What is Neurolinguistic Programming, (NLP)?

The development of a grounded theory of NLP within an Action Research Journey.

Bruce Grimley

December 17th, 2015

In partial fulfilment of requirements for

The Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

University of Central Nicaragua

The Evaluator Committee of the UCN for Dissertation by Bruce Grimley

Karl Nielsen, PhD
Head of the International School of Psychology @ UCN
Professor in Psychology and Clinical Psychology
Universidad Central de Nicaragua Universidad Central de Nicaragua

Nandana Nielsen, PhD
Professor in Psychology and Clinical Psychology
Universidad Central de Nicaragua

"I hereby declare on oath that I have written the submitted dissertation what is Neurolinguistic Programming, (NLP)? The development of a grounded theory of NLP within an Action Research Journey independently and without unauthorized assistance. I have not used other than the named tools and scripts. All used parts of other authors either literally or correspondingly are cited."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Figures

Table of Tables

Abstract

This thesis explores the question õwhat is NLP?ö using a grounded theory approach. The intention in developing a theory of NLP for the author was to improve his practice as a psychologist who makes use of NLP patterns in his work. NLP has many definitions of what it is and it is this multiplicity which makes research into its efficacy difficult. Building on the recommendations of Einspruch and Forman (1985) this research seeks to understand what NLP is from the NLP practitionerøs perspective, and 15 experienced NLP practitioners from around the world were interviewed using Skype and the transcripts were used to generate this theory of NLP. In order to develop a theory based upon multiple perspectives, not only were 15 experienced NLP practitioners interviewed, but a 44,000 word LinkedIn discussion on the authenticity of NLP between 19 experienced professionals with a back ground in psychology was also used as data, with permission, to assist generate this theory. In order to get to the heart of the matter in the semi structured interviews, principles of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis were made use of, so meanings were unlayered and deeper understandings were explicated with new themes emerging.

The limitations of this study are discussed and the responses of some of the participants to the unfolding theory are explored and discussed also. As a result of this recycling of information it is shown how the theory was both developed and consolidated.

The resulting theory emerged as a model with 8 interacting dimensions and is believed to explain the practice of NLP over 40 years. As this model is perceived as both dynamic and stable it is also believed it can act in such a way that it will predict the future orientation of NLP. This theory is housed within a set of pre-suppositions which are characterised by the acronym P.E.A.S. A precis of the 8 interacting dimensions acting as a verbal definition of NLP is:

"NLP is a human development activity which is primarily commercial, controversial, and unproven. It borrows from psychology and other disciplines in an eclectic way to provide perceived gains in a short period."

As a piece of Action Research the author discusses how this research has improved his practice and developed him as a psychologist who makes use of NLP patterns in his professional work and personal life.

Chapter 1

Introduction

NLP is a popular practice started by John Grinder, Richard Bandler and Frank Pucelik in the early 1970ø*s. As a result of imitating well known therapists these people claimed to develop patterns of thought and behaviour that exceeded the effectiveness of the exemplars which they imitated. They later trained others in what became to be known as NLP and the workshops which followed became a profitable enterprise during the late 1970ø*s and 1980ø*s.

During the 1980ø*s 2 reviews of NLP were conducted by Christopher Sharpley. In 1984 he reviewed 15 Studies, (Sharpley, 1984). This paper was replied to by Eric Einspruch and Bruce Forman, (Einspruch & Forman, 1985) and in this paper a further 24 articles not reviewed by Sharply were used, identifying overall 39 reports of empirical studies based on publications from 1975 to April 1984.

Einspruch and Forman suggested a number of modifications could be made to improve designs of research conducted on NLP. Firstly that researcher should be trained by competent NLP practitioners. Secondly sensory-observable measures should be used. Thirdly evidence should be obtained at the individual level and summed to arrive at group data and finally studies should be conducted only when participants are experienced and have demonstrated mastery. (Einspruch & Forman, 1985, p. 594).

The requirement for research into NLP being conducted by competent NLP practitioners was reiterated in the most recent publication concerning the application of NLP within a clinical context (Gray, Liotta, Wake, & Cheal, 2013, p. 201).

Sharpley replied to this paper in 1987 (Sharpley, 1987) reviewing a further 7 studies suggesting that NLP could be seen as a partial compendium of counselling practice rather than an original contribution.

The motivation to conduct this research is to improve my practice as both a psychologist and as an NLP practitioner. Action research as a form of professional learning asks:

What am I doing? What do I need to improve? How do I improve it? What is my evidence? The resulting accounts come to stand as practical theories of practice, from which others can learn if they wishö (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006, p.7).

In this chapter I seek to position myself as a researcher who understands the NLP paradigm and how through asking important questions, recognised they were not answered fully and needed to be.

An introduction to NLP

To introduce readers who are not familiar with NLP, it has many definitions. The practice started in the early 1970øs and has as its core methodology that of modelling. Originally the type of modelling used by NLP was behavioural and imitative, (Bandura, 1977), however what NLP modelling actually is, is schismatic within NLP at present and will be discussed later. The first 3 people to be modelled by the Co-Founders of NLP Dr John Grinder, Richard Bandler and Frank Pucelik were the gestalt therapist, Fritz Perls, the family therapist Virginia Satir and the psychiatrist Dr Milton Erickson. These modelling projects were designed to produce the essence of these practitioners in the most elegant form so others could learn their skills. In reality at this time NLP had not been developed and to suggest anything was õdesignedö at this stage is to overstate the case. Richard Bandlerøs õmodellingö

of Fritz Perls was an incidental product of working for Science and Behaviour books and putting together The Gestalt Approach and Eye Witness to therapy, (Perls,1973).

The NLP models were published in book form:

a) The structure of magic volumes 1 and 2 (Bandler & Grinder, 1975b; Grinder & Bandler, 1976), known as the Meta Model.

b) Patterns of the hypnotic techniques of Milton H. Erickson MD Volume 1 and 2 (Bandler & Grinder, 1975a; Grinder, DeLozier, & Bandler, 1977), known as the Milton Model.

NLP quickly developed into a popular practice and workshops began to emerge quickly teaching these skills to others who were interested in self-development. It was this expansion of NLP that prompted Sharply to review the evidence for NLP as he stated in his initial review of 1984 that proponents of NLP were teaching their skills for personnel training and marketing as well as counselling. However in spite of the increased interest and Sharpley presumed application, no review had been published of research evidence supporting NLP's claim as an effective intervention procedure.

The practice of NLP around the world is not formally regulated and people can sometimes become practitioners after only 3 days training. However as can be seen in Appendix C the other end of the spectrum is 34 days training over 9 months with professional supervision. In order to deploy the NLP patterns coherently Grinder suggests a set of NLP presuppositions would satisfy the question õwhat would have to be true?ö The most well-known of these presuppositions is The Map is not the Territory, a fuller representation being: õA map is not the territory it represents but if correct it has a similar structure to the territory which accounts for its usefulness.ö (Korzybski, 1994, p. 58).

So when communicating with another person an NLP practitioner is aware that one error the person communicating with them possibly makes is they think their representation of the world is somehow true and cannot be changed on account of that truth. Holding to this presupposition then allows the NLP practitioner to work with the NLP techniques in a way that is particular to NLP.

This is a useful example of a presupposition as NLP is regarded as constructivist in orientation and Korzybski is often cited as the source of this orientation. Thus when talking about the theory which supports NLP, NLP practitioners will signpost the enquirer to the NLP Presuppositions

My Journey

My interest in Neuro Linguistic Programming, (NLP) started after completing my B.Sc. in Psychology (Open University, 1993). I became particularly interested in the unconscious mind and depth psychology at that time. I was interested in the deeper levels of consciousness that informed and sustained both behaviour and language and the mechanisms of how this occurred. NLP claimed to produce models of how experts operated and make explicit the structure of their subjective experience, so others could learn from this model and be trained accordingly. What I found interesting about this was the claim by NLP practitioners that excellent performers actually did not know how they did what they did, they were unconsciously competent and the pattern was both embodied and implicit. The key task of NLP, I was told, was to discover what this unconscious pattern was and somehow make it explicit, so others after training, could even exceed the expertise of the excellent performer. What made NLP even more tantalising for me at this time was the means by which an NLP practitioner executed this function. It was by turning off all their conscious understanding and through a process of unconscious assimilation, similar to the way in which a child would

learn through imitation, allow the pattern to develop until one could accomplish what the excellent performer could do. Once this could be accomplished one then went about first of all coding this pattern and then putting it into a training format so it could be tested in transfer. As Bandler and Grinder had modelled Milton Erickson, a psychiatrist who practiced clinical hypnosis, NLP seemed to be a good place to continue my training and develop my understanding of the unconscious. I felt if I could train in NLP I would begin to understand more readily how people did what I regarded as extraordinary and develop myself more readily. Hypnosis was an area that fascinated me and ever since reading õDivided Consciousness, Multiple Controls in Human Thought and Actionö, Hilgard (1977), and the experimental demonstration of õThe Hidden Observerö, I wanted to learn more. Hilgard through his work had demonstrated there is a cognitive process which he named the Hidden Observer. This process is aware of much of that which the conscious mind is not aware of and is the deepest level of control of human thought and action. His demonstration showed how a participant was truly not aware of blocks of wood being struck together after being hypnotised, however after regaining a fully conscious state and then being re-hypnotised, there was a deeper level not available to conscious perception that actually was aware of the noise. (Hilgard, 1997, p. 194). As someone who had studied psychology I had learned how most activities and people¢s capabilities in those activities, given enough samples, would create a normal distribution with most people falling within one standard deviation of the norm. Thus my belief was, in some shape or form, excellence could be quantified, even if the process of being excellent may be difficult to measure, the results of excellence should be easy to measure. My thought process was maybe Milton Erickson successfully eliminated symptoms in 99% of his clientele putting him beyond 3 standard deviations of the norm where 65% of the sample population, (clinical hypnotherapists), would fall. Consequently if

this performance was reliable he must consistently and probably unconsciously be doing something different to produce these results.

After my Practitioner in NLP, I completed an Advanced Practitioner, a Master Practitioner and an NLP Train the Trainer training in the hope of discovering what is on the cover of the very first book about NLP; The Structure of Magic (Bandler & Grinder, 1975b). My formal training thus was 30 days of training under supervision and with supervised practice using real clients, including 10 sessions of personal coaching/therapy, (NLP practitioner), 21 days of assisting NLP workshops and assessment, (advanced diploma in NLP), 21 days (Master Practitioner) and 10 days (train the trainer). As the first application of NLP is to oneself it is generally recognised that continued professional development means attendance at relevant workshops and conferences to build on these foundational skills.

During this time I also completed an M.Sc in Occupational and Organization Psychology (University of East London) and had become a Chartered Psychologist and Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, (BPS). My Chartership route had taken the depth specialisation of one to one work within the context of the organisation. As the BPS did not have a psychotherapy section, I took the advice offered at the time by the Society and that was to register with an organisation which was a member of the United Kingdom Psychotherapy Council (UKCP), this happened to be the Neuro-Linguistic Psychotherapy and Counselling Association, (NLPtCA). Practicing psychology as both a Therapist and a Coach, helped me appreciate that many of the stresses which afflicted people within the workplace were often related to contexts from outside of the workplace or from contexts within their personal history from the past.

Recent Development

I was still fascinated with NLP at the end of this personal education in 2005 however was concerned that so many spectacular claims were unjustifiably made for its efficacy. In my reading of the psychological literature there was no support for NLP concerning its ability to do what practitioners said it did. I myself had not witnessed any magic in particular, other than that which could have been brought about by application of much of the psychology I had learned myself through my formal training as a psychologist. Clinical psychologist Alden argues when hypnosis is featured in the media it is often to report some miraculous cure. However in reviewing 4 of her own cases she found the relevant factors contributing to this apparent magic were the straightforward variables of expectancy, distraction, motivation, compliance, imagination, relaxation, attribution and cognitive change. (Alden, 1989).

During this time I worked at Royal Mail in the UK, initially as a Postman and later in management, namely; development and training, operational management and a small amount of consultancy work. I started publishing articles about NLP in peer reviewed Journals in 2007 and argued that õNLP, despite being with us since the 1970s, is not even in a position to be evaluated as it is too loosely constructed with little rigour or substance, in either form or content.ö I went on to say; õNLP remains an exciting adventure which has yet to come of age í if it ever does.ö (Grimley, 2007). I was also asked in 2007 to contribute to õHandbook of Coaching Psychology, A guide for practitioners. (Palmer & Whybrow, 2007, pp. 193-210). In this chapter and many subsequent chapters in other publications I wrote enthusiastically about the potential of NLP patterns when used effectively in coaching and other work, however was always concerned about the continued claims made by NLP practitioners publically and the lack of empirical evidence to support such claims.

I started my PhD studies under Dr Paul Tosey and Professor Eugene Sadler-Smith in January of 2008 at the University of Surrey, UK and became very interested in NLP as a research methodology, especially within action research, (McNiff, 2000). I became interested with the idea of using NLP to reduce stress within the workplace. During my first year I developed this topic and discussed it avidly with my supervisors. During my 2nd year I took a break to research independently whilst remaining at the school of management. In 2010 as a result of my time at Surrey University I became interested more in taking my ideas to the public by writing a book. I put a proposal into Sage Publishing and on 29th October 2010 contracts were exchanged. The book expressed both my admiration for the complexity, depth and potential of NLP, however it also expressed concerns about the lack of empirical support, lack of ethical and professional practice and definitional ambiguity. õTheory and Practice of NLP Coaching, a Psychological Approachö was published in January 2013.

This brings me to the present moment when I was encouraged to continue with my PhD studies by Professor Dr Karl Nielsen. I was asked to provide a Key Note talk at the 2012 Conference of the International Association of NLP Institutes (IN) and the International Association of Coaching Institutes (ICI), held in Biograd Na Moru, Croatia and presented the idea we can create workplaces where everybody would like to belong. I prepared the talk with the Presuppositions of NLP firmly in my mind however the key moment which really inspired me to develop a grounded theory of NLP was when after providing my talk I recognised, despite being an NLP Conference, what I had said could feasibly have been said at any Occupational Psychology conference around the world. The realisation for me that in fact NLP provides nothing new was a bit of a Damascus Road experience and I seek in this research to really find out what NLP is by talking to subject matter experts from around the world.

NLP in the Workplace

In my professional journey which has led to this research, I would like to explain how I seemed to fall into the trap of doing what I thought was NLP, when in fact I was merely taking principles from psychology and other related fields which are already well established.

Gregory Bateson (1972) pointed out humans do not behave according to dynamic laws in the same way an inanimate object like a billiard ball does. Their behaviour is based upon the ideas they have and these are always different from other people in one way or another (Bateson,1972, p. 229). Because all employees are different, it is inevitable that whatever environment is created, in that environment there will always be a percentage who will be dissatisfied. This means in order to create a workplace where every employee wishes to work means creating an environment which supports employees attempts to discover who they are as individuals and how they can best realise their innate potential at many different levels; Mission/Vision, Identity, Values, Beliefs, capability, behaviour and environment, (Dilts, 1990). In my talk I suggested in order to accomplish this, an organization needs to be characterized by 4 independent yet related process variables:

1) Energy.

2) Values.

3) Communication.

4) Self ó Awareness.

I recognised in putting this talk together I was effectively experimenting with a systemic theme which is one characteristic of NLP. This was being done according to my own subjective experience within organisations and again the experimental aspect of my talk drew from the exhortation to try NLP out for yourself and see what feedback you get: õWe strongly

recommend that you read this volume carefully and that you spend time experimenting with each patternö (Bandler & Grinder, 1975, p. 3).

This experimental aspect of NLP is put very well by NLP participant 15, she says:

> õI have a í .as Bateson would say õa conscious purposeö and then thereøs everything else that happens as a result too, of which some, I canøt have predicted, some I canøt have known, but they do, they do come out. So this is where you have, rather than a predictive approach, you have an ¬in-course correction approachø, so here itøs the idea, they say in Silicon Valley, you know, õReady, Fire, Aimö (both laugh). Iøve got to get out there ó and get going doing something, then I want to take the feedback from this particular situationö (NLP participant 15, 1:19:30)

As I continued my active experimentation I clustered my experimental variables into two sets of two.

Energy – Values.

As I continued I argued energy is the capacity for vigorous activity and needs the variable of values for direction and to steer the boat in a sea of many currents, Values need energy for self-expression and execution of appropriate behaviours. Values without behaviour are meaningless. To use a Metaphor, values are the compass which shows the captain of the ship which way he / she should set the rudder, energy is the horsepower of the engine transmitted through the propeller shaft.

Communication – Self-Awareness.

In my talk, I assumed that just as within the individual the unconscious and conscious mind need to communicate effectively to energise the individual system, so too the organisation needs to communicate horizontally and vertically across the organization and out into the

world in order to express its brand and product in an authentic way. Without self-awareness at many levels, individuals and organisations cannot communicate effectively.

In my preparation I had recognised similar themes within my professional training as an occupational psychologist. Argyris (1957, 1964.) demonstrated how communication without self-awareness leads to Model 1 type of Organisations and a lack of appreciation for the difference between In Use theories and Espoused theories. Essentially in use theory is what we **do** and Espoused theory is what we **say** we do and is often different to what is in use. Model 1 type behaviour leads to the organisation being sealed into iterations of single loop learning. Just as Gregory Bateson, the teacher of both Grinder and DeLozier (1987, p. vii), developed the double bind theory of schizophrenia so too it seemed organisations could be bound in a similar way through adopting a model 1 culture. Argyris explained this in terms of single and double loop learning. As the work of Argyris seemed to me to be more developed in terms of the model I was experimenting with I made use of his work in the preparation of my talk.

Single and Double loop learning

The governing variables, (NLP would call these pre-suppositions) of a model 1 organization are:

A) One must achieve one's own goals as one sees them.

B) One must win rather than lose.

C) One must minimize eliciting negative feelings in relationships.

D) One must be rational and minimize any emotionality.

Argyris (1957, 1964.) says that this leads to behaviour which is controlling of others, maximizes personal safety, and leads to minimum confrontation of any emotionally charged issues. If one is confronted by another it leads to defensiveness. This results in a self-sealing process or single loop learning in which one sets up the situation to confirm one's own premises, but never learning whether or not these premises themselves are valid.

My talk in Biograd Na Moru suggested within a work environment, NLP as an Action Research based methodology would facilitate the development of what Argyris (1957, 1964.) would term a Model 2 Organization and what Senge (1990) would term a learning organization. When communication within an organisation is conducted in such a way that processes allow for self-awareness to develop then learning organizations emerge and systemically both individuals and the organization grow. This is characteristic of what Argyris would call a Model 2 Organisation. (Argyris, 1957, 1964).

 From the perspective of Argyris the governing variables of a model 2 organization are:

A) Action should be based upon valid information.

B) Action should be based upon free and informed choice.

C) Action should be based on internal commitment to the choice and constant monitoring of efforts to implement one's choices.

This õorganizationö could be at the level of the individual, the family, the community or at the level of a Multi-National Organization.

I argued in this presentation at Biograd Na Moru, Croatia that NLP is a dynamic type of Action Research and each employee is personally responsible for being õHappyö within the organisation and that includes taking personal responsibility for employee engagement and

development of the necessary skill set in order to produce stakeholder benefit, with the recognition that the individual employee is also a key stakeholder.

After this presentation it dawned upon me more fully my arguments could equally well have been made by any traditional Occupational Psychologist who had followed the appropriate curriculum and not only was there not an internationally agreed definition for NLP, there was neither an organised curriculum in NLP at undergraduate degree level attached to a state university anywhere in the world. Consequently I could not reference my work as inspired by NLP nor could I build argumentation based upon well written and tested research within the context of the organisation as little peer reviewed research existed. The little that did exist did not extend past small case study pieces which could not credibly be generalised to the larger population. It seemed that rebuttals by psychologists had silenced the NLP voice quite easily in the academic literature and consequently NLP has continued to be regarded as an õeasy targetö by psychologists who wish to õhave a popö, (Sutton, 2012, p. 813). Indeed when coding and analysing the data from psychologists this is one of the themes which emerged, that NLP is actually not even worth discussing. More of this will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Modern efforts to bring credibility to NLP

Efforts to bring credibility to NLP are beginning to emerge. NLP is taught in modular form within some coaching courses, for instance, 10 days during the MSc in Coaching and Organisational Behaviour at Henley Management College, and more substantially within the MA in Applied Coaching at Derby University. Oxford Brookes University has a one-day course in NLP for staff at their university to help them õManage Change and Coach Themselvesö (Oxford Brookes University, 2012). The ANLP (Association of NLP) has hosted Bi-annual NLP research conferences at UK universities for the last 6 years. At the

University of Lincoln the Lincolnshire Leadership and Management Centre did have for a time in 2013 their own Master Practitioner NLP course run by Drøs Jan and Graham Dexter.

UCN (University of Central Nicaragua) has a psychology department where post graduate students can research NLP under its own name, rather than as a pseudonym like 3rd wave CBT, or the application of NLP in coaching/counselling. Also the International Association of NLP Institutes (IN) has held an academic congress approximately every three years in different locations around the world starting in Berlin in 2006.

In Australia a Nationally recognised vocational Postgraduate Certificate offers a 40-day programme with eight units of five days in NLP. This is rated at level 8 in the Australian Qualifications framework which is the equivalent student level of a Bachelors Honours Degree. In Austria the Austrian Training Center for Neuro-Linguistic-Programming has had government licensing to provide coaching trainings since 1995. Finally the NLP research and recognition project was started in 1995 and their mission is to support, coordinate, and fund rigorous scientific research in the field of NLP.

Despite all of these efforts NLP is still regarded in academia by many as pop psychology and an adjunctive set of untested techniques which are used within the wider context of coaching, management, consultancy, sales, education, psychotherapy, health care and much more. The lack of peer reviewed research demonstrating the efficacy of NLP is one of the reasons cited for this state of affairs, however this research aims to dig deeper and interview current leaders of the NLP brand to understand what the other reasons are, if any. One data corpus for this research is a LinkedIn discussion between psychologists and proponents of NLP over 10 months (March 2013 to January 2014) which carries to 44,000 words, (Munro, 2013). The intention of including this data set was to tap into some of the more recent and live discussions to explore deeper reasons for the poor reputation of NLP from the perspective of

the profession of psychology, as well as providing a different perspective thus preventing a possible positive schew.

In seeking to find out what NLP is, this thesis originally set out to explore what it would take for NLP to become a modality with its own body of evidence which stands up to academic scrutiny. For some this is to misunderstand NLP as from their perspective it comes from an anti-positivist epistemology and thus the relationship between objects are consistently changing as the dynamic of the phenomenological world under scrutiny changes, even moment by moment in the presence of the researcher. However this thesis explores whether such a perspective does in matter of fact render NLP patterns immune to testing in a sound way which can be peer reviewed in academic journals, a pattern itself which has been sadly missing over the past 40 years. As Dr Frank Bourke who has managed twelve psychiatric hospitals says; õWhile many NLP ˗expertsø have historically either ignored the need for research evidence for the effectiveness of NLP techniques or maintained the ˗un-measurable natureø of NLP techniques, ˗knowingø IS ˗measuringø and useful knowledge must have standardized measures." (Bourke, 2013, p. 280).

At present no undergraduate NLP degree attached to a recognised national university program has been developed. This thesis, in seeking to understand what NLP is, explores the idea that this can be addressed and should be addressed as one avenue by which NLP can begin to make a recognised and lasting contribution to modern human development in a variety of contexts.

Summary of Chapter 1

I have described my personal journey in both psychology and NLP and described one of the pivotal points which brought about this Action Research, a key note talk in Biograd Na Moru, Croatia.   The inclusion of my personal journey as well as the use of the personal pronoun is

to emphasise the ontological and epistemological frame of this research. That is, the realities we create are constructions to which we are emotionally attached. Despite techniques to assist us recognise the nature of **how** we distort and delete the sensory world about us, in order to create generalisations and our personal map of the world, when we research, despite these techniques, subjectivity is inevitable. The use of the personal pronoun also emphasises the Action research characteristic which asks us to recognise the effect our enquiry has upon those who provide us with data. McNiff and Whitehead cogently state the Action Research position:

õThe stance of researchers working in these traditions remains external. They speak about research and ideas as things õout thereö. What is known is assumed to be separate from a knower. Realities and ideas about reality are turned into free standing things, which can be studied, taken apart and put back together in new ways. Many researchers working in these traditions do not seem to appreciate that they are part of the same reality they are studyingö (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006, p. 41).

In this chapter I have also given the reader evidence to recognise I meet the criteria of both Einspruch and Forman (1985) and Gray, Liotta, Wake, and Cheal (2013) concerning the need for researchers to be trained by competent NLP practitioners for an appropriate period of time.

Chapter 2

Literature Search

Some current definitions of NLP

NLP stands for Neuro-Linguistic Programing and was created by John Grinder and Richard Bandler in the early 1970øs at The University of California, Santa Cruz. A popular definition of NLP is õAn attitude with a methodology which leaves behind it a trail of techniquesö. This is attributed to Richard Bandler, however the uncertainty of what NLP is, is nicely portrayed by an email from Robert Dilts who had the quote down differently, he writes: õI believe it was Richard Bandler who said "NLP is an attitude and a methodology, *not* (emphasis added) the trail of techniques left in its wake." But I don't know if there are any books or other written references for either of these quotes.ö (Dilts, personal communication, 2012).

A discipline which marginalises the techniques which flow from its epistemology is indeed a very different discipline to that which aggrandises such techniques and positions them as products which have high degrees of both reliability and validity. In defining NLP this is a key question which needs addressing and answering.

The attitude is formalised in what are called the Pre-suppositions of NLP, the method is that of modelling and the techniques are the patterns of human thinking and behaviour which emerge from modelling projects, (Grimley, 2012). The first two models were the Meta Model and the Milton Model, (Bandler and Grinder, 1975, 1975b; Grinder & Bandler, 1976; Grinder, DeLozier, & Bandler, 1977).

Dr Anthony Grant makes the point concerning Neuro-Associative Conditioning (NAC) which is Tony Robbinøs development of NLP

õThe exaggerated claims made by Robbins as to the efficacy of NAC may well be harmful to individuals experiencing strong dysphoric states, and could increase their sense of failure when the promised results do not eventuate. Indeed, it could well be argued that Robbinsø marketing of NAC comes close to breaking the Code of Ethics of the Australian Psychological Society (1997)ö. (Grant, 2001).

This perspective raises a couple of questions which need to be answered:

1) Are Patterns which have been developed by NLP students representative of NLP and therefore testable as NLP or not?

2) What is NLP? The popular definition mentioned above is one, however there are many more. For example:

a) õDefies Easy Descriptionö (Overdurf & Silverton, 1998, p.viii).

b) õThe unexpected by-product of the collaboration of John Grinder and Richard Bandler to formalize impactful patterns of communicationö (Dilts, Grinder, Bandler, & DeLozier, 1980, p. ii).

c) õIn some respects it is simple. An internationally prominent practice in business, management development and professional education, a method used by facilitators of various kinds ó coaches, trainers and consultants ó who claim to offer some innovative and highly effective approaches to human developmentí í í í í .í .in other respects NLP resembles more of a mystery story.ö (Tosey & Mathison, 2009, p. 3).

d) õAn explicit and powerful model of human experience and communicationö (Andreas, 1979, p. i).

e) õThe study of the structure of subjectivityö (Dilts et al, 1980, p. ii).

f) õA behavioural model that consists of a series of tools and techniques modelled on performance excellenceö (Wake, 2010, p. 7).

g) õA model from Cognitive Psychologyö (James & Woodsmall, 1988, p. 3).

h) õThe art and science of personal excellenceö (Alder & Heather, 1998, p. xii).

i) õAn extension of linguistics, neurology or psychologyö (Dilts et al, 1980, p. i).

j) õThe Frankenstein Grandchild of Post Ericksonian Hypnosisö (Brown, 2007, p. 128).

k) õIt is not a set of techniques it is an attitude.ö (Bandler, 1985, p. 155).

l) õWhatever worksö (Attributed to Robert Dilts by www. GrassRoots.com. 2013)

m) õA user oriented metaphor designed to generate behavioural options quickly and effectivelyö (Dilts et al., 1980, p. 12).

n) õA modelling technology whose specific subject matter is the set of differences that makes the difference between the performance of geniuses and that of average performers in the same field or activity. (Bostic St Clair & Grinder 2001, p. 50).

The above list of 14 definitions is by no means exhaustive; however it demonstrates the problem of being able to accurately define NLP.

Richard Churches in talking about researching NLP and in particular one of the NLP Models, the Milton Model says; õ Just this aspect of NLP alone, the fact that it has been a largely oral tradition for the last 30 years and a ÷community of practiceø provides enough ammunition for the critical academic to dismiss NLPö (Churches, 2013).

It seems logical that if we cannot effectively define something we cannot research it. This is because again it seems logical that the nature of our research will be shaped by the definition

of that which we are researching. If what we are researching keeps on changing according to whom we talk to then the paradigm becomes incapable of falsification. Effectively one has a paradigm which on the back of slick marketing and unverifiable claims re-defines itself every time scientific research finds against it.

In the field of NLP this problem has a historical antecedent and we briefly touched on it within Chapter 1. In order to avoid going down the same road in this research it would be wise to look in some detail and learn some lessons from the problem posed by a review of 44 NLP articles between 1975 and 1986.

Lessons Learned

In 1984 Christopher Sharpley submitted a paper reviewing the use of preferred representational system (PRS) in NLP. After the Meta Model this was the second model of NLP (Bostic St. Clair & Grinder 2001, p. 164). Strictly speaking this was an example of NLP Design rather than a model as no single expert exemplar or group of expert exemplars were modelled.

The difference between an NLP model and NLP design is explicated for us by Bostic St Clair and Grinder when they talk about NLP design as: ðThe manipulation of the variables discovered in the original modelling studies and their use as essential design variables in the creation of new patterningö Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001, p56).

The NLP model of communication suggests we process data initially through our senses. Each of these senses is regarded as a representational system as the associated neurology does not just receive the information from the outside world, it also actively processes it. Just as type psychology suggests we have cognitive preferences (Brigs Myers & Myers 1980, Costa & McCrae 1994), so too Bandler and Grinder at this time suggested individuals had a

preferred sense with which to represent the world and process information (Grinder & Bandler, 1976). This can be visually appreciated by looking at how Bodenhamer and Hall (1999, p. 65) represent the NLP communication model in figure 1 below. In a communication context NLP practitioners believed that if they could identify what this PRS was in another person, this would help them frame their communication in such a way that such a communication would be more easily and readily accepted and maybe even acted upon by another person.

Sharpley was concerned that NLP, which started as a counselling application, was being used in other fields such as Personnel training and Marketing, and up to that time no review had been published of research evidence supporting NLP's claim as an effective intervention. He reviewed 15 studies. There was support for PRS in some studies. For example Birholtz (1981) found stability over one week for a Kinaesthetic preference in 27 participants. There was no relationship found however between this preference elicited through the use of predicate preference in response to neutral questions concerning negative and positive experiences and the participants self-report of their preferred PRS.

Figure 1. The NLP communication model (Bodenhamer & Hall, 1999, p. 65, with permission)
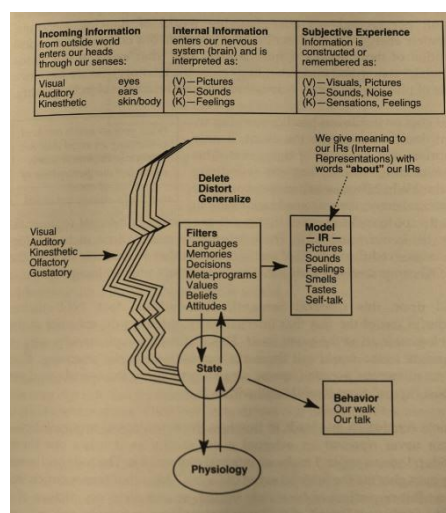
Yapko (1981) compared the relative effectiveness of hypnotic induction via verbal instructions in the subject's preferred modality with similar instructions in a non-preferred modality. 30 participants demonstrated their PRS by answering open ended questions. Frontalis electromyograph (EMG) readings were lowest when relaxation instructions were delivered in their preferred modality (F = 3.55, df = 29, p < .05).

Finally Falzett (1981) had counselors match or mismatch predicates with 24 right-handed female volunteer college students whose PRS had been determined by eye-movement responses to questions prior to predicate matching. Subjects rated the counselor on the Trustworthiness scale of the Counselor Rating Form, with results indicating a significantly higher level of perceived trustworthiness when counselors matched predicates with clients (p < 001).

However as a result of the majority of research not supporting the experimental hypothesis Sharpley concluded;

õAt present, there is no consistent support for the use of the predicate-matching process of NLP in either contrived counseling situations or actual clinical realities. Of most importance, there are no data reported to date to show that NLP can help clients change.ö (Sharpley, 1984, p. 247).

This paper was responded to by Eric L. Einspruch and Bruce D. Forman 1985. They pointed out that NLP was an;

õExtraordinarily complex model of human cognition and behavior and of how to identify behavioral and communication patterns and interrupt these patterns in a deliberate way so as to achieve predictable outcomes.ö They continued; õEye

scanning patterns and representational systems are an important, but small, part of NLPö. (Einspruch & Forman, 1985, p. 594).

They suggested Sharpley 1984 failed to consider a number of methodological errors in the 15 studies he reviewed. These included the following;

õ(a) Lack of understanding of the concepts of pattern recognition and inadequate control of context, (b) Unfamiliarity with NLP as an approach to therapy, (c) Lack of familiarity with the NLP "meta-model" of linguistic communication, (d) Failure to consider the role of stimulus-response associations, (e) Inadequate interviewer training and definitions of rapport, and (f) Logical mistakes.ö (Einspruch & Forman 1985, p. 590).

Einspruch and Forman after reviewing 39 reports published between 1975 to April 1984 (24 of which were not reviewed by Sharpley) concluded; õOn the basis of the research that has appeared in the literature, it is not possible at this time to determine the validity of either NLP concepts or whether NLP-based therapeutic procedures are effective for achieving therapeutic outcomes.ö (Einspruch & Forman, 1985, p. 594).

In order to address the perceived complexity of the NLP model Einspruch and Forman suggested 4 recommendations for research into NLP.

õ1) Researchers should be trained by competent NLP practitioners for an appropriate period of time, they thought this was probably the most important recommendation. 2) Researchers wishing to study rapport should rely on objective, sensory-observable measures of their procedures. 3) Except in gathering information about sensory-observable outcomes of therapy, procedures should not be applied at the group level, but rather at the individual level, and calibrated to each personøs personal

characteristics. Data on individual observations may then be summed to arrive at group data. 4) Any treatment studies should be performed only by therapists with demonstrated mastery of the model and its techniques, and outcome measures should be behavioral in nature. If comparisons are to be made with other treatment approaches, the therapists using the comparative model should be equally proficient.ö (Einspruch & Forman, 1985, p. 594).

In 1987 Sharpley responded to the research of Einspruch and Forman 1985 refuting many of their detailed criticisms and reviewing 7 further NLP studies.

Sharpley in commenting on the review of the NLP studies to date at that time suggested collectively they point to the conclusion that;

(a) The PRS cannot be reliably assessed;

(b) When it is assessed, the PRS is not consistent over time; therefore,

(c) It is not even certain that the PRS exists; and

(d) Matching clients' or other persons' PRS does not appear to assist counselors reliably in any clearly demonstrated manner.

Sharpley suggested.

a) õThe basic tenets of NLP have failed to be reliably verified in almost 86% of the controlled studies, and it is difficult to accept that none of these 38 studies (i.e. those with nonsupportive, partial, or mixed results) were performed by persons with a satisfactory understanding of NLP (or at least enough of an understanding to perform the various procedures that were evaluated).öí .

b) õPerhaps NLP principles are not amenable to research evaluation. This does not necessarily reduce NLP to worthlessness for counselling practice. Rather, it puts NLP in the same category as psychoanalysis, that is, with principles not easily demonstrated in laboratory settings but, nevertheless, strongly supported by clinicians in the field. Not every therapy has to undergo the rigorous testing that is characteristic of the more behavioural approaches to counseling to be of use to the therapeutic community, but failure to produce data that support a particular theory from controlled studies does relegate that theory to questionable status in terms of professional accountability.ö (Sharpley, 1987, p.105).

c) Sharpley suggested that the idea of mirroring has long been used in counselling and is effective for supporting clients and demonstrating empathy. In that predicate matching does this, it is useful. Also the idea of shifting sensory modality from visual to auditory to kinaesthetic is also useful and has a long tradition in Gestalt therapy in assisting clients understand an issue. Finally the practice of Reframing has been noted in at least 5 other therapies being most clearly presented by Frankl (1962) in focusing on the positive during his period as a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp. Sharpley suggested that these 3 NLP techniques along with anchoring and changing personal history can all be found in a wide reading of the many counseling theories that abound and are by no means specific to NLP.

Sharpley concluded, without reply from Einspruch and Forman that

õAs such, NLP may be seen as a partial compendium of rather than as an original contribution to counseling practice and, thereby, has a value distinct from the lack of research data supporting the underlying principles that Bandler and Grinder (1975b, 1976, 1979) posited to present NLP as a new and magical theory.ö (Sharpley, 1987, p. 106).

Sharpley added;

> õIf, however, NLP is presented as a "theory-less" set of procedures gathered from many other approaches to counseling, then it may serve a reference role for therapists who wish to supplement their counseling practice by what may be novel techniques for them.ö (Sharpley, 1987, p. 106).

Professor Sturt makes a point after a Freedom of Information request revealed that the NHS in the United Kingdom spent over £800,000 on NLP from 2006-9, and a further estimated £105,000 on training staff. She says; õthe very fact that there is no agreed definition of NLP indicates how little evidence we have of its benefits.ö (Sturt, 2012b).   Definitional problems in the 1980øs were a key hurdle for NLP practitioners. We can see from Einspruch and Forman that they are concerned the reviewed papers did not õUnderstand NLP as an approach to therapyö (Einspruch & Forman,1985, p. 591). They point to one of the reviewed papers, (Hammer 1983) and point out; õThis is a distortion of the NLP approach to therapy, which is generative by nature and makes use of questions designed to build a future that is appropriate for the client to move toward.ö (Einspruch & Forman, 1985, p. 591).

However nowhere in the NLP literature do we find NLP defined consistently in terms of being both generative and future oriented. It may indeed be the favoured personal definition for a group of practitioners, however it is not one that is traditionally used to define NLP such as õthe study of the structure of subjectivityö (Dilts et al., 1980, p. ii). Whilst NLP continues to accept this definitional ambiguity, as Professor Sturt points out no meaningful research can be undertaken. In the order of things one needs a solid definition in order to develop patterns / techniques which are consistent with that definition, which can then be tested either quantitatively or qualitatively.

The definitional difficulty which faced NLP back in 1985 and still does today can further be explicated by Einspruch and Forman's identification of research which is sensible in their opinion because it makes use of a physiological indicator of rapport. They tell us this physiological indicator of rapport is the measure of muscular relaxation. The research found that generally the 30 participants relaxed more to a taped hypnotic induction when the emphasised representation in the hypnotic induction matched their own PRS. (Yapko, 1981). The contextual variable of moving in and out of trance states, used by Milton Erickson to deepen trance, however was not controlled for in this research and in the opinion of Einspruch and Forman limited the degree one could generalize from these findings.

Whilst this research meets Einspruch and Forman's criteria that sensory-observable measures of procedures are used, it raises more questions than it answers in terms of their critique concerning researchers not understanding the NLP definition of rapport. This leaves us with an expanded challenge in that not only do we **not** have a standard definition of NLP, **neither** do we have standard definitions of important concepts within NLP such as rapport.

To suggest that a measure of muscular relaxation is a measure of rapport is to misunderstand the concept of rapport when we put it against the definition of Rapport from the Encyclopaedia of NLP, "One of the most important relational skills in NLP is the ability to establish rapport with others. Rapport involves building trust, harmony and cooperation in a relationship." (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000, p. 1051).

"Harmonious", "mutual understanding", "being in tune", and "in accord" are some of the words used to describe the process or state of being in rapport with another. Indeed in the whole definition of rapport which runs to over a page in the Encyclopaedia of NLP, the word "relaxation" is not used once. For Einspruch and Forman to then say "Yapko's results support Bandler and Grinder's (1979) contention that matching primary representational systems

enhances rapportö (Einspruch & Forman, 1985, p. 592), seems to demonstrate a misunderstanding on their part of the concept of rapport. The research of Yapko may tell us generally when the PRS of the participant is used in a hypnotic induction greater levels of relaxation will be achieved compared with when a mismatched representational system is used, but one cannot then generalise that finding to mean they are in rapport with the person administering the hypnotic induction if one is to use the definition provided by the Encyclopaedia of NLP. Such a detail is important given the critique of Gray et al (2013, p. 207); ŏThe definition of rapport utilized in studies is restricted to dictionary definitions or the authorøs definition and is not discretely defined as a process in a way that it is experienced in NLPö

In reviewing these early papers it seems that the researchers took their lead from the extant literature on NLP at the time. If this information is elusive itself or even contradictory it supports the idea that definitional aspects of NLP need to be addressed in order to conduct satisfactory research and to establish the validity of its claims.

It can be feasibly suggested that if the NLP community had decided to pay attention to the research conducted by psychologists in the 1980øs then the Co-Founder of NLP, John Grinder would not have needed to say over 30 years later the below:

> ŏI would unhesitatingly delete the remarks made by Bandler and myself about most highly valued representational system or sometimes preferred representational system. These terms first appeared in section I of the Structure of Magic, Volume II the presentation of representational systems. What could we have been thinking! The term is itself patently ridiculous.ö (Grinder & Pucelik, 2013, p. 214).

The ambiguity of the nature of NLP and what precisely it's tenets are, in this particular instance continue to be exacerbated when other first generation NLP practitioners tell me quite clearly they still believe in the primacy of PRS (Personal communication, 2014).

One of the main lessons thus learned from the Sharpley papers (1984 & 1987) and Einspruch and Forman (1985) is that in order to develop the credibility of NLP it is not sufficient to provide a rebuttal and then leave it at that. Einspruch and Forman could have replied to the 1987 paper of Sharpley, however chose not to. If they had kept the discussion going not only would NLP have been more fairly represented in the academic literature, but through the peer reviewed process its ideas could have been defined more effectively and good quality research might have been forthcoming as a consequence.

Einspruch and Forman in more detail

Einspruch and Forman (1985) open their rebuttal to Sharpley (1984) with an overview of NLP as a process model and explanation of logical levels, stating NLP operates at the 3rd of Batesons 4 logical levels of learning. In this opening they make claims which from a scientific perspective are not warranted; "NLP has been clinically demonstrated as a powerful technology for engendering change" (Einspruch & Forman, 1985, p. 589).

From a scientific perspective in order to demonstrate something works one needs to be able to generalise from one particular instance to other contexts in a reliable and valid way. Usually this is done through the use of controlled research which compares the experimental method with other methods and a control. Paradoxically Einspruch and Forman recognise this and concerning NLP practitioners state; "Clearly these practitioners would provide a service to the field by presenting their data in the literature so they may be critically evaluated. (Einspruch & Forman, 1985, p. 590).

The first study Einspruch and Forman look at is that of Gumm, Walker, and Day (1982). Here Einspruch and Forman suggest the researchers engage in fundamental methodological errors.

Gumm et al., (1982). attempted to elicit PRS through three methods.

1. Questionnaire.

2. Self-Report Questionnaire.

3. EAC (Eye Accessing Cues see figure 2 below) observation with heads fixed by means of a restraining device.

Even though in each method a bias towards a PRS occurred there was no agreement as to what the overall PRS for each subject was when comparing the results of all three methods of elicitation.

Sampling demonstrated further misunderstanding according to Einspruch and Forman (1985) as only right handed subjects were chosen as it was believed the model did not work for left handed people.

However when we look at the extant NLP literature in 1982 both the methodology and the sampling of Gumm et al., (1982) seem totally understandable. They were seeking to test a generalisation Grinder and Bandler explicitly make. Grinder and Bandler tell us in the section headed identifying the most highly valued representational system; õIn order to identify which of the representational systems is the clientøs most highly valued one, the therapist needs *only* (emphasis added) to pay attention to the predicates which the client uses to describe his experienceö (Grinder & Bandler, 1976, p. 9).

What is being said is clarified later on in the text:

õWe would like you to realise that very little of natural language communication is really metaphorical. Most people in describing their experiences even in casual conversation are quite literal. Comments such as õI see what youøre sayingö, are most often communicated by people who organise their world primarily with pictures. These are people whose most highly valued representational system is visualö (Grinder & Bandler, 1976, p. 11).

In Patterns of the Hypnotic techniques of Milton H Erickson M.D. Volume 2 (1977) Grinder, DeLozier and Bandler talk of the PRS in terms of the 4-Tuple and the R Operator.

The 4-Tuple is the first notion in the Milton Model. (Grinder, De Lozier & Bandler 1977, p. 11). It is a representation of experience where:

V = Visual.

K = Kinaesthetic.

A_t = Auditory tonal.

O = Olfactory.

i = The referential index of the experiencer.

i and e in this representation will also refer to the origin of the data experienced. So i means the data is internally generated and e means the data is externally generated. So my experience behind my computer could be coded as:

$<V^e$ the sight of the screen; K^e the feeling of my chair; $A_t^{i\ e}$ the sound of my internal voice and the sound of the hum of the computer and the tapping of the keyboard; O^e the smell of my study$>_i$

So even though $< V^e, K^e, A_t^{i\ e}, O^e >_i$ may be the total 4-Tuple and sum of experience available to me in fact what I may experience is $<\varnothing, \varnothing, A_t^i, \varnothing>_i$ in other words I am only experiencing consciously the tone of my internal voice and not even paying attention to the feeling of my chair or the content of my words which would be indicated by a subscript of $_d$ standing for digital. Such conscious attention to only a part of the 4-Tuple is in itself regarded as a pattern by Grinder et al, (1977, p. 21) and is coded by reference to the R operator.

Concerning their own example they point out:

> õThe above example then represents a person who is attending solely to the visual component of the total experience ó the person who *typically* attends *primarily* to what they see. Thus for a person whose most highly valued representational system is Kinaesthetic the application of the R operator would yield a different outcome, namely:
>
> R $<V, KA_t, O>$ ───────────> $<\varnothing, K, \varnothing, \varnothing>$
>
> This operator creates an explicit representation for the notion of most highly valued representational system ó specifically the personøs most highly valued representational system is the variable in the 4-Tuple which has a non-null value after the R operator has been applied to the 4-Tuple which represents the personøs total experienceí í In *general* (emphasis added) the personøs most highly valued representational system will coincide with portions of the external world which they are aware of ó knowing this is of great importance in understanding how to communicate effectively with a client in the hypnotic encounterö (Grinder et al., 1977, pp. 21-22).

In this very short chapter on representational systems at no point do Grinder et al. talk of the PRS changing with context, only changing with the individual. Indeed as marked out in the reference by myself they use words such as typically, primarily and in general. They are thus emphasising the belief that PRS does exist as a generalisation. It is therefore quite appropriate for Gumm et al., (1982) to test the validity of this generalisation, especially when Grinder and Bandler state as mentioned above: õIn order to identify which of the representational systems is the clientøs most highly valued one, the therapist needs *only* (emphasis added) to pay attention to the predicates which the client uses to describe his experienceö (Grinder & Bandler, 1976, p. 9).

Proponents of NLP may well indeed point out that in other parts of NLP literature PRS is regarded as context specific. For instance in Bandler and Grinder (1979, p.36).

> õOur claim is you are using all systems all the time. In a particular context you will be aware of one system more than another. I assume that when you play athletics or make love you have a lot of kinaesthetic sensitivity. When you are reading or watching a movie you have a lot of visual consciousness. You can shift from one to the other. There are contextual markers that allow you to shift from one *strategy* (emphasis added) to another and use different sequences. There is nothing forced about thatö (Bandler & Grinder, 1979, p. 36).

However even though Bandler and Grinder talk about the strategic use of making use of different PRSs in differing contexts they very quickly, 4 pages later, revert to the generalisation they explicitly refer to back in 1976:

> õA lot of school children have problems learning simply because of a mismatch between the primary representational system of the teacher and that of the child. If neither one of them has the flexibility to adjust, no learning occurs. Knowing what

you now know about representational systems, you can understand how it is possible for a child to be "educationally handicapped" one year, and to do fine the next year with a different teacher, or how it is possible for a child to do really well in spelling and mathematics, and do badly in literature and history.ö (Bandler & Grinder,1979, p. 40).

In exactly the same way, by referring to the extant NLP literature at the time, Gumm et al., (1982) cannot be criticized for sampling error in ensuring participants were naturally right handed. Figure 2 below makes it quite clear Bandler and Grinder again are making generalisations when they refer to visual accessing cues for a normally organised right handed person. Bostic St Clair and Grinder re-emphasise their commitment to the model and refer to eye accessing cues as one of the few NLP patterns that can justly claim to be original discoveries by the Co-Creators of NLP

With the exception of the Basque, Bostic St Clair and Grinder say of this pattern: õThey were struck with the simplicity of the pattern, while sensitive to handedness (a common measure of so called cerebral dominance) as well as its robustness ó independent of culture and languageö (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001, p. 171).

One flaw in the review conducted by Sharpley and indeed similarly by Heap (1988, 1989, 2008) is the assumption of the primacy of PRS to the NLP paradigm. This is relevant to this research because had there been a consistent and singular definition of NLP agreed upon by NLP practitioners world-wide, it might have been easier to identify that PRS was simply one of the many designs to come out of NLP after the modelling of Fritz Perls and Virginia Satir

Figure 2. EAC (Eye Accessing Cues) (Palande, 2015. With permission)

Visual Construct

Visual Remembered

Auditory Construct

Auditory Remembered

Kinesthetic

Auditory Digital
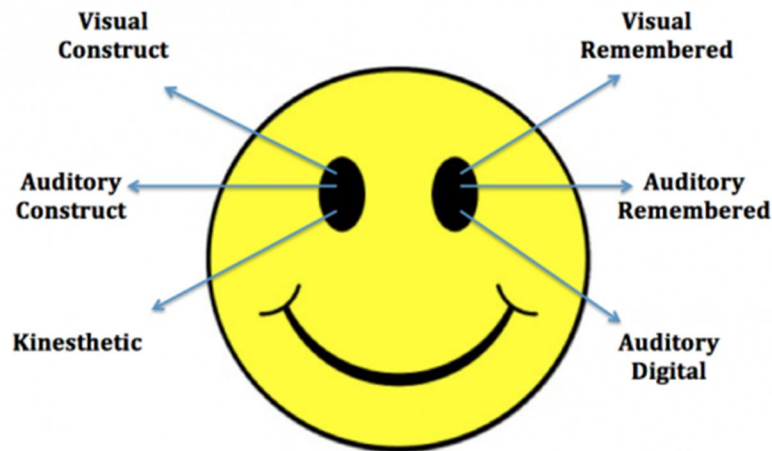
rather than as Sharpley (1987, p.105) says a õbasic tenet of NLPö or Heap (1988, p.268) õOne of the important concepts of NLPö.

Indeed Grinder does identify EAC as one of the few unique patterns to emerge from NLP and the apparent pride Grinder takes in saying this aligned with the unequivocal references by both Sharpley and Heap make it understandable why such an apparently testable hypothesis could be taken in isolation from the NLP paradigm as a whole.

> õThere are few NLP patterns that can be justly claimed to be original discoveries by the Co-Creators of NLP, (as opposed to modelling of patterning already present in the behavior of highly effective people albeit intuitively). The discovery of the Eye Movements represents one such original piece of research on the part of Bandler and Grinder.ö (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001, p.171).

However had NLP been more developed as a paradigm at the time and if testing and standardization rather than ad hoc experimentation and commercial activity had followed on after the 1st generation of NLP work, then it may have been more possible for researchers of the time to recognise that modelling is at the heart of NLP rather than EAC or PRS.

To emphasise the point again that psychologists in the 1980ǿs were only taking their lead from NLP practitioners themselves, Grinder and Bandler are referenced by Sharpley (1987 p.103). Turning to the page number referenced we read;

õHowever we tend to use one or more of these representational systems as a map more often than others. We also tend to have more distinctions available in this same representational system to code our experience, which is to say that we more highly value one or more of these representational systems.ö (Bandler & Grinder, 1976, p.8).

in the note appended to the last sentence they go on to elaborate and tell us; õBy most highly valued representational system we mean the representational system the person typically uses to bring information into consciousness ó that is the one he typically uses to represent the world and his experience to himselfö (Bandler & Grinder, 1976, p.26).

The very fact that one of the Co-Founders only now points out, nearly 40 years later the term PRS õis itself patently ridiculousö (Grinder et al., 2013, p. 214), could suggest NLP is still in its infancy in terms of being able to reflect on its own practice and critically evaluate the validity of its propositions.

NLP, Positivist or Anti-Positivist epistemology?

This is a similar question to; õIs NLP content oriented or process oriented?ö The majority of NLP practitioners will say NLP is process oriented, however their practice is then very content oriented. They will act as though someone actually possesses an Away From Meta-Program or a Visual PRS, in NLP terms the Map has become the Territory and both the NLP Practitioner and client begin to live in an õIsö reality. A hardening of the categories occurs. These content offenders / perpetrators, as interviewee 14 calls them, restrict the potential flexibility of their client through labelling them as õhavingö one of the processes which are

characteristic of the structure of subjective experience. So when Grinder and Bandler were talking in terms of PRS they too were guilty of a content offence. One possible commercial reason for this hardening of the categories is that it is very much easier to sell content contrasted with process and these and other themes are indeed the meat of this research and will be discussed in Chapter 4 and 5.

For those who have no training in NLP a Meta Program is regarded as a process that operates at a higher neurological level compared with that of primary processing. So in the well-known example of someone looking at a glass which is filled to the half way mark with water the Towards person will see the glass as half full as they are processing the basic sensory material as moving towards being full. However the Away From person will see the glass as half empty as they are processing exactly the same sensory material in terms of moving away from being empty. Meta Programs thus are ways in which we act upon the sensory information we receive to create another level and layer of experience and thus meaning. Individuals can therefore have exactly the same sensory experience, however when they then operate on that experience using different Meta Programs they create very different meanings and therefore speak and behave in a very different manner. As can be seen in figure 1 above Meta Programs in NLP are one of the filters which distort our primary experience.

Rosenthal experimenter effect

When NLP practitioners attempt to operationalize NLP within a positivist paradigm such is their enthusiasm for the effectiveness of their discovered NLP pattern that there is the danger of falling foul of the Rosenthal experimenter effect. An example of this is demonstrated by Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001, p. 87) when they attempt to provide an understanding of how a psychologist would approach the testing of an NLP Pattern.

They imagine a well-trained psychologist researching the NLP spelling strategy. They go on to describe exactly what psychologists often do find; support for a weak version of the hypothesis. In this hypothetical case the finding was, as a group, the NLP spelling strategy out performed both the control group and the phonics group. However what is not supported is the strong version of the hypothesis and that is all members of the NLP group will spell words perfectly. What the results of this imagined research actually show is that some people in the NLP group spelt words incorrectly, and also that some people in the control and the phonics group spelt more words correctly than those in the NLP group.

Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001) say consequent to this hypothetical research an NLP researcher would review the video tapes independently of which group they were in, focussing attention on those who spelled words correctly. They go on to say; õideally, she would discover that, indeed, all individuals who spelled all the words correctly used the V^i---K^i---A^d NLP spelling strategyö. (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, p. 89).

This does in fact set up the strong possibility the researcher will begin to fall foul of the Rosenthal experimenter effect which is something they correctly say a well-trained psychologist would actively avoid. In looking for evidence to support the hypothesis after the research has been conducted is to invite experimental distortion, albeit at an unconscious level.

What is necessary from a research perspective, if one wished to move forward with the NLP spelling strategy, would be to focus the attention on those in the NLP group who did not follow the NLP patterns, as this clearly would demonstrate a deficiency in NLP modelling.

A characteristic of an NLP pattern and modelling project is that it can be coded in such a way that the skill can be transferred to others, so participants can achieve similar excellence in a

similar time frame when compared with the original exemplar. Dilts calls this designing of a training context the Design phase of modelling. (Dilts.1998, p. 57).

In this way the original material in the NLP spelling model could be refined so NLP^{training}, which is about the transfer of NLP patterns to others according to Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001) is improved. One would then expect in subsequent research with different participants an improvement in the direction toward the strong version of the NLP hypothesis. Of course if this did not happen, then that will provide us with evidence that the spelling strategy is only supported according to the weaker version, and strong claims for its effectiveness cannot be professionally or ethically voiced.

Tosey and Mathison say this type of propositional knowledge is not superior to more qualitative ways of knowing (2009, p.120) and other forms of research emphasise exploration rather than õprovingö. What is possible given Ryleøs (1990) proposition that

1) Knowledge-how cannot be defined in terms of knowledge-that

and

2) Knowledge-how is a concept logically prior to knowledge-that

is that NLP as a paradigm has begun to talk in terms of õknowledge-thatö before demonstrating in the academic literature they fully understand in terms of õknowledge-howö. Thus there is an attempt by marketers of NLP to use inappropriate language to dress NLP up as more grown up than it really is, possibly leading to the increasing senses of failure when the promised results do not eventuate as Grant 2001 pointed out concerning the ethical considerations of NLP.

What I am keen to discover in this research is the nature of NLP in terms of its epistemology. This research will explore the nature of NLP knowledge, understanding indeed if it is

possible that such positivist and propositional knowledge can form a sub set within the more dialectical forms of knowing as suggested by the Action Research approach. (McNiff 2000, p. 229).

In examining the present status of NLP Grimley (2013) places NLP squarely in the dialectical and qualitative side of the research divide as can be seen in figure 3.

The very fact that Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001) can talk about positivist research in NLP as they do above, yet have never conducted and published any such research in peer reviewed journals suggests from their perspective that NLP is indeed a qualitative practice.

Figure 3. Grimley (2013)
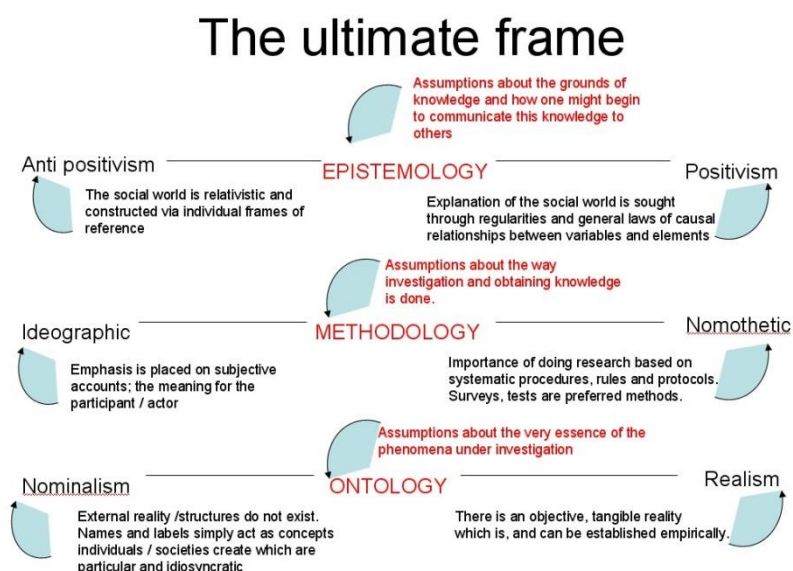
This can be emphasised as the other Co-Founders, Richard Bandler and Frank Pucelik also have not published any such material. In this respect the words of Sharpley in his review of NLP in 1987 mentioned above are relevant; õí it puts NLP in the same category as psychoanalysis, that is, with principles not easily demonstrated in laboratory settings but, nevertheless, strongly supported by clinicians in the fieldö (Sharpley, 1987, p. 105).

From an ethical perspective it is very important not to miss Sharpleyøs reminder concerning the lack of evidence to support NLP patterns; õí failure to produce data that support a

particular theory from controlled studies does relegate that theory to questionable status in terms of professional accountabilityö. (Sharpley, 1987, p. 105).

The reason this is important from a professional practice point of view is that without such empirical evidence it is unprofessional and unethical to make generalisations concerning what an NLP model can accomplish.

NLP has been in existence since the early 1970øs, however despite being such a popular practice the empirical support for claims made by practitioners seems to be lacking. Even if it is accepted, the nature of Evidence to support NLP as an Anti-Positivist paradigm is different from the evidence required by practitioners from a positivist paradigm, there is a large gap in the peer reviewed literature concerning what NLP is and whether it works. This needs to be addressed. When Leading NLP Practitioners make statements which are of a positivist nature such as; õWe can, reliably, get rid of a phobia in 10 minutes every single timeö Bandler (2013a), it is then acceptable to critique the practice from a positivist perspective. If such gaps are left unaddressed then there are serious ethical and professional concerns which need to be tackled. This is especially so when such extravagant claims are then mimicked by Master NLP practitioners who make their living though NLP. For example Master NLP Practitioner Carol Richards is quoted by a BBC program investigating the use of NLP in the resolution of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):

> õThe undercover veteran, who does not have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) but described suffering some of the symptoms, was told by Carol Richards during therapy that it had taken her just 20 minutes to help one soldier who had seen many of his colleagues killed.ö (BBC, 2013).

 A further example might illustrate the difficulty of taking the exuberant claims of NLP at face value.

An NLP case study suggests that in one instance Myopia was temporarily cured through the use of Milton Model patterns and then more permanently with the use of concepts from what is known in NLP as the 6 step reframe, specifically by using the positive intention behind the limiting behaviour. According to the authors this case study prompted Angart (2005) to develop a treatment regime using the strategy used by John Grinder alongside other strategies (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001, p. 133). As is the case with NLP for professional psychologists, so it appears the case is with Angart's model for professional ophthalmologists, on account of no supporting evidence in the peer reviewed literature.

In a popular TV show Angart was interviewed along with an ophthalmologist and two of his students. Despite anecdotal stories of improved eye sight, the student who actually had his eyes tested using standard procedures and instruments after the course said there was no miraculous improvement. The ophthalmologist commented on the exercises Angart uses saying they have been around for 100 years and there is evidence they assist in delaying the onset of using reading glasses. (BBC4, 2010).

In an extended correspondence with Angart by email, many interesting and relevant points were made by him concerning the testing of NLP patterns and NLP in general;

1) Current scientific research generally is sloppy and methodologically unsound, citing ðThe Economist 2014.

2) There is no commercial advantage to doing research on NLP as it will not increase the number of people attending workshops.

3) There are general findings in favour of vision training, however no published evidence for Angart's specific techniques.

4) The current leaders in NLP are focused on building their own businesses.

5) There is no desire to actually fund the research into NLP much less do it.

6) Recently So and So threw in her towel citing that NLP training in the UK is currently conducted by people with between 20 days to 40 years of experience. If you have every Tom, Dick and Harry teaching NLP it is no wonder that NLP has such a bad reputation.

7) Commercial forces dictate that you need to have something that people want before you can succeed. So if enough therapists want to have NLP validated and are willing to provide funding, then this project will succeed.

8) Like NLP there is no real commercial benefit in doing research. It is more like a prestige thing. People do not come to the workshop because of the research. They come because they know someone who came before and succeeded. Word of mouth is the most powerful advertising. People are interested in what does it do for me. Lately I have 70, 80, 100 people in the workshops in each city. (Angart, personal communication, 2014).

The general exercises which both the ophthalmologist and Angart refer to are validated in scientific research as the conclusions below demonstrate:

> õIn response to the question, "How effective is vision therapy in remediating visual deficiencies?," it is evident from the research presented that there is sufficient scientific support for the efficacy of vision therapy in modifying and improving oculomotor, accommodative, and binocular system disorders, as measured by standardized clinical and laboratory testing methods, in the majority of patients of all ages for whom it is properly undertaken and employed. The American Optometric Association reaffirms its long-standing position that vision therapy is an effective therapeutic modality in the treatment of many physiological and information processing dysfunctions of the vision system. It continues to support quality

optometric care, education, and research and will cooperate with all professions dedicated to providing the highest quality of life in which vision plays such an important role. (American Optometric Association, 1985)

Angart was most forthcoming in discussing with me the above points, however what seems difficult to fully comprehend is why testing of these workshops and their claims is not pursued. On the TV show, the presenter made the simple point that Angartøs two students had been to the workshop and that objective testing would follow several months later to establish whether these vision training exercises, within the context of an NLP workshop, produced the spectacular results claimed.

When pressing Angart on this he replied:

> õTV people are very fickle so there was never any follow up. Concerning the success rate, I sometimes meet people who came to my workshop 15 years ago and still do not wear their glasses. Success depends on the effort people put into the work and of how severe their problems are. It is like losing weight. Most people know how to lose weight, but it always seems to require too much effort.ö (Angart,personal communication,2014).

Angart, like many NLP practitioners continue to run commercial practices on the premise that what they do works and their practices thrive on the basis of word of mouth testimonials and the usual marketing and sales practice. Even though in our email correspondence there was the hope of doing work in Stockholm with the Karolinska Hospital, the idea of robust testing as called for by the positivist paradigm in this case, as in the case for NLP, is not forthcoming, yet. When the claims of NLP are subjected to more objective criteria in order to partial out experimenter effects, the spectacular results seem to disappear for a host of reasons. As Angart points out in his TV interview, belief in a technique is a big variable in its

eventual success. This raises the question of whether many of the NLP techniques are a function of a more general placebo where expectation is raised through the promise of spectacular success, cognitively reframing objections, and future pacing the õrealitiesö of what can be accomplished and the rest is a numbers game.

NLP Modelling

Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001) make it clear NLP is about modelling excellence and one of the pre-suppositions of NLP [modelling] is that just as language behaviour is rule governed, so too patterns of excellence in human behaviour are rule governed. What this paper seeks, in discovering what NLP is, is to explore assumptions by Bostic St Clair and Grinder, such as;

> õí what we are actually proposing here is that an effective and useful methodology for analysing patterns of excellence in human behaviour is to assume that the behaviour we are observing in an individual is representative of an intact rule governed system and to ask the question; õWhat set of rules would account for the behaviour we are observing?ö (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001, p81).

The title of the first text book of NLP was Neuro-Linguistic Patterning, Volume 1. The Study of the *Structure* (emphasis added) of Subjective Experience, (Dilts et al., 1980).

The Co-Founder of NLP, John Grinder presently eschews any form of NLP that does not follow his particular format, explicitly saying it is not NLP. Specifically, he says:

> õIn the absence of guidance, well-intentioned people all over the world, who thought they were doing modelling, did a number of activities which I certainly donøt recognise as modelling in the NLP sense, but it certainly was an expression of their positive intentions to attempt to follow in the footsteps of a couple of strange people

from California who had developed this technology called modelling.ö (NLP Academy, 2008).

Burgess makes a compelling case for modelling and discovering the structure of subjective experience using modelling formats of many kinds (Burgess, 2014). Her own modelling methodology has the important criteria of effectiveness and published experience (Figure 4). From her perspective under the heading of õeffectivenessö there is a historical agreement that within NLP the output of an NLP modelling process is to enable a third party to acquire the ability of the exemplar. She quotes the mantra of the early days of NLP; õIf it is possible to be done by one it is possible to be done by anotherö. Under the heading of õpublished evidenceö she points to the need of the NLP modeller to provide tangible evidence of the effectiveness of their methodology. In the modelling framework of Burgess there are 4 classes of modelling; Intuitive modelling, Expressive modelling, Metaphoric modelling and Cognitive modelling. The õReal NLP modellingö of John Grinder is just one of 3 types of intuitive modelling. The tension this creates between the Co-Founder of NLP and the rest of the NLP community will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, however suffice to say the Burgess and Grinder modelling methodology agree on two important criteria, that the NLP model created needs to demonstrate effectiveness in learning as a result of acquisition and that the model needs to be published and coded in an explicit form in such a way that others have a representation of what to do in order to replicate the skill of the exemplar and so by implication can test the model.

Figure 4 Modelling methodology criteria (in Burgess, 2014, p. 106).
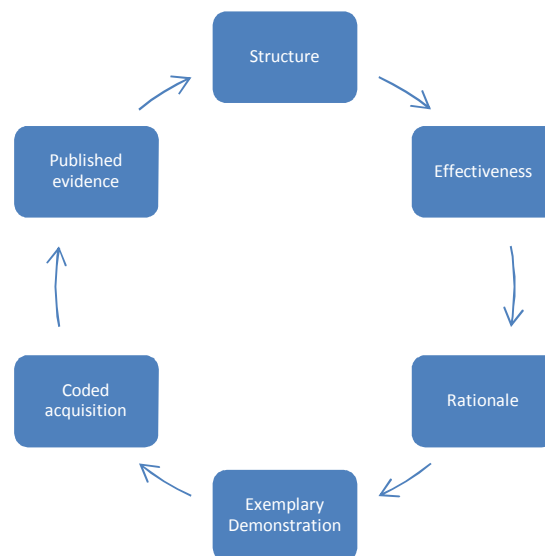
NLP modelling versus Analytical modelling

The Co-Founder of NLP, John Grinder makes a distinction between what he recognises properly as NLP and analytical modelling. Below is an extended quote from a workshop taken from a public video.

> ȱThe one distinction I am requesting is for this unconscious assimilation practise in parallel context strategy to not be lost historically. I think itøs important to find some way of making a distinction between analytic modelling and what Iøm calling NLP modelling. The explicit criteria that distinguish the two are suspension of any attempt to understand, an unconscious assimilation without any filtering on the input side of it and using the criteria and being able to replicate the competencies, the skill sets and elicit from clients, in parallel contexts, the same thing that the genius, whoøs the source of the patterns, gets. When youøve used those two criteria for the assimilation and youøve achieved the criterion of being able to replicate geniusø performance, this is the time to go click over here and switch on all those marvellous conscious, analytic, comparative processes that youøve worked your whole life to use as a way of

refining your internal maps and to seek a vocabulary to codify what youøre already able to do. You now, of course, have two points of reference ó the source themselves, the actual genius and your own replication. By triangulating now you are faced with the task of dismissing those portions of the geniusø behaviour which are idiosyncratic and unnecessary to replicate the kind of consequences, results the person gets in the world.ö (Inspiritive, 2008. 2:02 ó 3:37)

Even if we put aside the fact not one model to date from NLP has passed academic criteria for validity, how an NLP model is created in such a way that it passes as õNLPö is important. A theological comparison is made by Grimley (2007)

õIf one wanted to know what the Sermon on the Mount meant and Jesus was in the living room and St. Paul in the kitchen that person would probably talk to Jesus, even though what St. Paul had to say might be very interesting. One thing we forget when we talk about NLP is the people who created it are still alive, and seem to be saying very different things about their creation from the rest of us.ö Grimley (2007, pp. 79-80).

Even though there are traditionally 3 Co-Founders of NLP, John Grinder who was an Assistant Professor of Linguistics at Santa Cruz University seems to stand out. C. Morris, when attending a talk by Frank Pucelik says:

õThey set up a Gestalt practice group and it attracted other students and also a linguistics professor called John Grinder. John sat quietly for the first two sessions and then approached Frank and Richard with some observations and questions. Frank says that John was the real genius of the group. Frank and Richard originally pretended that they were aware of all the things John pointed out, but later they

invited John to join them and the three of them began working as a close team.ö (Morris 2010)

Similarly Grimley notes: õGrinder seemed to be the cohesive glue and if it was not for him NLP would not have come about according to Pucelik.ö (Grimley, 2013, p. 12).

Given that Grinder is not only still alive but also very vocal about what NLP is and what it is not, it is necessary to look at what he says.

From the above reference one can understand Grinder sees the explicit distinction is in õReal NLPö there is a:

> õsuspension of any attempt to understand, an unconscious assimilation without any filtering on the input side of it and using the criteria and being able to replicate the competencies, the skill sets and elicit from clients, in parallel contexts, the same thing that the genius, whoøs the source of the patterns, gets.ö (Inspiritive, 2008. 2:02 ó 3:37)

For Grinder, it is important to demonstrate the competency of knowing **how** to do a particular skill and achieve the same outcomes as the exemplar, **before** you turn on the analytical capabilities, generally in the left hemisphere of the brain, so you can begin to code in more explicit terms the skill which you can now perform. Also Grinder is quite explicit the NLP modeller will now have two models; the original exemplar and their own model which can perform the skill at the same level, but with a difference in the texturing of precisely how the performance is achieved. However, if one has learned how to run a start-up business and obtain a multi-million turnover within one year, this is the competency which is claimed will be obtained by learners of NLP after being trained in such a model, nothing more or nothing less. To say as Angart does above with vision training, failure is not a function of the model

rather it is a function of the learner; õMost people know how to lose weight, but it always seems to require too much effortö (Angart, personal communication, 2014), is actually a failure in the design of the model. People are different and a part of a good NLP model is to design the training context in such a way that these differences are accounted for in transferring the explicit code of an NLP model to motivated learners.

Unconscious assimilation in NLP modelling

This ability to suspend any attempt to understand, becoming imitative like a child, so one can unconsciously assimilate the exemplar has been challenged by Steve Andreas another very experienced NLP practitioner, who transcribed and edited many of the earliest texts in NLP. In critiquing Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001) he says while finding their book interesting and thought provoking a lot of it was difficult to understand and often contradictory in both form and content (Andreas 2003).

When talking about modelling, Andreas points to one of the apparent contradictions. He notes Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001) write:

> õMany students of NLP, especially in their initial enthusiasm for the effective use of the patterning, seize upon an epistemologically peculiar (and impossible) goal. The task they set about to accomplish is to free themselves from all perceptual filters, often stating that thereby they will appreciate the world without distortion. Such a naive project is surely incoherent.ö (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001, p. 247 in Andreas, 2003).

For Andreas, to suspend oneøs perceptual filters not just at a linguistic level but also at a sensory level is unlikely as even the unconscious mind has perceptual and analytical

categories. Andreas cites an article by Grinder where he talks about the distinction between Grinder's "real NLP modelling" and analytical modelling and then critiques:

> "This difference resides principally in the degree of imposition of the perceptual and analytic categories of the modeller during the modelling process--in the case of NLP modelling, the imposition is minimal; in the case of Analytic modelling, the imposition is maximal." (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2005, p. 3).

> Firstly, this statement seems to assume that the unconscious does not have "perceptual and analytic categories." I think there is ample evidence from hypnosis and experimentation that the unconscious does have these, and they can be at least as biased as conscious ones. So even the "minimal imposition" of the modeler in unconscious acquisition will be substantial.

> Secondly, any relevant imposition will be evident and discernible in the outcome: the behavior of the person acquiring the model will be different from the behavior of the original expert model.

> Thirdly, any "imposition" can be either harmful or beneficial. If the modeler degrades what the expert model does (either through conscious or unconscious imposition), the person acquiring the model will not be able to produce results that are as effective as the behavior of the original expert model." (Andreas, 2006).

Continuing to note contradictions within real NLP, Andreas goes on to critique the traditional first model of NLP, the Meta Model, challenging whether by the criteria of Bostic St Clair and Grinder it is in fact a model at all:

õThe meta model is described as ‑the first model in NLPø (Bostic St Clair & Grinder 2001, pp. 142-163), so it presumably satisfies their criteria for a new model. However, they repeatedly describe it as an application and adaptation of a model already existing in transformational grammar: The meta model can, for example, be usefully understood to be an application of the modelling of linguistic patterning inspired by Transformational Grammar (Bostic St Clair & Grinder 2001, p. 51). There already existed an explicit code for capturing verbal patterning: the descriptive and formal vocabulary for syntactic studies used by professional linguists (Bostic St Clair & Grinder 2001, p. 146)ö (Andreas, 2006).

Not only does this research seek to understand the difficulties and tensions noted above concerning the key methodology of NLP, but it also seeks to understand how it can be that with testing being a key element of a successful NLP model, none of the clinical NLP models developed, nor any of the other models developed for other contexts have been supported in the appropriate academic journals. Testing is a part of NLP modelling and is clearly stated in the 2nd part of Grinders talk on õreal NLP modellingö as well as in the Burgess model for NLP modelling (Burgess, 2014). Grinder continues:

> õThis is a complex process called ‑codingø There must be a thousand effective codes, none of them true, all of them at variance with the reality, but your task is to develop those codes to the point where you can then pass the code to someone whoøs interested in acquiring those patterns, those competencies, and you watch if there is a convergence within a reasonable amount of time of the performance of the particular person whoøs been presented with the code, a convergence with the actual performance of the genius, you know youøve got a code thatøs worth considering. Otherwise, you go back to the drawing board.

The second part of NLP is application. There would be little point to the modelling other than self-indulgence, self-improvement on the part of the modeller, which is always worth considering, unless there was an actual coding and transfer of the patterns to that part of the public interested in having those skill sets. The sole, unique justification, in my opinion, for all application of NLP patterns is the creation of choice. That is the measure of the effectiveness of the application.ö (Inspiritive, 3:40 ó 4:51, 2008).

NLP Ontology and Epistemology

Ontology deals with the fundamental nature of existence and the very essence of the phenomena under investigation. It is concerned with the question, õwhat is there?ö Epistemology deals with the grounds of our knowledge and is concerned with the questions "What do you know?ö and õHow do you know it?ö A definition of NLP which allows me to move forward as both a professional psychologist and an NLP practitioner will need to account for both these concepts. Dilts and Delozier (2000, p. 363) describe Epistemology as that upon which we set our reasoning, the fundamental system of distinctions and assumptions upon which one bases and generates all other knowledge. They describe both the ontology and epistemology of NLP in unequivocal terms:

õNLP is both a way of being (an ÷ontologyø) and a way of knowing (an ÷epistemologyø). At the core of NLP as an ontology is a set of fundamental presuppositions about communication, choice, and intentions behind our behaviours. At the heart of NLP as an epistemology is modelling ó an ongoing process for expanding and enriching your map of the world through awareness, flexibility, multiple perspectives, and personal congruence. Both the ontology and epistemology of NLP begin with the presupposition that õthe map is not the territoryö ó each of us

actualises possibilities in the world through the models or maps we create in our minds. NLP teaches that no one map is any more true or real than any other, but that your ability to be effective and evolve beyond where you are now is a function of having a map which permits the greatest possible range of choices. In NLP terms then a master is not someone who already knows the answers and has the solutions, but rather is someone who is able to ask worthwhile questions and direct the process of learning, finding solutions and creating new maps of the world that lead to useful new answersÓ and possibilitiesö (Dilts & Delozier, 2000, p. 364).

NLP Presuppositions

Ontology and Epistemology are intertwined and are often so part of our everyday existence we do not even realise we have fundamental beliefs which support the majority of our reasoning. Bateson tells us:

> õIn the natural history of the living human being, ontology and epistemology cannot be separated. His (commonly unconscious) beliefs about what sort of world it is will determine how he sees it and acts within it, and his ways of perceiving and acting will determine his beliefs about its nature. The living man is thus bound within a net of epistemological and ontological premises which ó regardless of ultimate truth or falsity become partially self-validating for himö (Bateson 1972 p314)

Tosey and Mathison (2009) when talking of the NLP presuppositions talk of how we take it for granted things fall down rather than up. They suggest in their chapter in answering their own question that the NLP presuppositions reflect the principles of first order cybernetics and being grounded in such, possibly offer a stronger theoretical foundation than is found in many other approaches to people development.

Mind and Body as a system

The way in which NLP sees the mind and body working systemically can be deduced somewhat by listening to how Bostic St Clair and Grinder position the NLP presuppositions within NLP. They say they are: õa pedagogical device to assist people new to the adventure called NLP in making the required transitions in their thinking to the new forms of perception and thought implicit in the technologyö (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001, p. 202).

Elsewhere when talking about the NLP presuppositions the Co-Founders sometimes call them ÷organizing assumptionsø (Bandler & Grinder, 1979, p. 137). However, what does not change is the purpose, which is that there are several organizing assumptions which NLP practitioners use to put themselves into a cognitive, emotional and physiological state which is useful to operate in and from

Other writers likewise point to the attitudinal heart of NLP. Linder-Pelz tell us she aims to reduce NLP coaching õto basics and principles rather than toolsö (2010, p. 53). From a systemic point of view these basics and principles are of a different logical type and neurological level compared to the tools which are generated as a function of such principles. Hall makes a similar point and talks of the NLP presuppositions as devises to õsuggest the kind of attitude or a meta-state frame that transforms us so that our practice of NLP moves to a higher level of masteryö (Hall & Bodenhamer, 2003, p. 40). Also as already mentioned the Co Founder of NLP, Richard Bandler draws our attention to õIt is not a set of techniques it is an attitude.ö (Bandler, 1985, p. 155).

Tosey and Mathison say that there is no definitive list of NLP presuppositions and that the number varies among training manuals. However they offer a list with sources, which is a translation from the German (Walker, 1996, p. 111):

õEvery behaviour is potentially communication (Bateson, Perls, Satir, Erickson).

Mind and body are part of the same cybernetic system (Bateson, Perls, Satir, Erickson).

People have all the resources they need to make changes (Perls, Satir, Erickson).

People orientate themselves by their internal maps, their model of the world and not to the world itself (Korzybski).

The map is not the territory (Korzybski).

People make the best choices that present themselves to them (Satir).

Choice is better than no choice (Satir).

Every behaviour is generated by a positive intention (Satir).

The meaning of a communication is the response it elicits, not the intention of the communicator (Erickson).

Resistance is a message about the communicator (or therapist) (Erickson).

If what you are doing isnøt working, do something different (Erickson).

There is no failure, only feedback (Erickson).

The most flexible variable controls the system (Ashbyøs law of requisite variety).

Everything that a human being can do can be modelled (Bandler and Grinder).ö

(Tosey & Mathison, 2009, pp. 98-99)

As Dilts and DeLozier (2000) point out NLP starts with the Presupposition õThe map is not the territoryö from Korzybski or the fuller representation:

"A map is not the territory it represents, but, if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness. ... If we reflect upon our languages, we find that at best they must be considered only as maps. A word is not the object it represents; and languages exhibit also this peculiar self-reflexiveness, that we can analyse languages by linguistic means. This self-reflexiveness of languages introduces serious complexities, which can only be solved by the theory of multi-ordinality. The disregard of these complexities is tragically disastrous in daily life and science." (Korzybski, 1994, p. 58).

In order to fully appreciate the nature of Mind and Body as a system within NLP it will be useful to revisit the NLP model of communication, (figure 1)

The NLP Model of communication

The NLP model of human communication assumes 2 levels of information processing or meaning making. Initially we take in sensory information through our sensory systems. These are not only receptors, but active processing systems. Thus we can receive and process visual information in a multitude of ways as we can also for the Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Olfactory and Gustatory systems. As soon as we go through this process we engage in a transformative process, we change something out there to something different in here and this is represented within our sensory systems. So between what is presented to us by the outside world and is received by our sensory receptors and our associated cortical structures are a series of neurological structures which transform that information. Once this process is complete there is a tendency to see "out there" in terms of what we have previously created "in here". Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001) provide the example of a child sorting out a pile of toys to clarify the distinction between first access, (FA) neurological transforms and linguistic transforms (F^2). They say that when the toys are grouped on perceived similarity of size, shape or colour

then this is representative of partitions based upon neurological transforms and calls these natural partitions /classifications. What is emphasised is this partitioning is not a function of the actual properties of the toys, but rather a function of how they are perceived subsequent to filtering through FA neurological transforms: the F^1 transforms from receptor to FA.

An example of a linguistic transform which is regarded as an artificial partition / classification would be if the child sorted the pile of toys by price or manufacturer. This is regarded as artificial because the sorting would not be on the basis of sensory perception but rather categories which are developed and imposed upon those objects independent of any inherent perceived features of those objects. Thus artificial partitions and the resultant artificial sets are formed by set membership rules defined on criteria not necessarily available as a result of the neurological transforms. They are top-down distinctions.

In NLP therefore there are two sets of transforms which are of different logical types.

Korzybski refers to FA as õthe unspeakable levelö or the õobjective levelö according to Hall (Hall 2011):

> õIt is of utmost importance for the present A-system not to confuse the verbal level with the objective level, the more so that all our immediate and direct mental and emotional reactions, and all s-r states and reflexes belong to the unspeakable objective levels as these are *not* wordsö (Korzybski, 1994, p. 34).

According to the NLP communication model, a breakdown in communication occurs when we do get these two levels confused, thus the primacy of õThe Map is not the Territoryö.

In terms of the systemic relationship between the mind and the body, it was mentioned above that the conscious and typically linguistic representation of an experience was coded with reference to the R operator (Grinder et al., 1977, p. 21) however often what is communicated

by an individual in totality to another person is much more than that. Grimley (2013) explains the solution to this communication difficulty:

> õAn R operator refers to the part of the four tuple at any point in time which has a greater signal level and consequently breaks through into consciousness. Difficulty in communication ó and therefore life ó occurs when the recipient picks up on only one part of the communication (four tuple), and takes this to represent the whole communication. If my wife says to me that was a great meal darling, as she gives half of it to the dog, I might delete the auditory message and focus on the visual message, and get upset. The answer in the early NLP days was to inculcate the C operator. This means that every part of a four tuple in communication at any point in time represents exactly the same message. In this case it does not matter which signal is picked up by the R operator of the recipient as all representations are communicating the same message. The same principle applies to the communicator. Often they may be aware of only one part of the message they are communicating (R operator) and the recipient picks up on the other parts of the communication of which they have no consciousness at all. Their belief then is something like, ─He has no clue as to what I am trying to sayø Thus the NLP presupposition: the meaning of your communication is the response you receive.ö Grimley (2013, p. 115).

The NLP communication model borrows from transformational grammar and suggests at each of the 2 levels of transformation material is deleted, distorted and generalised.

As humans do not have access to the outside world the question of truth is moot, what is more important is the quality of communication to ourselves and to other people in the context of utility and the achievement of what is important to us and them.

This proposition is eloquently expressed by Dilts et al.:

õNeuro-Linguistic Programming is the discipline whose domain is the structure of subjective experience. It makes no commitment to theory, but rather has the status of a model ó a set of procedures whose usefulness not truthfulness is to be the measure of its worthö (Dilts et al., 1980, Forward to Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Para 2)

Often within NLP a similar sentiment is expressed by referencing Einstein:

õI see on the one side the totality of sense experiences and, on the other, the totality of the concepts and propositions that are laid down in books. The relations between the concepts and propositions among themselves are of a logical nature, and the business of logical thinking is strictly limited to the achievement of the connection between concepts and propositions among themselves according to firmly laid down rules, which are the concern of logic. The concepts and propositions get õmeaningö or õcontent,ö only through their connection with sense experience. The connection of the latter with the former is purely intuitive not itself of a logical nature. The degree of certainty with which this connection, or intuitive linkage, can be undertaken, and nothing else differentiates empty fantasy from scientific truth. (Schilpp, 1979, p. 11).

In the NLP model of communication then, people are continually communicating simultaneously at two levels. When these two levels are synchronised and working together effectively, there is an ecological and congruent communication, however, as Argyris (1964) noted in the context of organisational life, when the two levels are not synchronised there is an incongruent and un-ecological communication, with the recipient picking up on the communication from FA and weighting this more heavily than the more conscious communication from F^2. What often prevents change within people and teams to a more ecological and useful operational model is nicely summarised by Bateson who talks about the tendency of humans to restrict the choices available to them:

õNow the major difference between people and Von Neumannøs robots lies in the fact of learning. To be infinitely intelligent implies to be infinitely flexible and the players in the dance I have described could never experience the pain which human beings would feel if continually proven wrong when they had been wise. Human beings have a commitment to the solutions which they discover and it is this psychological commitment that makes it possible for them to be hurt in the way members of a schizophrenic family are hurtö. (Bateson, 1972, pp. 241-242).

Bateson in his double bind theory of schizophrenia suggested the context which allows schizophrenia to be expressed and developed is when there is an important relationship and a member within that relationship is receiving two orders of messages and is then denied by the sender of those messages the opportunity to comment on the nature of the distinction between those two messages. Further the member is prohibited also from leaving the relationship as well. Essentially in such a relationship what is being attenuated is the individualøs capability to make accurate distinctions between the two orders of communication, initially from other people, but then eventually within themselves. This state of affairs eventually renders the individual incapable of any choice other than to continue as they are.

NLP claims to have developed patterns which can assist individuals and groups of individuals communicate more effectively both within themselves and with each other. This allows people to become more flexible in their existence, providing them with more choice to engage in useful behaviours and language when appropriate.

The Ghost in the Machine

If one of the accepted definitions of NLP is õThe study of the structure of subjective experienceö (Dilts et al., 1980), then one would expect NLP to describe both intelligence and effectiveness through procedural knowledge rather than propositional knowledge, which is

simply descriptive and declarative. With one of the NLP presuppositions being the mind and body is a part of the same system, indeed NLP comes down on the side of Ryle (1990) in the discussion concerning Cartesian dualism. One of the main criticisms of propositional knowledge, and psychology from the NLP perspective is that it is effectively a ōPsycho-Theologyō. Bandler and Grinder (1979) explain:

> ōThereøs also a group of people who are theoreticians. They will tell you what their *beliefs* are about the true nature of humans and what the completely ōtransparent, adjusted, genuine, authentic,ō etc. person *should be*, but they donøt show you how to *do* anythingō (Bandler & Grinder, 1979, p. 5).

Ryle argues that there can be no disembodied intellectual process behind an intelligent action otherwise one gets caught in an infinite regress. He points out ōefficient practice precedes the theoryō (Ryle 1990) or, as mentioned above, Knowledge-how is a concept logically prior to knowledge-that. Concerning the infinite regress Ryle states:

> ōThe consideration of propositions is itself an operation, the execution of which can be more or less intelligent, less or more stupid. But if, for any operation to be intelligently executed, a prior theoretical operation had first to be performed, and performed intelligently, it would be logically impossible for anyone ever to break into the circleō (Ryle, 1990, p. 31).

For Ryle intelligence is different from blind habit or as in the lower animals S-R responses, it is rather dispositional, however that disposition is not perceived through positing a ghost in the machine, but rather through the timely execution of certain behaviours. He explains:

> ōIn a word he conducts his operations efficiently and to operate efficiently is not to perform two operations. It is to perform one operation in a certain manner or with a

certain style or procedure, and the description of this modus operandi has to be in terms of such semi-dispositional, semi-episodic epithets as õalertö, õcarefulö, õcriticalö, õingeniousö, õlogicalö, etc.ö (Ryle, 1990, p. 48).

Much is made within NLP of its ideographic methodology, emphasising subjective accounts and different meanings. The assumption often is that individual practice cannot be generalised to other instances. Gray et al. put the NLP case for NLP in the context of psychotherapy:

> õAs to whether NLP õworksö or not, we need to consider what we are testing. NLP techniques are open to many confounding variables as are many ó if not all ó psychotherapies. They appear in the performance of the practitioner, the õreadinessö of the client, the relevance of the treatment to the problem under consideration, (inclusion and exclusion criteria), and the appropriateness of the environment. It is challenging to provide consistency across interventions and therefore difficult to õproveö that NLP works.ö (Gray et al. 2013, p. 212).

Ryle however makes the case that such variability should not prevent the exercise of intelligent and effective practice, indeed the litmus test of efficacy is the ability to deal intelligently with such variability.

> õí knowing *how* then, is a disposition, but not a single-track disposition like a reflex or a habit. Its exercises are observations of rules or canons or applications of criteria, but they are not tandem operations of theoretically avowing maxims and then putting them into practice. Further, its exercises can be overt or covert, deeds performed or deeds imagined, words spoken aloud or words heard in oneøs head, pictures painted on a canvas or pictures in the mindøs eye. Or they can be amalgamations of the two.ö (Ryle, 1990, p. 46).

This õknowing howö within the real NLP modelling school is assigned to the unconscious mind, the conscious mind just being too slow and not sufficiently effective to deal with such decisions. One of my interviewees (5) makes this quite clear in the transcript of our discussion:

> õSo a part of the way that New Code is used and applied in terms of self-application for example or the assisting of other people in the change process is to create consciously setting frames in order to engage the unconscious to generate the appropriate resources for the context now when working with people. What sort of techniques to use, I don't think in terms of techniques now what happens is I simply put my attention to the other person and my unconscious mind selects the moves to make at that time. So really the answer to the whole idea, the frame is about the personøs personal organisation of the relation between their conscious and unconscious mind and having the background in terms of exposure to multiple patterns and multiple descriptions of patterns so that they have a repertoire to be able to generate from the unconscious mind the appropriate pattern and the appropriate combination of patterns for the context.ö (Interviewee 5 1:22:21 ó 1:23:26)

Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001, pp. 198ó9) sum up the elements of every NLP pattern as a function of five strategies. Each of these strategies have nothing more than the manipulation of these unconscious representations as their core objective:

1. The Meta Model, designed to verbally challenge the mapping between first access to the outside world through our senses (F^1), and our linguistically mediated mental maps (F^2).

2. Operations defined over representational systems and their sub-modalities, for example the Swish technique.

3. Reframing patterns, where representations are placed in a different cognitive structure.

4. Anchoring, where undifferentiated groupings of representations are brought together for purposes of integration.

5. The Milton Model, where representations at F^1 (first access through our senses to the world) are shifted by using F^2 (linguistically mediated maps) patterning without the need to map those representations into the client's conscious understanding.

Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001, pp. 198‐9).

6. In an email to me John Grinder made the following comment concerning number 4).

õ… they are not undifferentiated, on the contrary, they are rather precisely differentiated (far more so that a linguistic label would offer), but rather are unnamed, unlabelled, managed by the non-dominant hemisphere without (in fact, ideally better without) any left hemisphere intrusions - like labelling. This is, of course, yet another example of the essential role and power of both hemispheric functions and the crucial importance of calibration as the mother of all skills sets in the application of NLPö (J. Grinder, personal communication, 2014).

However the appropriate moves are made within a behavioural context, NLP still has yet to demonstrate within the academic literature that effective results have been obtained as a result of those moves. As Gray et al. (2013) point out, when applying NLP in a clinical context confounding variables are a challenge for **all** practices in the social sciences, however, many of those practices manage to produce data which demonstrate a particular technique for a particular problem will generally work. If the sole justification for all

73

application of NLP patterns, including self-application, is the creation of choice then one would expect far superior results for NLP patterns in complex contexts with confounding variables. To date this is not the case and as mentioned in chapter one it was this paradox which in part was the motivation for this research.

EMDR an NLP exemplar

Eye Movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) is an example of how an NLP pattern can be taken and not only be accepted by National guidance organisations but also fulfil the potential of NLP to work quickly when compared with other treatments, despite all the confounding variables in place within PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)

Dr Roger Kingerlee, principle clinical psychologist of the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS trust in the United Kingdom says:

> õBeyond the numerous RCTs in its favour, EMDR has striking and novel features that stand out clinically. For one thing, actual trauma processing can, at best, be extraordinarily fast in EMDR. I personally have had various cases in which the traumatic memory was resolved in 10 minutes or under of actual processing ó to the astonishment of all concerned. In such cases, it seems as if a bubble of consciousness, temporarily problematic due to trauma and often with significant somatic links to the memory, has been burst. This type of experience is not so unusual: I estimate that I hear a jaw-dropping EMDR story of rapid and/or deep symptomatic relief at least once a month.ö (Kingerlee, 2014).

Shapiro who is credited with discovering the pattern worked with Grinder at Grinder, Delozier and Associates, Inc, in the early 1980øs. As an employee she attended workshops on

various forms of phobia cure or patterning in the case of trauma given by Grinder and his trainers. Grinder explains, from his perspective, how he passed on the patterning to Shapiro:

"Francine Shapiro worked (administration and sales) in the Santa Cruz offices of Grinder, Delozier and Associates in the 80's. She approached me one day and told me that a friend of hers from New York has been raped and she wanted to help her through this trauma and ensure that she exited cleanly and without scars. I told Francine to put her in resourceful state (anchored) and have her systematically move her eyes through the various accessing positions typical of the major representational systems (with the exception of the kinesthetic access). I suggested that she see, hear (but not feel) the events in question - obviously the kinesthetics were to remain resourceful (the anchored state) while she processed the event. She later reported that the work had been successful. You may imagine my surprise when I later learned that she had apparently turned these suggestions into a pattern presented in an extended training, with no reference to source, with a copyright and a rather rigorous set of documents essentially restricting anyone trained in this from offering it to the rest of the world." (Fredricks, 2014; Grimley, 2014).

Shapiro went on to develop a model based upon dual attention (F^1 and F^2) put in the hard work to test this model and publish her findings in the context of PTSD and now NICE (The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) and National Guidance Organisations around the world recommend this pattern to treat PTSD. In emailing to confirm this account with Shapiro on 12th March 2014, I received no reply.

After writing so enthusiastically about NLP and publishing such words when talking about NLP as; õSince this powerful technology allows you to practically read mindsö (Shapiro 1985, p43) and õWe all want to communicate our ideas and be really received. Neuro-

Linguistic Programming offers the skills and techniques. (Shapiro 1985, p43) and given one of the single original contributions to change work of NLP is an emphasis on eye movement (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001) it would seem strange that when walking in a park in 1987 none of the NLP trainings were related to Shapiro's Eureka moment and the development of EMDR. However such denial of association with NLP when successful is a theme which I seek to explore in this research.

Despite such success EMDR is warned against the possibility of falling into the commercially attractive NLP type of Martini Solutions (any time, any place, anywhere) by Gurnani (2014);

> "PTSD is the only psychological problem for which NICE recommends EMDR. Therefore to justify its extended application, which can't be bad for business, EMDR practitioners such as Robin Logie ('EMDR – more than a therapy for PTSD', July 2014) must look for early trauma or negative life experiences as 'causal factors in many psychological disorders' McNally (2009) warns against an ever broadening definition of trauma, which he calls a 'conceptual bracket creep', by which ordinary stressors are deemed to be traumatic. Consequently, he points out that according to some surveys nearly everyone in the USA would count as a trauma survivor today." Gurnani (2014, p. 638).

Besides mission creep into Martini Solutions Gurnani also notices some anomalies in the EMDR account;

> "First, it will be recalled that the role of eye movements was discovered serendipitously whilst Francine Shapiro, its progenitor was walking in a park in May 1987. She noticed that disturbing thoughts were no longer troublesome and she related this to eye movements that had occurred concurrently (Shapiro, 1995). Curious therefore that no further reports have emerged of such unassisted recovery

from disturbing thoughts whilst walking, even though the latter alone, without eye movements could constitute a form of bilateral stimulation presumed necessary for recovery. Second, in its early days, a unique selling point of EMDR was its brevity. Spector and Huthwaite (1993) reported successful treatment of a road traffic accident survivor with PTSD in one session of EMDR. Likewise Hassard (1993) reports successful EMDR treatment of a client with body-image problems in one session. So the question remains as to why the literature has not been replete with further accounts of such rapid successful outcomes with EMDR, especially considering the current cash-strapped state of the NHS.ö (Gurnani, 2014, p. 638).

NLP as Pseudo-Science

NLP over 40 years has never developed an undergraduate degree in the discipline. As a result of this it can be argued it is poorly defined, poorly operationalized and the claims made for the efficacy of the patterns developed are not substantiated in the academic literature. NLP makes the claim to be useful however Professor Sturt as mentioned in Chapter 1 makes a point; õí   the very fact that there is no agreed definition of NLP indicates how little evidence we have of its benefits.ö (Sturt, 2013).

Sharpley (1984) in reviewing the NLP idea of Preferred Representational System (PRS) concluded;

> õAt present, there is no consistent support for the use of the predicate-matching process of NLP in either contrived counseling situations or actual clinical realities. Of most importance, there are no data reported to date to show that NLP can help clients change.ö (Sharpley 1984).

Refutation from Einspruch and Forman in 1985 met with a further rebuttal in 1987 by Sharpley without reply. The most recent rebuttal of the Sharpley critiques come from Gray et al. (2013). Firstly the authors say Sharpley relied too much upon secondary sources which made false assumptions. They draw upon parallel occurrences in psychology, for instance the misrepresentation of the famous conditioning experiment in 1920 conducted by Watson and Rayner in introductory psychology texts, (Harris 1979). The authors point to the assumption by Sharpley that PRS is a theoretical construct at the heart of NLP when it is not. They further suggest by defining such concepts as õrapportö themselves within the research rather than according to how it is experienced within NLP they further distance themselves from that which they seek to research. Concerning Eye Accessing Cues (EAC) the authors point again to a misunderstanding by Sharpley as it is assumed EACøs are pre-determined constructs that relate directly to PRS. They point out this is not so and they are contextual and give an indication moment to moment of how a person is bringing to consciousness portions of unconsciously stored information. This is supported by research conducted by Robert Dilts in 1977 and published in 1983 which found in favour of PRS and EAC association and is not referenced by any of the critics of NLP during the 1980øs.

Dilts discovered that people have specific strategies for accessing sensory cognitions. For instance, in order to hear the engine of a car a participant may first experience the feeling of being in their car and then see themselves operate the ignition key before they could *hear* the sound of the engine of the car, which is what the experimental question required of them. It is this subjective differentiation of accessing the required sensory mode which makes this type of research very difficult.

Finally Gray et al. (2013) point to the inadequate training of researchers and thereby introducing inaccurately defined variables. In this sense they clearly disagree with Sharpley who says;

õThe basic tenets of NLP have failed to be reliably verified in almost 86% of the controlled studies, and it is difficult to accept that none of these 38 studies (i.e,, those with nonsupportive, partial, or mixed results) were performed by persons with a satisfactory understanding of NLP (or at least enough of an understanding to perform the various procedures that were evaluated). (Sharpley, 1987, p. 105).

Elsewhere in his 1987 critique Sharpley does concede;

õIf it is the case that NLP can be demonstrated as effective only by those who have undergone the "extensive training" that Einspruch and Forman (1985, p. 594) referred to as necessary for effective use of NLP, then NLP may well be a successful (if elusive) procedure. On the other hand, it may be an example of "E bias" in the evaluation of a specific psychotherapeutic environment, in which case it may be the conviction level of the counselor and not the specific treatment or approach to counseling used by the counselor that is the effective variable. (Sharpley, 1987, p. 104).

Many of these criticisms have been addressed above, pointing out that at the time Sharpley was reviewing NLP based upon the extant literature at the time and also drawing readers attention to contradictions within the NLP community at the time, which still exist today, making research into NLP difficult on account of definitional ambiguity.

The first academic review of NLP says NLP techniques have been õover-sold and under-tested.ö Tosey and Mathison (2009, p. 182). The authors go on to tell us NLP is at a crossroads. Despite being a commercially successful system of practical knowledge for 40 years it is in danger of entropy with its knowledge base being re-cycled more than being extended.

The resolution in the minds of Tosey & Mathison is that NLP is still a system of belief in which Guru like figures hold out the promise of changing lives possibly expecting allegiance to their authority (Tosey & Mathison, 2009, p. 174). Elsewhere NLP is likened to Dianetics which also "worked" (Tosey & Mathison, 2009, p. 126) and popular self-help movements like Norman Vincent Peals "The Power of Positive Thinking" (1952) and Dale Carnegie's "How to win friends and influence people" (1953) (Tosey & Mathison, 2009, p. 39). NLP continues to attract the label of pseudo-science even in the popular channels of communication with the Wikipedia entry describing and referencing NLP as a discredited pseudo-science: "The balance of scientific evidence reveals NLP to be a largely discredited pseudoscience. Scientific reviews show it contains numerous factual errors, and fails to produce the results asserted by proponents" (Wikipedia, 2013).

Others liken NLP to Cargo Cult science:

> "The physicist Richard Feynman coined the term 'cargo cult science' (Feynman, 1985). In the South Seas there is a cargo cult of people who, during war-time, observed lots of airplanes carrying goods. They wanted the planes to continue to land after the war ended and so set about reconstructing airports with fires alongside the runway, a wooden hut for the air traffic controller to sit in and antennas made of bamboo. Despite the form of the airport being right, the planes didn't land! Feynman adapted the idiom of 'cargo cult science' to refer to research that follows all the form and pretence of scientific investigation yet is missing something essential." (RoderiqueDavies, 2009, p. 62).

Roderique Davies suggests the use of NLP as an umbrella term only adds to the confusion and conveniently excuses its proponents from having to substantiate its claims. He Concludes:

õTo adapt this term one more time, *(Cargo Cult Science),* NLP masquerades as a legitimate form of psychotherapy, makes unsubstantiated claims about how humans think and behave, purports to encourage research in a vain attempt to gain credibility, yet fails to provide evidence that it actually works. Neuro-linguistic programming is cargo cult psychology.ö (RoderiqueDavies, 2009, p. 62).

In this research it is therefore important to understand the NLP answer to these criticisms by talking with experienced NLP practitioners, if I am to understand more fully the answer to the question; õWhat is NLP?ö

The Bandler Effect

This research asks the question õwhat is NLP?ö In order to triangulate sources of data and rather than relying on only sources from within the NLP community, one data source drawn upon has been a current live LinkedIn psychology discussion forum which has discussed the Authenticity of NLP between May and October of 2012. This discussion ran to 44,000 words, (Munro, 2013). One theme which emerged from this discussion was the behaviour and reputation of one of the Co-Founders of NLP in particular. In terms of the Halo and Horns effect, (a form of cognitive bias where we make either positive or negative attribution across the whole domain on the basis of a particular instance), this reputation certainly seems to generate a horns bias against NLP. However in seeking to understand õWhat is NLP?ö understanding peopleøs perception of NLP is one of the keys. Tosey and Mathison (2009) warn against ad hominem arguments, however, in this case not only are arrogance and egotism regarded as characteristics which assisted in the formation of NLP by Grinder, (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001, pp. 121-122) but on a more general level, NLP does not seem to distance itself sufficiently from them. This is especially so in its claims about the efficacy of NLP in the absence of published findings. George Berkeleyøs dictum, õto be is to

be perceivedö is quite apt as his philosophy of immaterialism, like NLP, also insisted that reality is constructed within our minds. A blog which is entitled, NLP ó trainingøs shameful, fraudulent cult, starts off:

õKnow this guy? He was arrested for First Degree murder in 1988 and charged with the murder of his bookkeeper, who was also running a call-girl operation on the side. He had plunged headlong into cocaine addiction, and only he and his drug dealer (who was also the victim's boyfriend) were present in her house when the shooting took place. He's one of the founders of NLP - a crackpot of the first degree - Richard Bandler.ö (Clark, 2006)

Writing publically again in 2012 Clark talks of NLP in vitriolic style talking about it as no longer plausible. The opening again refers to the incidents concerning Bandlerøs past:

õ Richard Bandler, a cocaine addict, was arrested for murdering a prostitute by shooting her in the head, the girlfriend of his drug dealer. Despite the presence of her blood on Bandlerøs shirt both he and the drug dealer admitted being in the room when she died but as each accused each other, both were acquitted. No one has been charged with the crime. He's one of the founders of NLP. These founders and their heirs have been involved in incredibly bitter disputes about the so-called theory and ownership of the NLP brand.ö (Clark, 2012).

This story is replicated again by Michael Hall a current NLP leader:

õ 1986: Bandler provided his own challenges to the field due to actions in his personal life. In the middle of the 1980s he was arrested, charged with an account of murder, and spent 120 days in county jail. That certainly didnøt do the field of NLP any good! Steve Andreas lead a defence fund for Richard and personally provided

$60,000 to Richard for the trial. What happened? A young woman, Corine Christensen, was shot by a .357 magnum revolver, the only other persons in the house was Richard Bandler and James Marino, an admitted cocaine dealer and her boyfriend. Though it was Marino's house and although they had been fighting, the district attorney decided that the evidence pointed to Richard than the drug dealer! Anyway this lasted from 1986 to 1988 and ended in the grand jury unable to decide, so the charge was dropped. But, of course, not without the trial hitting the headlines in many papers and journals— including a scathing review in Mother Jones magazine that you can still find on various websites." (Hall, 2013a).

The bitter disputes referred to by Clark in his blog are explicated further by Michael Hall who was one of the John Does cited in a Law suit brought against the NLP community he writes:

"It began in July of 1996 when Richard Bandler filed a $90,000,000 lawsuit as a civil action against John Grinder, Carmen Bostic St. Clair, Christina Hall, Steve and Connirae Andreas, and Lara Ewing and 200 John and Jane Does. In that lawsuit Bandler claimed exclusive ownership of the Society of NLP. Copies of the lawsuit are still available on various websites." (Hall, 2013b)

Hall provides an interesting insight into the financial arrangements at this time. He writes:

"This first affected me in early 1997. Having just completed another NLP Practitioner Course with 20 people, I sent a check for $4,000 ($200 per participant was the arrangement) and the certificates to the "First Institute of NLP" in San Francisco for Richard Bandler to sign. As an NLP trainer, this was the arrangement that I had been following for seven years, but this time Brahm von Huene returned the check and certificates and sent a new contract for me to sign. In the contract, I crossed out the section that said that anything I developed based on NLP would be considered

the intellectual property of Bandler and the section that if he decided to sue me, I would assume responsibility for all legal bills. Of course, I would not sign that! I initialled both places, and then sent the money, certificates and the contract back. Shortly thereafter all was returned again with the statement that I was no longer an NLP trainer under the Society of NLP.ö (Hall, 2013b).

Hall Started up Neuro-Semantics at this time with Dr Bob Bodenhamer and tells us also of how Bandler chased Tony Robbins away from the NLP brand through a similar law suit with Tony Robbins using a similar strategy and also re-branding what he did to ensure separation from NLP at an earlier time in 1988/1989. Referring to the Tony Robbins lawsuit after Bandlerøs arrest for murder Hall says:

õí Another Bandler lawsuit occurred sometime later (1988 or 1989) against Tony Robbins. That one was against Robbins because he was not certifying people as NLP Practitioners or Master Practitioners through The Society of NLP. Settled in 1990 out of court with Tony promising to õcertify people through the Society and pay his $200 for each one certified in NLP,ö he promptly stopped training õNLPö as such and invented a new name, NACô Neural Associative Conditioning.ö (Hall, 2013a).

Finally Hall (2013a) conjectures it is possible these events led to the definitional problems NLP now has many years later he cites Gordon 1995:16-18; õWhile there was some degree of tracking each otherøs innovations, the overall effect of the breakup of the original group was a diversification in the trajectories of NLP with a resulting blurring of its definition.ö (Gordon 1995, p. 16 in Hall, 2013a)

And again:

ổ There is no organization with the authority to pass judgment on the quality of the diverse NLP training programs currently being offered, or even to define what is, and what is not, NLP.ö (Gordon, 1995, p. 17) í . For the field of NLP has no single voice, no universally agreed upon definition, no quality control over what is offered under its name. An outside entering these waters may encounter anything from the sublime to the ridiculous.ö (Gordon, 1995, p. 18 in Hall, 2013a)

Tosey and Mathison tell us; õNLPøs body sometimes seems so fractured that it is difficult to imagine it recovering from its self-inflicted injuries. Due especially, we suspect, to the effects of litigation about intellectual property rights in NLP something appears to have died.ö (Tosey & Mathison, 2009, p. 191).

From a scientific perspective Bandler continues to make statements which seem strange. On a BBC radio program recently he commented on the work of Allan, Bourne, Bouch and Churches et al. (2012) who researched the use of NLP in education.

Allan et al. (2012) conducted a typical piece of research such as other competent psychologists might conduct. Allan et al. took as a base measure, results of a mathematics test for three different groups: 1) No training, 2) Innovative maths pedagogy and 3) NLP and innovative maths pedagogy. His team then took experimental measures for the three groups of learners after instruction and found only the NLP group had sufficient confidence levels to reject the Null hypothesis. Research hypothesis A was that adult learners whose teachers are trained in innovative maths pedagogy attain higher maths results than adult learners whose teachers have had no training. Research hypothesis B was that training in NLP influencing skills enhances the maths attainment of adult learners whose teachers have trained in innovative maths pedagogy. The research team found that only the NLP group had sufficient confidence levels to reject the Null hypothesis. The 4 days NLP training provided for the

teachers in the NLP group consisted of Milton Model, Satir Categories, and anchoring of positive emotional states with a noticeable absence of PRS which was the focus of research interest in the 1980øs as discussed above.

When Bandler was asked how he would do the research he said he would

> õbuild a new school from the ground up, thatøs how I would test it and you know and I would take lots of the kids that are doing badly in school and lots of the kids that are doing good in school and Iød mix them all up together in a new formula, and Iød get rid of the grade level notion, and Iød make a race to the end of the educational system and find out how fast, how many of these kids could hit the cross lineö (Little, Radio 4, 2011).

Again, more recently, Richard Bandler is a noticeable absentee in a recent book about the origins of NLP edited by the other two Co-Founders of NLP Grinder and Pucelik, (2013). In this book Pucelik talks frankly about how his life changed abruptly late in 1976 and early 1977 when his õgreat friend and incredible life partnerö, Leslie Cameron, became indifferent to him after having been invited to join Richard Bandler who then õwithin a couple of weeks informed Pucelik he was no longer welcome to be involved with the team or any of the team members in any way, for any reasonö. (Grinder & Pucelik, 2013, p. 27-29).

Both Grinder and Bandler were absent from the 3 NLP leadership summits convened by Frank Pucelik and Michael Hall in 2012, 2013 and 2014 and are not currently expected to attend the 4th summit in 2016.

It is appropriate to put a small section in concerning the õBandler effectö in chapter 2 as this does appear to be a strong theme running through the extant NLP literature that has adversely affected the image of NLP and will be discussed more thoroughly later in this paper.

Summary of Chapter 2

In Chapter 2 I have expanded on many of the unanswered questions which I asked in my personal and professional journey in Chapter 1 concerning the definition of NLP. I have looked in more detail at the criticisms of psychologists in the early 1980øs and looked also in more detail at the methodology of NLP modelling as well as the Ontology and Epistemology of NLP. I have also looked at some of the characteristics of NLP as described by people who do not practice it in order to provide a different perspective and balance the insider position which I have as both an Action Researcher and an NLP practitioner. In building a grounded theory of NLP in chapter 3 I will discuss what methodology I choose in this research and why I have chosen these methodologies and approaches in order to answer the research question, õWhat is NLP?ö.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

All research design is divided into 4 components according to King et al: õthe research question, the theory, the data, and the use of the data.ö (King, Keohane & Verba, 1994, p. 318).

King et al. tells us that these components are not usually developed separately and scholars do not attend to them in any preordained order, they continue to say that often for researchers who begin their field work before choosing a precise research question, data comes first, followed by the others. In one sense this is how this research unfolded, my field work as mentioned in chapter one has been an apprenticeship in NLP, developing my own research questions implicitly as I developed my understanding. My initial round of interviews for this research were conducted before I even really had developed a complete methodology or considered the implicit theory that was directing my enquiry. On reflection the answer to me was almost so obvious from the very beginning that methodology seemed irrelevant. I had fallen into the trap of believing what I was investigating was unambiguous data with clear relationships, King et al. (1994) warns;

> õComplexity is likely to make our inferences less certain but should not make them any less scientific. Uncertainty and limited data should not cause us to abandon scientific research. On the contrary: the biggest payoff for using the rules of scientific inference occurs precisely when data are limited, observation tools are flawed, measurements are unclear, and relationships are uncertain. With clear relationships

and unambiguous data, method may be less important, since even partially flawed rules of inference may produce answers that are roughly correctö (King et al. 1994, p. 249).

I had started this research with the rather naïve belief, that it was actually quite obvious what NLP was, and the reason it had not obtained significant funding nor mainstream psychological credibility was because no major scientific enquiry demonstrating either what it was or what it could do had been conducted. Going into research with this naïve belief I implicitly believed, as King et al. (1994) suggest, that maybe methodology in such õstraight forwardö cases is not so important as the relationships I was investigating were very clear and left little room for interpretation.

It was only when I began to conduct my interviews I appreciated the vast diversity of opinion and understanding from my interviewees and recognised this data needed to be recorded, sorted and understood fully in order to derive any inferences. In order to do this I would need to adhere to a methodological procedure; õa dynamic process of inquiry occurs within a stable structure of rulesö says King. (King et al. 1994, p. 302).

King et al. (1994) tells us that we should use data to generate inferences that are õunbiased,ö that is, correct on average. What they mean by this is by reference to the quantitative paradigm. If one takes data from a single data source there will be both error of measurement and no doubt an element of error concerning inference too. However this error can be partially corrected by taking data from multiple sources and making inferences at the point these data points coincide. This created difficulty in terms of selecting my interviewees. Many senior NLP practitioners would come from either similar camps or opposing camps and finding a balance to represent NLP as broadly as possible was a challenge to this research. This is particularly important for researching the topic of NLP, as the opinions of

the Co-Founders, although influential are only one voice in an expanding field, and often other voices are saying very different things. In a Grounded theory of NLP these differences need to be accounted for and if a very small number of sources were used the resultant theory would be biased in the favour of that small number. A part of methodological procedure is to avoid selection bias where possible as this leads to biased inferences.

Sampling

I believed a snowball sampling methodology would help me get to the heart of the matter more quickly. The strategy has been utilized primarily as a response to overcome the problems associated with understanding and sampling concealed populations (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997) and for this reason, given the diversity within NLP I believed this would be appropriate especially in the light of NLP practitioner⍰s concern researchers do not fully appreciate the NLP paradigm.

During the first interview, I was reassured by the participant that because it was me, she would be happy to support the research and was happy a university was giving me a PhD for it. I regarded initial interviews as scoping interviews.

Making use of a snowball sampling methodology, I mentioned another NLP practitioner, who in a scoping interview had given me a list of people who I should interview. In a similar way this participant, (who was on the list), provided me with her list of NLP practitioners I should speak to.

Specifically Participant 2 said:

> ⍰Given that it⍰s you doing that Bruce and you⍰ve got a grasp of the NLP basics I think that you could ask some marvellous questions and come up with some really helpful,

what I would call, direction making findings. A lot of this that's been done before, the people asking the questions didn't have a clue what NLP was about and so they were putting into academia all sorts of ridiculous conclusions" (Participant 2, 2:35, 2014).

Participant 2 went on to talk about a recent publication which suggested NLP had potential and was a "radically client centred format that follows the client in a way that nothing else can or has to this point" (Participant 2, 4:45 2014)

At this point two considerations raised their head for me.

Firstly I was concerned that cooperation was a function of because it was me. I interpreted this in such a way that I felt I could skew my grounded theory of NLP in a way that was particularly favourable to NLP. I took this interpretation away and recognised that I need to pay attention to the data that emerges from my 3 data sources; Interviews with NLP practitioners, LinkedIn discussion in a psychology forum on the Authenticity of NLP, and the extant NLP and psychological literature relevant to my enquiry. When going back to interviewee 2 to bring this interpretation to her she told me this was not the case. I should report on what I find, however she was referring to the NLP research considerations of Einspruch and Forman (1985) which suggested researchers into NLP should have NLP experience.

Secondly when I asked participant 2 (who was on the list provided in the first scoping interview), for their list of NLP practitioners who I should interview, not one of the 10 NLP practitioners recommended matched the list of 14 NLP practitioners recommended in the first scoping interview. This brought about the possibility that NLP is such a diverse practice I literally could end up with an unmanageable number of interviews to conduct.

In continuing to pursue a snowball methodology I discovered further difficulties. One of the potential NLP practitioners recommended by Participant 2 would not talk with me, so I chose somebody who represented õtheir kind of NLPö. This Participant provided me with a list of 10 NLP practitioners who I should speak to and this time 5 of the NLP practitioners were the same as that of Participant 2. It was important to recognise at this point that the 5 participants who were similar were not from this similar camp of NLP. I felt that by taking the middle ground and using my own experience in NLP to cover the practice as best as possible I would end up with a manageable list of NLP practitioners to interview. Pursuing this method with a third NLP practitioner and Participant in this research their list converged with the other 2 participants on 5 out of 10 NLP practitioners. Using this methodology I ended up with 15 NLP practitioners who were willing to talk with me about their definition of NLP. I made use of my own expertise in NLP in selecting some participants in order to provide a voice not within the echelons provided using a Snowball methodology. For instance I thought it important to include an NLP practitioner who made their living from NLP and relied on the income, yet was simply an accredited NLP trainer who very few practitioners on the growing list of candidates knew about. This provided a perspective of an NLP trainer who simply made his living from the practice and was not really involved in the leadership of NLP.

One of the reasons no matches were made between the first scoping interview and the second interview could have been the first participant was very keen that his list represented an international flavour, including non-English Speaking participants. I felt in order to use this list, I would need to employ an interpreter and that was outside the financial scope of this research. Participants in this research come from America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand and these participants have trained people in NLP from all parts of the world. On that basis it was still felt that this research represents views from all around the world and has an international flavour. Also it is the case that even though I did not wish to limit

participation because I wanted a theory that could generalise as much as possible, time taken to do transcriptions and interviews as well as coding transcriptions meant I needed a figure I could work with and was manageable. For many who I could have interviewed, their views and thoughts are transparently available in the extant NLP literature and on active blogs and social media which made up one of my data sources and these are referenced when used.

Methodology and personal bias

One of the aims of good qualitative research is to use a little to explain a lot. Traditionally in qualitative research leverage is low, however with good methodology this leverage can be increased and one can use a little to explain a lot, rather than as is often the case using a lot to explain a little. It is for this reason it is important that this research is also as open and transparent as possible as well as methodical.

King et al. (1994) tells us maximizing leverage is so important and so general that they strongly recommend that researchers routinely list all possible observable implications of their hypothesis that might be found in their data or in other data. In Qualitative research they make the point that some researchers refuse to make generalisations on the basis of their observations and inferences because of an insistence that the subject of their study is totally unique. Such researchers sit at the extreme of the anti-positivist ó positivist epistemological continuum. However even unique events can be studied scientifically by paying attention to the observable implications of theories developed to account for them. So in this research as I am listening to my interviewees express themselves, I am listening specifically for observable implications of the research which asks õwhat is NLP?ö My personal bias as a psychologist leads me to assume NLP will not obtain consistent mainstream funding from government and private agencies until it begins to demonstrate the validity of its knowledge through accepted

methodological processes. However I need to ensure I pay just as much attention to counter evidence as my interviewees say such things as;

> õI think NLP has not been interested in that because we see it working every day in people's lives and our purpose has been to do business instead of doing research so there's not been that much interest in it and somebody has to collaborate and create funding to be able to do that and that usually occurs at a university level where they've got the money and don't have to worry about business and so once that happens once the people who are interested in that and will spend the time, the boring time to apply for grants and get that done then that will be done otherwise the marketplace is the place that test it.ö (Interviewee 7, 21:05 ó 21:52. 2013).

So, contrary to my prejudice, this is evidence that NLP does not need to develop academic credibility in order to obtain mainstream funding as such funding could come from the market place within business and the above transcript can be coded in multiple ways drawing out initial themes of õdoing businessö õworking every dayö õtesting in the market placeö õfundingö and õuniversity levelö

The challenge, as a researcher, is to hold oneøs emotions at bay when hearing such contrary views to oneøs own and to recognise that this perspective needs to inform the answer to the research question as much as those answers that resonate with the researcherøs preferences. From the perspective of Grounded theory specifically, and qualitative research generally, it is necessary to be aware of these personal õsensitising conceptsö, (Blumer, 1969) as they can impact upon the objectivity of theory that emerges from a systematic analysis of the data collected.

However, just as in the quantitative paradigm, one needs to take many data points in order to begin to extrapolate a pattern at a higher level of understanding which explains those data

points, so too it is important to test the quality of those data points. All of my interviewees were NLP experts and it is possible they may have expressed contrary opinions at different times: in the interview, in published print, or on blogs posted on the World Wide Web. It is for this reason I have not only used my interviewees comments as source data, but also their words and the words of other experienced NLP practitioners who declined to be interviewed from the extant literature, carefully referencing such secondary data. The benefit of these multiple sources is that they assist in differentiating systemic and non-systemic variance. If I relied only on the data from my interviews it is possible that my NLP expert was expressing an opinion which was based upon their view at the time which could well be moderated by such personal circumstances as business relations, financial matters, personal relations, health, an opinion with which they wished to support a current training agenda and many more temporary factors. However by triangulating their words with historical data on the world wide web and from the secondary sources of extant NLP texts it is easier to understand the systemic variance which might answer the research question more comprehensively on account of using data not only from multiple sources, but also multiple sources along a time line and indeed with data from outside of the NLP community.

This research does not set out to test a theory even though an implicit theory is present in the exploration for a definition of NLP. A key concept of Grounded Theory, (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is that, in the research, Grounded theory is appropriate when the study of social interactions or experiences aims to explain a process, not to test or verify an existing theory. The implicit theory that NLP does not have a definition and needs one to effectively develop, is very much õon holdö during this research, it may be the multiple definitions already in circulation suffice and indeed are characteristic of a gestalt which defies definition. It is important therefore that in this dynamic process of inquiry I adhere as closely as possible to the stable structure of research rules to ensure a systematic analysis of all comments from

interviewees, contrasted with an analysis of data that only supports the implicit theories of the researcher. In this research it is important that any new theory that emerges, emerges from the data as much as possible, even if that data contradicts the implicit assumptions of the research question; õWhat is NLP?ö As King et al. (1994) draws our attention to, the importance of listing all possible observable implications of the emerging hypothesis is that such procedure will produce useful information which can be tested at later times.

Methodology and Validity

Rigorous methodology is important as it helps validate the hypothesis you are proposing. McNiff and Whitehead make a useful distinction between valid knowledge and legitimate knowledge, they say:

> õValidity and legitimacy are different things. Validity refers to establishing the truth value of a claim, its authenticity or trustworthiness. This is a matter of rigorous methodological procedure. Legitimacy refers to getting the account accepted in the public domain, by getting people to listen to you and take your work seriously in the hope that they may be open to learning from it or trying out something similar to it themselves. Establishing legitimacy is a matter of power and politics because people may or may not want to listen in spite of your having demonstrated the validity of your work.ö (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006 p. 157).

However even though a rigorous methodological procedure might provide a sense that the knowledge is somehow valid, this does not mean that knowledge assumes the properties of being set in stone, applying in all instances, and being unwavering. Knowledge from an anti-positivist perspective is relativistic and constructed via individual frames of reference. This difference of approach, unless appreciated from the beginning, can lead to frustration when

attempting to get to õthe beefö of what a piece of research is attempting to provide. This is metaphorically described very well by Etienne Wenger:

> õOne day I was talking about my research with someone who is in charge of designing information systems, and he asked me: õThatøs very nice, but Iøm interested in change, in design, so whereøs the beef?ö As sympathetic as I am to his question, I had to first try to make clear that this is not just beef; it is more like a cow, a living cow: one can make beef with it, of course, but one can do many other things: one can pull a plough, milk it, breed it, show it in country fairs. What I am trying to develop is not a recipe or a method; it is a discourse, a perspective, a way to look at the world. But it is a discourse that has wide-reaching practical implications, especially for design endeavors. I will actually suggest that it may cause us to reconsider what we mean by design. The validity of such a discourse can in fact be said to reside in its ability to inform a variety of activitiesö (Wenger, 1991, p. 4).

One of the approaches used in this research is Action Research. A principle feature of Action Research is that through this approach your work is validated within validation groups as colleagues ask questions of how you arrived at certain pieces of knowledge, a bit like a group supervision process. Once validated it is the story which is offered to the world, not as propositional knowledge, but as a story of how it has assisted the researcher improve their practice within a particular domain or sector. One would hope there is a relationship between validity and legitimacy in that the greater attention paid to ensuring the knowledge is valid-- as a result of adhering to research methodology--the greater the legitimacy. However this is not necessarily the case, knowledge is seen through the filters of individual frames of reference. NLP participant 5 makes an interesting observation from the field of technology to illustrate the point:

õYou can have a poor idea, an awful product that is marketed very well compared with a great idea that is marketed very poorly. Was it Beta Max or was it VHS I think Beta Max was a better product, but VHS was better marketed. I think when you compare the original Microsoft operating systems--MS-DOS compared with Apple's graphic user interface--Microsoft had a big advantage over Apple and that became the industry-standard, and other people would agree with me that was the inferior product.ö (Interviewee 5, 35:15 ó 35:53. 2014).

However, the dynamic nature of social and technological systems (as well as knowledge generally and itøs observable implications), is revealed when interviewee 5 points out the following:

õí and to extend that metaphor, VHS is now dead and rather than just have one medium for recording, letøs say video, we have DVDs, hard disks, material up in the cloud on the Internet, so you can download a show to watch or a film on the Internet if you have the benefit of living in a country that has high-speed broadband. The fact is there are multiple ways now, there is a range of choices with that now, and I think this is may be how NLP in some respect develops.ö (Interviewee 5, 1:08:00 ó 1:08:30. 2014).

The idea therefore that this dissertation can produce knowledge that is finite and valid for all times is rejected from the outset. This research is indeed like a cow, different people will take from it different things. You will get more out of the cow if you respect it and allow it to live, even though eventually it will die, even in its death it will provide the seeds for new growth which will be beef of various cuts.

This research, however, does not adopt the extreme anti-positivist epistemology which suggests that because each event is unique no generalisations can be made. In looking at my

data I can make historical summaries of the data based upon the outcomes that I wish to describe or explain. This information will need to be simplified, however in making the data simpler, it is important to ensure this reduction of information adequately represents all the historical data. Further I can make descriptive inferences based upon this simplified data. King et al. (1994) explain that descriptive inference is the process of understanding an unobserved phenomenon on the basis of a set of observations.

Action Research

In this research as I am listening to my interviewees express themselves I am listening specifically for observable implications of the research which asks õwhat is NLP?ö Schon (1983) believed that those who researched in the õswampy lowlandsö of everyday practical research should create their own knowledge through investigating their practice and submit their own emergent personal theories to the same rigorous process of testing and critique as that of the high ground of abstract conceptual technical knowledge often pursued at university.

Action researchers, unlike positivist researchers, embrace the fact that their research is value laden and will often make their values explicit at the beginning of their research so readers can hold them accountable. To think that talking in the third person and using a statistical paradigm somehow indemnifies a researcher from contaminating their topic of research with their own values and personal õmap of the worldö is clearly not accepted. The very fact that a researcher from a positivist epistemology believes such õobjectivityö exists and therefore the scope and validity of the knowledge they uncover is therefore greater, is evidence of a fundamental difference of ontology. Action researchers always see themselves in relation with others in terms of their practice and their ideas. Their world is a dynamic world and it is always probabilistic. They can divide the world into apparently systematic and non-

systematic components and consequently improve on prediction, however, there will always be a significant amount of non-systematic variation. This means that even the predictions they make are probabilistic. This anti-positivist approach assumes an open system which is consistently reinventing itself. This is to be contrasted with the world of the positivist who sees the world more in terms of a closed system. For the positivist, the fact that our world, and especially our social world, is not entirely predictable is only due to stochastic variation that we as yet have no explanation for. When we do have an explanation for it, as our understanding develops, then we too will have greater predictive power, until eventually we can predict everything perfectly.

King et al. (1994) make the point that these two perspectives can be regarded as observationally equivalent. Because of this equivalence a choice between the two perspectives depends rather on faith or belief rather than on empirical verification.

Whether we decide to be certain and deluded, or paradoxically, certain yet not certain is nicely portrayed when Joseph Schumpeter cites Albert Einstein, who said õas far as our propositions are certain, they do not say anything about reality, and as far as they do say anything about reality, they are not certainö (Schumpeter, 1936, pp. 298-99).

Tosey and Mathison (2009) in their academic review of NLP suggest a range of research options for those who wish to take NLP down that route. Reviewing the 40 year history of NLP they point out that within NLP lies both the seeds of its own destruction and also the potential for further adaption and survival. They cite 8 areas of research they believe are likely to be fruitful:

õa)   Action Research by Practitioners

b)   Case studies and evaluations.

c)   Modelling projects.

d)   Review and testing of specific NLP models and techniques.

e)   Surveys of the incidence and use of NLP.

f)   Elaboration and critique of the underpinning philosophy and epistemology of NLP.

g)   Studies of NLP as a social phenomenon.

h)   Use of NLP to enhance existing research methods.ö (Tosey & Mathison, 2009, p. 195).

Grimley (2013) commenting on this list of proposals says:

> õI think we still need firstly to understand and agree on what NLP is, this will pave the way for modelling and then testing of those techniques. This provides us with the simple answer to the question that most people want to know: ˗What is NLP and does it work?øIf NLP had already done this and we found it did work, then the other areas of research would be interesting. If we engage in those other areas of research *before* we know what NLP is and whether it works there is the likelihood the fog of NLP will continue. It will then be supported by interesting and good quality qualitative research which investigates a social phenomenon that has no evidence of utility in specific contexts.ö Grimley, (2013, p. 190).

This research therefore is indeed embedded within some of the researcherøs assumptions, and the above opinion is just one of the values being made explicit. Having these assumptions challenges the notion in Grounded Theory that a person can come to a research area with a Lockean *tabula rasa* mind set, formalised in the methodology of delaying the literature

review until after forming the analysis. To think one can, is to fall into the same trap of the positivist who thinks he / she is examining the world objectively from a fly on the wall perspective.

In this chapter I would like to talk about the 3 approaches I have taken in collecting data, analysing data, interpreting data and coming to conclusions. These are Action Research, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, and Grounded Theory.

Action Research continued

I started my Ph.D. journey in the January of 2008. During this time I have been aware of the transformative influence my research activity has had on me, both personally and professionally. Action research, which is also referred to as community based research, participatory action research, or collaborative inquiry, (Gibson, Gibson, & Macaulay, 2001), is not done on participants. Rather research is designed, carried out, and integrated by the researcher in partnership with the participants. Based in emancipatory social theory and designed to democratise the research process, action research is an iterative process in which researchers and practitioners act together in the context of an identified problem to discover and effect positive change within a mutually acceptable ethical framework. Action research is also regarded as a new scholarship which helps reduce the theory ó practice gap. It sees knowledge creation as a collaborative process and recognises that knowledge created by humans is created through the filters of values and beliefs and these need to be explicitly stated from the outset. The Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology of Action research is laid out by McNiff and Whitehead in table 1 below:

Table 1. Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology of Action research. McNiff and Whitehead (2006, pp. 22-29).

Ontological Assumptions.

- Action research is value laden.

- Action research is morally committed.

- Action researchers perceive themselves as in relation with one another in their social contexts.

Epistemological Assumptions.

- The object of the enquiry is the õIö in relation to other õIøsö

- Knowledge is uncertain. Answers are created through negotiation. Often answers cannot be negotiated so people have to learn to live with the situation.

- Knowledge creation is a collaborative process.

- Knowledge is a property of individuals, so it is often subjective and biased. Individuals have to negotiate their meanings with other knowing individuals.

Methodological Assumptions.

- Action research is done by practitioners who regard themselves as agents.

- The methodology is open ended and developmental.

- The aim of the research is to improve learning with social intent.

What is particularly powerful about Action Research is that it emphasises personal agency and a key characteristic of this research is discovering the answer to what can I do in relationship with other people to improve my practice as an NLP practitioner and an

Occupational Psychologist. The research thus is offered to the wider NLP community and others as a consequence of researching within that community what NLP is and examining the assumptions of the research question. However what happens after this research is published is my responsibility. Whether I act on our findings or not is totally my responsibility. Action Research is consequently an empowering research paradigm which necessarily encourages action as demonstrated by the contrasting questions in table 2 below.

Table 2. Different types of Questions. (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006, p. 8).

Social Science Questions	Action Research Questions
What is the relationship between teacher motivation and teacher retention?	How do I influence the quality of teacher's experience in school, so they decide to stay?
Does Management Style influence worker Productivity?	How do I improve my management style to encourage productivity?
Will a different seating arrangement increase audience participation?	How do I encourage greater audience participation through trying out different seating arrangements?

Action Research Diary

A diary of the research journey was kept to note learnings of significance. This was fed back into my professional practice as a researcher. For instance I noticed early on in my interviewing that it appeared I did too much of the speaking and framing of questions. On becoming aware of this, in subsequent interviews I allowed the participant to talk more freely, asking only the occasional open question. This resulted in transcripts which strayed from the original questions which had been created specifically for this research, but provided a much richer picture of what the participant felt and thought about specific topics. In discussion with my supervisors, the methodological benefits and shortcomings of such a change were examined and evaluated. In terms of personal development such discussions assisted in the development of a greater understanding of how the framing of our own questions can influence the responses of the participant. Also discussions concerning how not

only the framing of the words which are used, but also the framing of how the words which are used influences responses was discussed. õWhat do you think of that?ö emphasising õYouö generally seemed to generate answers based around the participant and were more subjective. The same question, however, emphasizing õthatö generally and understandably seemed to produce a more task oriented answer with less emotion attached to it.

Action Research Outcomes

This whole dissertation is an Action Research outcome. It tells the story of a Postman who wanted to learn more about the workings of the unconscious mind and discovered the paradigm of NLP. However in qualifying as a Chartered Psychologist he recognised what he regarded as huge gaps in the quality of knowledge NLP practitioners promulgated. He recognised much of what was in NLP was in fact already in existence within the framework of traditional psychology and within that frame it was subject to much greater scrutiny and the emergent knowledge was practiced within professional and ethical frameworks that did not exist within the NLP world. Understanding these frameworks often necessitated many years of undergraduate and post graduate university education in nationally accredited universities. My quest in this research, with other practitioners within the NLP community, is to understand how NLP can raise the quality of the knowledge it offers and critically examines whether other people think this is necessary. In my research journey I have found that there is so much ambiguity concerning what NLP actually is, it is currently very difficult to develop credible research into NLP that is falsifiable.

In writing my dissertation I have needed to understand who my audience is. Habermas (1987) says our account should be comprehensible, truthful, authentic and appropriate. However in order to be all these things I need to understand whom I am addressing. Writing about my research and experiences is very different to experiencing my research and experiences.

McNiff and Whitehead (2006) say we need to use the language of practitioner researchers, but must not avoid scholarly issues. Thus, the form of written expression needs to be appropriate for the, practitioner ó scholar, rather than the, scholar ó practitioner. The communities that I am addressing are both the NLP communities and the professional Psychology communities; I belong to both. However, the other communities I would like to write for are those communities of other professionals that wish to make use of NLP. It is for these reasons the written expression is informal and not particularly academic in nature. It is hoped that this dissertation will be read by a wide audience and in order to achieve that outcome it is necessary that the work be sufficiently compelling to that wide audience to warrant turning over the next page.

Action Research seemed to me a very appropriate paradigm for NLP as I learned about it during my apprenticeship as outlined in Chapter 1. It is a style of research rather than a specific method, and although not synonymous with qualitative research, it typically draws on qualitative methods such as interviews and observation. Meyer maintains the strength of Action Research is in its focus on generating solutions to practical problems; this seems to resonate well with NLPøs focus on utility. However the second part of Meyers belief concerning Action Research might be sadly missing from NLP, if one regards the knowledge coming from Action Research as needing to be valid. Action Research is strong insofar as it empowers people by encouraging them to engage with research and the subsequent development and implementation activities implied thereby. (Meyer, 2000).

First used in 1946 by Kurt Lewin, researchers work explicitly with and for people rather than undertaking research on them according to Meyer, again this is very attractive to NLP as it suggests rather than creating theories about people and then applying those theories to people Action Research co creates the future as the practitioner works with the person and their phenomenological experience.

Myer (2000) believes that most definitions of action research incorporate three important elements: its participatory character, its democratic impulse, and its simultaneous contribution to social science and social change. These 3 elements sit very well with the tenets generated in the Kurt Lewin-style encounter groups / T groups. The groups created by Bandler, Grinder and Pucelik in the early 1970's were similar to this; for this reason, Action Research again seems to be an appropriate approach to use in discovering õWhat is NLP?ö

The participatory aspect of this research is that experienced NLP practitioners have been willing to talk with me concerning the research topic. In action research, the clear cut demarcation between õresearcherö and õresearchedö that is found in other types of research may not be so apparent. Indeed, the NLP practitioners themselves find themselves in negotiation with myself concerning how the data will be used, what the ethical rules are as the conversations we have, themselves produce a dynamic that leads to unforeseen questions to which we do not fully understand the answers.

According to Lewin, change goes through the process of first of all õunfreezingö, then change is applied and õrefreezingö takes place (French & Bell, 1995, p. 81). However, Argyris, who was greatly influenced by Lewin, a significant figure in the creation of T groups and Organizational Development (OD) as a discipline, pointed out that if we attempt to change without first of all unfreezing, we end up in a single loop learning experience and change does not occur, (Argyris, 1957). Learning and change then is achieved as a consequence of intervening in the system and this research, irrespective of the findings, is an intervention that will create results, some foreseen and some unforeseen. Lewin introduced the idea that any situation is a product of opposing forces and developed the idea of force field analysis. In an organisation for instance, there is one force pushing for higher productivity and other forces pushing for lower productivity. The actual productivity is a function of the interaction of these forces. All of these forces need to be addressed to successfully introduce change. The

challenge is disconfirmation of the current state of affairs as we see it is very difficult to accept, and there is a tendency to create confirmatory beliefs distorting, deleting and generalising, creating an experience which supports what we already know. Researching this dissonance became the work of Leon Festinger who was recruited by Lewin at the Research Center for Group Dynamics in 1945. The challenge in interviewing my participants and engaging with this research was creating as much as I could an interview culture whereby they felt they could unfreeze and explore some of their own thinking and the premises for those thoughts. Indeed it is this experience which I have experienced which allows me to put this research into Grounded theory terms. Even though I came into this research with quite strong views, through interviewing my 15 participants and over 5 years engaging in extended email discussions as well as face to face conversations I myself have changed, understanding the different needs of others in making use of NLP and applying it to their personal and professional lives. These dynamics and personal changes have been written up in coding diaries and personal logs as I have continued with this research. For example I remember on one occasion getting very angry (under my breath so to speak), when I asked one participant about the definition of NLP. The conversation went:

> Bruce: õIf we say NLP works, itøs useful to know what NLP is. I know there are many definitions of NLP, but what is your definition of NLP and why?ö

> Interviewee 6: õBefore I answer that Iøm also going to say I donøt like that phrase, I know a lot of NLPøers use it, because itøs too general and thatøs probably what youøre getting at with the definition, I think. I would rather we talk about interventions that work, that we have evidence for, and I would also like us to talk about how NLP helps influence language patterns, etc. Itøs like saying, ‑Psychology works,ø to say, ‑NLP works.ø So, for me, thatøs one of the things thatøs got us into trouble, saying a blanket ‑NLP worksø frame.ö (Interviewee 6: 21:48-22:31)

Even though later on when coding I began to understand, and more importantly appreciate exactly where this participant was coming from, I remember in the moment being quite incensed at the first words of his sentence and not really being able to concentrate afterwards as a consequence, or more accurately only concentrating on how incensed I was. I have found being able to stick to a methodological process which requires me to code all my data, forces me into a position of recognising the value of what another is saying even though my initial impulse is to delete it from my memory. In terms of Action Research this process has been invaluable in allowing me to follow the typical Action Research Process in figure 5 below.

Like NLP, the Action Research family is wide and so there are many perspectives depending upon who you talk to. However, Action Research is regarded as insider research rather than professional researchers from the outside looking in and trying to understand. This was one of the research criterion of Einspruch and Forman (1985); õResearchers should be trained by competent NLP practitioners for an appropriate period of timeö, (Einspruch & Forman 1985, p. 594).

Figure 5 Action Research from McNiff and Whitehead (2006)
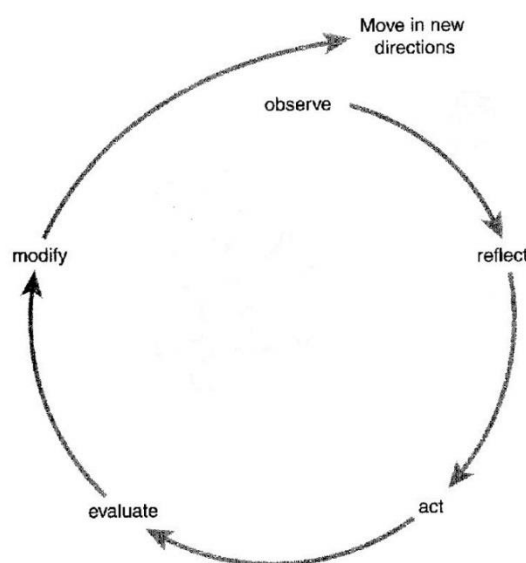
Einspruch and Forman thought this was probably the most important recommendation. This insider research needs to be a disciplined and systematic procedure and the basic and notional pattern suggested by McNiff and Whitehead is as follows:

1. Take stock of what is going on.

2. Identify a concern.

3. Think of a possible way forward.

4. Try it out.

5. Monitor the action by gathering data to show what is happening.

6. Evaluate progress by establishing procedures for making judgements about what is happening.

7. Test the validity of accounts of learning.

8. Modify practice in the light of the evaluation.

As can be appreciated from figure 5 not only does this incorporate the dynamic encounter group approach of Social psychologist Kurt Lewin who was one of the first to embrace Action Research, but the output is a double loop learning contrasted with the less productive single loop learning.

Following McNiff and Whitehead (2006) in figure 5, my **observations** are based upon being involved in NLP since 1995 and psychology since 1987, my **reflections** have been summarised to date in chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation, my **action** is to talk with NLP practitioners as well as other professionals, looking also at the extant literature and understanding what NLP is, developing my own grounded theory. I am also interested, based

upon my experience and reflections, why many academics talk so poorly about NLP and why it has not been incorporated into mainstream provision of psychological services.

My **evaluation** is to use qualitative methodology and software to organise and make sense of the feedback I obtained from the NLP experts I spoke with and other data within the data corpus of this dissertation such as a transcription of Linkedin discussions between psychologists on the subject of NLP, emails requesting answers and the extant literature which discusses the topic of NLP as well as my personal coding diaries and research logs. **Modifications** are the suggestions I make consequent to this research to enable my practice of NLP to identify itself, according to my Grounded Theory, and **moving in the new direction** is the direction I will take and the direction I will encourage other NLP practitioners to take based upon the evidence I find. Action research is particularly suitable for NLP on account of the shared systemic ontology. Both do not believe that researchers can sit outside of the world in which we live and õobjectivelyö observe and measure it, as researchers too are part of the world and indeed as they interact with their subjects this changes their responses. The purpose of all action research is to generate new knowledge; however, action research creates a particular type of knowledge. As the name implies it is linked to real action in the world, rather than the kind of knowledge which gets put in a university library and gathers dust. Concerning dead dogma, J.S. Mill writes:

> õHowever unwillingly a person who has a strong opinion may admit the possibility that his opinion may be false, he ought to be moved by the consideration that however true it may be, if it is not fully, frequently, and fearlessly discussed, it will be held as a dead dogma, not a living truth.ö(Mill, 1859).

It seems often in my reflection of 20 years within the NLP community the dogma of NLP is indeed fearlessly and frequently discussed, however it is not fully discussed and this is my

own prejudice as a psychologist which I bring to this research. The methodology of this dissertation does not assume a static social world that can be categorized accurately and counted, with the assumption that those numbers will continue to be valid the next day. The next day literally the world has moved on; different people enter the research space and they answer the same questions in a different way on account of a different emotional state, a different span of attention, a different attitude towards the research, different beliefs as to what the researcherøs intention is, a different level of compliance, and different priorities, to name just a few. Action research places the individual, the õIö at the centre of the investigation; it does not attempt to create the myth of objectivity as only objects can produce objective data. Not only does the output of action research provide answers to the question õHow do I?ö rather than õWhy is?ö, but the nature of such answers almost compel action on behalf of the action researcher rather than propositional and technical knowledge which simply tends to stimulate further debate as a result of its abstract and theoretical nature. This is very similar to aligning with Ryleøs, õKnowledge Howö, contrasted with õKnowledge Thatö and how the nature of Action research as different in this respect is illustrated again for emphasis in table 2 below.

Table 2 Different types of Questions. (McNiff & Whitehead 2006, p. 8).

Social Science Questions	Action Research Questions
What is the relationship between teacher motivation and teacher retention?	How do I influence the quality of teacherøs experience in school, so they decide to stay?
Does Management Style influence worker Productivity?	How do I improve my management style to encourage productivity?
Will a different seating arrangement increase audience participation?	How do I encourage greater audience participation through trying out different seating arrangements?

In examining other theorists McNiff and Whitehead point to Chomsky who, according to Bostic St Clair and John Grinder (2001), influenced NLP more than any other. They say;

õProcesses of coming to know (learning) are complex. One view is that we raise our deep tacit knowledge. This idea can be linked with Chomsky (1965) and Goetheøs (1988) ideas about generative transformational capacity a developmental process that allows a present form to emerge as a new form. Combining these ideas gives rise to a theory of learning that accepts the infinite capacity of humans to create an infinite number of new forms of knowledge and to transform their existing knowledge into new improved forms. This means that each person should be recognised as having the capacity for creative choice and for making original contributions. Now letøs link this with an idea from Habernas (1975), that people are not capable of *not* learning, that is, we *must* learn as a part of our genetic make-upö (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006. p. 52).

Interestingly for McNiff and Whitehead in our relations to others, the above provides one of two choices, that is to firstly use our influence to respect each personøs uniqueness of mind or to influence them in such a way as to deny them that uniqueness. Addressing this dynamic has been interesting in interviewing, with an intention to respect the other personøs uniqueness; through respecting that uniqueness and asking clarifying questions, material which is more difficult for the interviewee to articulate develops. It is at this stage the possibility for development occurs, both for my interviewees and also for me. A key factor in attempting to interview NLP practitioners who would then provide good data and the possibility for such development was my ability to follow Argyris (1957) model of motivation pictorially displayed in figure 6 below.

The third of Myerøs important elements in Action Research is simultaneous contribution to social science and social change. As Professor of adult nursing and working in a clinical environment, she points out that there is increasing concern about the õtheory-practiceö gap. What õshouldö work according to the technical, rational and propositional forms of knowledge implicit within a positivist epistemology actually, in real life, does not work in the

messy, uncontrollable and unpredictable world of õreal lifeö. Ever since NLP began this has been an area NLP has exploited with Bandler and Grinder (1979) often being critical of academic psychology.

Figure 6 Motivational Factors after Argyris (1957)

In this dissertation my bias is this: I am not disputing the legitimacy of NLP as it clearly has been accepted by many people all over the world, what I am suggesting might be missing is validity and in talking to experienced NLP practitioners from around the world I am testing my belief in answering the question õWhat is NLP?ö and developing an operational epistemology to allow me and potentially other NLP practitioners and psychologists to move forward. As McNiff and Whitehead point out valid knowledge only comes as a function of rigorous methodological procedure and this procedure is accepted within academic circles as

having specific steps to follow to ensure rigour. NLP cannot claim to provide a contribution to Social Science if it has not demonstrated the methodological rigour which is regarded as appropriate to produce valid knowledge. It may be NLP is a paradigm that only tests for validity in the moment based upon anecdotal evidence. In defining and understanding NLP it is these questions I wish to pose and the answers I receive in my Action Research assist me develop my theory of NLP which can inform my practice and provide other people with a model to use should they wish to. As McNiff and Whitehead say:

> õAction research is a form of enquiry that enables practitioners everywhere to investigate and evaluate their work. They ask, õWhat am I doing?ö õWhat do I need to improve?ö õHow do I improve it?ö Their accounts of practice show them how they are trying to improve their own learning and influence the learning of others. These accounts come to stand as their own practical theories of practice, from which others can learn if they wish. (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006, p. 7).

A large part of this research has been involved in travelling this journey with fellow NLP practitioners and as my theory has developed I have fed this back into the community to which I belong, not only to test the theory and request feedback but also to inform and assist in its development. An email from the Managing Director of ANLP concerning this process provides a sense of the utility this provides:

> õHi Bruce, Thank you for the long and detailed email, much appreciated.

> í .your email has some interesting thoughts within in that match what Andy Coote and I have been discussing from an ANLP/NLP marketing perspective. Would you mind if I shared the information with him for two reasons:

1. It could be useful and relevant information to a paper Andy is currently preparing for the NLP Conference.

2. It could be considered as an interesting topic for a future issue of Rapport (either research or author interview or just within the NLP section).

Of course, if we were to use anything in the paper, it would be referenced back to youí Thanks Bruceö (Personal communication, Mon 1ˢᵗ September, 2014 10:58).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, (IPA)

Introduction

The commitment in phenomenology is to discover intervieweesø meanings and respecting their views of the world. It was thus believed that IPA would be an ideal methodology to discover the true definition of NLP, with one data stream being interviews of a selection of NLP practitioners, many of whom were taught directly by the Co-Founders of NLP and were practicing NLP in the 1970øs when NLP originated.

The theoretical underpinnings of IPA are Phenomenological, Interpretative and Idiographic and whilst the method started in health psychology it is now used in management, counselling, medicine and the humanities. Smith (2010) says IPA prioritizes a rich idiographic account, after which patterns are explored, also allowing a dialogue with extant literature on the topic under investigation. In the example he gives of pain management he states that IPA provides data that simply cannot be obtained with a quantitative instrument. (Smith, 2010).

A core principle of phenomenology is to go back to the things themselves and focus on experience in its own terms. The ontology of NLP is similar to the ontology of IPA, as Heidegger argued, phenomenology is hermeneutic and literally to perceive is to project our

own interpretation onto the thing perceived. Thus, there is no objectivity as we, as researchers, are a part of the field we are investigating, influencing it and being influenced by it.

IPA takes great care with each case and is slow to move towards general nuanced accounts of similarities and differences between cases. Being the opposite to the nomothetic paradigm which tends to analyse at a group level and comparing means.

IPA Sampling

IPA makes use of purposive sampling (Smith, 2008, p. 56, 2010) and can be described in the following way: õPurposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling, is a type of non-probability sampling technique. Non-probability sampling focuses on sampling techniques where the units that are investigated are based on the judgement of the researcherö (Lund Research Ltd, 2012).

Within the wide range of sampling strategies open to an IPA researcher I made use of expert sampling. Lund Research Ltd (2012) provides examples of the many different types of purposive sampling and below I explain why I reject others in favour of Expert purposive sampling:

1. **Homogeneous sampling** is a purposive sampling technique that aims to achieve a homogeneous sample. With a 40 year history of disputing behind NLP, it was not my expectation that I would obtain a homogeneous sample. From the outset, I began to discover that if I did make use of this sampling technique, using a snowball methodology, I would inevitably skew my sample towards a particular clique within a paradigm which is noted for its diversity.

2. **Typical case sampling** is a purposive sampling technique used when you are interested in the normality/typicality of the units. As interviewee 10 puts it:

> õI said everybody there runs some sort of training company they all have a commercial interest, we all have a commercial interest in NLP. They have a commercial interest at the moment; they have a commercial interest in their type of NLP working, their type of NLP being more successful than somebody else's type of NLP. And we are not ready for that yet as a field because the field is not widely recognised enough outside of the field. So I think the analogy I used in my book was about food, Sainsbury's and Tesco and Aldi can all scratch each other's eyes out because we all know we need food, we know that so they can overtly compete with each other and they do say in their adverts our Price is better than Sainsbury's, we'll price match Tesco's. They can do that because they are actively competing for our attention because we know we need food. We are not yet in a position as a field for people to know that we are a solution, when we get to the stage that NLP is recognised as a solution, a potential solution for whatever it is, then we are at a stage when we can say then my solution is better than your solutionö (Interviewee 10, 21:35-22:53)

As an insider to NLP myself I suspected, in the sense used above, that there was no õnormalityö currently for NLP so typical case sampling was rejected for this reason.

3. **Extreme (or deviant) case sampling** is a type of purposive sampling that is used to focus on cases that are special or unusual, typically in the sense that the cases highlight notable outcomes, failures or successes. As an NLP insider for 20 years I felt that as interviewee 10 pointed out, NLP is not sufficiently recognised as a solution, and coming into this research I would suggest, not sufficiently developed, in order to have a deviation from any norm.

Indeed, this research seeks to understand if there is a norm concerning exactly what NLP is and in listening to experienced NLP practitioners within the field and triangulating their data with other sources I might be able to detect some patterns of note. It is for this reason extreme case sampling was rejected.

4. **Critical case sampling** is a type of purposive sampling technique that is particularly useful in exploratory qualitative research, research with limited resources, as well as research where a single case (or small number of cases) can be decisive in explaining the phenomenon of interest. Even though there were many characteristics of critical case sampling that were attractive to me, it was rejected on two inter-related counts. It is limited to a small number of cases and consequently its generalizability is usually low. Further, given that NLP appears to be such a diverse field, if I had too few samples it could be the case that I would increase the probability of missing a crucial element which made up NLPøs ontology, methodology or epistemology and consequently develop a grounded theory which missed key elements.

5. **Total population sampling** is a type of purposive sampling technique where you choose to examine the entire population (i.e., the total population) that have a particular set of characteristics. This was rejected quite simply because it was beyond the scope of this research to interview every NLP practitioner around the world.

6. **Expert sampling** is a type of purposive sampling technique that is used when your research needs to glean knowledge from individuals that have particular expertise. This expertise may be required during the exploratory phase of qualitative research, highlighting potential new areas of interest or opening doors to other participants. Alternately, the particular expertise that is being investigated may form the basis of your research, requiring a focus only on individuals with such specific expertise. Expert sampling is particularly useful where there is a lack of empirical evidence in an area and high levels of uncertainty, as well

as situations where it may take a long period of time before the findings from research can be uncovered. Therefore, expert sampling is a cornerstone of a research design known as expert elicitation.

Expert sampling seemed to meet all the criteria of this research. By talking with experts I could realistically reduce the number down from the õtotal populationö without missing anything. My operational assumption is experts with their experience would collectively cover the huge scope of activity within the NLP community, without the need to talk, hierarchically speaking with people lower down on account of less experience and possibly less understanding. In this sense a grounded theory could still generalise with credibility. Also it was important **not** to use NLP experts as the sole data point for a grounded theory of NLP. Thus this research falls very much into the category of developing a grounded theory which is exploratory in nature rather than definitive. As interviewee 10 pointed out above a characteristic of NLP is its commercial nature and many NLP practitioners could have a commercial incentive to bias their interpretation for commercial reasons. Also as pointed out by interviewee 10 there are many competing theories of what NLP is. Data sources from the extant NLP literature and from a group of motivated and interested professionals outside of the field of NLP would provide the opportunity to triangulate interpretations and consequently develop a theory which is more robust and less subjective.

The disadvantages of purposive sampling is it is difficult to defend against researcher bias. However a characteristic of IPA is that it is insiders who conduct the research on the premise they understand the domain at a higher level than an outsider and therefore can develop greater rapport and elicit meanings which have greater explanatory value and validity. Having researchers who understood NLP on account of training and experience was very much the concern of both Einspruch and Forman (1985) and Gray et al. (2013) and it was felt in order to õbuild bridgesö between the psychology community and the NLP community and

hopefully begin to develop some cross fertilisation this criterion should be adhered to. As Smith and Osborn point out:

> õAt the same time, IPA also emphasizes that the research exercise is a dynamic process with an active role for the researcher in that process. One is trying to get close to the participantøs personal world, to take, in Conradøs (1987) words, an ¬insiderøs perspectiveø ö (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

The Interview process

The relationship between the õInsiderö and the field of research is visually represented by Smith (2010) below in figure 7

In talking about this relationship Smith points to a double hermeneutic, the participant is attempting to make sense of their experience and what they mean, and the researcher is attempting to make sense of the participants making sense of their experience. As already mentioned this can be a mutually influencing process in meaning making and consequently as a dynamic process both researcher and participant can emerge with a more evolved thinking.

Figure 7. The research circle. Smith (2010).
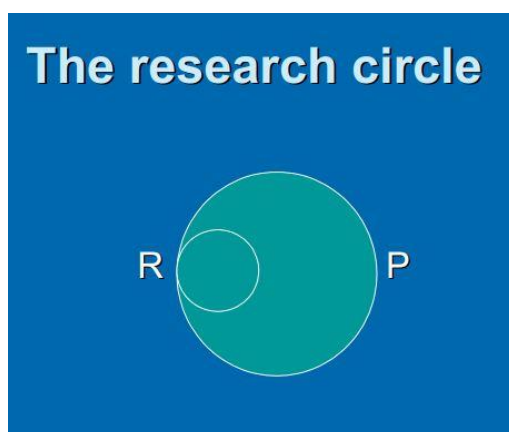
Whilst interviewing my Participants often the experience was a whole body experience, beliefs were questioned with the intention of understanding more fully so as to represent not just superficial understandings and positioning concerning what NLP is, but also to understand the deeper positions which were foundational.

Psychophenomenology offers refinements to IPA (Smith & Osborn, 2008) and Tosey and Mathison tell us psychophenomenology (Vermersch, 2004) offers enhancements to phenomenological interviewing. They say:

> õIt is a form of guided introspection that seeks to develop finely-grained first-person accounts by using distinctions in language, internal sensory representations and imagery that have been incorporated from neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) (Bandler & Grinder 1975a). It is also a participative, relational and developmental form of interviewing, in the sense that the interviewee can gain significant insight into their experience; the process is not concerned purely with data gathering.ö (Tosey & Mathison, 2010).

Interestingly Tosey and Mathison conclude:

> õWe have argued that in psychophenomenology the researcher needs insights into the epistemological dimensions of different syntactical structures and levels of abstraction, and skills in the subtleties of questioning, directing, commanding, suggesting and giving permission to explore further. These are subtleties which may be lacking in more conventional approaches to phenomenological inquiry such as IPA. Psychophenomenology therefore represents an interesting attempt to bring greater rigour to the use of guided introspection to organizational research. (Tosey & Mathison, 2010).

They argue that Psychophenomenology offers refinements to the precision of phenomenological methods such as IPA and psychophenomenology has innovated by drawing from NLP.

I thus paradoxically find myself using a methodology that possibly benefits from NLP in order to fully understand what NLP is. However like NLP this approach suffers itself from a lack of scientific support:

> õDespite a long tradition of phenomenological research, Gibson and Hanes acknowledge (2003, p. 193) that it has no prescribed method. Giorgi (1985, p. 25) ascribes the lack of a clear methodology for such research to the notion that phenomenology itself is an emergent knowledge system: ‑Neither psychological phenomenology nor psychology as a human science is as yet a well-founded, fully mature discipline; both are only in the process of coming into beingøö (Tosey & Mathison, 2010).

In discussing phenomenological approaches Tosey and Mathison (2010) point out that a psychology that looks at brain states and behaviour but misses out on how people experience the world cannot be complete and cite Velmans (1999). Often psychology as a discipline mistrusts first-hand accounts because of the unreliability of them. Tosey and Mathison argue that this missing gap of experience can be more reliably filled when psychophenomenology focuses on the subtleties of language and the associated inner landscapes. By doing this, it is argued the researcher can distinguish more accurately between their own constructs and those of the interviewee. They critique existing phenomenological methods, saying: õIt also highlights the risk that existing phenomenological methods may be gaining imprecise accounts, or inappropriately interpreting accounts through the researcherøs constructs and presuppositions despite their conscious intent to do otherwise.ö(Tosey & Mathison, 2010)

It is quite clear that Tosey and Mathison (2010) themselves believe that the improved Psychophenomenology methodology which draws from NLP assists the researcher in dealing with the double hermeneutic described above.

In understanding what NLP is IPA has been used in this research as a methodology despite its lack of development and no prescribed method because, firstly this research rejects the idea a researcher can stand outside of his / her field of interest and objectively observe without influencing and being influenced, and secondly because of the assumption the more we embrace the qualitative side of the research spectrum and the associated assumptions, the more we can develop ways of understanding more precisely the experiences of people and groups of people and how this experience interacts with the dynamics of such systems as measured in more positivist ways. This is a very different set of assumptions from the researcher, who in seeking to understand the structure of subjective experience, believes through using questionnaires which have undergone a comprehensive item analysis, factor analysis and standardisation of both materials and administration and by adhering to this bubble of õobjectivityö they somehow will obtain more objective data that will reliably understand and validly predict performance through the intervening fuzzy variables of attitude, personality, ability, motivation, character and context to name a few. Such approaches may get us in the õBall parkö, however they do not account for the theory-practice gap so often experienced in real life as a result of the exacerbation of the õknowing thatö and õknowing howö dichotomy. McNiff and Whitehead cite Schon (1995) who says: õIt is time to develop a new scholarship which demonstrates a new epistemology, a new way of knowing that meets the everyday needs of people working in real-life situations.ö (McNiff & Whitehead 2000, p1).

Introducing myself to my NLP expert participants I did develop a standard pro forma to read from in order to provide the frame (see appendix A) and standardise the questions (see

appendix B). However as I became more adept at interviewing and after consultation with one of my supervisors in particular, as mentioned above I developed a more open approach, allowing the NLP participant to talk more freely and not being concerned myself with getting all of my questions in.

Grounded Theory

Introduction

What Tosey and Mathison (2010) propose NLP brings to psychophenomenology is an emphasis on process and structure in the interview process rather than on content. One criticism of NLP is that in terms of its own structure and process there is no unifying Meta Theory, which ties NLP all together, identifying it specifically as NLP. Grimley says:

õHaving a theoretical orientation is important if any discipline is to grow. If this were not the case we would still think Malaria was caused by bad air, (Methane). Even though shutting windows reduced the incidents of Malaria it did so for the õwrong reasonsö. Only when Alphonse Laveran developed the theory that Malaria was caused microscopic parasites carried by Mosquitoes could more effective advances be made. This is very much the current case with NLP.ö (Grimley 2013b)

One of the Participants in the psychology forum discussing the authenticity of NLP puts it this way:

õThe swish technique is in fact cognitive psychology, nothing specific to NLP. The mere fact of bringing together techniques based on several theoretical backgrounds does not make it a theory, it just makes it a bunch of techniques. Moreover, the NLP "practitioners" do not have a theoretical background to substantiate their "techniques". Actually, this is my last comment on NLP as I do not think it is worth a debate.ö (Ouellette in Munro, 2013)

In analysis not only was this comment coded as õtheoryö and õtechniquesö but also it was coded as õNLP not worthy to discussö.

It is probably worth reiterating what Dilts says about NLP at this juncture:

> õNeuro-Linguistic Programming is the discipline whose domain is the structure of subjective experience. It makes no commitment to theory, but rather has the status of a model ó a set of procedures whose usefulness not truthfulness is to be the measure of its worthö (Dilts et al. 1980, Forward to Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Para 2)

However as is often the case concerning the paradox of NLP other well-known figures within the NLP community say the opposite. It is important here to make use of a full quote in order to appreciate the difference and also the challenge of creating a coherent grounded theory of NLP which accounts for these differences:

> õIn the field of NLP, there is no consistent use of the term, model, patterns, techniques, etc. In this volume we have attempted to use the following as a way to distinguish a small-caps model and a big-caps Model (a Model with a capital M). First there has to be a theory which establishes the theoretical descriptions, background, foundation, hypothesis, etc. and which offers an explanatory model for how the model or a system works. An explanatory model will involve the governing ideas of the model and how to test and how to test and refine the ideas that will then lead to the creation of new applications. A model will present an idea (a hypothesis) that can be tested and falsified and can answer the *why* does this work questions. What explains this experience or process? Does the model have construct validity?

A theory functions as a way of bringing together a multitude of facts into a comprehensive order and when it does, it allows us to make reasonably precise predictions. A theory then is a tentative expression of a regular pattern.

Now, in spite of possible protests to the contrary, NLP does have a theory. Declaring that NLP was a model and not a theory was perhaps good public relations, but it doesnøt exclude the model from having a theory behind it. The hidden theory in NLP can be seen in the ÷NLP presuppositionsø and as such establishes NLP on the premises of constructionism, phenomenology, and on cognitive psychologyö (Hall & Rose Charvet, 2011, pp. 365-366).

Grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) its main idea is to develop higher level understanding that is õgroundedö in, or derived from, a systematic analysis of data. Grounded theory is appropriate when the study of social interactions or experiences aims to explain a process, not to test or verify an existing theory. Researchers approach the question with disciplinary interests, background assumptions and an acquaintance with the literature in the domain, but they neither develop nor test hypotheses. Rather, the theory emerges through a close and careful analysis of the data.

Key Features of Grounded theory

Grounded theory methods emerged from the sociologists Glaser and Straussøs collaboration during the 1960s. Interestingly this was the time that quantitative methodologies were beginning to become popular and the contrast to that approach and epistemology becomes clearer as one contrasts the positivist epistemology as described by Charmaz (2008) with the features of grounded theory outlined in this section. Charmaz (2008) says of the positivist paradigm:

ōThese methods were rooted in positivism, or the assumption of a unitary scientific method of observation, experimentation, logic and evidence. Positivistic beliefs in scientific logic , objectivity and truth supported and legitimized reducing qualities of human experience to quantifiable variables. Positivistic methods assumed an unbiased and passive observer, the separation of fact from value, the existence of an external world separate from scientific observers and their methods, and the accumulation of knowledge about this world. Hence, positivism led to a quest for valid instruments, replicable research designs, and reliable findings.ö Charmaz (2008, Kindle location, 1737).

Lindard et al. (2008) tell us the key features of grounded theory are its iterative study design, theoretical (purposive) sampling, and system of analysis. An iterative study design entails cycles of simultaneous data collection and analysis, where analysis informs the next cycle of data collection. Analysis of the subsequent phase of data collection will lead to further adaptations of the data collection process to refine the emerging theory. In keeping with this iterative design, the sampling process proceeds on theoretical grounds. The sample is not set at the outset but is selected purposefully as the analysis progresses, participants are chosen for their ability to confirm or challenge an emerging theory. The central principle of data analysis in grounded theory research is constant comparison. As issues of interest are noted in the data, they are compared with other examples for similarities and differences. Through the process of constant comparison, for which a number of formal approaches are available, emerging theoretical constructs are continually being refined through comparisons with fresh examples from ongoing data collection, which produces the richness that is typical of grounded theory analysis. Iterative study design, theoretical sampling, and system of analysis are intimately related. An iterative study design requires theoretical sampling for iterations to be meaningful, and constant comparative analysis allows the integration of new and existing

data in this iterative cycle, towards a well-grounded theory. Therefore, a study must use all three of these features to allow the emergence of new conceptual models that extend beyond conventional thinking.

Charmaz puts the challenge of undertaking Grounded theory well, characterising the double hermeneutic in IPA described by Smith (2008): ðHow can you give all your data a fair reading, rather than selecting only what interests you? How can you recognize multiple frames of reference and avoid misinterpreting data which flow from a frame of reference different from your own? (Charmaz 2008)

The distinguishing characteristics of grounded theory methods (see Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) include:

- simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis phases of research

- developing analytic codes and categories from the data, not from preconceived hypotheses

- constructing middle-range theories to understand and explain behaviour and processes

- memo-writing ó that is, analytic notes to explicate and fill out categories

- making comparisons between data and data, data and concept, concept and concept

- theoretical sampling ó that is, sampling for theory construction to check and refine conceptual categories, not for representativeness of a given population

- delaying the literature review until after forming the analysis. (Charmaz, 2008).

Where this research has strayed from the above is in delaying the literature review until after forming the analysis. As already mentioned it seems if someone engages in action research and already has disciplinary interests, background assumptions and an acquaintance with the literature, effectively being an insider on account of examining a subject which they hold a

strong interest in, it will be inevitable that they will have strong biases and even unconscious beliefs concerning the research area. This is recognised by Blumer (1969) who coined the phrase ‑senisitizing conceptsö to characterize the research interests and set of general concepts which grounded theorists often begin their studies with. Even if they are relatively new to the subject they research, life experience will inevitably provide a set of filters which are idiosyncratic, deleting some themes and expanding on others which resonate with previously filtered material. It seems much better to formally acknowledge this and declare it where possible and then correct for it in the coding, memo writing, comparison and theoretical sampling, rather than pretend it does not exist, paying homage to such a stance through the simple delaying a literature review. By using this method, the reader can then see more clearly how the researchers biases have pushed the research in a certain direction and make their own adjustments, if necessary, in their interpretation of the research. This method is much more in tune with an ontology which insists we construct our knowledge and are intimately connected to our field of research in a dynamic way. Interestingly the notion of soaking and poking (Fenno, 1978), or as Rock (1979) describes it õimmersed in field experienceö and relying on a kind of implicit uptake as in NLP, was superseded by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and a texturing of positivism, as Charmaz portrays:

> õGlaser and Strauss built on their qualitative predecessorsø implicit analytic procedures and research strategies and made them explicit. Earlier qualitative researchers had taught generations of students through mentoring and immersion in field experience (Rock, 1979). Glaser and Straussøs written guidelines for conducting qualitative research changed that oral tradition. The epistemological assumptions, logic and systematic approach of grounded theory methods reflects Glaserøs rigorous quantitative training at Columbia University. Strong links to symbolic interaction,

with its stress on human reflection, choice and action, stem from Strauss's training at the University of Chicago with Herbert Blumer and Robert Park." (Charmaz, 2008)

The ontology of the self can to some extent be appreciated when one sees how the founder of symbolic interactionism regarded its formation and by implication the questions such a self would generate:

"The self is something which has a development: it is not initially there at birth but arises in the presence of social experience and activity, that is, develops in a given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process ..The self ...is essentially a social structure and it arises in social experiences". (Mead, 1934, p. 135).

Contrasted with the more asocial trait theory in traditional psychology, the self is constantly developing in the presence of social experience and activity, as indeed are the meanings created and the questions which arise. Despite the positivist influence of Glaser, Grounded theory and its links to symbolic interactionism suggest the self and associated meanings are constantly being constructed in a social manner and any impermeability of these are more linked to the emotional considerations which Bateson above commented on than the existence of hypothetical structures such as "intelligence" or "personality".

Mead of course recognised that there is an element of permanence to the self and Damon (1983) succinctly puts this observation into written form:

"Although a person's self-knowledge is socially influenced, nevertheless self-knowledge is not totally dependent, at least from moment to moment, upon the views and opinions of others. Although self-knowledge is diverse and multifaceted, there is

also coherence and stability in a personøs identity over time and contextö (Damon, 1983, p. 12).

Mead made his own process / content distinction to overcome this paradox, calling the õIö the self as subject, and the õMeö the self as object. Whilst the õMeö described what was known about somebody; their clothes, possessions, manner of thinking, religious beliefs and so forth, the õIö described the active process of experiencing contrasted with the content of that experience which is the õMeö. It is therefore possible within a Grounded Theory methodology, especially when supported by IPA and the suggested benefits which Tosey and Mathison propose in focusing on process rather than content, that during the interview process a dyadic interaction occurs whereby the õIö, is changed and new meaning, the õMeö emerges for both parties.

It is important to recognise when using Grounded Theory that it is not a preliminary exercise in refining a quantitative approach, but an epistemology and ontology that sits at the opposing end of the of the epistemological spectrum. Having said this it is clear with the influence of Glaser concessions are made to positivism in generating an ultimate theory, which in the moment is expected to have an element of predictive power.

One of the limitations of a positivist approach to scientific enquiry is that it can quite easily become stuck within the limits and range of that which can be quantified through a statistical paradigm, this experience is nicely alluded to by Neisser in the context of psychological research into memory:

õIn short the results of a hundred years of the psychological study of memory are somewhat discouraging. We have established firm empirical generalizations, but most of them are so obvious that every 10 year old knows them anyway. We have made

discoveries, but they are only marginally about memory; In many cases we don't know what to do with them, and wear them out with endless experimental variations. (Neisser, 1982, p.11).

Striking a balance between what is unique and excellent and what is statistically probable and therefore predictable is needed when working with Grounded Theory. Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001) misunderstand psychology when they critique it saying:

õIt is patently absurd to collapse the performances of a number of different subjects and average across their responses to determine whether there is a pattern. In fact to collapse such performances and average them guarantees that any pattern that may be present will be obscuredö (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001, p. 82).

Psychologists using a positivist paradigm generate these data sets, not in order to collapse the performance of a number of different subjects, but to create a context where they can identify excellence and then if possible benchmark it. This misunderstanding of Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001) demonstrates a lack of knowledge concerning the practice of psychology.

It is within the possibilities that a dynamic paradigm which emphasises meaning and seeks to elicit it from experts in the field, yet despite the ontological position that knowledge is individually and socially constructed, seeks also to work in a methodical way and generate a meaningful Grounded Theory that will predict and possibly even create future events that this research is carried out. Working in this way there is a recognition that one is not discovering õtruthö, however rather in a social process creating õtruthö. This will be my truth and in line with Action Research, others are free to learn from it and create their own truths about NLP and what it is. My responsibility is to move forwards on the basis of the õtruthsö I have discovered about both NLP and myself.

Chapter 4

Findings

Introduction

In this chapter I will present a grounded theory of NLP and describe how I arrived at this theory using the methodologies described in chapter 3. Inevitably using an interpretive approach this theory is only one of many competing theories which could be drawn from the data. However by being as methodical as possible I am hoping to make a case that the theory has validity. Further I intend to use this grounded theory as evidence within the profession of psychology that I am using NLP in both an ethical and professional way.

Anonymity of NLP practitioners

As someone who had practiced NLP for 20 years I already had a large degree of insider information to call upon. In writing up my dissertation I quickly made a decision to keep the identities of the contributors anonymous. This decision was partly to emphasise the positivist aspect of the research which attempts to get at the õbeefö and to marginalise that within NLP which is based rather on personality. Brown writes:

> õIf we remove from the NLP equation the grinning, flaccid course junkies, delusional flower fairies and ridiculous tactile businessmen, and some of the taken-as-read wild claims made by NLPers at all levels, there are some sensible enough tools and techniques from that world which are worth knowing about, as long as you donøt become a true believerö (Brown, 2007, p. 186).

And again later in the same text: õThe shining stars of NLP thus are tagged with the buzzword ÷geniusøand become the sum of their anecdotes.ö (Brown, 2007, p. 129).

Brown points out that within NLP the subject of testing is generally mocked and that personality is what seems to dominate what he calls powerful change: õItøs not hard to take people from a group of suggestible, enthusiastic believers and have them experience what appears to be powerful change in front of an audience. That comes down to understanding charisma and performance. He (Bandler) certainly excels in those areasö (Brown, 2007, p. 175).

By keeping contributors anonymous it is hoped that the readerøs attention can focus on the quality of discussion, rather than who said it. It is also hoped that anonymity will provide a context where the NLP practitioners who participated can talk more freely about what they believe NLP is, knowing that they will not be identified in the text.

The key research question driving data collection to inform theory

As mentioned above, King et al. (1994) tells us the 4 components of qualitative research are usually not developed separately or in any preordained order. My first point of call after developing a research question was to talk to an NLP practitioner who was also a research psychologist. At this time I rather naively wanted to jump in with my own biases and ask the research questions õWhat is missing from NLP and what would be needed to develop a university curriculum?ö Indeed my interviews, although asking the question õwhat is a definition of NLP?ö asked this question in the context of many other questions, concerning NLP curricula, missing elements within NLP, and why, despite 40 years of history NLP was still regarded by many professionals as Pop Psychology. However as time passed I recognised my original questions provided too large a research project and settled for what I

believe was the most foundational of the questions to form the basis of this dissertation: õWhat is NLP?ö

Extant NLP literature

The reason for using extant NLP literature was to triangulate with the data provided in the interviews. For instance on one occasion, when contrasting and comparing data, I provided an NLP practitioner with a particular point of view. They got back to me telling me I was completely wrong. When I pointed out these were their exact words, providing both text, edition and page number, they were put into the interesting state mentioned in chapter 3 where new meaning can emerge, providing individuals are open to the ongoing process of meaning making. On some occasions this was a difficult process in getting to õthe beefö, however in order to stick to a methodology that sought systematic variation as a basis for a grounded theory of NLP, it was necessary to be quite vigilant in this respect.

Another reason for using extant NLP literature as a secondary source for this research is that in building a grounded theory it provided me with material to compare and contrast the primary data of what NLP practitioners actually said during their interview. Given that interviewing and transcribing is a time consuming practice, it also provided me with an alternative to conducting a complete second round of interviews to expand upon points made in the first interviews. Where I felt it was necessary to contact the participants again to clarify a particular point of view, or indeed put to them an alternative perspective to either develop or consolidate a direction the theory was taking I did so on an ad hoc basis. Having this secondary data source available in this research, capitalised on my own understanding of NLP as required by Einspruch and Forman (1985) and also expanded the scope upon which a grounded theory could be built.

A non NLP perspective

The purpose of including a data stream from outside of NLP was to offset a possible bias in building a grounded theory of NLP based solely on adherents of NLP and their writings. As Brown, who is not an adherent of NLP, notes above: there is the possibility that the nature of NLP is such that adherents provide a perspective that is highly subjective and not based upon a full critical evaluation of the process and evidence. By including a discussion in a psychology forum which ran to 44,000 words, I felt this was an opportunity to draw from professionals who had been trained in psychology to comment upon the feasibility of NLP and what it was from their perspective. It was an informed perspective, as being practitioners of the science of thinking and behaviour, they were familiar with some of the tenets of NLP and many of the theoretical strands NLP had drawn from within psychology. Some also had read classic NLP texts and in some cases were trained in NLP themselves. There were 19 contributors to this forum, the majority coming from a psychology background. As Sharpley noted in 1987 and when replying to Einspruch and Forman (1985), it is feasible that when commenting on and even researching into NLP, one does not need the training Einspruch and Forman suggested, merely an understanding of the particular aspect of NLP under investigation. Indeed it is possibly this more objective assessment of NLP that was not influenced by the kind of charisma and performance that Brown (2007) mentions within NLP, was responsible for the findings that there is no such thing as preferred representational system (PRS) as demonstrated by the review of empirical research, and as recognised by Dr John Grinder some 40 years later (Grinder & Pucelik, 2013, p. 214).

Coding

Coding is the method by which the data corpus is abstracted conceptually and then reintegrated into a grounded theory. There are two types of coding in grounded theory.

Substantive coding works on the data directly, fracturing and analysing it so core categories and concepts can emerge through open coding. Subsequently selective coding is used to inform theoretical sampling and bring the analysis to a point when, through constant comparison of the data, no further concepts can be derived, this is known as theoretical saturation. This could be likened to the rotation of factors within Factor Analysis in order to develop themes within a data set, asking the question which rotation most effectively accounts for the data or is the best fit. Even when one finds the most effective rotation, other rotations will uncover themes in the same data not accounted for by the most effective rotation. This indeed is one of the limitations of Factor Analysis, which is a key method in questionnaire construction within the positivist epistemological camp. Kline points out: õIn principle components for example it is an artefact of the method that a general factor is produced, followed by a series of bipolar factors. Thus interpretation of these components as reflecting anything but their algebra is dubiousö (Kline, 1994, p. 56).

Kline explains that there is no one perfect or ideal solution in factor analysis as there is almost an infinity of mathematically equivalent sets of factors. In a similar way just as the extraction of themes is a function of the underlying algebra being projected onto the data set, to believe that somehow we can suspend our own neurology and not interpret the data we experience in grounded theory is feasible, is to stretch credibility. Thus different individuals with different topics of interest and unconscious filters will not only code the data differently, but will, through their questioning and observation extract the data from the field differently too. Essentially the pure concept of an inductive theory has to be rejected as indeed the idea within NLP of a õknow nothing stateö is rejected by some. Glaser tells us:

> õIn grounded theory the analyst humbly allows the data to control him as much as humanly possible, by writing a theory for only what emerges through his skilled

induction. The integration of his substantive theory as it emerges through coding and sorting is his verification that the hypotheses and concepts fit and work and are relevant enough to suggest. They are not proven; they are theoryö (Glaser, 1992, p.87).

Within each category, instances, known as indicators provide the texture to help us understand the properties and dimensions of each emerging category. In this way categorical themes emerge from concepts which have certain characteristics based upon the data corpus from which they are drawn. These instances which inform the emerging category to use Factor Analytic terms, õloadö into the category differentially. Some will be good examples and others not so good, but nevertheless examples, which texture the emerging category in a particular way. So for example under the category õconscious and first attentionö, Interviewee 5 said: õWe Live in a Society That's Very Unbalanced as a Result There Is This over Emphasis on Conscious Knowledge, on Categorisation and rather than Attending to Something Which Is in First Attention, that Is Our Sensory Experienceö (Interviewee 5, 1:31:30)

When put together with other instances this helps us appreciate that from the perspective of Interviewee 5, NLP can assist us in re-balancing an over-emphasis on conscious knowledge in present society. Thus, in understanding the answer to the question what is NLP? We have a clue that (for at least one practitioner) NLP should attend more to information which is at First Attention. This initial coding later became subsumed into the category õNLP epistemologyö. In comparing this with other Participants and the extant literature one discovers First attention is often unconscious. The more other participants mention something similar, the stronger this category becomes textured in this way. For instance Participant 1 spoke of NLP in terms of category which very generally is

linguistically mediated conscious material, and referred to as categorisation by participant 5, and also scope which is usually more sensory based and unconscious. She says concerning NLP: õSo on a very crude level scope is the unconscious and category is the conscious.ö (Interviewee 5, 26:28).

õMost of the things that bring people to therapy are unconscious responses that they have no control over, they don't have any conscious control over it. Most therapy tries to deal with this using conscious thinking and this is not where the action is. Just changing the punctuation of a sentence that someone is saying to themselves or changing the tonality as they say something to themselves, that is all unconscious as it is a basic small scope of experienceí that, for people is very impactful. Cognitive behavioural therapy for instance takes the conscious statement of somebody who is say depressed, and they play with the words of it they write down the words on a piece of paper, they write counter words down which is supposed to counter that and they write that down on a piece of paper and they tell people to say that all day long without anything to do with the tone of voice they use, like a sarcastic tone or a Mandarin Chinese tone and they have no idea how impactful that isö (Interviewee 5, 27:04).

So initially I can tentatively begin, to create a theoretical category of õEpistemology of NLPö and within that category the theory that NLP practice is defined by a focus of attention on scope of experience rather than / as well as categorisation of experience. However as I continued to code I discovered other NLP practitioners emphasised a more content oriented approach, training their NLP trainees in Meta programs and specific NLP patterns which were claimed to work, so the epistemology of NLP from this wider perspective became

problematical and was one aspect of this research which loaded into the final theoretical category of õLack of standardized Definition, curriculum and professional practice code. Critical of the discipline of Psychologyö

Coding Diary

These emergent ideas and thoughts were put into a coding diary to diarise the process and the thinking behind it, known as memoing in Grounded Theory (Holton, 2010). Memoing is described by Holton thus:

> õGrounded theoryøs tandem processes of coding and memoing help to alleviate the pressure of uncertainty by challenging the researcher to stop coding and capture, in the moment, their conceptual ideas about the codes that they are finding. As coding and memoing progress, patterns begin to emerge. Pattern recognition gives the researcher confidence in the coding process and in his or her innate creativity; it encourages the researcher to continue while offering guidance on where to go next in the data collection, coding, and analysis process.ö (Holton, 2010)

The above two transcripts could have been coded very differently, however as the object of my research was to discover õWhat is NLP?ö it was regarded by me as appropriate to form a theoretical category of epistemology, so that in answering the research question I can begin to answer it in epistemological terms. In terms of observable implications of such coding, one would thus expect to see such a focus and emphasis on the unconscious and First Attention. However on other occasions within NLP I could also expect to see a more content oriented approach with an emphasis on following the listed techniques correctly;

> õThen when somebody asks you, ─What is NLP?ø you can say, ─This is what we consider NLP,ø and it can also include different levels of technology. So, it can be

assumptions or anchoring as a principle or collapsing anchors as a technique, the steps. So, that can all be thrown into this list, because itøs that we, as NLPers agree, yes, yes, and yes and maybe it will have 100 items.ö (Interviewee 14, 48:45).

Holton says:

õMany who attempt grounded theory are captured by the energy of conceptual emergence at the substantive level and settle for a few good concepts but do not sustain the discipline and patience to systematically integrate those concepts through theoretical coding. This task is made more difficult if they have neglected the important process of memoing in conjunction with coding and analysis.ö (Holton, 2010)

Interestingly, just as a positive response to ambiguity and vagueness was a characteristic instrumental in the creation of NLP; Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001, p123), So too the analytical temperament for a grounded theorist seems to be something similar: õThe required analytic temperament will allow the researcher to maintain analytic distance from the data, tolerate regression and confusion, and facilitate a trust in the power of preconscious processing for conceptual emergence.ö (Holton, 2010).

What is clear is that both NLP and Grounded Theory like to act õAs ifö they can be conceptually neutral and rely on preconscious / unconscious processes to organise the sensory material in an emergent way.

However Andreas makes a telling comment when talking about the difference between NLP modelling and Analytical NLP modelling. The very same could be said for the grounded theorist attempting to code inductively:

"The essential difference of consequence between the process of NLP modelling and Analytic modelling is the relative contributions of the model and modeller to the final work product. This difference resides principally in the degree of imposition of the perceptual and analytic categories of the modeller during the modelling process--in the case of NLP modelling, the imposition is minimal, in the case of Analytic modelling, the imposition is maximal. Firstly, this statement seems to assume that the unconscious does not have "perceptual and analytic categories." I think there is ample evidence from hypnosis and experimentation that the unconscious does have these, and they can be at least as biased as conscious ones. So even the "minimal imposition" of the modeller in unconscious acquisition will be substantial.ö (Andreas, 2006).

My reasoning in emphasising the subjective nature of this research is the intention to allow the reader to continue to appreciate the nature of this research. With the positivist emphasis of Glaser within Grounded Theory, there is a danger that after reading the chapter on methodology in this research one somehow believes subjectivity is partialled out through the imposition of specific procedures, this really is not the case in my opinion. It is for this reason both Action Research and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis are called upon. I recognise this is my interpretation of ambiguous material and the meanings derived form the basis for my future actions. My use of grounded theory is in order to assist my interpretation be as valid as possible.

Abbott, in Saldana, likens the process of coding to decorating a room. However much one may arrange and re-arrange, the end result which makes sense is still to a great extent subjective, however that is OK as it is the researcher who has to õlive with itö and indeed validate to visitors: õAs you progress toward Second Cycle coding, there may be some

rearrangement and reclassification of coded data into different and even new categories. Abbott (2004) cleverly likens the process to "decorating a room; you try it, step back, move a few things, step back again, try a serious reorganization, and so on" (Saldana, 2009. p. 10).

The coding diary assisted me in the decoration of my room so to speak. As themes emerged and concepts began to develop into categories my diary provided space to compare and contrast, rearrange and view.

Coding and Software used; Nvivo and The Brain

Nvivo was used in order to do the intial substantive coding. What was found, as described above was the scope of my initial enquiry was too great and the assumptions which informed that scope consistently were challenged in my interviews, so I recognised the words of Glaser (1992) õIn grounded theory the analyst humbly allows the data to control him as much as humanly possibleö

My initial research question at Surrey University õCan NLP patterns be effectively used to reduce stress in the workplace?ö had altered through õwhat is missing from NLP and what would be in an NLP curriculum to create a degree?ö and õWhat is the definition of NLP?ö to simply õWhat is NLP?ö

During the coding process the concept of a definition was challenged on many counts: õDefinition can be narrow, and is itself a nominalisation. I would suggest that for me its more important to know the principles, postulates, applications, epistemology (sic), historical context of discovery in a cultural sense, , and so on.ö (Authenticity, Russel Dexter, 2014).

And again:

õBruce: If we say NLP works, itøs useful to know what NLP is. I know there are many definitions of NLP, but what is your definition of NLP and why?

Interviewee 6: Before I answer that Iøm also going to say I donøt like that phrase, I know a lot of NLPers use it, because itøs too general and thatøs probably what youøre getting at with the definition, I think. I would rather we talk about interventions that work, that we have evidence for, and I would also like us to talk about how NLP helps influence language patterns, etc. Itøs like saying, ₋Psychology works,ø to say, ₋NLP works.ø So, for me, thatøs one of the things thatøs got us into trouble, saying a blanket ₋NLP worksø frame. (Interviewee 6, 21:48-22:31, 2014).

As a result of these and many more observations suggesting the word definition is not useful for descriptive purposes, I settled for a research question of just õWhat is NLP?ö recognising that this could embrace evidence for NLP interventions which work, through the principles and epistemology of NLP, to NLP in a cultural and social sense, however allowing the coding process to determine exactly what those categories should be.

When cross referencing with the extant NLP literature I noticed that Tosey and Mathison, (2009) also refer to õNLP as a movementö examining the culture of õNLP as self-helpö, õNLP as a pursuit for excellenceö, õNLP as the Wild Westö and in rejecting NLP as a cult noticing that it can be seen as õa system of belief in which Guru-Like figures hold out the promise of changing lives and the hope of acquiring wealth and happiness, and may expect allegiance to their authority and their own brand of truth.ö (Tosey & Mathison, 2009, p. 174).
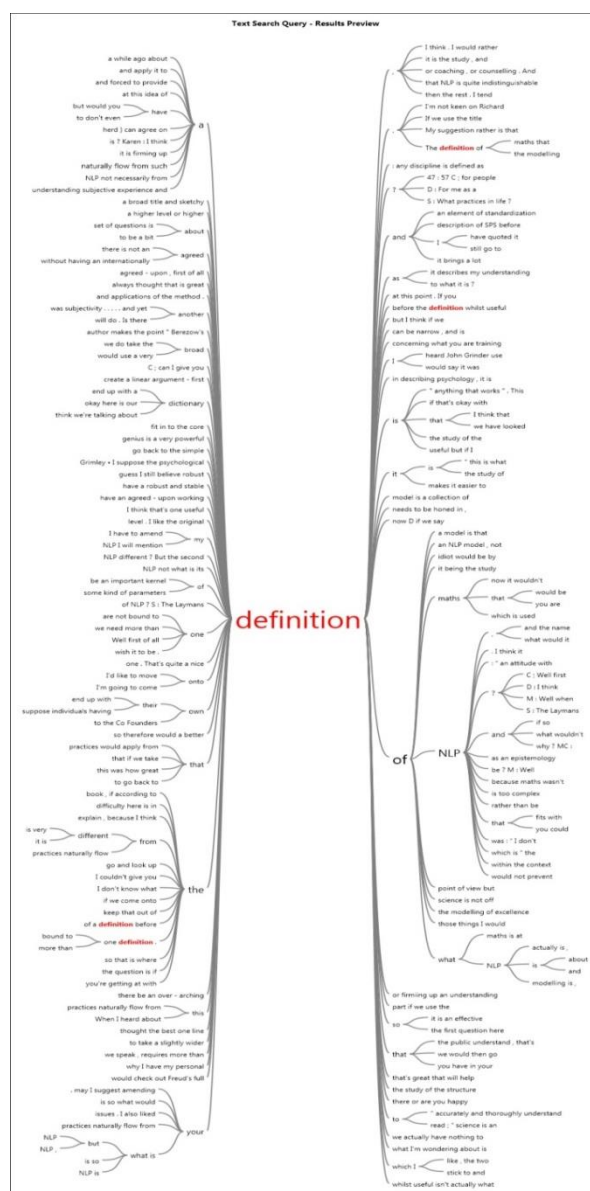
As a result of the substantive coding and subsequent theoretical coding of 15 transcripts from NLP practitioners and The Authenticity Forum Linked In discussion, 8 conceptual categories emerged. These were:

NLP "defined" by   1) Commercially motivated, with no coherent epistemology, ontology or methodology

2) Saturated in Anecdotal evidence

3) Lacking in published Empirical Evidence.

4) Historical and current disagreement

5) Wanting to be õacceptedö, but disappointed with the continual pattern of not being accepted by õmainstreamö

6) Development of break-out groups, dissatisfied with the culture of disagreement within NLP, sometimes using a different brand.

7) Lack of standardized Definition, curriculum and professional practice code. Critical of the discipline of Psychology

8) All practice generally being associated with worst practice

Given a concern by some Interviewees was that definition has the effect of narrowing down the practice of NLP in an inappropriate way it was an interesting finding that in conducting a word frequency count in the data corpus the word definition did not appear in the top 100. In fact it occurred only 150 times with the word psychologist appearing 151 times, (weighted percentage 0.07%) A possibility that it is psychologists who are more concerned with definition than NLP practitioners would be a useful avenue to explore, especially as we see in the developing epistemology of NLP that there is a concern for First attention at a sensory level rather than categorisation.

In order to develop these categories and compare them I found the moving between boxes and files in Nvivo rather cumbersome and found some software that allowed me to visually see the association between concepts and also make notes and import social media and web material. ōThe Brainö has been used for qualitative research by others and not only was it a useful piece of software for myself to help develop the substantive codes into concepts and finally categories, but also to disseminate this research around the world to those who might be interested to see how I developed my Grounded theory from the substantive coding.

Figure 8. Text search print out for "definition" Nvivo. (15 & 19 Participants)

Figure 9 below provides a visual portrayal of the word frequency count.

Figure 9 word frequency count Nvivo. (15 & 19 Participants)

Below, in figure 10, a snap shot of the early substantive coding in õThe Brainö can be seen. It will be appreciated by being able to see on one screen how coding an instance in many ways assisted in facilitating the emergence of higher level concepts and categories and eventually a grounded theory. By clicking on a particular concept this made it central on the screen and all the instances related to it became visible along with notes and associated web material imported. These instances could then be explored further by clicking on them. In this way not only was it possible to chunk down from concept to instance, but it was also possible to see how both the particular instance was also related to other concepts coded at that time as well as other instances within that concept. So not only were instances related to multiple conceptual codes, but also they were related to each other and through this relationship further conceptual codes emerged.

Throughout the substantive coding process new categories would appear as new instances fitted into existing categories, creating different categories at different levels. For instance the

following transcript of a public Video by Richard Bandler was initially coded in multiple ways; 1.NLP definition, 2. NLP practice, 3. NLP beliefs.

> õNeuro-linguistic programming came out of the work I did modelling the way people thought. What we did is solely unique. When I started out there were 40 schools of psychotherapy all arguing about who had the right approach when none of them could reliably do a single thing. They couldnøt fix phobias, they couldnøt do this, they couldnøt do that. Every once in a while they were successful, but most of the time they were so busy arguing about the theories.ö (NLP life training, 2008).

And

> õWe can, reliably, get rid of a phobia in 10 minutes every single time, because we found out, not by studying people that had phobias, but by finding people who had gotten over phobias and finding out how they did it, what they did at the neurological level and at the subjective level.ö (NLP life training, 2008).

However, on reflection after coding many other similar instances, the interaction of this õpracticeö õdefinitionö and õbeliefsö brought about other categories at different levels which subsumed these levels. These were õNLP as defined through professional relationships and within that õprofessionalismö. This in turn, when compared and contrasted with other instances became: NLP as a personality and within that; õNot taking enough consideration of the presuppositions of NLPö Eventually these two concepts converged to create the final category within the grounded theory of

õLack of standardized Definition, curriculum and professional practice code. Critical of the discipline of Psychologyö

Figure 10 Screen shot of "The Brain" used to do initial open coding alongside Nvivo
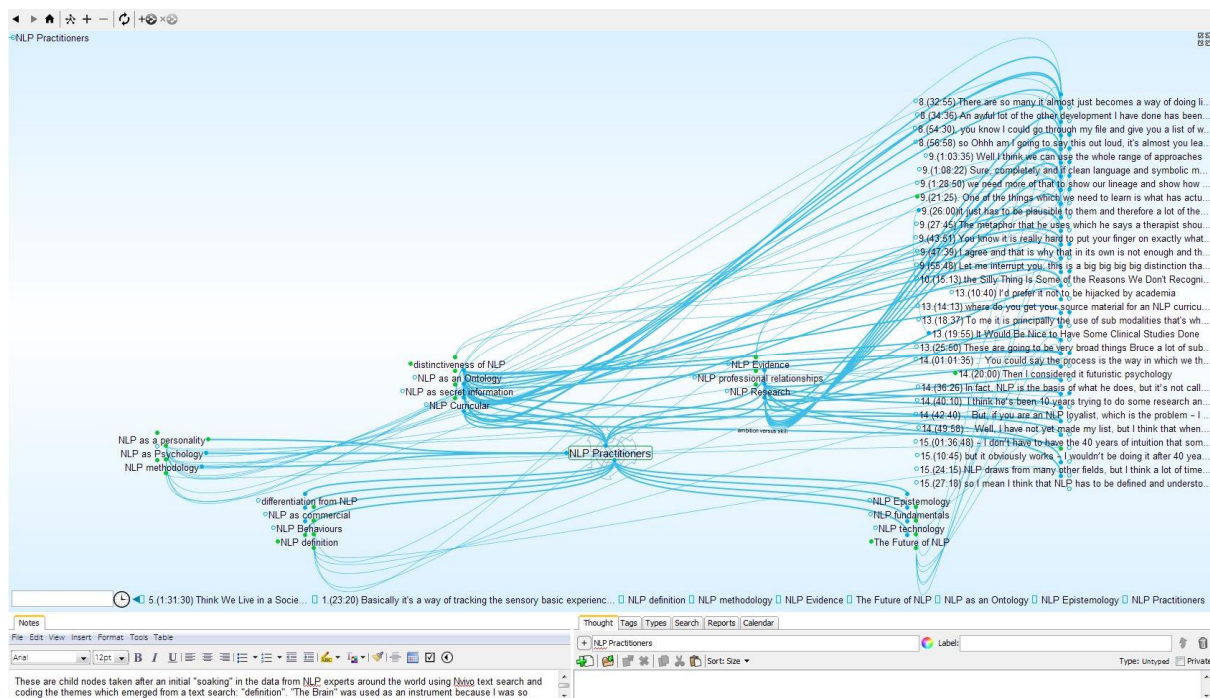
As this constant comparison generates more conceptual codes which can inform an answer to the research question, also it can help see if the data does indeed continue to support these emerging higher conceptual codes. The concept of professionalism in NLP was supported for instance by Interviewee 10:

> õI don't class myself as an NLP person at my identity level but probably what I do class myself at an identity level is a professional so I apply my professionalism to whatever field I happen to be in at the time so I was a professional as an accountant and therefore professional is knowing my scope of practice as an accountant I knew what I could do what I couldn't do I wouldn't stand there and say I can do a really complex tax return which has got inheritance tax and capital gains etc. etc., if you really want me to do your tax return the first thing I will say is I am not an expert on tax returns if you still really wanted me to do your tax returns I will do it if you have just got a P 60 and that's all that goes on your tax return fine but I knew my scope of

practice I knew what I could do I knew what I couldn't and that is part of being a professional which I am.ö (Interviewee 10 1:04:57 to1:05:48. 2014)

For Interviewee 10 a part of being a professional was to know his scope of experience, many of the conceptual codes which emerged from the open coding characterised other ways NLP practitioners generally seems to deal with this higher level concept of õprofessionalismö. For some they break out into groups where they can have greater control and impose professional and ethical standards as well as an epistemological and methodological base from which to work, for others there is continual disagreement as to what NLP is all about, and it is almost as though an argumentative culture is thrived upon, yet professionalism for many NLP Interviewees is displayed through an earnest desire to change this and provide standards. Tosey and Mathison observe:

õNLPøs body sometimes seems so fractured that it is difficult to imagine it recovering from its self-inflicted injuries. Due especially to the effects of litigation about intellectual property rights in NLP (Hall 2001), something appears to have died. The legal matter may have been resolved but itøs impact persists. To use an English cricket metaphor, NLP has been knocked for sixö (Tosey & Mathison, 2009, p. 191).

Others quite simply proclaim the commercial market place is the area where validation occurs and NLP, being legitimately accepted across the world means it works, otherwise why would people spend good money to be involved with it? In this sense they see themselves as being fully professional.

When contrasting the comments of Bandler above with the substantive codes from the LinkedIn discussion it seemed quite clear from both a professional and scientific perspective

the above statements displayed a lack of professionalism in terms of Interviewee 10's framing and that is to work within the scope of what one knows.

Grant and Cavanagh, (2004) summarize professional status as defined by several key criteria:

õ(1) Significant barriers to entry

(2) A shared common body of knowledge rather than proprietary systems

(3) Formal qualifications at university level

(4) Regulatory bodies with the power to admit discipline and meaningfully

sanction members

(5) An enforceable code of ethics

(6) Some form of state-sanctioned licensing or regulation for certain

professions or parts of professions.ö (Grant and Cavanagh, 2004, p. 3).

What was important in this research was to suspend personal bias and recognise that professionalism for NLP practitioners could be something else and indeed this research demonstrates that it is, and such a difference in perspectives leads to the formation of category 7 in the grounded theory.

In the next section I will explicate how precisely I came to the 8 core categories which have informed this grounded theory.

Coding specifically speaking

Category 1 commercially motivated,

A quick search on the World Wide Web will demonstrate you can easily pay over £3,000.00 for an NLP practitioner course, so for those at the top of the tree it is a very profitable ventureí ..to such an extent some have likened NLP to pyramid selling. A couple of comments from an on line blog signposted by participants in the Authenticity forum put such views into a typical perspective:

> õ í   I watched as line managers (not HR) and a third party NLP Master deceptively structured an NLP course under another guise, to avoid "forcing" staff into the training. That plan was scuttled when their deception was revealed by one of their targets.
>
> That said, I don't believe that it's a cult. But it should be prosecutable as a pyramid scheme.ö (comment in Clark 2006)

> õNLP is like financial pyramid, first two guys have idea how to manipulate a few people to make one million U.S. dollars, next of them like to be manipulated as they believed that there is so many others which follow them and also pay millions for that õwisdomö, problem is that at the end is a lot of NLP gurus and nobody new to manipulate ó frustrating, what a drama for fanatics, they spent so much money and time to stay NLP guru and now what? They only can attack and fight to the lastö (comment in Clark 2006)

Even though the above blog was designed to debunk NLP the ambivalent attitude towards the educational value of NLP courses is alluded to in a further comment:

"I well remember, when I worked for a giant further education (FE) college, the sense of chilled embarrassment that spread round the room when its Director of Human Resources, whom I reported to indirectly (whilst also representing over 1000 teaching staff in a trade union role during a period of very strained industrial relations), told us in complete seriousness that he was a Certified NLP practitioner." (Schmoller, 2006, in Clark 2006).

For those interested in NLP it is difficult to see past the possibility that the main driver and focus of developing NLP courses is commercial rather than educational. Historically the 1st and 2nd generations of NLP practitioners very quickly turned to selling training courses and it was this diaspora which led Sharpley to reviewing the research into NLP in 1984. If the heart of NLP was valid practice then one would have expected, in the wake of the Heap and Sharpley reviews an upturn in research, clarifying precisely what NLP was and good quality research which tested some of the NLP patterns. However as Witkowski, (2010), demonstrates, after the 1980's there was a downturn into NLP research and the interest has never returned, (figure 12), with an instance in the "Saturated in anecdotal evidence" category suggesting the topic is not even worthy of debate.

Tosey and Mathison (2009) point out the emphasis on modelling excellence and genius within NLP circles probably resonated with the commercial potential of NLP and they suggest NLP, in being packaged and sold as a commercial product, may lend weight to the view that NLP is a part of the self-help movement. This is congruent with the idealism of the American Dream and the promise of freedom and choice in one's life. Dale Carnegie taught us how to win friends and influence people, Norman Vincent Peal taught us how to think in a positive way, now NLP apparently teaches the masses how to model excellence. Multimillionaire Tony Robbins would be the poster boy for NLP if he did not fit into

category 6 of this grounded theory of NLP; õDevelopment of break out groups, dissatisfied with the culture of disagreement within NLP sometimes using a different brand.ö Instances which brought about the 1ˢᵗ Category in this theory are exemplified below.

Table 3. A section of substantive and theoretical coding leading to the development of the category: Commercially motivated (with no coherent epistemology, ontology or methodology)

Property of concept	Data Source	Example
NLP as a product, like any other which competes in the market place	NLP Interviewee 5 (34:00)	I suppose you think about it more from a free market point of view you think about all these different views and NLP is competing in the marketplace.
Awareness and emphasis on the importance of marketing in commercial success, independently of the quality of product.	NLP Interviewee 5 (35:15)	You can have a poor idea, an awful product that is marketed very well compared with a great idea that is marketed very poorly. Was it Beta Max or was it VHS I think Beta Max was a better product. But VHS was better marketed.
The implication currently it is more economically viable to do things inappropriately and unethically and this is how NLP sells its benefits. It is not economically viable to do things appropriately.	NLP Interviewee 6 (17:40)	Find a way of selling the benefits of doing it more ethically and looking at other ways that we might do it. And itøs possible that, even with other things going on, thereøs going to come a point where itøs actually economically viable to do things appropriately, because it will become more mainstream.
What constitutes knowing what one is doing in NLP is determined by the marketplace.	NLP Interviewee 7 (22:21)	We just do it and the marketplace will put out of business those who don't know what they are doing and don't have good protocols and who may try to do it based upon their personality rather than the process itself.
The purpose of NLP is to do business instead of doing research.	NLP Interviewee 7 (21:05)	I think NLP has not been interested in that because we see it working every day in people's lives and our purpose has been to do business instead of doing research
Some people in NLP are practicing NLP as a way of making money quickly with no quality or testing associated with the program.	NLP Interviewee 8 (11:30)	But where it is now I think it's in quite a dangerous place with what it appears to be some people almost abusing what I see as the philosophy of NLP and doing a quick win a quick moneymaking, I don't know, I find it hard to describe it but it worries me when I see things like online practitioner for you know hundred quid or whatever when there's going to be no face-to-face there's going to be no possible measurement of competence.
NLP definitions possibly designed to boost attractiveness and sales, rather than describing accurately what its purpose and mechanisms are.	NLP Interviewee 8 (31:45)	No I mean I sometimes I can reel off some of the official ones but I think sometimes some of those are more about marketing than actual definitions
Small businesses who run NLP courses are focused on the practice of business and not research.	NLP Interviewee8 (43:55)	Bruce: I guess really one of the questions I have here is what do you see as the challenges of robustly testing an NLP pattern, you have already answered that finance is a big one. 8: I think finance is big one and while it is individual people running their own businesses that is not their focus their focus in a business is making money not proving it works.
People will write cheques for thousands of pounds for dodgy everyone passes courses. Strong marketing and sales practice perceived by observers.	Authenticity Hammond	The discussion has also pointed out the very strong marketing machine. I have attended several free events just to observe the techniques and am amazed to watch people writing cheques for 1000s of pounds for dodgy-everyone-passes courses (that was actually a coaching course, but they're pretty indistinguishable in content). But go back 2 hours, and they had been subjected to full-on 'don't let them tell you you can't do it'. 'no one holds you back but yourself' 'seize your dreams' sort of stuff, plus of course the Olympian soaring music. And of course the groupthink stuff is also going on here - I wonder if there are twenty or so stooges who rush up straightaway to create a social norm of 'yeah do it!'
NLP practitioners with commercial organisations are more interested in customer satisfaction than with what actually works.	NLP Interviewee 9 (26:00)	Here is an important distinction. One of the things which I got from NLP, and especially Bandler was that what satisfies people is what satisfies them it doesn't have to be true, it doesn't have to be proved, it just has to be plausible to them and therefore a lot of the NLP trainings give stuff that satisfies the answer when even though it's rubbish, they give that and it satisfies people.
NLP although commercially motivated is not sufficiently organised as a field to convince the world they are a solution, but rather are perceived as weird, lentil eating,	NLP Interviewee 10(21:35)	Everybody there runs some sort of training company they all have a commercial interest, we all have a commercial interest in NLP. They have a commercial interest at the moment, they have a commercial interest in their type of NLP working, their type of NLP being more successful than somebody else's type of NLP. And we are not ready for that yet as a field

sandal wearing freaks who operate from a personal commercial interest perspective suggesting their type of NLP is better than somebody else's type of NLP.		because the field is not widely recognised enough outside of the field. So I think the analogy I used in my book was about food, Sainsbury's and Tesco and Aldi can all scratch each other's eyes out because we all know we need food, we know that so they can overtly compete with each other and they do say in their adverts our Price is better than Sainsbury's, we'll price match Tesco's. They can do that because they are actively competing for our attention because we know we need food. We are not yet in a position as a field for people to know that we are a solution, when we get to the stage that NLP is recognised as a solution, a potential solution for whatever it is, then we are at a stage when we can say then my solution is better than your solution. Whereas what we've got is that mentality where everybody accepts and understands, because were in the field, and we know how good NLP is, and we accept that about NLP we don't look outside the fields and say everybody else just looks at us and says we are all weird, lentil eating sandal wearing freaks
NLP attracts people in its sales model who have a mind-set that marginalises academic science.	NLP Interviewee 12 (9:22)	Its attractive because, I think, of So and So and So and So's attitudes and what they promulgate as their sales model, it's attracted a certain mind-set that marginalises itself against academic science.
NLP chose to be a sales oriented activity rather than an academic one early on in its history.	NLP Interviewee 12 (11:37)	So and So and So and So were positioned to go down an academic route, however they chose a workshop sales model early on.
Certain people in NLP are perceived as only being interested in commercial gain as their prime motivator for doing work.	NLP Interviewee 12 (18:32)	Unless So and So and So and So are going to make money out of something they are not going to be interested
NLP is polluted with marketing material.	NLP Interviewee 12 (20:21)	NLP has become polluted with so much marketing material.
NLP is a highly competitive field.	NLP participant 14 (17:24)	I think there are many factors. Of course, the crisis, so people don't have the money or don't want to spend the money. Also, we have 50 institutes that provide NLP practitioners in a small country like ours, so there is a lot of competition.
NLP has made money from claims, but not put in the hard work and discipline to support those claims over the years. This is a modern trend in Academia which is another story.	Authenticity Munro and Shannon.	Munro: This is where I think NLP comes under a bit of pressure, ie much money made from the claims but little evidence of outcomes. Shannon : The problem is one of the choice of, and measurement of, the criterion or outcome and control of extraneous variables. What is observed in the 'lab' may or may not be replicated outside it. With rigorous practice over time a body of evidence can be built up that people could find convincing. But it takes hard work and discipline, and some one has to do that and get paid for it. This is where NLP falls short. The work has not been done to support the claims. However, NLP is not the only place where this happens. The politicisation and monetization of academia threaten the integrity of research. But that is another story.
Cognitive dissonance at work in the sales model means everybody is satisfied. Some psychologists might be tempted to adopt the way NLP promotes itself.	Authenticity Williams	Who in their right mind would be stupid enough (sorry, an accurate, but not politically sensitive term) to pay this kind of money and then have the guts to admit they were scammed? Come to my house instead and I'll throw-in an open bar and endless gourmet buffet. Participants will be so crocked and stuffed they won't remember a thing. (Note to self: Change the way you promote yourself)
In 1996 Bandler perceived the NLP brand to be worth a lot of money and took what could be regarded as action which evidences the real motivation for engaging in the practice of NLP.	Hall M (2013b)	'It began in July of 1996 when Richard Bandler filed a $90,000,000 lawsuit as a civil action against John Grinder, Carmen Bostic St. Clair, Christina Hall, Steve and Connirae Andreas, and Lara Ewing and 200 John and Jane Does.'

Discussion category 1, NLP as commercially motivated.

In researching what NLP is, what struck me during the research period was not so much that people who trained NLP wanted to be paid for their work, but rather how they were so competitive with each other and could not evidence in the psychological literature what was so wonderful about NLP compared with any other paradigm. However much NLP practitioners insist they have nothing to do with psychology, on a daily basis they are actually

training people in psychological techniques modelled from people initially trained in and practicing psychotherapy / psychiatry. Given this lack of evidence which is alluded to by NLP Interviewee 10, the practice of NLP becomes a marketing and sales exercise and as NLP Interviewee 5 points out those with the best marketing and sales strategy and execution are the winners irrespective of content.

This state of affairs can be contrasted with the coaching industry which has grown exponentially over 10 years. Unlike NLP, however, coaching recognises the place psychology has in its profession with some writers pointing out psychology is the profession that most influences coaching, (Brock, 2006). Coaching too is commercially motivated with post graduate courses costing anything between £10k to £30k. Coaching, however, recognises that in order to work ethically and professionally in human development, it needs to incorporate research practice into its curriculum. Academic journals and conferences now address and discuss the emerging profession of coaching and many of the emerging challenges. These act as professional forums which test new coaching models and coaching practice in a peer reviewed milieu, ensuring critical examination of claims made and also ensuring that ethical and professional practice standards are adhered to.

It is the exclusion of this critical examination of practice, and development of an evidence base that throws the commercial aspect of NLP so much to the fore that it does become a defining feature of NLP in this grounded theory.

Category 2. Saturated in Anecdotal evidence

This category was very much the other side of the coin of category 3. NLP attracts its customer base through stories, or anecdotal evidence. It is not necessary that these stories are true either, as for NLP there is no truth, only subjective maps of the world which are the

product of distortion, deletion and generalisation and are more or less useful. The key question for NLP is are these õliesö useful? Below in table 4 the reader can get a sense how this category became populated and textured through coding.

Table 4. A section of substantive and theoretical coding leading to the development of the category: Saturated in Anecdotal Evidence.

Property of concept	Data Source	Example
Competency obtained through anecdotal evidence.	NLP Interviewee 4 (4:20)	So you get reports back of people generalising themselves using the pattern out there in the world. That is one example of evidence that demonstrates to me that they are getting it
Recognition by NLP practitioner of the anecdotal nature of NLP evidence to date and the need for empirical evidence.	NLP Interviewee 6 (34:10)	Bruce: When you mention the ÷swifter interventionø, is it important to have the empirical evidence to support those claims?......Participant 6: I think it is, I think itøs essential, because otherwise itøs just anecdotal and itøs just us saying, ÷Itøs this, itøs that,ø or whatever. It just doesnøt stand up. We have to have some empirical evidence,
Behavioural evidence obtained by the observations of one assessor without consultation from other perspectives nor a behaviourally anchored template	NLP Interviewee 5 (56:12)	So one I am observing and listening to the patterns that they are demonstrating, to me that is the most important form of evidence it is behavioural.
NLP is interested in doing business rather than testing its product.	NLP Interviewee 7 (21:05)	I think NLP has not been interested in that because we see it working every day in people's lives and our purpose has been to do business instead of doing research
Not interested in the validation of NLP generally, validation occurs on an ad hoc basis at the individual level. A preference for individual anecdotal validation over validation through accepted psychological protocols.	NLP Interviewee 15 (1:50:05)	í itøs not my mission on this planet to validate NLP. I actually, you knowí .if it works, great, you know. I knowí .(laughs) I know from the work that I do with people, and I donøt care if some study came out and said that this wouldnøt work,
NLP totally ideographic, generalisations cannot be made because each event happens for the first time.	NLP Interviewee 15 (1:17:48)	There is no statistic on it because it is the first time that itøs happening so itøs the first time it is happening for this person
Anxiety that NLP patterns might not generally work as a barrier to doing scientific research thus the practice of only relying on anecdotal evidence.	NLP Interviewee 9 (1:03:35)	we have to play the game and I think one of the things which has held us back is this kind of belief that NLP is that much better than everything else but let's not actually test it in case it isn't and the way you can get around that is that you don't have to do comparative studies to prove that NLP is valuable
NLP Practitioners are not interested in research or intellectual history.	NLP Interviewee 15 (1:43:00)	So what you do, is you donøt just tell stories, you also are going to have certain (laughing) you know stuff that either itøs been filmed or itøs been written, or you have a dataí .da daí .you have witnesses, you have this, youøve got this, youøve got this and thatøs how you establish the intellectual history of something. But I think that people who do NLP are not that interested in intellectual history, frankly, (laughs) thatøs part of the í í which is againí itøs not just theyøre not interested in research, they donøt care where it came from í .I also can understand that academics, you know, donøt like thatí í I donøt particularly like it ó
Critical of psychological practice as a possible excuse for not conducting good research which can be generalised.	NLP Interviewee 1 (51:40)	90% of All Psychological Research Is either Done on College Sophomores, Naive Rats.
Critical of psychological practice as a possible excuse for not conducting good research which can be generalised	NLP Interviewee 1 (51:15)	She did her Ph.D. she had psych students coming in and was doing research on eye accessing cues, all the students had to come as a requirement of their psych course, a lot of them came in stoned
A recognition currently the certified NLP trainings are not based upon material that has been researched. Participant 2øs comment on my interpretation: õPage 176 Your use of my quote to support õSaturated in Anecdotal Evidenceö negatively skews my well documented opinion that the huge amount of anecdotal evidence put forth from NLP experts whose personal integrity	NLP Interviewee 2 (6:30) and clinical skills, I have first-hand knowledge of, such as Professor Emeritus William McDowell, Steve Andreas, Robert Dilts, Judith DeLozier, Richard Bolstad, Tim Hallbom and Professor Richard Gray, indicates sufficient promise in	People like Me Say This Has to Be Researched and There has to be Certified Training Programs for the Materials that Are Researched. the NLP materials to warrant further research.ö (see p224 for discussion)

NLP testing is done anecdotally and in an idiographic way. It is consistently experimental.	NLP Interviewee 5 (1:23:30)	You can apply and test a pattern in a range of different contexts and find where does it work and where doesn't it work so it's very much, a part of this is doing it yourself is up to the person who is learning NLP to take a pattern and tested it in a range of context to find out where it applies and where it doesn't.
NLP practitioners would love to see research done, but do not seem prepared to do it themselves.	NLP Interviewee 6 (41:00)	I would love to see some research done where people take the original modelling skills and pick something else where they model on someone whoøs excellent and then, maybe, take several people: someone who is in the same field but not at the same standard and teach them; then take someone who is at the beginning of that field and teach them; and have some control people who are similar levels and measure their progress ó maybe a longitudinal study
NLP practitioners know that NLP patterns are amenable to testing. There is nothing about NLP which makes it intrinsically untestable.	NLP Interviewee 6 (42:15)	We can even take something as minor as phobia cure, where we could find 60 spider phobics and have 20 of them with an NLP approach, 20 of them with cognitive and 20 we donøt do anything with. So, we could take an intervention and really, really test it and compare it to other approaches.
Acknowledgement NLP is not doing what would be õniceö.	NLP Interviewee 13 (19:55)	The way I would like to see it done is it would be nice to have some clinical studies done. I acknowledge the difficulty in setting them up but it would be nice to have some randomly allocated patients to 2 or three different treatment groups one in NLP one cognitive behavioural intervention probably the other just received counselling and I'd like to see that done
Empirical Evidence does not change the way someone thinks about a topicí í So why bother?	NLP Interviewee 14 (36:26)	There is evaluation research in Romania and So and So in Finland; they compared NLP with control groups and other types of therapy. They had positive results. It is clear to me that, although they did that, it will have nil effect on your opinion. Social psychologists know that opinions are not changed by proof, because identity is much stronger in this field, so the way you identify and how you define accounts is strong. If you see one piece of research that is totally significant and proves NLP works, ÷OK, what did they do wrong? What did they manipulate or what is wrong with the design?ø Thatøs the first thing you think when you are opposed to that.
It takes too much money and effort to warrant good quality research	NLP Interviewee 14 (36:00)	So, I know how to do research, but, for instance, to do evaluation research on things of NLP performance, I could do that and know how to do that, but it takes a lot of money and effort.
Good quality research limits what you can discover because of modern professional constraints.	NLP Interviewee 8 (30:08)	I mean I guess if you imagine Bandler and Grinder way back being tied down to a strict methodology thinking through ethics to getting ethics permission they may never have discovered some of the stuff they discovered because you know we all know they were doing it in pretty way out ways, they were really pushing the boundaries of ethics at times, but they were exploring at the edges of new knowledge and understanding and they probably pushed themselves further than a strict research methodology would have allowed them to do.
NLP uses õscientific languageö therefore to be congruent it õshouldö make use of scientific evidence.	Linked in Discussion. Munro	By using the vocabulary of Neuro Linguistic Programming, the project seemed to want some kind of scientific association. It could have labelled itself Magical Mumbling Jumbling and gone down the route of many other New Age-isms and -ologies of the 70s. And no one would have batted an eyelid. But it didnøt, so it shouldnøt be too surprised when the sceptics ask about evidence - of the conventional kind.
NLP is more likely to be World 2 and put two fingers up to World 1 with NLP practitioners as secular priests popularising a õwheezeö.	Linkedin Discussion. Munro	World 1 is the abstract world of NLP: concepts, constructs, theory, research and building an evidence base, etc. Some of the language is baffling to me - but that's me. But it's not a world that connects too much with heavy duty and mainstream scientific thinking or debate. And NLP theorists (Bruce, yourself apart) seem to maintain a distance from the world of mainstream publications, intense social media debate, etc. Here NLP has to work out a story: is it part of the scientific enterprise, or does it sit outside it? World 2 is the one in which NLP practitioners are untroubled by World 1: they know NLP works because their client said how much the session/workshop/ etc helped them. Here NLP is part of their belief system and faith. That's OK if NLP advocates and practitioners want to be secular priests. But here they remain subject to the same criticisms of any other wheeze that says "it works because I and my followers (clients) say it does". History is full of wheezes that "worked"; some were inconsequential and trivial, some were harmful. NLP needs to make its mind up: Does it take the best of World 2 and integrate it within World 1 (and lose its identity)? Or, more likely, decide to go down the route that maintains World 2 (and retains the NLP brand and its commercial variations) and puts two fingers in the air at World 1. And as I say, NLP is not alone in this field of having to working out how these two worlds come together. The closing 20 seconds of Burn After Reading, which should be shown at the conclusion of every management meeting: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQQdSwFgSec
NLP is short in hard research facts, but long in opinions and anecdotes.	Authenticity. Williams	it looks like this thread is about to break a world record for duration...Lot's of opinions and anecdotes...few hard research facts...That should tell us a lot about the subject.
NLP is just a series of techniques taken from psychology and unless one has a discipline which is theoretical it cannot ipso facto be authentic. NLP not worthy of debate.	Williams and Ouellette	Williams: I don't think you could even pose a question about the authenticity of something that is atheoretical. Ouellette: Mark, the swish technique is in fact cognitive psychology, nothing specific to NLP. The mere fact of bringing together techniques

		based on several theoretical background does not make it a theory, it just makes it a bunch of techniques. Moreover, the NLP "practitioner" does not have a theoretical background to substantiate their "techniques". Actually, this is my last comment on NLP as I do not think it is worth a debate.
Historically NLP has never done research despite always talking about it and this is a pretty strong pattern.	NLP Interviewee 9 (21:25)	One of the things which we need to learn is what has actually happened and for example in terms of your thing, people have talked about doing research in NLP since the day I arrived in NLP and we are still talking about it, so it is a pretty strong pattern.
NLP does not attract people who are interested in research. It attracts people who eclectically find out the best way to help people reach their goals.	NLP Interviewee 15(01:22:10)	but I do think then, maybe the problem with NLP is that it tends to attract people who are more into, like I was saying ó that are more like coaches ó a coach doesnøt look at the statistics ó you are talking about a person who has a particular goal and youøre just trying to eclectically find whatøs the best way to support that particular person to reach their particular "goals". Yeah and maybe thatøs where NLP tends to attract that kind of people and those people ó none of them do research. Maybe CBT tends to attract research / researchers ó you get a lot of research

Discussion category 2, NLP defined as Saturated in anecdotal evidence

The importance of this theoretical concept is that it well could be that given the epistemological stance:

õThere is no statistic on it because it is the first time that itøs happening so itøs the first time it is happening for this personö,(NLP Interviewee 15 1:17:48)

anecdotal evidence is the only evidence available for NLP. If NLP really does believe one cannot generalise patterns which work from one instance to another due to the heterogeneity of both person and context then this is what should be made clear. However the stance of the extant literature is that this is not the case and an NLP model is defined as being an explicit representation of the implicit structure of a genius which can be transferred to others in such a way that in a specified context and upon congruent application of such a pattern the same results as that genius will be forthcoming. Category 3 clearly discounts such a proposition so the interaction of an expectation there should be empirical evidence to support NLP and the fact there is only anecdotal evidence brings about a 3rd concept which is internal inconsistency and this is represented in both categories 4 and 7 feasible leading to category 6 as one way of dealing with the resulting tension.

Action Research which also seeks to close the practice-theory gap and develop a new scholarship has a similar stance to NLP. Action Research, however, does not put the emphasis on the **product** of model making, but rather the **process**. McNiff and Whitehead (2000) say that much of what informs practice is tacit and that in order to understand how we might improve actions we need to tap our deep tacit knowledge and raise it to explicit levels of awareness. However being aware of the nature of our transformative processes is a very different product from an explicit representation of a tacit structure which is transferable to other people and testable. For Action research, what we do in the process, moving from the tacit to the explicit, is the practice which matters. This is visually represented below in figure 11. Leaders of NLP who suggest they can reliably get rid of a phobia in 10 minutes every single time imply that NLP practitioners can produce an explicit representation of a tacit structure which can be taught to others so that, in the context of a phobia, upon congruent application of this pattern, a phobia will always be cured in 10 minutes. Those within the NLP world however who believe this statement /approach to be a misrepresentation of NLP, (a similar example is NLP practitioners who believe the practice of determining a lie by observing eye accessing cues), leave themselves open to misrepresentation by not publically distancing themselves from such claims and making it clear what the evidence base for their practice is. Currently it seems throughout all echelons of NLP the best evidence for what is practiced and marketed as NLP is only anecdotal and this is a part of both NLP culture and NLP practice.

Figure 11. The practice that matters in Action Research.

After McNiff and Whitehead (2000 p51)

Explicit Awareness

Transformative Practice

Deep Tacit Knowledge

Category 3 Lacking in Published Empirical Evidence

This category was not, as some may think, regarded as necessarily negative within NLP. It only became negative when attempting to develop an understanding of NLP while factoring in the input of the LinkedIn discussion and some of the extant literature on NLP. Thus, it did not become a defining character when talking with NLP practitioners alone. It only began to develop as a category when introduced by other professionals, some of whom were psychologists.

For many NLP practitioners empirical evidence was not really consistent with NLP as it was more about doing business (Category 1):

> õBruce: So the question is: in terms of moving forwards í over the previous 30 to 40 years what has happened is that we have had protocols written up which are very creative and have tremendous potential but they haven't actually been developed to the extent that any person, as far as I can understand, could congruently say yes this does work in this context and we can predict to a great degree of probability this is the result weøre going to get.

Interviewee7: Yes well what you are talking about is interest and funding I think NLP has not been interested in that because we see it working every day in people's lives and our purpose has been to do business instead of doing research so there's not been that much interest in it and somebody has to collaborate and create funding to be able to do that and that usually occurs at a university level where they've got the money and don't have to worry about business and so once that happens once the people who are interested in that and will spend the time, the boring time to apply for grants and get that done then that will be done otherwise the marketplace is the place that test it.ö

NLP Interviewee 7 (21:05-21:52)

Another NLP Interviewee had learned from Bandler that doing NLP business was not about validity and proof, it was more about plausibility:

Bruce: Can I ask a question aroundí ., you mentioned quality within NLP, my guess is, please correct me if I'm wrong, maybe collaborations which already are happening and building on those collaborations would be one thing which would increase the quality of NLP, I don't know, but what did you mean when you said increasing the quality of what we are doing?

Interviewee 9: Okay, I agree collaborations are one way to do that, and in a way, you mentioned about criticism, one of the way the academic community builds its quality is through self-criticism. I think it can take it too far and I think it can be horribly painful, but the bottom line is if you don't examine the holes or the false statements, or the statements that don't have any backing then they just carry on, and thatøs kind of low quality. A lot of the statements which are made about NLP and are trundled out under the guise of NLP have no basis whatsoever, they are nice marketing

statements, no wonder NLP is accused of psychobabble. Here is an important distinction. One of the things which I got from NLP, and especially Bandler was that what satisfies people is what satisfies them it doesn't have to be true, it doesn't have to be proved, it just has to be plausible to them and therefore a lot of the NLP trainings give stuff that satisfies the answer when even though it's rubbish, they give that and it satisfies people. That's fine, but what you are discovering is that won't satisfy the academic community and what we haven't addressed is what we need to do to satisfy them and it isn't necessarily any more true, it just has different criteria. NLP could have been an established methodology by now, but the reason it couldn't is historical, we know because the founders had an anti-academic position, and mummy and daddy have influenced the entire field ever since, and they went further they even rubbed academics noses in it, they rubbished academia they made fun of professors, so you don't win friends like that. (Interviewee 9, 24:10-26:11)

What both of these NLP practitioners have in common is while recognising academics need a different kind of evidence, a different kind of criteria to meet the standards of being valid, within the context of doing business, providing it õsatisfiesö or in terms of Interviewee 7 õwe see it working every day in people's livesö there is no business reason to develop this type of academic evidence because it is perceived as costly.

What is interesting is that whilst expressing the above there is another dialogue, (meme or narrative) within the NLP community which simultaneously seeks this type of evidence. Thus one of the characteristics of NLP is an internal schism of marginalising the need for academic evidence in practice, yet also insisting that it would also be both useful and desirable. NLP finds itself in the typical double bind which Argyris (1957) noticed in so many organisations.

Below is an example of some of the coding which developed category 3, Lacking in

published empirical evidence, followed by a discussion of this coding.

Table 5. A section of substantive and theoretical coding leading to the development of the category: Lacking in published Empirical Evidence.

Property of Concept	Data Source	Example
Anecdotal evidence does not stand up	NLP Interviewee 6 (34:10)	I think itøs essential, because otherwise itøs just anecdotal and itøs just us saying, -Itøs this, itøs that,ø or whatever. It just doesnøt stand up.
Academia building quality through self-criticism. This can be painful.	NLP Interviewee 9 (26:00)	The academic community builds its quality is through self-criticism. I think it can take it too far and I think it can be horribly painful
Lack of interest in research in NLP and a lack of interest concerning the source of research.	NLP Interviewee 15 (01:43:00)	But I think that people who do NLP are not that interested in intellectual history, frankly, (laughs) thatøs part of the í í which is againí itøs not just theyøre not interested in research, they donøt care where it came from
A lack of self-criticism leads to low quality	NLP Interviewee 9 (26:30)	But the bottom line is if you don't examine the holes or the false statements, or the statements that don't have any backing then they just carry on, and thatøs kind of low quality
Publication bias, poor reputation of NLP, resources of cost, need for resilience and hard work	NLP Interviewee 14 (40:10)	Yes, well, I think one of the reasons I couldnøt do it is that I did once spend so much time and money, because I saw no resources there other than mine. My colleague, So and So, he tried to apply for a European grant. I think heøs been 10 years trying to do some research and he finally had to do one trial, but he couldnøt get it into any journal. So, this is something, when you hit on that a couple of times and you see how hard it is or when itøs named NLP ó which is why I like your reasons, that you will put NLP in the title ó when you put NLP in the title the chances youøre not accepted in any journal are huge.
No interest within NLP concerning grappling with the serious questions.	NLP Interviewee 1 (18:40)	I didn't get anything back nobody is ready willing to really grapple with the serious questions in NLP
NLP not being a content model means it is not amenable to a quantitative methodology	NLP Interviewee 8 (56:58)	So Ohhh am I going to say this out loud, it's almost you learn the process but actually you are not really competent until you can go away and play with the process and do something individualised and different
Not knowing what specifically to research. (Evidence **of** what, see below in Authenticity)	NLP Interviewee 5 (16:10)	The concern I have about that is I talk to various NLP trainers and a lot of trainers I've spoken to don't even have a definition of NLP that fits with my understanding of what it is, NLP definition
Lack of interest in research. Perceived as boring.	NLP Interviewee 7 (21:05)	once the people who are interested in that and will spend the time, the boring time to apply for grants and get that done then that will be done otherwise the marketplace is the place that test it.
The lack of empirical findings in psychology as commensurate with the lack of empirical findings in NLP? and a possible reason/excuse as to why there is a lack of published evidence for NLP?	NLP Interviewee 6 (24:20)	Yes. Having said that, I work with a lot of scientists and there are a lot of scientists who think the whole of psychology is crack-ology.
Sales people who partially develop and generate business do not have to validate their product to the standard required by Academics. Participant 2øs comment on my above interpretation is: õPage 162. Your use of my quote to support -Lacking in Published Empirical Evidenceø negatively skews my well published opinion (Publication details) that there is sufficient published studies to warrant further research into NLP materials.ö (see pp.223-224 for email discussion)	NLP Interviewee 2 (5:37)	You are not a salesman, you have to validate that what you are saying has some validity in terms of you can compare across these people and make some informed opinion
Good quality NLP research is wanted by Practitioners. This research is difficult to set up.	NLP Interviewee 13 (19:55)	The way I would like to see it done is it would be nice to have some clinical studies done. I acknowledge the difficulty in setting them up but it would be nice to have some randomly allocated patients to 2 or three different treatment groups one in NLP one cognitive behavioural intervention probably the other just received counselling
NLP is a generative discipline and statistics cannot assist in the moment	NLP Interviewee 15 (1:17:48)	Which sometimes is the case, right, youøre entering into a situation where nobodyøs ever been before. There is no statistic on it because it is the first time that itøs happening so itøs the first time it is happening for this person, so thereøs that whole aspect where you enter into

		í ..and it is a more generative spaceí .and then past statistics donøt offer you that much
NLP only interested in what satisfies even if that is rubbish.	NLP Interviewee 9 (25:10)	One of the things which I got from NLP, and especially Bandler was that what satisfies people is what satisfies them it doesn't have to be true, it doesn't have to be proved, it just has to be plausible to them and therefore a lot of the NLP trainings give stuff that satisfies the answer when even though it's rubbish, they give that and it satisfies people.
Published evidence but not of sufficient scientific quality to warrant serious consideration. Empirical evidence or a clear scientific rationale, appears to be beside the point.	Rhodes, Authenticity.	Errr what evidence would that be Mark? It's similar to the evidence for EI, once you take a close look at the claims, none bear critical scrutiny (see Murphy's book on that issue, a Critique of Emotional Intelligence-Wiley). There is seemingly a vast and unappeasable appetite in the HR community for techniques which are superficially attractive and which claim to deal with important workplace issues (communication, influencing, interpersonal relationships etc). Whether they are supported by any empirical evidence or a clear scientific rationale, appears to be beside the point. And being able to become an 'expert' quickly, with a credit card is attractive. But importantly this access is without any proper grounding in the philosophy of science, logic etc, and it means practitioners being ill equipped intellectually to deal with its truth claims.
Generalisations made concerning the character of NLP possibly leading to õdeletionö of any published material out there. See: http://cdn.cfbt.com/~/media/cfbtcorporate/files/research/2013/r-raising-maths-attainment-2013.pdf	Rhodes. Authenticity.	But there is still some poor soul out there who has an 'Msc' in the subject. This must be one of the exemplar examples of the continuing degradation of British Higher education- a chequebook MSc in a bogus subject. But like many fads it makes seductive claims, highly relevant to the world of work but with no science to back its claims. But, why would you want to be involved with a subject whose founder tried to attach his stepfather to the national grid?
Lack of evidence on account of NLP being poorly defined. A confusion of the phenomenon that needs, explanation (of what; NLP) and the explanation itself, (for what; a comprehensive description)	OøConnor. Authenticity	Such is the circularity of arguing evidence when we haven't looked at "Evidence for what?" - a question which might be more important than its easier cousin, "Evidence of what?"
Lack of evidence on the basis of NLP being too broadly defined	Rodgers, Authenticity	By taking a broad title and sketchy definition it makes it easier to discredit from a common sense and a statistical perspective. Just like saying that all assessment interventions are nonsense when used to measure 'leadership'. Some might be, some not but by using labels like leadership (vague and poorly defined) it makes it easier to discredit. If we use one label i.e. NLP then we lump visualisation, goal setting, mirroring, building rapport etc under the same umbrella as curing cancer or increasing breast size which is surely doing the bits of NLP that are useful a disservice.
Lack of evidence on the basis on NLP not being defined at all	Sturt (2013)	the very fact that there is no agreed definition of NLP indicates how little evidence we have of its benefits
Lack of acceptance and credibility on account of little published research	Tosey and Mathison (2009 p125)	The lack of a credible, public evidence base is one of the most significant barriers to more widespread acceptance of NLP.
No need to publish because õit worksö and meets the business criteria of NLP practitioners	Tosey and Mathison (2009 p126)	õA common tactic however is simply to assert that ̃NLP worksø í .Martin Gardner points out that L.Ron.Hubbard, the founder of Dianetics, relied on exactly the same mantra (Gardner 1957 p279). The claim it works should therefore be treated with scepticism, and not be accepted at face value.
NLP does not need to publish empirical evidence as its culture does not call for it.	Linder-Pelz (2010 p103)	NLP is based largely on *intuitive* and *authoritative* knowledge rather than scientific knowledge based on observations in which observersø subjectivity was limited.
Published evidence but not of sufficient scientific quality to warrant serious consideration and much of the evidence not supporting the tenets of NLP.	Tomasz Witkowski, (2010)	Huge popularity of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) therapies and training has not been accompanied by knowledge of the empirical underpinnings of the concept. The article presents the concept of NLP in the light of empirical research in the Neuro-Linguistic Programming Research Data Base. From among 315 articles the author selected 63 studies published in journals from the Master Journal List of ISI. Out of 33 empirical studies 18.2% show results supporting the tenets of NLP, 54.5% - results non-supportive of the NLP tenets and 27.3% brings uncertain results. The qualitative analysis indicates the greater weight of the non-supportive studies and their greater methodological worth against the ones supporting the tenets. Analysis results contradict the claim of empirical bases of NLP.
Lack of Empirical verification as standard within NLP	Tomasz Witkowski	When analysing how the NLP concept was formulated, it

	(2010)	is worth indicating analogies between the manner in which it had been developed and the research methodology applied in social psychology proposed and defined by Cialdini (1980) as a full-cycle approach to social psychology. Bandler and Grinder followed the full-cycle method, but regrettably they omitted the stage of empirical verification of their assertions.
Decline in the interest of researching into NLP.	Tomasz Witkowski (2010)	Of interest are the findings of quantitative analysis of publications in individual years. By reference to the diagram including all 315 studies, it is clear that scientific activity peaked in the eighties of the 20th century. (see Figure 1). It experienced a minor renaissance at the beginning of the present century. Based on the diagram, one may assume that as a research issue NLP enjoyed immense popularity in the period directly following the formulation of its empirical underpinnings in the seventies of the 20th century. In the subsequent years the research interest in NLP was decreasing
Unreliability concerning the majority of research into NLP.	Tomasz Witkowski (2010)	Although there are many doubts raised to this list, magazines from the Master Journal List are much less likely to have published unreliable articles than others. As a result of the initial selection, of 315 articles I had 63 ó accounting for 20% of the entire base - left for further analysis.
Lack of controls in research into NLP which generally lacks sufficient standard to be cited in reputable journals.	Tomasz Witkowski (2010)	It is most likely that any type of intensive 21-day effort undertaken on self-development, based on any concept, would result in similar changes as those measured in the quoted research.
Research which did test specific NLP patterns / concepts when tested against controls did not find NLP any more effective than the control.	Tomasz Witkowski (2010)	Studies on the effectiveness of specific therapeutic techniques failed to provide data supportive of the NLP tenets, too. Krugman, Kirsch and Wickless, (1985) tested Bandler and Grinderøs claim for a single-session cure of anxiety. They did not find any support either. Similarly, Matthews, Kirsch and Mosher (1985) verified the effectiveness of double hypnotic induction. Comparison of the experimental group against the control group did not yield findings supporting the hypotheses. In addition, application of pacing and metaphor to overcome client resistance did not prove the reliability of Bandler and Grinderøs claims (Dixon, Parr, Yarbrough and Rathael, 1986). Additionally NLP proved to be of little use as a method of enhancing human performance considered by the US Army (Swets & Bjork, 1990). õThe conclusion was that little if any evidence exists either to support NLPøs assumptions or to indicate that it is effective as a strategy for social influence.ö (p. 90)
Research which is not supportive of NLP is of a much higher methodological standard.	Tomasz Witkowski (2010)	The studies classified into the non-supportive category are marked by a much higher methodological level. The majority allow for the comparison against the control group, provide measurement of a number of variables and use a higher number of indicators. Among the studies are two articles offering extensive and reliable reviews of research. Most results of research from this category were replicated.
Publication Bias. (File drawer effect)	Tomasz Witkowski (2010)	When evaluating the whole empirical research devoted to NLP, one should also consider the file drawer effect (Rosenthal, 1979). In view of which, the NLP supportive studies should have a greater chance for publication then those showing lack of support. It may be easily assumed that a part of the studies, which did not find any support for the NLP hypotheses was filed away in researchersø drawers.
Lack of motivation to research	Tomasz Witkowski (2010)	It looks as if the world of science was losing its interest in the concept of Bandler and Grinder, having confronted it with the research findings, and the concept proponents lack motivation to undertake any type of research into, for instance, the effectiveness of methods offered by the concept.
Lack of motivation to do the ground work comprehensively in research within the NLP community.	Tomasz Witkowski (2010)	The base is commonly invoked by NLP followers and indicated as evidence for the existence of solid empirical grounds of their preferred concept. It is most likely that most of them have never looked through the base. Otherwise they might have come to the conclusion that it provides evidence to the contrary ó for the lack of any empirical underpinnings. Moreover, they not only fail to browse through the database, dare I say, but they also do not read articles available therein.
Claims within NLP for validity of concepts not derived from NLP	Tomasz Witkowski (2010)	While reading such articles I strengthened my belief that it was only due to some single key words that the NLP related status of those papers was approved. This gives

		rise to the suspicion that even the database administrators do not read articles, not to mention the abstracts.
Cargo Cult Science. NLP as masquerading as scientific but actually not being so.	Tomasz Witkowski (2010)	All this leaves me with an overwhelming impression that the analyzed base of scientific articles is treated just as theater decoration, being the background for the pseudoscientific farce, which NLP appears to be. Using õscientificö attributes, which is so characteristic of pseudo-science, is manifested also in other aspects of NLP activities. It is primarily revealed in the language ó full of borrowings from science or expressions referring to it, devoid of any meanings whatsoever.
NLP in the context of therapy discredited by experts.	Tomasz Witkowski (2010)	Instead we find NLP on the list of discredited therapies. Norcross, Koocher and Garofalo (2006) sought to establish consensus on discredited psychological treatments and assessments using Delphi methodology. A panel of 101 experts participated in a 2-stage survey, reporting familiarity with 59 treatments and 30 assessment techniques and rating these on a continuum from not at all discredited (1) to certainly discredited (5). Neuro-linguistic Programming for treatment of mental/behavioral disorders was averagely assessed 3.87 (SD=0.92).
NLP has had enough time to collect evidence to either support or annul their propositions.	Tomasz Witkowski (2010)	In 1988 Heap passed a verdict on NLP. As the title of his article indicated, an interim one. In the conclusions he wrote: If it turns out to be the case that these therapeutic procedures are indeed as rapid and powerful as is claimed, no one will rejoice more than the present author. If however these claims fare no better than the ones already investigated then the final verdict on NLP will be a harsh one indeed (p. 276). I am fully convinced that we have gathered enough evidence to announce this harsh verdict already now.
No A studies yet and Researchers are in need of both justification and motivation to engage in rigorous scientific research	Wake et al. (2013 p1)	The purpose of this book is to present sufficient evidence of the clinical efficacy of Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) techniques to justify and motivate rigorous Scientific research. í í .. There are no A studies yet completed for NLP techniques.
Cargo cult science. NLP as masquerading as scientific but actually not being so.	Roderique-Davies, G 2009 p62)	To adapt this term one more time, NLP masquerades as a legitimate form of psychotherapy, makes unsubstantiated claims about how humans think and behave, purports to encourage research in a vain attempt to gain credibility, yet fails to provide evidence that it actually works. Neuro-linguistic programming is cargo cult psychology.
NLP emphasis on saleability (satisfaction see Interviewee 9 above) despite lack of validity.	Heap (1989b p13)	Is it reasonable then to regard NLP and indeed Milton Erickson (the phenomenon and not the man himself) , very much as products of our consumer culture? A culture that puts a premium on the saleability of a commodity rather than itøs real value to the purchaser (two different things); A culture with an eager curiosity for the magical and the miraculous, and one that promotes the celebrity and the ‑cult figureø? To the present author these questions seem at least as interesting and relevant as any of those posed by the NLP model; but it is often the case that what a person says is less fascinating than why he says it.
NLP tenets not verified in publications which have been accepted by journals.	Sharpley (1987 p105)	The basic tenets of NLP have failed to be reliably verified in almost 86% of the controlled studies, and it is difficult to accept that none of these 38 studies (i.e,, those with non supportive, partial, or mixed results) were performed by persons with a satisfactory understanding of NLP (or at least enough of an understanding to perform the various procedures that were evaluated).

Discussion category 3, NLP defined as Lacking in published empirical evidence

One striking feature in the above excerpts is the amount of coding taken from Tomasz Witkowskiøs Paper. One of the reasons for this is it is, as far as I can see the only review of

the scientific evidence of NLP since Sharply (1987) and broadly speaking Witkowski arrived at very similar conclusions. Also this review is regarded by proponents of NLP as having a methodology which is õfairly exemplaryö (Wake et al. 2013, p. 203).

However the critique by Wake et al (2013) signpost Witkowski making the same mistakes Sharpley made in assuming PRS and EAC are central tenets in the NLP model.

Given that Wake et al. (2013) regard Witkowskiøs comment; *Argumenta ponderantur, non numerantur* -the force of the arguments lies in their weight, not numbers as apt, it seems strange a characteristic of NLP is not to engage in these weighty arguments. Specifically given that back in 1985 after being concerned that researchers did not fully understand the NLP model Einspruch and Forman (1985) pointed out:

> õSharpley reports that the amount of published data supporting NLP as a viable model for therapeutic change is minimal. Nevertheless, many skilled NLP practitioners have a wealth of clinical data indicating that this model is highly effective. Clearly these practitioners would provide a service to the field by presenting their data in the literature so they may be critically evaluated.ö (Einspruch &Forman,1985, p. 590).

In chapter 2, I presented the case that the researchers in the 1980øs were only researching on the basis of the extant NLP literature of the time and consequently their research methodology was generally acceptable. If, despite the recommendations of Einspruch and Forman (1985), NLP practitioners over 40 years have not explicated precisely what NLP is, the mechanisms for change and evidence for its efficacy in a variety of contexts then researchers can either say as Bourke says:

"I believe strongly that a "statistical system of analysis" that develops validation and replication measures for outcome measures of psychotherapy research based upon individual clients outcomes will be able to be developed. While many NLP "experts" have historically either ignored the need for research evidence for the effectiveness of NLP techniques or maintained the "un-measurable nature" of NLP techniques, "knowing" IS "measuring" and useful knowledge must have standardized measures." (Bourke, 2011).

Or as a Gestalt therapist at the time of the emergence of NLP:

"To justify his hire, the therapist must be able to assist the patient to move in the direction he wishes, that is, to accelerate and provoke change in a positive direction. We are rapidly leaving the time when the therapist, in the absence of more specific knowledge, relies on "something" in the relationship that will result in "something" happening. We are approaching the time when the therapist can specify procedures that promote rapid change in a way that the patient can experience directly and others can observe clearly" (Fagan, 1971, p 96)

Or as Witkowski concludes concerning 40 years of NLP:

"The analysis of the Neuro-Linguistic Programming Research Data Base (state of the art) by all measures was like peeling an onion. To reach its core, first I had to remove some useless layers, and once I arrived, I felt like crying. Today, after 35 years of research devoted to the concept, NLP reminds one more of an unstable house built on

the sand rather than an edifice founded on the empirically based rock.ö (Witkowski, 2010).

In researching other psychological sources I discovered Wiseman, Watt, ten Brinke, Porter, Couper, and Rankin (2012) researched a practice which had become wide spread within NLP training. They say: "Although the originators of NLP didnøt view ÷constructedø thoughts as lies, this notion has become commonplace, leading many NLP practitioners to claim that it is possible to gain a useful insight into whether someone is lying from their eye-movements." (Wiseman, Watt, ten Brinke, Porter, Couper, & Rankin, 2012).

They concluded as a result of their research which tested these propositions that there was considerable grounds to be sceptical of such a notion and that it is irresponsible for NLP practitioners to continue to encourage people to make important decisions on the basis of the claims eye movement up and to the right are indicative of lying.

In terms of NLP being defined as lacking in empirical evidence one would have thought it is up to the Leadership of the NLP brand to address the anomalies uncovered by both Wiseman et al. (2012) and indeed Sharpley in the 1980øs rather than allow the brand to be diminished by shoddy practice or to blame researchers for not understanding NLP. Indeed an inability to shake off the shoddy practice (category 8) by which NLP is generally defined has been a characteristic of NLP throughout its history, and especially so in the context of academic psychology. Why this continues, according to this emerging grounded theory of NLP, will be discussed later.

As discussed within this paper another interacting characteristic of NLP is internal conflict (category 4) and this conflict partially is about the very nature of NLP and what is õrealö NLP and what is not. If within the field of NLP leaders cannot agree precisely what NLP is then, as Sturt (2012b) points out, one is not in a position to develop research to test NLP. Even if NLP adopts a process position where, in a particular context, the choice of pattern to use is provided by the unconscious and therefore unpredictable, what should be predictable is the result of such a process when used in a particular context by a trained NLP practitioner, whether that be therapeutic, sports, business, education or another.

The lack of organisation and motivation within the NLP brand to generate published research in quality journals is characterised by the comments of an Interviewee who would like to see this happen:

> õ Yes, well, I think one of the reasons I couldnøt do it is that I did once spend so much time and money, because I saw no resources there other than mine. My colleague, So and So, he tried to apply for a European grant. I think heøs been 10 years trying to do some research and he finally had to do one trial, but he couldnøt get it into any journal. So, this is something, when you hit on that a couple of times and you see how hard it is or when itøs named NLP ó which is why I like your reasons, that you will put NLP in the title ó when you put NLP in the title the chances youøre not accepted in any journal are huge.ö (NLP Interviewee14. 40:10-40:50)

In my coding I made the comments that this category is characterised by publication bias, poor reputation of NLP, Cost, need for resilience and hard work. However as NLP Interviewee 7 tells us:

õonce the people who are interested in that and will spend the time, the boring time to apply for grants and get that done then that will be done otherwise the marketplace is the place that test it. (NLP Interviewee 7. 21:40-21:52)

It seems clear that after the peak of research in the early 1980øs (see figure 12) Not only is there a lack of quality concerning research into NLP, there is also a lack of interest, despite protestations and hopes to the contrary by a small minority.

When Tosey and Mathison (2009), both Practitioners of NLP make the point õthe lack of a credible, public evidence base is one of the most significant barriers to more widespread acceptance of NLP. (Tosey & Mathison, 2009, p. 125). I do not think they understate the case.

Figure 12. Number of all publications included in NLP Research Data Base in individual years as against the number of studies of Master Journal List. (Witkowski, 2010)
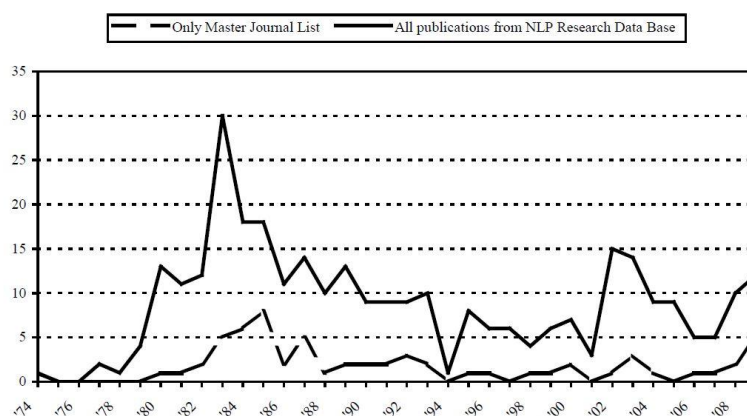
As can be seen above in table 5, NLP as being defined as not having a substantial empirical evidence base is textured in many different ways through differing instances in this research.

There were many other instances which loaded into other concepts before ultimately being subsumed under the concept of õNot having a substantial empirical evidence baseö.

For example õNLP as secret informationö; When Interviewee 5 said: õThe concern I have about that is I talk to various NLP trainers and a lot of trainers I've spoken to don't even have a definition of NLP that fits with my understanding of what it is.ö Interviewee 5 (16:10)

I interpreted this as meaning different trainers have their own, (secret), definition of NLP and there is a lack of standardisation. However when critique from outside of NLP began to point out that this lack of standard definition was related to the lack of empirical research I considered that at a different level such a concept as õsecret informationö was more usefully subsumed into the category of Lacking in published empirical evidence. So in researching NLP in a more open sense, contrasted with the original and more constrained; õa definition of NLPö, when considering interventions or patterns that õworkö we still discover NLP lacks a credible empirical base from which to operate and this is problematical from both an ethical and professional perspective as originally noted by Sharpley (1987)

Also the comment; õSo Ohhh am I going to say this out loud, it's almost you learn the process but actually you are not really competent until you can go away and play with the process and do something individualised and differentö Interviewee 8 (56:58)

Was coded in multiple ways conceptually:

1. NLP Epistemology

2. Distinctiveness of NLP

3. NLP as Psychology

However I believed that, despite NLP being portrayed as a dynamic and process-oriented epistemology, and distinct in this way, did not absolve NLP from providing quantitative evidence that the patterns they say exist and when appropriately made use of in the context they are designed for, would produce sensory based evidence. Indeed this is one of the criteria of an NLP model. It is for this reason such a comment was ultimately subsumed into the theoretical category of lacking in published empirical evidence as it is one of the reasons often given within NLP as to why there is not an empirical evidence base. Bostic St Clair and Grinder put it thus: õí the use of statistical tools ó in general, those methods of analysis associated with probability ó as a strategy for description, analysis and explanation is entirely inappropriateö (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001, pp. 81-82).

However, in explaining that the appropriate method of description for NLP is a formal system of well-defined recursive rules from which behavioural acts emerge, Bostic St Clair and Grinder admit, in a footnote, that there is much work to do in understanding what portions of human behaviour need to be assigned to rule systems and which to analogue processes. Which portions are discrete and which are assigned to continuous paradigms also need to be differentiated. Irrespective of what answer practitioners of NLP may come up with, the fact of the matter is the behavioural acts which do emerge from the apparently identified formal system of well-defined recursive rules are amenable to statistical analysis and the fact that there is a lack of published empirical evidence within NLP is an identifying feature which has both professional and ethical implications. In keeping with the Action Research spirit this sentiment was emailed to Dr Grinder:

õGood Morning Johní í ..Just a reflection on your last email: õuse corrupting patterns of thinking such as Cause-Effect.ö I suspect even Real NLP is still guilty of shoddy epistemology. Whilst you purportedly eschew a positivist paradigm your

whole raison d'être is to make explicit the implicit, code it and then upon congruent application of such a code predict what will happen. Sounds pretty cause and effect to me John. Best wishes, Bruce." (Personal communication, 2014).

Category 4 Historical and current disagreement

As previously signposted, Tosey and Mathison (2009) tell us "NLP's body sometimes seems so fractured that it is difficult to imagine it recovering from its self-inflicted injuries. Due especially, we suspect, to the effects of litigation about intellectual property rights in NLP something appears to have died" (Tosey & Mathison, 2009, p. 191).

As well as Bandler instigating litigation against the NLP community he was also responsible for ousting Pucelik from the early core group of developers. In modelling, both himself and Bandler, Grinder notices one of the characteristics they share in common is being arrogant and egotistical. These characteristics are probably not very conducive to harmony and Grinder himself is very critical of all who practice NLP contrary to the way he believes it should be done, publically criticising the work of Hall and Dilts to name two, (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001). Grinder, after describing what NLP is, tells us that for 99% of the people in the world NLP has nothing to do with what he describes as NLP, (Inspiritive, 2008b). Below in table 6 is some of the coding which textured this concept.

Table 6. A section of substantive and theoretical coding leading to the development of the category: Historical and current disagreement.

Property of concept	Data Source	Example
NLP is fragmented and the practice of NLP involves NLP sometimes and sometimes does not.	NLP Interviewee 1 (10:26)	It is very fragmented and people here and there doing various things they call NLP some of which is and some of which isn't
People possibly afraid to talk about the serious questions in NLP and to "rock the boat"	NLP Interviewee 1 (18:40)	I didn't get anything back nobody is ready willing to really grapple with the serious questions in NLP
NLP is characterised by discussions around personalities rather than issues of substance.	NLP Interviewee 1 (15:25)	About six years ago I think I put forward the proposal to have a more spirited dialogue to focus on issues rather than personalities and basically nobody was interested
NLP as fragmented	NLP Interviewee 5 (14:50)	How do I see the future of NLP well if it continues the way it is it could continue to be fragmented
NLP as too willing to mount legal attacks	Munro Authenticity	The other big misgiving I have about NLP is its willingness to mount legal attacks (why am I thinking Scientology?) See the story of the editing of Darren Brown's book.

NLP as a dog's breakfast	NLP Interviewee 5 (24:30)	That's okay that's how I see NLP now, I see it as being a bit of a dog's breakfast
Arguing within NLP is leading to barriers and preventing building rapport with other approaches.	NLP Interviewee 6 (17:04)	I think we could do more to build rapport with the other approaches, people doing other things, and, from a position of rapport, we can have more influence. Because I think, all the time we're arguing, that's actually creating more barriers.
NLP divided amongst themselves a little bit	NLP Interviewee 6 (13:02)	That's an interesting question. Divided amongst themselves a little bit, because I think we have three groups: the ones that are interested in the respectable side of NLP, that are wanting to legitimise and get us accepted as an ethical, appropriate way forward; there are another relatively noisy group who do not plug in to any kind of community at all, but seem to be, and I'm mind-reading here because I don't know them, more interested in making money and not particularly concerned at what happens to their students after qualifying… … … … … … Then there's the smaller group of NLP trainers out there who have got no idea at all about the politics that are going on, doing their own thing and, again, not plugged in.
Some Leaders in NLP who are expert insist NLP has to be practiced in their particular way.	NLP Interviewee 8 (11:50)	So I think somewhere along the line with some people, values of what I hold as NLP and what it stands for have kind of been lost but then I also see at the other end some people who are leaders in NLP who I believe are doing almost as much damage by saying that now they have become expert they are the only ones that understand it properly, and you have to do their style of NLP or it's not really NLP either.
Divisiveness within NLP takes a lot of energy away which otherwise could be put to good use.	NLP Interviewee 10 (38:18)	But if We Could at Least Move that Barrier of the Community Being Divisive Saying It's not Needed It's Needed It's not Needed It's Needed that Will Take a Lot of the Energy Away and the Energy Can Be Put to Good Use
Ethical use of NLP is tainted by others who practice and have different values and beliefs.	NLP Interviewee 10 (40:30)	Because that is the point at the moment we're so tainted by the likes of those people, NLP is for manipulating science, NLP is going to make you 100 grand a day, in less than a month and those sorts of things we've got to crawl out from underneath that and that is where I think it comes back to baby steps
Confusion of empowerment and omnipotence by some in the NLP community.	NLP Interviewee 10 (13:33)	NLP teaches us about empowerment, it is about empowerment of self and empowerment of others and I do think that sometimes with some people they get slightly confused between empowerment and omnipotence.
A lack of loyalty and support within the NLP community regarding those who intend to develop NLP	NLP Interviewee 14 (43:30)	But, if you are an NLP loyalist, which is the problem – I feel there is some paradox, because I have always been an NLP loyalist, but then I found NLP, let's say So and So and So and So and many of the first generation of NLPers, that they are not so loyal to me. So, when you develop something in NLP they will not pay any attention, they will not give any support. So and So, for instance, who I respect a lot, but he is only trying to prove that other things than what he did are not NLP.
NLP is missing some form of aggregation.	NLP Interviewee 15 (2:01:56)	What It's Missing Is the 4th Condition Which Is Some Form of Aggregation. (the 1st 3 being diversity, autonomy and decentralisation)
NLP is not respectable	NLP Interviewee 6 (11:38)	Provided NLP becomes respectable, I think it's got a bright future
The squabbling by leaders gets in the way of the good sell and what works.	Munro, Authenticity.	It's a good sell; after all we don't have to worry about the dynamics of context that will shape the efficacy of this thing. And it certainly has been a great commercial success for NLP - although amusingly enough the founders seem to keep squabbling and suing each other. And in the process, the what in fact did work when, is lost.
Recurring themes of power, control and manipulation within NLP.	O'Connor, Authenticity.	Given the recurring themes of power, control and manipulation within NLP, I was thinking – even if it did work – would it be an authentic approach to success?

Discussion category 4, Historical and current disagreement

It is well known by people inside of NLP that the two Co-Founders acrimoniously split and, on publication of The origins of Neuro Linguistic Programming (2013), it was finally made public that Bandler asked Pucelik to leave in what appear to be acrimonious circumstances. The Bandler effect has already been discussed in Chapter 2, however the publically declared characteristics of arrogance and egotism in leaders do not lend themselves to development of harmonious teams.

It is possible the leadership of NLP is attempting to turn over a new leaf. Under the auspices of Michael Hall and Frank Pucelik an NLP leadership group emerged in 2012 and have met annually at the NLP conference in London with the intention of working effectively together. A web-site has been created (http://nlpleadershipsummit.org/) and definitions, values and mission statements have been posted. Characteristically though, and in accordance with the concept of historical and current disagreement, many NLP leaders including Bandler and Grinder are missing from the list of contributors. Only time will tell if this is indeed a significant turning point, history is against it being so; however, with good leadership anything is possible.

One of the telling characteristics of this concept in this research is that much of the disagreement is a function of those who possibly practice NLP in such a way that they themselves do not live their personal and professional lives according to the presuppositions of NLP. Interviewee 6 says:

> ðThatøs an interesting question. Divided amongst themselves a little bit, because I think we have three groups: the ones that are interested in the respectable side of NLP, that are wanting to legitimise and get us accepted as an ethical, appropriate way forward; there are another relatively noisy group who do not plug in to any kind of community at all, but seem to be, and Iøm mind-reading here because I donøt know them, more interested in making money and not particularly concerned at what happens to their students after qualifying, some of whom have actually gone through accreditation with people at NLP, even. So theyøve jumped through the right hoops for that, but they seem to be more about cranking the numbers through and not, necessarily, working anywhere else. And, of course, unfortunately, one of the founders is a numbers man as opposed to anything else, and I would say itøs only one

of them in all of us. Then there's the smaller group of NLP trainers out there who have got no idea at all about the politics that are going on, doing their own thing and, again, not plugged in. So, it would be nice if we could find a way of helping them to get plugged in, because I think there are probably quite a few of them that might be very ethical and be prepared to actually do things in the right way." (Interviewee 6: 13:02-14:30)

So within groups there can be agreement, however, NLP, in becoming fragmented, has NLP groups which are united, publically disagreeing with other groups of NLP[ers]. Looking in from the outside this is more visible as from the "helicopter view" one can more easily see the separate groupings contrasted with those who are associated into their particular group where there may be great agreement. For instance in talking about NLP, Interviewee 8 says: "So I think somewhere along the line with some people, values of what I hold as NLP and what it stands for have kind of been lost" (NLP Interviewee 8, 11:50-12:01).

Clearly Interviewee 8 sees himself and those in his group as practicing NLP from a place of integrity and professionalism, however, in looking at the wider picture, one sees this is not so for many others. From insider and associated perspectives NLP can be seen to be ethical and maybe even valid, however from the wider perspective the cracks and disagreements quickly appear and characterise the field. What is especially noticeable for NLP is that these differences of opinions have not been aired in the appropriate academic literature and given a chance to develop, as for instance Grounded Theory has.

An interesting point is raised by Interviewee 6 when she says: "from a position of rapport, we can have more influence. Because I think, all the time we're arguing, that's actually creating more barriers." (NLP Interviewee 6, 17:00-17:04).

The name of the flagship NLP magazine of the ANLP in the UK is õRapportö, such is the significance of the process within the NLP paradigm, however, it is as though those who practice NLP are not using NLP within their own communications. The category of historical and current disagreements in the grounded theory was informed by sub-categories or concepts during substantive coding and emerged from such themes as; õThe specific behaviours within NLPö, õNLP as a personalityö and õNLP as defined through professional relationshipsö. Even earlier in the substantive coding a concept which emerged was õNot taking enough consideration of the presuppositions of NLPö. Within the multiple groups there can be the seeds of good practice, however when one takes a ‑helicopter viewø and also looks at NLP using a time line, one sees that internationally NLP is characterised by friction and fragmentation. Essentially the NLP brand appears to lack organisation, whether this is by design or a function of poor organisational practice, like the definition of NLP will differ according to whom you speak.

Category 5. Wanting to be "accepted", but disappointed with the continual pattern of not being accepted by "mainstream"

In many ways this category was related to category 7 õLack of standardized Definition, curriculum and professional practice code, critical of the discipline of Psychologyö, and also related to a growing awareness within the NLP community that psychology and other professions are re-owning the patterns borrowed from them over the last 40 years by putting them into different contexts. For instance positive psychology is recognising the benefit of studying the habits of effective people, rather than understanding what is wrong with clinical populations (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In researching, the feeling was that this concept is either a blind spot for the NLP community, a fundamental flaw in their ability to model academic practice, or a recognition that NLP fundamentally is anti-academic. As a

defining feature of NLP, the prevalence of this concept could represent a strategy to court respectability and thus market share and this would be commensurate with NLP as a commercial practice. A part of the õblind spotö could simply be the anti-academic and anti-psychological stance NLP has taken from the beginning, as Interviewee 9 told us:

õNLP could have been an established methodology by now, but the reason it couldn't is historical, we know because the founders had an anti-academic position, and mummy and daddy have influenced the entire field ever since, and they went further they even rubbed academics noses in it, they rubbished academia they made fun of professors, so you don't win friends like that.ö (NLP Interviewee 9, 25:45-26:11).

Whatever the reason for this prevalence, NLP seems to be characterised by a war with the traditional science of thought and behaviour, yet paradoxically also wishing to become more a part of that community. Interviewee 6 tells us: õWe do want to grow as a field, but we need to do it in a way that is going to meet the academic rigour.ö (Interviewee 6, 50:25-50:31).

Some of the instances which informed and developed this concept are below:

Table 7:A section of substantive and theoretical coding leading to the development of the category: Wanting to be "accepted", but disappointed with the continual pattern of not being accepted by "mainstream"

Property of concept	Data Source	Example
Currently there is no official body of NLP nor a list of things that are generally accepted by NLP as constituting NLP practice. Also currently there is no mechanism to achieve this and NLP is in danger of becoming a stagnant field. In order to grow as a field, NLP needs to adopt a way that will meet academic rigour.	NLP Interviewee 6(50:05)	I think that, at some point, we need to have a list of things that are generally accepted by the community and an official body as these are definitively already accepted as part of NLP and this is how you apply to add something to the field. I think that should come hand óin-hand, so we have a mechanism, because otherwise weØll become a stagnant field. We do want to grow as a field, but we need to do it in a way that is going to meet the academic rigour.
Negative behaviours do not endear proponents of a discipline to those who would like to support it.	NLP Interviewee 6(20:50)	But my understanding is there was an opportunity in the United States, when NLP was fairly new, for it to have been taken into the whole education system. Someone very senior was very interested in it and thought, ÷This would be great, we need to take it into schools.ø There were some negative behaviours engaged in by the people that were running the NLP at that point, which completely turned them off and thatØs when the reputation started going

		downhill as well.
Whilst NLP has some unique characteristics it has some unethical practices which persist. (possibly it is the non-addressing of these unethical issues which prevent assimilation into mainstream practice.)	NLP Interviewee 6 (32:57)	So, although we will visit the past, we will do that without re-stimulating too much. I think that, possibly, is one of the most unique things, actually, thinking about it, that we recognise that there's an anchoring that goes on when people assess negative experiences. And it is swift to change, as are many other approaches, however I'm almost loathe to say, on our negative end we've got people saying one session, and stuff like that, which I'm uncomfortable with. Although there might be one or two minor issues people can clear with a session, it doesn't seem ethical to say, 'Off you go, goodbye.' Having said that, two or three sessions on some minor things I think is realistic.
'Mainstream' generally may be quite left brain in orientation. NLP being a more experiential and generally right brain activity may generally belong to a group of studies which is marginalised by 'mainstream' on account of its epistemology.	NLP Interviewee. 8 (34:36)	I don't think I have done any development the same level as NLP that really challenges the very core of who I am and how I am so I don't know that I can compare it to anything else I have done. An awful lot of the other development I have done has been head based academic, knowledge based, critical thinking based it's interesting it possibly enhances my knowledge base, does it actually change how I do life? No. So I think that is what distinguishes it from me.
Current NLP courses for whatever reason integrate other unverified 'new age' content into the curriculum meaning NLP essentially becomes anything you wish to put in a curriculum. Also what is supposed to be the key methodology in NLP is either not taught or taught badly.	NLP Interviewee 8 (54:30)	However my training also included some quite peripheral things which I would question are not a part of NLP and I don't know what the heck they were doing in there, so things like Chakras, like auras, things like Organ language to some extent where it is an interesting aside but it is not NLP. So I think that is where I come back to I think you could develop an agreed list of competencies that you would have to be competent in, but it will have to be tools based. I think the harder part would be how do you ensure competency in the process of modelling which in mine I think was done less well, really modelling wasn't covered in any real depth until master practitioner and then was specifically related around board breaking and it wasn't done well I don't think.
NLP is not sufficiently, specifically and loudly defined as a discipline nor researched for it to be incorporated into mainstream as something which is radically different from what psychology already offers. (Although the claim is NLP is radically different on account of working directly with inner worlds, there is no evidence it is radically different, nor produces outcomes which are radically different either as noted in category 1)	NLP Interviewee 9 (47:39)	So the psychoanalyst, they talk about it, they analyse it, they discuss it, they don't work in a direct way as we do. So if you take as an example of the swish pattern the idea of moving around elements of your inner landscape in your inner world, this is radically different to what most other practitioners do. It's radically different of course people borrow it from NLP.
NLP would be more easily identifiable if its practitioners lived by the presuppositions which implicitly are regarded as the supporting theory of NLP. The fact that generally they do not markets NLP to the world as something rather fake.	NLP Interviewee 10 (15:13)	And the silly thing is some of the reasons we don't recognise that is because we are not taking enough notice of our own teachings. The presuppositions of NLP, one of the key presuppositions of NLP is meeting people in their model of the world and that is one thing I think that NLP as a field doesn't necessarily do very well.
NLP is not sufficiently, specifically and loudly defined as a discipline nor researched for it to be incorporated into mainstream as something which is radically different from what psychology already offers. (Again the claim is it is different, but the difference is only anecdotal and not supported in the academic literature as noted in category 1)	NLP Interviewee 13 (18:37)	To me it is principally the use of sub modalities that's what I would say sets it apart because if you look at other psychological interventions in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, REBT, EMDR I suppose may have a little bit of an overlap to me it's working with the patient's mental pictures how they structure their memories of past and future.
The basics in NLP are not integrated into one training and tested as NLP to see if what it is that NLP does differently really does make a difference. Consequently no case can be made for NLP being anything other than what it has modelled from what we already have.	NLP Interviewee 13 (25:50)	The thing is Bruce a lot of the other stuff bleeds across into other therapies doesn't it? That is what I would say that caught me on the hop really. I'd like to give presuppositions: no failure only feedback, the meaning of the communication is the response you get and so frequently when I work with students on my courses who come from other backgrounds those things that we take for granted are often quite extraordinary things for them they find that a really big learning. When you start saying that and if you can accept that, even something simple I would have thought everybody did this, is looking for deletions distortions and generalisations. I think the important thing for me if it was NLP I would make sure again, it is a bit of a negative, a lot of clients come to me because what they have is they've been looking in the past. That is the big difference for NLP, although we acknowledge the past but principally we focus on what are we getting now and what do we want in the future?
Beliefs such as these prevent integration with mainstream development and mental health practice as it sets up barriers and predisposes those insulted to look for faults in what NLP does.	NLP Interviewee 1 (43:05)	The way I put it is the whole of psychology and psychotherapy establishment is a shameless fraud
NLP has never been a part of mainstream	NLP Interviewee 1 (1:06:25)	Take So and So and So and So they are not part of mainstream

psychology. Not being so enables small groups to develop quickly.		psychology at all and never have been, maybe never will be, and because they had a small group that were somehow connected enough, they could make quite a lot of development unhindered by the larger community
Despite wanting NLP to be a distinct discipline and a respected profession, this is not possible as there is no definition of NLP.	NLP Interviewee 5 (18:00)	I'd like to see NLP nicely established as a distinct discipline and secondly from that as a profession and for that to be achieved I think there needs to be an agreed-upon, first of all definition of what NLP actually is
Again as above the difference which makes a difference that is NLP is not made sufficiently explicit to be tested as NLP and consequently be seen to be a significant advance on what we already have.	NLP Interviewee 14 (27:12)	Although I have been learning about it, I have never done anything hands on with it. So, using anchoring purposefully is only done in behavioural therapy and in a more static way.
NLP cannot become a part of mainstream provision until it becomes something other than a community of practice with a largely oral tradition.	Churches (2013)	Just this aspect of NLP alone, the fact that it has been a largely oral tradition for the last 30 years and a ÷community of practiceø provides enough ammunition for the critical academic to dismiss NLP.
Despite the more ethical and professional efforts of some in the NLP world, this is still at õGrey Literatureö stage and is not sufficient to offset the poor reputation of NLP generally.	Churches (2013)	Alongside this, the first peer-reviewed NLP research journal is now in existence and the second edition is now in press. Furthermore, it is also clear that much university-related NLP research has taken place but has not been published in journals (so called ÷grey literatureøó conference papers, PhD theses etc.)
NLP seen as a marketing success, which generates cult like behaviour, in followers (Lalich and Langone 2006) rather than educational success which is validated through appropriate testing and publication.	Williams, Authenticity	This all goes to show that if someone comes up with a theory, gives it a scientific-sounding name, surrounds it in mystery, and writes a book; there exists a ready audience of gullible people who will snatch it off the shelves and sing it's praise to the high heavens. Once a critical mass of believers is reached, it will take on a life of its own and defend against all infidels. Marketing trumps critical discernment every time.

Discussion of category 5. Wanting to be "accepted", but disappointed with the continual pattern of not being accepted by "mainstream"

In developing this concept as defining NLP it has been impossible to ignore the lack of critical discussion in the academic literature concerning either the status or definition of NLP and testing of any propositions which may flow from such a definition. Given the 40 year history of NLP it would seem strange that NLP practitioners should ever think they could be a part of mainstream education with such a track record.

This concept seemed to be characterised in a few ways.

First, generally speaking, NLP practitioners as seen in category 1 see NLP primarily as a commercial activity. The majority are happy for research to be done on NLP, but it is not an activity which they either do, enjoy, or can afford. Interviewee 7 regarded such work as õboringö. When Interviewee 14 wished to do research work she discovered there was no support from the NLP community. Concerning being a part of mainstream, NLP seems to be

rather a ӧí baby in the bathwaterö (NLP Interviewee 2 4:10) than õ...being at a crossroadsö (Tosey and Mathison 2009 p188).

(In feedback NLP Interviewee said the following about my use of her words in this section of the dissertation. The email discussion can be seen on p. 225.

> õPage 198 Your statement õConcerning being a part of mainstream, NLP is rather a ÷baby in the bathwaterø (NLP Interviewee 2 4:10) rather than ÷being at a crossroadsø (Tosey and Mathison 2009 p188) completely misses my intention to communicate that mainstream academia/professional critics are throwing the baby out with the bathwater when they dismiss ALL of NLP practitioners and materials. My analogy carries the meaning of destroying something very young, vulnerable and valuable, while doing the housecleaning chores to most readers. The Research and Recognitions Projects early research results are substantiating that analogy.ö)

Tosey and Mathison (2009) say at the crossroads there are 3 roads available for NLP in their opinion;

1 Entropy? Where energy is lost as the knowledge base is simply re-cycled rather than extended.

2 Seeds of its own destruction? As a result of diversity of opinion and dissent it is suggested NLP has been knocked for six.

3 Renaissance? Where NLP rediscovers and reasserts its identity as essentially a pragmatic system of knowledge.

Interviewee 13 uses the metaphor of crossroads in a different way to describe NLP:

õWhere do I see NLP now? I see personally it is a set of very useful strategies personally for myself and useful to teach to clients I think it's a useful intervention for self-development, I think there is a very useful set of tools there to help people overcome difficulties and problems they have in their lives, and I think they are understandable, I think theyøre nicely presented so the man in the street can generally make sense of them if they're presented well. I think it is at a crossroads really between psychology and populist self-help.ö (NLP Interviewee 13, 6:45-7:15).

Interviewee 13 seems to be happy with NLP remaining at the crossroads in between psychology and populist self-help seeing this as fitting the criterion of NLP as being essentially pragmatic, it would seem, however, from the perspective of Tosey and Mathison (2009) that if this road is taken then entropy is the inevitable consequence.

It seems from talking with NLP practitioners, good quality research has not even got off the ground, while Wake et al. are saying that their research volume, looking at the application of NLP to psychotherapy, is designed to justify and motivate rigorous scientific research into NLP (Wake et al. 2013, p. 1). Even though these considerations are more aligned with category 3; õLacking in published Empirical Evidenceö, it is coded here as it really seems to characterise the internal confusion of NLP as a paradigm. NLP either models excellence and makes explicit patterns which can be transferred to others so they too can become excellent, which is testable, or it is as Sharpley suggest a partial compendium of practice taken from other disciplines. Without possession of a robustly agreed-upon definition of what NLP is and a theory of NLP and without any empirical research to support the claims of NLP it seems paradoxical that any NLP practitioner would seek to be a part of mainstream education, however the dream does seem to persist. Even if NLP was accepted as a dynamic discipline NLP would be difficult to define because of internal diversity of opinion. Again the coaching

world provides an exemplar. There is no agreed-upon definition of coaching (Gormley & Van Nieuwerburgh, 2014), yet post graduate degrees and journal articles abound internationally. Links with universities and psychology departments exist all around the world and a critical body of evidence is being amassed. Much of this may be of a qualitative nature, however it is being evidenced according to the methodologies appropriate to the subject matter. Consequently, coaching as an important HR and OD activity is becoming commonplace within organisations internationally.

A second characteristic of this concept seems to be that historically, NLP never has been a part of mainstream education. It has remained that way as it is characterised by small partnerships engaged in commercial activity. Because they remain independent of the mainstream, they can flexibly retain a commercial focus as the market place shifts and new needs become apparent. In this way, NLP can continue to be a Martini solution for anyone, any time, at any place in the world, providing they have the funds to pay. Their offerings are not slowed down or hindered by ethics committees, bureaucratic processes, or propositional knowledge which seems to have no application in the õrealö world. Also in this world and from this perspective they are free to provide promises to clients which are not supported by evidence in academic journals. As already mentioned, Tony Grant makes the following observation concerning Anthony Robbinøs Neuro Associative Conditioning (NAC), one of the offshoots of NLP who is discussed in category 6: õIndeed, it could well be argued that Robbinsø marketing of NAC comes close to breaking the Code of Ethics of the Australian Psychological Society (1997)ö. (Grant, 2001).

The third characteristic seems to arise from the helicopter view. As one attempts to reconcile these two apparently opposing features of NLP (wanting to be professionally accepted and being disappointed by rejection) we must ask the question ─Where is the leadership within

NLP that will ensure that some consistency does emerge so that one can at least understand what NLP is seeking to achieve?ø Those outside of the NLP community do not even see the better quality of NLP which runs NLP research conferences and encourages the Grey literature which Churches (2013) speaks of; they just see the marketers and their exaggerated claims in accordance with category 8.

A possibility is that at a group level the intention is commercial; in order to court legitimacy and make the marketing appear more credible to the lay public an association with research is nominally desirable. This strategy allows potential clients to suspend disbelief sufficiently to ensure the cheque clears. What is clear is that throughout 40 years of existence NLP practitioners have not put in the hard work that Francine Shapiro and her colleagues did in order to become a mainstream solution to a specific problem.

Category 6. Development of break out groups, dissatisfied with the culture of disagreement within NLP sometimes using a different brand

In talking with NLP practitioners, it became clear that one way to deal with the legal disputes and culture of disagreement within NLP was to depart from NLP and go it alone. This punctuates all 3 data sources sufficiently to warrant a category of its own. Below is some of the coding which supported such a category in a theory of NLP.

Table 8: A section of substantive and theoretical coding leading to the development of the category: Development of break out groups, dissatisfied with the culture of disagreement within NLP sometimes using a different brand.

Property of concept	Data Source	Example
NLP is fragmented and some groups do things which are not NLP.	NLP Interviewee 1 (10:26)	It is very fragmented and people here and there doing various things they call NLP some of which is and some of which isn't
NLP is very fragmented and produces very mixed results	NLP Interviewee 5 (18.27)	Well, I see it as being very fragmented with very mixed results in terms of quality of practitioners which are out there.
There is not much agreement between influential people in NLP.	NLP Interviewee 5 (33:55)	I don't know if there ever is going to be much of agreement between influential people in the NLP community
Evolution of new groups dissatisfied with the original group is a function of Western Epistemology.	NLP Interviewee 5 (37:12)	NLP is just an expression of a bigger pattern. This state in the NLP community in my view is an example of a problem and that is Western epistemology.
EMDR developed from an original pattern	(Fredricks, 2014, Grimley 2014	Francine Shapiro worked (administration and sales) in the Santa

developed by John Grinder	p561)	Cruz offices of Grinder, Delozier and Associates in the 80's. She approached me one day and told me that a friend of hers from New York has been raped and she wanted to help her through this trauma and ensure that she exited cleanly and without scars. I told Francine to put her in resourceful state (anchored) and have her systematically move her eyes through the various accessing positions typical of the major representational systems
A group wanting to call their discipline something other than NLP	NLP Interviewee 12 (20:21)	We don't really want to call it NLP. We are not going to market it under NLP. We are going to call it something different. We will honour where it came from.
Emphasising the difference between NLP and Neuro Semantics.	Akademi NLP (2010)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0hAQN4wK8c&index=7&list=FL8DkNuJiPmKdNTrMepPDfLQ
Denial by Francine Shapiro (EMDR) that John Grinder had a conversation with her about how to treat a rape victim.	*The Psychologist* vol 27 no 9 september 2014 (p638) The British Psychological Society.	Bruce Grimley's letter in the August issue of The Psychologist in response to my article (÷EMDR ó more than a therapy for PTSD¢, July 2014) includes a claim byDr John Grinder that he suggested to Francine Shapiro a way to treat a rape victim and that he is therefore the originator of EMDR. According to Dr Shapiro (personal communication), no such conversation ever took place.
Re-labelling of NLP has happened in multiple places.	NLP Interviewee 12 (19:45)	So while they are openly acknowledging part of its kind of history as NLP they have pretty much set it up as something quite different so yes you could lose, and I could certainly see one or two generations down, that a ***** trainer who wasn't an NLP trainer could just talk about the ***** part rather than the NLP part, for sure. But that is what has happened in other places we talk of Neuro Semantics we talk of New Code. So many people have gone on to relabel and just tweaked it a bit and then called it something else, but at least with *****it is something quite different, it is not stuff that you would have learned in NLP
Development of break out groups and rebranding for different reasons	NLP Interviewee 9 (39:40)	There was a time when So and So was trying to sue everybody So for his own safety it was a sensible thing to call it something else. We weren't in that position, ours was a more philosophical distinction there was so much in NLP, at the least in the way that it's was done, the way that it was taught that didn't align with **** that we decided to call it something else however I have always said I don't see any incompatibility at a fundamental level.
Specific patterns taken from NLP and relabelled as something else on account of independent research.	The Human Givens Institute.The fast cure for phobia and trauma: evidence that it works. Retrieved on Friday 28th November 2014 from: http://www.hgi.org.uk/archive/rewindevidence.htm#.VHiBtjGsXh4	The rewind technique, also known as the fast phobia cure, evolved from the technique developed by Richard Bandler one of the co-founders of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP). He called it the VK dissociation technique (the V stands for visual and the K for kinaesthetic ô feelings). The version recommended by the European Therapy Studies Institute has been refined and streamlined, as a result of its own research into why and how best it works.[2]
Development of a different branch of NLP which encourages research and testing of NLP patterns.	Personal email from Dr Karl Nielsen Tue 30/09/2014 18:46 bruce@achieving-lives.co.uk	We decided to found **** on our 3rd NLP & Coaching World Congress in Croatia 2012. **** is designed so that only NLP Trainer with an academic Master in Psychology and a Psychotherapy qualification according to WCPC standard (NLPt level) are accepted as õ**** Master Trainer, INö. The content of **** trainings is defined as scientifically proven applicable Psychology knowledge and scientifically proven NLP.
Different NLP trainers have different definitions of NLP that to not fit together	NLP Interviewee5 (16:10)	The concern I have about that is I talk to various NLP trainers and a lot of trainers I've spoken to don't even have a definition of NLP that fits with my understanding of what it is, NLP definition
NLP practiced under a different name on account of legal proceedings.	(Hall 2013a).	Another Bandler lawsuit occurred sometime later (1988 or 1989) against Tony Robbins. That one was against Robbins because he was not certifying people as NLP Practitioners or Master Practitioners through The Society of NLP. Settled in 1990 out of court with Tony promising to õcertify people through the Society and pay his $200 for each one certified in NLP,ö he promptly stopped training õNLPö as such and invented a new name, NACô Neural Associative Conditioning.
It takes energy to remain divisive and this energy could rather be put to good use.	NLP Interviewee 10 (38:18)	But if We Could at Least Move that Barrier of the Community Being Divisive Saying It's not Needed It's Needed It's not Needed It's Needed that Will Take a Lot of the Energy Away and the Energy Can Be Put to Good Use
Informal aggregations already exist in NLP, however this needs to happen more, but not to the extent that we obtain centralisation.	NLP Interviewee 15 (2:01:56)	You can't have just, you know, So and So people, just So and So people. You've got to have diversity, you've got to have people to be autonomous, and that has to be decentralised ó great NLP's got all those things ó what it's missing is the 4th condition which is some form of aggregation. Right now it's aggregated, not formally, you know there's some certain informal aggregations, but í and then you have to have aggregation that doesn't become centralisation, otherwise you kill the wisdom again, so I don't knowí .how
There was an NLP summit in 2012 which looked at the possibility of collaboration between groups. There are bits of collaboration between groups in NLP. But the proof is NLP organisations don't survive very long and either disappear or	NLP Interviewee 9(22:25)	You know So and So's summit last year where we were all talking about collaboration. One of the things I said that is let us find out what collaboration is already happening because I see lots of little bits of collaboration I would rather go well let's build on those rather than have some huge thing where we all have to collaborate. The proof of the matter is that most NLP organisations don't

tear themselves apart. There is a pattern within NLP that has lasted 30 years where different groups are still arguing about standards and marketing.		survive very long, either they literally disappear like all the American ones have, or they end up tearing themselves apart or being in the hands of a small number, we might not like that truth but it is the truth. I travel around the world and it may not be an absolute, but nearly all the NLP organisations I talk to are suffering from that same issue if you like and they are all still arguing about exactly the same thing standards, marketing, exactly the same things of 30 years ago.
In response to the question: õhow do you see NLP getting from where it is now to where it needs to be in the future?ö Different Groups are not working together and if this does not happen then the patterns of disagreements and break out groups will continue.	NLP Interviewee 7 (3:55)	Well the only way it is going to happen is if we begin working together and collaborating and if we don't do that it will continue as it has been for three decades

Discussion of category 6 Development of break out groups, dissatisfied with the culture of disagreement within NLP sometimes using a different brand

NLP is regarded as very fragmented, which in itself is not problematical, however when this characteristic is put alongside a culture of disagreement, even concerning the fundamentals of what NLP is and what should be in an NLP curriculum it would seem difficult to present NLP as a field, especially in the light of being described as an õoral traditionö (Churches 2013) and having no A standard research to support any of its patterns. (Wake et al. 2013). Standing back and looking along the NLP time line, we see disagreement as standard and, despite efforts to rectify this, somehow systemically within NLP there appears to be a propensity for disagreement. As already mentioned recently, a series of NLP Leadership Summits have been convened in an attempt to deal with this, (http://nlpleadershipsummit.org/), time will tell what impact these will have. However only weeks after the latest Summit held in London, experienced trainers are publically denigrating it on account of some attendees not displaying the values the summit purports to have. Figure 13 taken from Facebook provides the rationale behind the critique and a sense of NLP conversation.

There are now many brands which have their roots in NLP, but choose to call themselves something different for a host of reasons: Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), Developmental Behavioural Modelling, (DBM), Clean Language, Symbolic modelling, Neuro Semantics, Multiple brain integration techniques (Mbit), Neuro-

Associative Conditioning (NAC), Human Givens, New Code, Design Human Engineering (DHE), Neuro Hypnotic Repatterning. Each of these groups have broken away from the title õNLPö to develop something similar, however rather than communicating with each other, it seems the gestalt is they compete commercially, emphasising their difference from each other and individual unique selling points.

Figure 13. Portions of a public critique of NLP Leadership Summit 2014.

(Retrieved on Friday 5th December 2014 from https://www.facebook.com/)

NLP Interviewee 5 in the above instances from interview transcripts gives an opinion that this dynamic could just represent the Western Epistemological tradition of labelling and separating and then looking at the individual labels contrasted with the more holistic view of

looking at and understanding the bigger picture of how these individual parts relate to and communicate with each other. (NLP Interviewee 5 37:12-37:22) However, the question remains: if NLP prides itself on being able to take this more holistic perspective, being rooted in systemic thinking, how is it that its history is characterized by a lack of appreciation for the wider system. A further question is suggested: what is the source of the apparent inability to make use of this this holistic perspective to effectively relate to each other and to the wider world of formal education?

Category 7. Lack of standardized Definition, curriculum and professional practice code

One of the many changes which took place during the course of this research as a result of listening to the NLP practitioners was to change the research title from õWhat is the definition of NLP?ö to õWhat is NLP?ö The word definition besides being a nominalisation was also regarded by some NLP practitioners as restrictive. However for Sturt (2013) the very fact NLP does not have a definition which is accepted by all, demonstrates that research cannot be done. She says: õthe very fact that there is no agreed definition of NLP indicates how little evidence we have of its benefits.ö (Sturt, 2012). A similar concept was recorded in the words of OøConnor of the LinkedIn group: "Such is the circularity of arguing evidence when we haven't looked at "Evidence for what? A question which might be more important than its easier cousin, "Evidence of what?" (OøConnor in Authenticity, 2014). If NLP has no figure in the world of Human Development (HRD) or Organisational Development (OD) and is so similar to all we presently have on account of borrowing from other disciplines then there is indeed nothing to research. We know the extent to which õNLP patternsö work on account of research in psychology and practice by professional psychologists. If NLP is ever to exist as a profession in its own right the words of Interviewee 5 are probably very relevant:

õI'd like to see NLP nicely established as a distinct discipline and secondly from that as a profession and for that to be achieved I think there needs to be an agreed-upon, first of all definition of what NLP actually isö (NLP Interviewee 5, 18:00).

However what NLP has presented us with over 40 years is a history of internal discord with Interviewee 6 telling us: õfrom a position of rapport, we can have more influence. Because I think, all the time weøre arguing, thatøs actually creating more barriers.ö (NLP Interviewee 6, 17:00-17:04).

In researching õwhat is NLP?ö I was hoping to also understand what a standardized curriculum in NLP might look like too, and within that question there was an assumption that currently there is something missing in NLP, otherwise it would indeed have been accepted within mainstream social science a long time ago. However a development of this theme seems to be bringing about the recognition that there is nothing in NLP to address anything which is not already in psychology, apart from the very eclectic and experiential way in which NLP practitioners work with a focus on untested application rather than theory building. In developing this theme further the acronym PEAS emerged with eclectic and experiential along with others being represented by the õEö. I discuss the role this acronym plays within the grounded theory in Chapter 5.

Below are some of the instances which developed this category.

Table 9:A section of substantive and theoretical coding leading to the development of the category: Lack of standardized Definition, curriculum and professional practice code. Critical of the discipline of Psychology.

Property of concept	Data Source	Example
NLP needs theoretical background as well as an evidence base to substantiate NLP patterns and be regarded as having substance.	Ouellette, Authenticity,	The mere fact of bringing together techniques based on several theoretical background does not make it a theory, it just makes it a bunch of techniques. Moreover, the NLP "practitioner" does not have a theoretical background to substantiate their "techniques"
NLP techniques may work, but not understanding how they work, why they work and the theoretical underpinnings prevents development.	Grimley (2013b)	Having a theoretical orientation is important if any discipline is to grow. If this were not the case we would still think Malaria was caused by bad air, (Methane). Even though shutting windows reduced the incidents of Malaria it did so for the õwrong reasonsö.

		Only when Alphonse Laveran developed the theory that Malaria was caused microscopic parasites carried by Mosquitoes could more effective advances be made. This is very much the current case with NLP.
Perceived bad practice in psychology used as an excuse not to engage in good research practice within NLP.	NLP Interviewee 1 (51:15)	She did her Ph.D. she had psych students coming in and was doing research on eye accessing cues, all the students had to come as a requirement of their psych course, a lot of them came in stoned
Perceived bad practice in psychology used as an excuse not to engage in good research practice within NLP.	NLP Interviewee 1 (51:40)	90% of All Psychological Research Is either Done on College Sophomores, Naïve Rats.
In talking about NLP we should concentrate on interventions that work and that we have evidence for.	NLP Interviewee 6 (21:58)	Before I answer that Iøm also going to say I donøt like that phrase, I know a lot of NLPøers use it, because itøs too general and thatøs probably what youøre getting at with the definition, I think. I would rather we talk about interventions that work, that we have evidence for, and I would also like us to talk about how NLP helps influence language patterns, etc. Itøs like saying, ÷Psychology works,ø to say, ÷NLP works.ø So, for me, thatøs one of the things thatøs got us into trouble, saying a blanket ÷NLP worksø frame.
At the moment there is not an agreed upon working definition of NLP and that is needed to see NLP change in a revolutionary way.	NLP Interviewee 5 (25:05)	Look I'd like to see a revolution take place in the NLP community, what do I mean by that, that people will become aware of how important it is to have an agreed-upon working definition of NLP
Currently the NLP practitioner frame is inappropriate as it does not represent NLP at a high enough logical level which is NLP as an operational epistemology. Consequently even though internationally there is a format of teaching applications of NLP in therapy, self development and coaching, this actually is not a curricular that represents what NLP really is. The fundamental patterns of NLP can be generalised to multiple contexts.	NLP Interviewee 5 (27:10)	The whole idea of training people as practitioners, it's still operating inside an old frame where people think of NLP as a therapy or now may be as a form of coaching and so if you think about it that way you are turning out NLP practitioners with the skill to coach others that's all fine but that's just one area of application of NLP so if you are to teach NLP, what are the fundamental patterns that would be appropriate to teach somebody? I don't know if you could even call them a practitioner however there are some fundamental patterns that are a part of the body of NLP and when people incorporate those pattern they can generalise those patterns to a context whether it be therapeutic, educational, personal relationship, self-management, intra personal creating a distinction between conscious and unconscious mind and how they live in the world and so on I think there are some fundamental patterns and maybe if there was a clean sweep, a whole redesign in terms of what is taught maybe not even calling it practitioner who knows and it would need to be at a high enough logical level, in terms of the patterns, rather than a format approach my concern is a number of and people get to churned out, quicky trainers, and they may not even be aware of the issue of NLP as an epistemology as an operational epistemology so there is not that much interest in a broad sense.
NLP does not need to furnish people with a complex theory if the õtechnologyö they give them is simple and it works.	NLP Interviewee 15 (1:36:48)	So, for me this is the whole idea, when you have a sufficiently developed technology and this is why I was struck with something like the meta-model, hey ó I donøt have to have the 40 years of intuition that somebody else does in order to be able to help somebody else in a very profound way.
An NLP curriculum depends upon agreement amongst the NLP community. Bits need to be agreed upon and put in a location where internationally people can refer to.	NLP Interviewee 14 (49:00)	So, that can all be thrown into this list, because itøs that we, as NLPers agree, yes, yes, and yes and maybe it will have 100 items. It can be put somewhere, like the safe of the International Association of NLP in Switzerland, where organisations say, ÷Yes, thatøs what we agree on.ø
Many NLP statements are not subjected to criticism and are marketing statements rather than statements which emerge from a solid body of evidence and a theoretical position.	NLP Interviewee 9 (24:30)	One of the ways the academic community builds its quality is through self-criticism. I think it can take it too far and it can be horribly painful, but the bottom line is if you donøt examine the holes or the false statements, or the statements that donøt have any backing then they just carry on, and that kind of low quality. A lot of the statements which are made about NLP and are trundled out under the guise of NLP have no basis whatsoever they are nice marketing statements, no wonder NLP is accused of psychobabble.
NLP defies easy description even by NLP experts.	(Overdurf and Silverton 1998:viii)	NLP õõDefies Easy Descriptionö
There is a lack of motivation to do decent research within NLP.	NLP Interviewee 6 (38:49)	We need to find a way to motivate some people to do some decent research. So, I think thatøs the idea. Every now and then I have an idea myself, for a research topic, and then I think, ÷But I havenøt got the time to do it,ø so Iøm unlikely to do it, although I might do a PhD at some stage, so who knows. I donøt know whether, as a community, if we could get to a position where everybodyøs really keen to support what weøre doing, could we help students get grants, for instance, or maybe even people of our age who want to go and study and get grants, so they can be paid to live whilst theyøre doing research. So, that would be a way the community could help it. Whether or not that would then become another criticism, of course, like the cigarette industry funding research, itøs a challenge all round, really.
NLP is a mystery story when one attempts to conduct evidence based research on it.	Tosey and Mathison 2009:3	õin other respects NLP resembles more of a mystery story.ö

NLP is more about generation than it is about prediction which is regarded by Grinder as a õPassive Activityö.	NLP Interviewee 15 (1:17:48)	There is no statistic on it because it is the first time that itøs happening so itøs the first time it is happening for this person, so thereøs that whole aspect where you enter into í ..and it is a more generative spaceí .and then past statistics donøt offer you that much
There is insufficient interest in creating the funding for and doing research within NLP.	NLP Interviewee 7 (21:05)	Yes well what you are talking about is interest and funding I think NLP has not been interested in that because we see it working every day in people's lives and our purpose has been to do business instead of doing research so there's not been that much interest in it and somebody has to collaborate and create funding to be able to do that and that usually occurs at a university level where they've got the money and don't have to worry about business and so once that happens once the people who are interested in that and will spend the time, the boring time to apply for grants and get that done then that will be done otherwise the marketplace is the place that test it.
There is no point in looking for evidence NLP works, until we have looked at the evidence for NLP existing as a separate discipline in itself.	OøConnor Authenticity	Such is the circularity of arguing evidence when we haven't looked at "Evidence for what?" - a question which might be more important than its easier cousin, "Evidence of what?"
We cannot research something if we do not know what it is. This implies a definition is important.	Sturt 2013	õthe very fact that there is no agreed definition of NLP indicates how little evidence we have of its benefits.ö
Within NLP there is a lack of integration with the areas modelled and the focus is simply on the practical applications which are derived from them.	NLP Interviewee 9 (1:28:12)	I think NLP in general and So and So in particular has this brilliant option to take theoretical models and turned them into practical applications that's an area that most other processes can't do as well as us but I also think our relationships with other models needs to be open and just saying if it works it's NLP I don't think is good enough. It certainly upsets other people and there has been a long-standing thing about lack of quoting other models and this is great to see So and So going back and finding for example some of the core stuff of the humanistic movement and things like this where some of the presuppositions come from.
Disagreements about what should be within an NLP curricular and the reasons for inclusion / exclusion. Again language about õit workingö without any accepted research being performed, reviewed and published.	NLP Interviewee 5 40:45	Well once again here's an example of a problem state and a number of people in the NLP community say we don't teach six step reframe any more. I say really, how come? It's been superseded by the Swish. I say how has it been superseded by this Swish. Ah with the Swish you can change behaviours faster than with a six step reframe. Now that tells me straightaway that they have no idea about the patterns which constitute the six step or N step reframe
An operating definition of NLP is õit is whatever worksö. However this does not seem to work as you do not know whether something that has worked in one context will work in another context, as Interviewee 15 points out, the transfer often is not effective. Thus there could be an element of the post hoc fallacy here?	NLP Interviewee 15 01:25:50	Certainly my original operating definition of NLP was that õit is whatever worksö. Then you could go õoh, then itøs just appropriating from other placesö Well, yeah, except that, you know, thereøs a lot of things that people do, that the way that they try to transfer isnøt effective, you know, itøsí you get mired down in a whole lot of other stuff.

Discussion of category 7 Lack of standardized Definition, curriculum and professional practice code

In looking through a sample of the substantive and theoretical coding above the reader can see how this category is textured in many ways. Also there were many instances which have been coded to other categories that were also coded to this category. This demonstrates the final grounded theory consists of 8 categories which though regarded as discreet for explanatory purposes are also interrelated to a great extent, however not to the extent of

multicollinearity. I would like to explore some of the ways in which this category is textured in more detail below.

1. Lack of standardized definition.

In psychometrics standardization is the procedure of establishing the initial set of norms for a test so as to define the conditions under which it should be used and also for determining the assessment of reliability and validity. As Sturt (2013) has pointed out the very fact NLP does not have a standardized definition demonstrates how little research we have concerning the benefits of NLP. An evidence base and standardization go hand in hand. As OøConnor (Authenticity) mentioned there is a circularity of arguing for evidence *of* , (emphasis added), NLP before we have established the evidence base that NLP actually exists and what it isí evidence *for*, (emphasis added), NLP? (OøConnor in Authenticity, 2014.)

2. Curriculum and Professional Practice code.

In the sample above I have included two quotes from NLP practitioners which demonstrate a fundamental divide in NLP as a discipline. Is it a process or content model? The reason this is a pivotal question is that, depending upon the answer, one will end up either with one curriculum and associated professional practice or another. The fact that most proponents of NLP will argue it is formally a process model and then when one looks at their curriculum one sees a set of content models, some which many NLP practitioners do not even recognise as NLP is a fundamental difficulty NLP needs to overcome it would seem.

Interviewee 5 talks of NLP at a higher logical level, she says:

> õThe whole idea of training people as practitioners, it's still operating inside an old frame where people think of NLP as a therapy or now may be as a form of coaching

and so if you think about it that way you are turning out NLP practitioners with the skill to coach others, that's all fine but that's just one area of application of NLP so if you are to teach NLP, what are the fundamental patterns that would be appropriate to teach somebody? I don't know if you could even call them a practitioner however there are some fundamental patterns that are a part of the body of NLP and when people incorporate those pattern they can generalise those patterns to a context whether it be therapeutic, educational, personal relationship, self-management, intra personal creating a distinction between conscious and unconscious mind and how they live in the worldö (NLP Interviewee 5, 27:10).

If we take NLP to be as above, then NLP Interviewee 5 says we need to agree on the fundamental patterns which constitute the NLP processes and through these we can generalise them to a variety of other contexts. The testing of NLP then becomes the testing of the generalisations made to the specific contexts. Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001) give us a clue as to what some of these NLP processes could be. They point out the Meta Model was already well developed and rigorously coded in the language of the transformational syntacticians. However, the non-verbal patterning which had been modelled had no comparable initial stable code to utilize. These NLP design variables were arrived at inductively and include rapport, manipulation of state, the use of multiple perceptual positions, certain anchoring formats and framing.

However when we look from the perspective of NLP Interviewee 14 we appear to have a more content oriented approach with maybe 100 or so items on the NLP list:

õSo, that can all be thrown into this list, because itøs that we, as NLPers agree, yes, yes, and yes and maybe it will have 100 items. It can be put somewhere, like the safe

of the International Association of NLP in Switzerland, where organisations say, ‑Yes, that's what we agree on.ø(NLP Interviewee 14. 49:00-49:20)

In researching what NLP is, what seemed to be the case was because there had been an avoidance of getting to the beef and arguing critically the difficult and important questions NLP had not evolved past the baby in the bathwater stage and consequently still appeared to be a bit of a playground where anybody with an opinion had as much right to call themselves an NLP practitioner as anybody else. Consequently, for over 40 years, NLP has been characterised by various practitioners claiming that their version of NLP worked better than anybody else's, however these have always been marketing statements without empirical evidence to support them.

This has created the overriding characterisation of NLP as a field which is:

1) Commercially motivated

2) Saturated in Anecdotal evidence,

3) Lacks published empirical evidence and therefore also has

4) Historical and current disagreement.

This is emphasised nicely by Interviewee 10: õthey have a commercial interest in their type of NLP working, their type of NLP being more successful than somebody else's type of NLP. And we are not ready for that yet as a field because the field is not widely recognised enough outside of the field.ö (Interviewee 10, 21:40-21:55).

When talking about the inductively-created NLP design variables, Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001) also recognised that the demand for trainings at that time provided a financial

opportunity which was seized. This opportunity distracted from the modelling projects, such as the development of the Milton Model (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001). Interestingly, it also provided a challenge; how do you modify the NLP patterns in such a way that the patterns can be transferred effectively to a wide range of paying customers? Implicit in this challenge, of course, is the design of a pattern so that upon its congruent application, predictable results are forthcoming. It is this aspect of NLP which is almost totally missing, thus the characterising categories of 2), 3), and 4) above.

Category 8. All practice generally being associated with worst practice
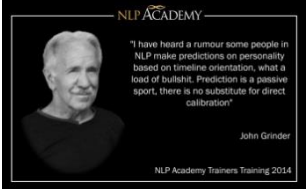
As has already been discussed, the NLP world is not homogeneous. The ANLP have hosted Bi-annual NLP research conferences at UK universities for the last 6 years. Some NLP training organisations will insist on 35 days training for an NLP practitioner certificate with external testing, supervision with a 5 to one ratio, and the course stretched over approximately one year. However, what was interesting in coding the Linkedin discussion (which represented an outside perspective on NLP) was the way in which even these sincere efforts were tarred with the same brush as those at the other end of the NLP training spectrum. At this end, commercial companies may cram 500 people into a hotel for the same õqualificationö in only 4 days with no testing or supervision. This range of training is alluded to, with interesting comments by Schutz (2014) in appendix C. He points out,

> õWhile in the world of lawyers, cardiologists, Airline Transport Pilots, Aikido teachers, clinical social workers, Zen Monks, Judges .... because of tradition, standardized access criteria, length of training, etc. the average minimal knowledge and competence is quite high and standardized, in NLP all these parameters vary much in diversity, and a profound discussion about them is rare.ö (Schutz 2014)

Such confirmation bias is of course a well-known phenomenon, (Kahneman, 2011) and even

though there may be different motives for making use of the worst possible practice in NLP

to represent the whole field, in this research it was a characteristic which stood out.

Below is some of the coding which led to such an emerging theme.

Table 10. A section of open coding leading to the development of the category: All practice generally being associated with worst practice

Property of concept	Data Source	Example
The majority of NLP practitioners do not mis-market, but these people are associated with the minority who do misrepresent NLP. Currently NLP as a brand is not in a position to do anything about this.	NLP Interviewee 7 (24:30)	So most NLP people don't miss market, but there's enough who do that creates the bad publicity for us and so what we lack is a community that can police itself and kick out those who are doing the misrepresentations.
Wikipedia currently runs a very negative representation on NLP. This is on account of there not being sufficient within NLP which is of educational value.	NLP Interviewee 6 (18:15)	But it will be more available from an educational perspective and they wonøt go on Wikipedia and see a negative story on there, which is what weøve got on there at the moment, of course.
NLP is easy to discredit.	OøConnor, Authenticity	Also to Andrew for leaving the oh-so-easy cudgels to one side and asking if it is possible to separate out that which is consistent and reliable in the fabric of NLP from the other, especially with the passage of years and much usage.
The editor of õThe Psychologistö in the UK refers to this article as having a pop at NLP which is an easy target. The particular property of this instance is that bad NLP press can now quickly reach a large population.(the editorøs views and signposting were in a popular professional publication going to 50,000 professionls internationally.)	Poole (2012) Your brain on pseudoscience: the rise of popular neurobollocks in *The New Statesman* retrieved on 7th June 2013 from: tinyurl.com/8jkndqc	õthe field (or cult) of õneurolinguistic programmingö (NLP) sells techniques not only of self-overcoming but of domination over others. (According to a recent NLP handbook, you can õcreate virtually any and all statesö in other people by using õembedded commandsö.) The employee using such arcane neurowisdom will get promoted over the heads of his colleagues; the executive will discover expert-sanctioned ways to render his underlings more docile and productive, harnessing õcreativityö for profit.ö (Poole 2012)
It is easy to set up Straw-man arguments against NLP as the Brand does not regulate the practice of NLP effectively.	Wiseman,R., Watt,C., ten Brinke, L., Porter,S., Couper,S., & Rankin,C. (2012). The Eyes Donøt Have It: Lie Detection and Neuro-Linguistic Programming. Retrieved on 1st June 2013 from: http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0040259	"Although the originators of NLP didnøt view ÷constructedø thoughts as lies, this notion has become commonplace, leading many NLP practitioners to claim that it is possible to gain a useful insight into whether someone is lying from their eye-movements.ö Wiseman et al. (2012)
The founders of NLP, some of their enthusiasts and their behaviours over 40 years have become inextricably linked with the field of NLP	Authenticity. Munro	Peterøs point though is valid. There is a real sense of õfakeö associated with the founders and many of the enthusiasts of NLP ó and it is an issue. Try typing: how do I become a master NLP practitioner into Google.
Even though concluding NLP is not a cult, Tosey and Mathison say there are many behaviours within NLP which are characteristic of the cultic. Others often say these behaviours are sufficient to generalise to NLP as a cult which is good copy for detractors of NLP.	Tosey, P. & Mathison, J. (2009) *Neuro-linguistic programming: a critical appreciation for managers and developers.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.	õOne characteristic cited by Lalich and Langone (2006) that seems relevant to NLP is, ÷The Leader is not accountable to any authoritiesø í .There are also adherents who sometimes appear to display ÷unquestioning commitmentø to their leader and regard his or her ÷belief system, ideology and practices as the Truth, as lawø (Lalich and Langone 2006)ö Tosey and Mathison (2009p173)
Provocative statements and colourful past history make the Co-Founders of NLP and thus NLP easy prey for Ad Hominem arguments, which though not sound, influence people away from NLP.	NLP training academy (2014) retrieved on 25th September 2014 from https://www.facebook.com/ and Clark (2006)	õKnow this guy? He was arrested for First Degree murder in 1988 and charged with the murder of his bookkeeper, who was also running a call-girl operation

		on the side. He had plunged headlong into cocaine addiction, and only he and his drug dealer (who was also the victim's boyfriend) were present in her house when the shooting took place. He's one of the founders of NLP - a crackpot of the first degree - Richard Bandler.ö (Clark 2006)

Discussion category 8, All practice generally being associated with worst practice

Wanting to believe in the wonders of NLP, but then on looking in the academic literature and not seeing any substantial support for any of the NLP patterns in any professional context makes it difficult to support NLP or NLP patterns as a valid practice. With the continued existence within NLP of such beliefs as looking up to the right is correlated with telling lies, it is easy for psychologists to hit back at NLP and discredit it. NLP itself will hold that one of the modelling principles for creating our maps (which we often mistake for the territory) is generalisation and this process along with distortion and deletion create the confirmation biases which have emerged as definitional for NLP. For those who have an agenda to discredit NLP, it is all just too easy to do just that on account of the many who practice NLP in an uninformed way and the inability or an unwillingness of the leadership within NLP to effectively address this dynamic.

The comments from the NLP Interviewees who did speak up on this topic though, were very telling. Interviewee 7 acknowledged NLP is not a community that can police itself and this is one reason the bias occurs. Another reason for NLP being defined in this way is that currently, according to Interviewee 6, there is a lack of genuine education within NLP. As a consequence, this makes it very easy for people who are interested in the field to believe the

frame currently presented on Wikipedia which concludes; "The balance of scientific evidence reveals NLP to be a largely discredited pseudoscience"(Wikipedia 2013).

The first research-based examination of NLP by Tosey and Mathison (2009) also highlights certain characteristics of NLP which are described as characteristic of cults. It may be worth exploring the possibility that the very public display of poor practice in NLP is quickly discerned and generalised, almost as a form of defence. As a species, it may be that humans are primed to attend to the negative in order to survive, fearful faces break into consciousness more quickly than happy expressions during continuous flash suppression, (Pessoa and Adolphs, 2010, p. 773). Tosey and Mathison (2009) tell us that, in their opinion NLP is not a cult. Unlike cults, within NLP people are free to come and go and do not have to cut family ties in order to practice. What NLP holds in common with cults, they tell us, are themes of control, influence and manipulation and that these certainly abound within NLP. Tosey and Mathison (2009) suggest that even though NLP may not set out to be a pseudo-religion, some people may use it to meet equivalent needs. The experiential nature of many NLP group meetings certainly may be enough to scare many into tarring the whole enterprise with a cultic brush, just to be on the safe side.

McClendon's book on the early days of NLP talks about activities which on one occasion involved tying a blindfolded group member to a cross, pouring lighter fluid at the bottom and setting it ablaze. When it was clear she could smell the smoke from the fire that John Grinder had lit, Richard Bandler asked the member if she would like her gift. This happened to be a knife with which she could cut herself loose. Apparently the anxious Interviewee never forgave Bandler, (McClendon, 1989). McClendon recounts other strange encounters in those days, for instance he talks of the group experimenting with negative hallucinations at the Alba Road training. McClendon describes using the deep trance phenomenon of developing

negative hallucinations to partially undress women and then tell them what colour their underwear was (McClendon, 1989). In writing a forward for the book Bandler points out that in some cases the recollections do not match his precisely but what McClendon has done in his opinion is capture beyond dispute the: õspirit of adventure that gave birth to NLP and continues to energise itö (McClendon, 1989, p. ii).

There are many people within NLP doing what would be regarded by some as a very good job, however an outsider perspective seems to be very unaware of this good work, (see appendix C) and understands NLP through the practice and communication of a possibly very vocal and visible minority. This possibility, along with the lack of empirical evidence and internal discord within NLP, often leads to the whole field being regarded in an ambivalent way at best and a negative way at worst.

What is a theory?

This research claims to create a new theory of NLP, so it is useful to understand what a theory is. The Co-Founders of NLP were unequivocal that they took an atheoretical approach

> õNeuro-Linguistic Programming is the discipline whose domain is the structure of subjective experience. It makes no commitment to theory, but rather has the status of a model ó a set of procedures whose usefulness not truthfulness is to be the measure of its worthö (Dilts et al. 1980, Forward to Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Para 2)

Grinder and Bostic St Clair (2001) tell us the work product of NLP is a model and this is different from a replica in that there are a reduced set of elements in a model. Grinder and Bostic St Clair (2001) tell us also that a model is not as complex as a theory which requires internal consistency, explicitness, elegance and a fit with reality. An informative email

discussion with Interviewee 2 addressed the topic of theory head on. In an email discussion (Personal communication, 8th June 2015 12:52) Interviewee 2 said:

> õI do not think you have presented a theory of NLP at all. Without a set of principles on which the practice of an activity is based there is no theory. A theory of education provides guidelines to produce õeducational activitiesö. Your description of NLPøs practice as õcommercial, controversial, and unprovenö are good facts about many of itsø current practitioners, their motivation, their professional standing as well as the basic reason for that professional standing, but it fails to set forth a set of principles on which the practice of NLP is based and does not comprise a theory.ö

My response to this feedback was that the sense of theoretical alluded to in this research was not only propositional (the 8 propositions acting as principles of explanation) but also both explanatory and predictive. Using a more simple definition of theory I suggested:

> õGoing to www.dictionary.com for ease of access a ball park definition there is a theory is:

> õA coherent group of tested general propositions, commonly regarded as correct, that can be used as principles of explanation and prediction for a class of phenomena: í í ..There is more, however I thought the above would suffice for my purpose. When I say õTheory of NLPö I mean it in the sense the 8 dimensions are from my research a group of general propositions which can be used as principles of explanation and prediction for a class of phenomena, in this case the practice of NLP. I accept that these propositions are not tested generally, however I have tested them within this research using grounded theory and I have made explicit this theory of NLP is my own subjective theory which I will use in order to inform my practice of

NLP as a chartered psychologist. As is the case with Action Research the intention is to improve one's own practice, however also to inform others how one goes about this. My theory therefore is not offered as a claim to understand what NLP is all about, but is offered in consideration that it is what I have found it to be about, and this may be useful for others in coming to their own conclusions." (Personal communication, 13th June, 2015. 10:40)

Testing in the context of this email means re-cycling the emerging concepts back to the Interviewees for clarification, validation or rejection.

It would seem clear that "being saturated in anecdotal evidence" (category 2. Fig14) indeed could not only be descriptive of NLP, but also could be a principle which is invoked on the basis that a more positivist orientation which seeks to make generalisations and create general laws which explain in a cause and effect way the workings of individuals or groups of individuals is antithetical to NLP as discussed in this research. The same could be said for each of the other categories within this theory of NLP. For instance having historical and current disagreement is not only descriptive and propositional, but also leads to a general principle within NLP which could be argued is responsible for the creativity and eclectic nature which pervades NLP and makes it so attractive to a great number of adherents. Being primarily commercially motivated is not only a descriptive proposition to emerge from this research, but also a principle which informs the practice of NLP as it currently is, predicting too how it will continue to be characterised and generally representing the values of those practicing NLP.

What is also made clear in my response to Interviewee 2 is that this research proposes a personal theory of NLP. In this research I have made it clear that the idea another researcher would take my data and arrive at a similar theory is incorrect, simply on the basis that the

other researcher would be different from me and consequently would look at the data with a totally different set of filters. This is despite the rigorous coding protocols implicit within a Grounded Theory approach. As soon as one moves away from very basic sensory description to interpretation one will delete, distort and generalise. When one appreciates the data one handles in the social science of psychology is in itself a secondary representation, the idea one can arrive at some form of objective theory using a grounded theory approach supported by IPA is unsound. This social character of the scientific endeavour is well summarised by King et al:

õUnderstanding the social character of science can be liberating since it means that our work need not to be beyond criticism to make an important contributionô whether to the description of a problem or its conceptualization, to theory or to the evaluation of theory. As long as our work explicitly addresses (or attempts to redirect) the concerns of the community of scholars and uses public methods to arrive at inferences that are consistent with rules of science and the information at our disposal, it is likely to make a contribution.ö King,G., Keohane,R,O., and Verba,S. (1994, Kindle Locations 237-241)

What is not a theory?

Turning the question on its head, a theory is not a theory when itøs explanatory power is based only on implicit or fragmentary evidence. One characteristic of a psychological theory is that it refers to a comprehensive explanation of some aspect of human activity that is supported by a considerable body of evidence. In order to develop a grounded theory I ensured I selected a range of subject matter experts who I knew held a range of perspectives which covered the domain of NLP. I also selected subject matter experts who did not have a vested interest in a theory which flattered the practice of NLP thus correcting for a possible positive schew. It is also important in developing a theory to make use of selection and

interpretation protocols to minimise subjectivity. A theory is not a theory when it does not have these characteristics and it has been developed in a haphazard way. All of us have implicit theories which are generalisations on how the world works. Some of these are useful; õIt is good to stop at a red traffic lightö some are not so useful; õI am useless at this and will never be any goodö. These are not theories in the scientific sense in that they have not been developed in the above way. Rather they have been developed through personal experience and usually it is the case they have not been rigorously tested in a variety of contexts. In NLP, practitioners recognise this lack of testing is antithetical to personal development and the Meta Model challenges are designed to test these implicit theories and through dialogue maybe even develop more robust theories which support the intention of the individual.

The Utility of a theory of NLP

The utility for developing a grounded theory of NLP is that it can be used as a stimulus to look at the practice of NLP using a frame which is valid, yet also a frame which invites development. By making such undesirable themes as õlacking in empirical evidenceö, õhistorical and current disagreementö and õhaving no coherent epistemology, ontology or methodologyö explicit this research also acts as an invitation. The invitation could be to demonstrate how this theory is flawed. The invitation could be to professional practice which moves towards agreement, coherence of methodology and consequently good level A research published in appropriate journals. The important factor which emerges from this research is that if such an invitation is taken up, it is done so within the context of scientific enquiry and inevitably that discourse is within good quality peer reviewed journals.

Grounded Theory of NLP

In this section I talk a little about what has emerged from this research moving in a funnel like way towards a greater focus on a more precise new theory of NLP.

NLP is an unregulated commercial practice which makes use of patterns borrowed from psychology and other professional disciplines. Its unique contribution to human development is the way in which it uses these patterns to follow a clientøs experience and facilitate movement towards what NLP calls a well-formed outcome. NLP has developed a dual processing model of human cognition (First Access F1 and F2). The former attends generally to scope and sensory experience and the latter attends generally, through language, to categorisation and organisation.

The only model, related to NLP, which has been formally approved by a national body is EMDR and the founder of this model denies any claim by John Grinder that he provided an original pattern for her to develop.

NLP is currently divided in terms of epistemology. Some claim NLP models work, and make generalisations and claims for effectiveness. These people have not published any empirical evidence which has been replicated to show whether they work, neither have they identified the contexts within which they do work. Others claim NLP is not characterised by the models it produces, but a dynamic epistemology which makes use of these models and is characterised rather by principles of relationship, perception, cognition and behaviour, the pre-suppositions associated with these principles and their effective operationalization in each evolving context which is always different in some way from before. Thus an NLP trained person can make use of such principles as rapport, sensory organisation, framing and anchoring, in a flexible way to consistently produce a result within the framework of an NLP

model. However such NLP trained people again have not produced any published empirical evidence which has been replicated to demonstrate this is the case in any particular context.

The methodology of NLP is regarded as modelling. How one goes about modelling is something which has not been addressed historically and is rarely taught. A recent author, Burgess (2014, p. 14) who has explicated thirteen methods of modelling within NLP is concerned very few people in the NLP community will read her book, despite the efforts to match and pace the NLP emphasis on practicality over academic theorising. This concern represents another characteristic of NLP and that is a focus on the commercial benefits of NLP rather than rigorous examination and review of its propositions, claims and evidence base.

In the 1980s psychologists could not find evidence of an NLP proposition, that people have a preferred representation system. Another proposition they could not find evidence of is that this preferred representation can be identified through observing eye accessing cues. Recently one of the Co-Founders agreed the concept of a preferred representation is ludicrous. (Grinder in Grinder and Pucelik, 2013:214). Since the 1980øs interest in researching the claims of NLP has reduced, Witkowski (2013).

NLP as a commercial practice satisfies customers and for this reason it still exists. However there is no evidence it works more effectively than any of the models within the disciplines it has borrowed from. This was the conclusion of proponents of NLP; Einspruch & Forman (1985), who replied to the reviews of Sharpley (1984) in the 1980øs. It was also the conclusion of a more recent review in 2013, Witkowski (2013). In 2006 a Delphi Poll suggested NLP stood midway between being possibly and probably discredited with a score of 3.57 on a 5-point, Likert-type scale where 1 was not at all discredited, 2 was unlikely discredited, 3 was possibly discredited, 4 was probably discredited, and 5 was certainly

discredited. To put this into some very general perspective the panel scored Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) for assessment of personality at 2.6 and Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) for the treatment of trauma at 2.88. (Norcross et al. 2006)

This grounded theory of NLP suggests the dynamic within figure 14 will continue until a significant change occurs at an international level. It also suggests the dynamic in figure 14 represents a stable system and to that extent is predictive of future occurrences within the world of NLP and associated parties.

The below theory, (figure 14) accepts that NLP practitioners have made use of psychology research and it is possible that by offering an eclectic mix of what psychology has uncovered, NLP practitioners can work in a much more flexible way, taking the cream of psychology and developing techniques from each psychological modality which can be creatively used to deal with different situations as they arise. However, irrespective of what has been õmodelledö from psychology over 40 years, there is no level A evidence that this material has been assembled to create an NLP pattern which can be tested in a particular context. Allan et al. (2012) have produced research showing the use of Satir Categories, anchoring of positive emotional states, and use of Milton model patterns creates improvement in the teaching of mathematics. Stipancic, Renner, Schutz and Dond (2010) have shown how Neurolinguistic Psychotherapy has treatment effects similar to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) when compared with a control, however over 40 years these are the exceptions which prove the rule and have not been replicated by other researchers to examine and test the specific claims made. Even the above exceptions to the rule are critiqued. Allan et al. (2012) is a part of what Churches (2013) refers to as Grey literature and Stipancic et al. (2010) was regarded as having a high risk of bias, (Sturt et al. 2012). Indeed the research of Sturt who could only use

10 of 1459 NLP citations received suggested as a result of her review: õThis systematic review demonstrates that there is little evidence that NLP interventions improve health-related outcomes. The study conclusion reflects the limited quantity and quality of NLP researchö (Sturt et al., 2012, p. 762).

Concerning the problematical area of not being able to define NLP sufficiently Sturt et al. (2012) simply took the Interviewees word, that irrespective of what they were using as an intervention it was NLP.

Even though Wake et al. (2014) hope that their volume presents sufficient evidence of the clinical efficacy of NLP to justify further research, the findings of Sturt and colleagues (2012), on the basis of their review, is unequivocal. They point out what would need to be done in the future and what many would argue is what should have been done from the outset in the early 1970øs:

> õThere is currently insufficient evidence to recommend use of NLP for any individual health outcome. Neither this review, nor the FOI NHS trust data, point strongly to appropriate populations for further research. Use of NLP in specific settings may be vindicated in future, and preliminary data from its use in MRI/claustrophobia may justify a sufficiently powered RCT to clarify its role for these patients. Discussions with NLP key informants identified populations, for example allergy sufferers, who they felt were a strong target population for further NLP-based research. A formal stakeholder consultation with a range of NLP master practitioners would be an important next step for identifying such target populations for research. The strength of evidence for CBT would suggest it as a possible comparison group. The risk of bias assessments point to the need to develop a fully-specified and replicable intervention protocol for evaluation in a sufficiently powered RCT.ö (Sturt et al., 2012, p.763).

Shapiro who did work for John Grinder and attended lectures by him on the treatment of trauma has developed a model and a theory to support that model and has researched this model in the context of PTSD thoroughly, and consequently such a model has been accepted by NICE. This model has won over the support of some clinical psychologists as mentioned in Chapter 2 as well as the critique of the same and warning against mission creep.

In developing a grounded theory of NLP, it has been apparent that if, within the domain which was first õmodelled,ö that of counselling and therapy, which can be argued is the most developed area of NLP application, no substantial evidence to justify the use of NLP can currently be found, it is unlikely there will be in any other domain. For example, in order to be licenced as an NLP psychotherapist in Austria for instance one needs 2400 hours including 800 hours practice. Thus a 37 day NLP practitioner certification and a 37 day master practitioner certification are only about one third of the requirements on account of such a domain having government sanction in Austria. In the UK there is a national voluntary register and the title psychotherapist is not a protected title, however one still needs 500 contact hours of formal NLP / NLPt training and 450 hours of supervised practice using NLPt.

Figure 14. Grounded Theory of NLP.

19 participants of the LinkedIn group see the below dynamic and conclude generally there is a **7.** Lack of standardized definition, curriculum and professional practice code and with NLP practitioners being critical of the discipline of psychology they make the generalisation, **8.** All NLP Practice is associated with the worst NLP practice.

1. NLP is commercially motivated with no coherent epistemology, ontology or methodology is **2.** Saturated in anecdotal evidence, **3.** Lacks published empirical evidence and there is therefore much **4.** Historical and current disagreement.

5. NLP Wants to be "accepted" but is disappointed with the continual pattern of not being accepted by mainstream, so there are **6.** Development of break out groups, dissatisfied with the culture of disagreement within NLP sometimes using a different brand.

Examples of how the transcripts were coded allowing the concepts and then categories to emerge can be seen in figures 15 to 17 below.

Figure 15. Colour Coded model showing how an exemplar portion of transcript is coded into one of the 17 NLP concepts

Figure 16. Colour Coded model showing how an exemplar portion of transcript is coded into each of the LinkedIn concepts.

1) It seems that NLP as a commercial wheeze drew on many lessons learnt by psychoanalysis; http://www.anlp.org/criteria-for-becoming-an-nlp-master-trainer and added the machinery of multi-level marketing.

2. Can I ask you an "impertinent" question: what is your professional experience and expertise and evidence base that equips you to provide the services you offer in business psychology? We should of course apply similar standards to any realm of applied psychology.
I'm very happy to have a pop at NLP, etc. But if your profession is patting itself on the back for its empirical achievements and celebrating a solid evidence base vis a vis NLP, I must have missed something.
Apart from the organisational utility of general mental ability (a long time back), I'm hard pushed to think of any research achievement that has achieved professional consensus and made a practical and significant impact.

3. I accept your last point. It would appear that there is a lack of evidence supporting the practice of NLP. However, the techniques have been used globally with an enormous population over a prolonged time period. One would have thought that there would at least be some evidence to refute or accept the claims made by NLP practitioners?

4. I came across this article in Psychology today
http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-squeaky-wheel/201309/simple-mind-trick-reduces-emotional-pain
The author (Guy Winch) cites research that supports a common "NLP" technique of "zooming out while reflecting on an experience so you can see it as if you were a passer-by"
So I looked up the research - here is the abstract
http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21728415
Nowhere in the Psychology today article does the author refer to the details of the research, namely that:
1. The study was conducted using 5th grade school children
1. The study asked subjects to rate their negative affect and write down their reflections of a recent anger-related experience.
Now it may be that the author is referring to more recent and comprehensive research than I have uncovered, but the glib way in which a research finding is generalised without citation to the specific details of the research in order to support the author's belief system strikes me as NOT SCIENTIFICALLY AUTHENTIC.

4. A chequebook Msc in a bogus subject. But like many fads it makes seductive claims, highly relevant to the world of work but with no science to back its claims. But, why would you want to be involved with a subject whose founder tried to attach his stepfather to the national grid?

4. The other big misgiving I have about NLP is its willingness to mount legal attacks (why am I thinking Scientology?) See the story of the editing of Derren Brown's book.

1. Commercial focus
2. Hypocrisy
3. NLP as science
4. NLP as a social Gestalt
5. NLP as a nominalisation
6. NLP as not even worthy of discussion
7. Shifting definitions
8. Lack of cohesion
9. The lowest denominator to represent the whole of NLP
10. NLP as fitting the gap between religion and science.

10. I think it responds to the gap between religion and science. Religion provides meaning and purpose and explanation. But we're not going to get far in tackling climate change, cancer, social injustice, etc with a religious mind-set. Psychology as a science on the other hand has not exactly been an outstanding success. Some gains but not much of any significance. And also its few successes have required a lot of hard work and boring effort. Hence NLP. A way of making sense of ourselves, people and our social interactions, but without the boring bits. Or is that too harsh?

5. Yes, I realise this, and it's paradoxical that the process is nominalised within the discipline that as much as any seeks to challenge nominalisation.

6. Also to Andrew for leaving the oh-so-easy cudgels to one side and asking if it is possible to separate out that which is consistent and reliable in the fabric of NLP from the other, especially with the passage of years and much usage.

6. The swish technique is in fact cognitive psychology, nothing specific to NLP. The mere fact of bringing together techniques based on several theoretical backgrounds does not make it a theory, it just makes it a bunch of techniques. Moreover, the NLP "practitioner" does not have a theoretical background to subtantiate their "techniques". Actually, this is my last comment on NLP as I do not think it is worth a debate.

7. Demonstrate quite clearly that there isn't a single "it", rather a cloud of claims, motivations, products, thoughts, theories, packaging's and nutshells.

7. By taking a broad title and sketchy definition it makes it easier to discredit from a common sense and a statistical perspective. Just like saying that all assessment interventions are nonsense when used to measure 'leadership'. Some might be, some not but by using labels like leadership (vague and poorly defined) it makes it easier to discredit. If we use one label i.e. NLP then we lump visualisation, goal setting, mirroring, building rapport etc under the same umbrella as curing cancer or increasing breast size which is surely doing the bits of NLP that are useful a disservice.

8. There is no "it", no NLP that can be pinned down to works-not works. So NLP is a sound bite for "stuff" covering the spectrum of the bonkers (examples can be provided) to the interesting that might have potential to become a valuable technique within a specific application and context.

9. Authentic like Paul Mckenna's Phd presumably?

9. http://www.nlp-secrets.com/nlp-seduction.php
http://donaldclarkplanb.blogspot.co.uk/2006/11/nlp-trainings-shameful-fraudulent-cult.html tinyurl.com/8jkndqc ("Meanwhile, the field (or cult) of "neurolinguistic programming" (NLP) sells techniques not only of self-overcoming but of domination over others.)

Figure 17. Colour Coded model showing how NLP concepts are merged with LinkedIn concepts after triangulation with extant literature to provide 8 interacting categories of Grounded Theory of NLP.

It is clear from talking to NLP practitioners from around the world, NLP is still regarded as the human development modality of choice and it would appear each practitioner works within a loose network to market NLP for themselves in a way that is useful. However as a brand which has anything new to offer, this would seem problematical.

In talking with NLP practitioners it is also clear there are certain characteristics which seem to define NLP, the acronym PEAS may serve here; NLP is **P**rocess oriented, **P**ragmatic, **P**ositive, **P**layful, **P**henomenological, and elicits **P**atterns, **P**racticing within the **P**resuppositions of NLP. It is also **E**clectic, **E**xperimental, **E**xperiential, with a focus on obtaining **E**legance in all practitioners do. NLP also has a focus on **A**pplication rather than theorising, however evidence for the effectiveness of such application is mainly **A**necdotal. Finally NLP is **S**ystemic in orientation, focusing on **S**tructure, with a strong emphasis on **S**ales in the market place for ideas and utility. As a result of NLP practitioners borrowing from the vaults of other disciplines and applying that work to develop themselves and others, it is not surprising that benefits are forthcoming, however there is no substantial evidence that any one combination within NLP does a job any better than those who work and practice within the professions from which NLP has õborrowedö. The dynamic created through the interaction of the above variables does mean the culture of NLP is very buoyant and practitioners of NLP do talk with positive expectations of the future. Along with the belief that the first application of NLP is to ourselves, this provides a tool box meaning NLP practitioners can be in the most resourceful state for a significantly greater time than those who do not practice NLP, (yet to be significantly evidenced). This is where the enthusiasm within NLP comes from, however a more critical examination does find NLP wanting.

A précis of this theory of NLP when one talks in terms of propositions which act also as principles of explanation and prediction for a class of phenomena is:

"NLP is a human development activity which is primarily commercial, controversial, and unproven. It borrows from psychology and other disciplines in an eclectic way to provide perceived gains in a short period."

Within this chapter I have given the reader a sense of how 3 sources of data; Interviews with 15 NLP practitioners, a LinkedIn psychology Group of 19 professionals, and the extant literature on NLP have been coded to develop a personal grounded theory of NLP. Tosey and Mathison (2010) suggest that NLP skills can be used to effectively develop IPA explication interviews and I have done my best, using õNLPö skills to extract the core meaning concerning what Interviewees communicated to me.

It has been my intention when interviewing to interpret as little as possible and allow the data to speak to me, however as mentioned in the previous chapter even when using õNLPö skills within an IPA methodology an element of projection and thus interpretation is inevitable.

In developing the concepts arising from the 2 data sources and triangulating with the extant literature on NLP, 8 categories emerged. These categories related to each other in such a way that what is perceived as a stable system emerges and it is this system which accounts for NLP in the world today. As this system is regarded as stable and derived in a bottom up way, it is also predicted that it will inform future events within the õfieldö of NLP.

Chapter 5

Concluding notes

Limitations of this research

A. Subjectivity

One purpose of using Grounded Theory as an approach was that I wished to build a theory of NLP that satisfied me within the context of an Action Research approach. IPA as a methodology is more concerned with extracting the individual meanings of NLP for my Interviewees personally and of course these meanings can change as a function of many variables. Despite wanting to get to the beef of the matter and looking for systematic variation I am too aware the data in this research could have been compiled and interpreted in many ways. I would like to repeat the words of Wenger when asked where the beef was (1991):

> õAs sympathetic as I am to his question, I had to first try to make clear that this is not just beef; it is more like a cow, a living cow: one can make beef with it, of course, but one can do many other things: one can pull a plough, milk it, breed it, show it in country fairs. What I am trying to develop is not a recipe or a method; it is a discourse, a perspective, a way to look at the world. But it is a discourse that has wide-reaching practical implicationsö (Wenger, 1991, p. 4).

In a similar way this research is a discourse, a personal journey, which others may be able to learn from, validate or invalidate, and develop their own personal perspective on NLP from. In this sense this research which has drawn from the opinions of 15 NLP Interviewees, 19

professionals in a psychology forum and the extant NLP literature, cannot and should not be taken to be a map of NLP set in stone for everybody. However for me personally and working as a professional psychologist it is my map of the world of NLP. In this map I recognise the lack of an empirical evidence base for NLP and need to help develop one. For my NLP courses I need to continue to demonstrate and make explicit the links between NLP and the psychological literature and develop an evidence base to demonstrate to my peers that a commercial investment in NLP for my customers has in the past been associated with improvements in life as measured by standardised instruments. I need to continue to write in the academic literature to demonstrate how my use of NLP meets professional standards, building my own epistemology, methodology and ontology, making it explicit, grounded in experience and comprehensively referencing the psychological literature. All of these things mean this is the beginning of a journey for me and not the end of it.

Having said the above I have made the efforts to validate my research and personal theory. In reading Einspruch and Forman (1985) I have gone to the trouble of attending training in NLP to the highest level in order to familiarise myself with the approach. I have taken care to talk to some of the most experienced practitioners in the field to obtain multiple perspectives, I have allowed myself to be influenced by the data rather than impose my high regard for the potential NLP has onto the data. I have attempted to use my own NLP skills to enhance the interviewing process in accordance with Tosey and Mathison (2010). Finally and not least in my coding I have meticulously gone over the transcripts, contrasting, comparing and even dreaming about emergent properties which inform my theory. If this theory makes sense to me, it is feasible others when looking at it will see sense there too.

B. Disappointing feedback numbers

In order to test the concepts which were emerging from open coding I sent emails to Interviewees and experienced NLP practitioners from around the world in order to obtain feedback. More formally I sent an email to all 15 NLP practitioners and other experienced NLP practitioners on 24th August 2014, (see Appendix D), requesting feedback. From this email I only received replies from 4 Interviewees with one of these being a request to use some of the ideas rather than offering any feedback. Again I sent a formal email out to all Interviewees on 31st May 2015, (see Appendix E) this time I got 5 replies. Along with this email was an attachment which attempted to demonstrate how the 8 categories had emerged from coding their words, (see Appendix F). This lack of involvement from many in the Interviewee pool is one limitation of this research. For some it seems as though they just did not have the time. Interviewee 10 was professional and explained his inability to comply:

> õI am really sorry, I simply do not have the time to devote to reading it thoroughly and commentingí í í .I do hope you will understand ó I just didnøt appreciate the enormity of what I had agreed to when I was first interviewed!ö (Personal correspondence, 16 June 2015, 14:15)

Interviewee 1 after pointing out I would get a lot of different answers if I asked õwhat is Physicsö with blurring of boundaries replied:

> õI donøt think I have time for this. Iøve had my say. All good wishes.ö (Interviewee 1 personal correspondence, 31st May 2015, 13:35)

Likewise time constrained Interviewee 5 suggested:

õThis looks very interesting I will get back to you with some comments. I have been extremely busy with training and consulting and frankly have had very little time.ö (Personal correspondence, 26th August, 2014. 00:42)

For others the reticence seemed to be more because they did not have much more to add to the views they had given already and were happy with my interpretation of what they had said and integration of that material into the new theory. Interviewee 6 said:

õI wanted to come up with something helpful to add but Iøm not sure I can. I agree with many of your points and am not emotionally (or anything else) attached to resisting research. Iøm with you on this and think even the patterns need testing which I think a lot of people in NLP are wary of.ö (Personal correspondence Tue 26th August, 2014 12:17)

Some Interviewees in emails directly and positively addressed the question as to whether I had used their materials appropriately and the choice of anonymising Interviewees seemed to have been vindicated:

õSo ó firstly ó happy with quotes against my number ó forgotten I had said many of them ó but fine ó just as well they are anonymous!ö (Personal correspondence, 3rd June 2015 01:14)

Interviewee 8 made the point that he assumed some aspects of the theory was provided more from those outside of NLP rather than from within NLP and along with discussion with my supervisors this led to the model in Venn form which makes clearer the direction of this weighting, (See Appendix F). Specifically Interviewee 8 assumed category 8 was from the psychology group í not what the public or NLP practitioners thought.

Interviewee 8 provided some useful qualitative feedback as well. He pointed out that concerning category 3 there was a peer reviewed journal and some research articles had been run in Rapport, the ANLP magazine. My response to Interviewee 8 was in an email reply:

õAs an academic you know Interviewee 8 there are journals and there are journals. There are even peer reviewed journals and í peer reviewed journals. Academics know which journals they want their papers published in. Rapport, the conference and the õpockets of practiceö all fall into the Grey literature which I comment on in the dissertation and what Richard Churches mentioned as being the õgold standardö of NLP currently. The default though and most common practice is Facebook and verbal testimony. It is for this reason, some psychologists would regard NLP as not even worthy of discussion.ö (Personal communication 4th June 2015)

Other interesting points raised and replies by myself illustrate a sense of the dialogue:

Interviewee 8: õI think for some it is primarily commercial ó but for many of us that does us a huge dis-serviceí ö (Personal communication, 3rd June, 2015)

Grimley reply:

õWhat put the commercial aspect into such focus was the lack of an educational element, re: empirical evidence, standardized practice, stable definitions, standardized protocols, lack of university association over 40 years, an enforceable ethical and professional code, etc. NLP has not developed these over 40 years to any significant extent; however it does continue to attract many thousands of pounds for 21 day courses. (Personal communication, 4th June, 2015).

Interviewee 8: õWhile I agree on comments re short courses ó time in a class room does not ensure competency either ó so it is about finding ways to ensure competency that is not hours basedö (Personal communication, 3ʳᵈ June 2015)

Grimley reply: õI agree, however why in 40 years has NLP not done this? I would suggest again it is to do with the commercial nature of the beast.ö (Personal communication, 4ᵗʰ June, 2015)

Even though Interviewee 8 was not only very supportive of this research and in his busy schedule could make time to provide extended comments upon the theory, only one iteration of discussion ensued.

Another NLP Interviewee gave her answers however again with only one iteration of dialogue For instance Interviewee 2 in response to question 3 in the formal email (see Appendix E), remarked:

> õMy personal experience of NLP has led me to the conclusion that NLP is a collection of largely un-researched pre-suppositions and behavior change procedures, which contain the basic components of a remarkable behavior change orientation and practice and that there is more than enough anecdotal evidence and pilot studies to warrant further research. When the basic components and clinical protocols are rigorously researched and organized into clinically oriented behavior change algorithms, I believe they will comprise the largest advance in clinical psychology in the last fifty years.ö (Personal communication, 8ᵗʰ June, 2015)

My reply to this interesting point in the context of the emerging theory of NLP was:

> I take on board this belief Interviewee 2. However my theory suggests that in 40 years of existence such beliefs have not been tested and there are reasons for this. I further

suggest my theory is a possible explanation. When one component of NLP was reviewed by Sharply in the 1980øs no evidence for PRS was found and there was little rebuttal to his findings. We now hear, 35 years later, in an NLP book, that one of the Co-Founders of NLP regards the idea of PRS to be untenable. If NLP proponents had continued to engage through the pages of peer reviewed journals in the 1980øs my contention is NLP would be in a much healthier state now. Again I would suggest my theory provides an explanation as to why this õhealthier stateö has not eventuated. (Personal communication, 13th June, 2015)

Interviewee 2 was interesting as she singularly was the one NLP Interviewee who felt I had misused her words in coding the transcription. However again only one iteration of dialogue ensued despite an invitation to rebut my answers further. After answering question 3 she pointed out: õI also need to note disagreement with all four uses of my statements as Interviewee #2ö.

 My replies were interspersed in the below email of 13th June, 2015:

Interviewee 2: Page 92.   As per your email suggestion, you need to omit the quotations as there was no recording of my words and you were constructing my responses from memory.

Grimley: This was part of our recorded interview Interviewee 2, however I am happy to take the quotation marks out if you wish.

Interviewee 2: Page 162. Your use of my quote to support õLacking in Published Empirical Evidenceö negatively skews my well published opinion (Publication details) that there is sufficient published studies to warrant further research into NLP materials.

Grimley: Ok in my comments on my interpretation I will include your own interpretation of your words. However I would still hold that published studies are a different category to published empirical evidence. In Lisaøs book you mention there are no Level A studies into NLP despite NLP being an inherently empirical discipline. This is after 40 years. I contend my theory explains why.

Interviewee 2: Page 176 Your use of my quote to support õSaturated in Anecdotal Evidenceö negatively skews my well documented opinion that the huge amount of anecdotal evidence put forth from NLP experts whose personal integrity and clinical skills, I have first-hand knowledge of, such as Professor Emeritus William McDowell, Steve Andreas, Robert Dilts, Judith DeLozier, Richard Bolstad, Tim Hallbom and Professor Richard Gray, indicates sufficient promise in the NLP materials to warrant further research.

Grimley: I cannot find anything of page 176 Interviewee 2, however on page 175 I find õPeople like Me Say This Has to Be Researched and there has to be Certified Training Programs for the Materials that Are Researched.ö If this is what you are referring to I will again include your own interpretation. However even in what you say in interpretation it still holds that it is still anecdotal evidence. The fact that it is a õhugeö amount supports the NLP theory that the evidence base of NLP is anecdotal and not empirical. Again over 40 years even though such anecdotal evidence does warrant further research during this time no such research has been published at level A. Again I would suggest my theory of NLP would explain this phenomenon.

Interviewee 2: Page 198 Your statement õConcerning being a part of mainstream, NLP is rather a õbaby in the bathwaterö (NLP Interviewee 2 4:10) rather than õbeing at a crossroadsö (Tosey & Mathison, 2009, p. 188)ö completely misses my intention

to communicate that mainstream academia/professional critics are throwing the baby out with the bathwater when they dismiss ALL of NLP practitioners and materials. My analogy carries the meaning of destroying something very young, vulnerable and valuable, while doing the housecleaning chores to most readers. The Research and Recognitions Projects early research results are substantiating that analogy.

Grimley: Again Interviewee 2 in my consideration of interpretation I will include your comments in this portion of the dissertation. However I feel that my interpretation does not miss the point. A baby cannot make a choice at the crossroads, it is not cognitively advanced so as to make a õchoiceö, the way the baby goes will probably be a function of chance more than anything else. Thus choice implies a level of maturity. I suggest despite 40 years in existence NLP is still a baby in the bathwater and my theory provides an explanation as to why.

I really appreciate you getting back to me with a considered response. I feel that dialogue like this can really take us to the next step. I have already published in a peer reviewed journal about my research, as a part of my PhD Journey and as expected I am obtaining a mixed response from the other Interviewees. Some very positive and some curious and seeking further explication. Please feel free to get back to me if you have further questions or need further clarification on any of the above.ö (Personal communication, Sat 13th June, 2015)

It was gratifying to have such email comments así

õThanks for sharing your draft. I think you hit the nail on the head . I agree with you when you say that many in the NLP õcommunityö (if there is such a thing) wonøt really like what you are saying (and will try to dismiss it). But because of your

background in NLP, this should be more difficult to dismiss than other articles, such as the one Witkowski wrote.ö (Personal communication, Mon 6th July, 2015)

õHey Bruce, I can imagine that there will be quite a few people in the NLP "community" that won't be happy with your theory, but nevertheless, science is all about determining a veridical model of the world, and I believe you have developed quite an accurate representation of how things stand with the history, development and ongoing nature of NLP.ö (Personal communication,15th June, 2015)

õSome amazing stuff there - very powerful - especially from psychologistøs side ... certainly going to a make an interesting debateö ... (Personal communication, 25th August, 2014)

õYes it is certainly obvious to me that you have already invested probably more thought, reflection, study, interviewing into your doctoral studies than most people! (Personal communication, 26th August, 2014)

õI have read your Ph.D. dissertation. I reached the end of it this morning.

First I want to compliment you very much with this work. I think your writing was very good. I could follow 98% (as a foreigner). I have spent some intense hours of reading with it. Most of your conclusions I do agree with.

The argumentation is sound. The methodology takes much space, but it is worthwhile to support your work so good. It is more a point of readability, to maybe put in some more examples regarding NLP, so that the reader does not lose track in believing that it about the method used.ö (Personal communication, 24th January, 2015)

í ..and there were more. The real õbeefö of developing a grounded theory is in rigorously testing the theory as it emerges from the substantive coding by contrasting, comparing and

obtaining feedback from experts in the field. The fact that so few could find time to get back after given the opportunity and that I did not pursue with more vigour the conversations where I did have engagement as per the motivation model I was using after Argyris (1957, figure 6) is a limitation of this research.

C) **Self Development**

Another limitation of this research is my inexperience as a grounded theory researcher, an interviewer and someone who uses Action Research to generate ideas which can be explored and acted upon then learning from the feedback and modifying ideas accordingly. As a psychologist with 20 yearsø experience, I have of course conducted research in my undergraduate and post graduate degrees, and with my continual professional development read about research methods and attended workshops on them. However my perception of myself is not that of a seasoned researcher, I see a PhD as the beginning of a research career. Initially I was sure a snowball methodology would work well, however I soon had to change tack as initially Interviewees did not agree on whom I should talk with, the consequence being my list of potential interviewees began to escalate beyond the scope of this project. Consequently I had to make use of some personal knowledge of NLP and my lists of people who I should talk with began to converge. Thus there are many NLP people who I have not been able to speak to, notably, John Grinder and Richard Bandler, but also many who practice NLP from many parts of the globe and who may practice in a way not covered within the theory developed. As far as possible this shortcoming has been addressed by referring to the extant NLP literature which makes quite clear what the views of some of these missing people are and also selecting practitioners who are generally regarded as leaders within the NLP community and who have worked with the Co-Founders and travel internationally training in NLP.

Also I believe my style and ability to interview changed and improved with practice throughout the research. Initially I adopted a semi structured format as I wished to appropriate answers concerning multiple topics to do with definition, curricula, what was missing from NLP and the future of NLP, (See appendix B). However after talks with my supervisors I was encouraged to make more use of my NLP skills and within the frame work of IPA seek for deeper meanings behind the surface structure. What this resulted in was much longer interviews, in some cases over 2 hours and a more open interviewing format. I believe this was beneficial to the research as it allowed me to really develop an understanding of the systemic features which have characterised NLP over the last 40 years and indeed these are those which are represented in the final grounded theory. During some of these later interviews there were genuine expressions of anger, sadness, and disappointment as well as hope and joy and I felt as though I was assisting the Interviewee explicate that which was at quite a deep level on account of them being able to speak more freely about what was important to them concerning NLP.

Conclusions

It was very apparent when talking with individual NLP practitioners they put up a very good case for the validity of NLP. They spoke clearly concerning their own methods and the epistemology which vindicated such methods and often spoke in terms of Ontologically NLP providing a different way of being. I did not doubt the satisfaction of their respective customers; however this all fell into the bracket of anecdotal evidence. It is as though as soon as NLP practitioners get together, they have difficulty communicating and reaching agreement with the consequence that they work individually, running small companies and do not collectively bring their talents together to build a coherent brand in the same way for

example that EMDR has. There seems to be some evidence that this is on account of NLP being more commercially motivated than educationally motivated.

There have been changes in my personal perspective throughout this PhD. I started naively going to my supervisor saying I want to explore the hypothesis that NLP patterns can reduce stress in the workplace and consequent to supervision I have ended up asking the research question õwhat is NLP?ö As an NLP advocate my filters were in fact biased to wanting to find data to support NLP, however as Witkowski (2013) points out it is a bit like peeling away the layers of an onion and when you get to the centre there actually is very little there. This for me is a huge disappointment and I know 5 years ago it was not what I expected. The data has spoken to me and changed me quite profoundly. As I reached saturation point, I kept going back to the data to look for something that could possibly put a more positive spin on what NLP is, however for me I could not find that there, in terms of the systematic variation, contrasted with the unsystematic variation, it was the 8 categories in figure 14 that emerged for me. What frustrates me and delights me in equal proportion and has done so over the last year is that the data tells me what my grounded theory does, Saturation to my mind has been reached and I am ready to defend that in my Viva Voce examination.

Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology.

At the heart of any field lies a robust Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology and this research suggests on account of this being very muddled, NLP cannot call itself a field yet. Below in figure 18 is a framework which takes apart and thus explicates the idea of epistemology.

In the early part of The structure of magic (1975b, p6), which is the book form of the Meta Model, Bandler and Grinder talk about Vaihingerøs concept of ╪the logical functionø

Vaihinger, was making the same point as Korzybski and that is, ÷Where the logical function actively intervenes, it alters what is given and causes it to depart from realityø (Vaihinger, 1924, p. 159). Where Vaihinger seems to differ from Korzybski is in the belief that objective reality does not consist of any logical function and the real clue to the development of religion, ethics, science and mathematics is rather to be found in the development of fictions, rather than a mathematically based language which maps the world more accurately than natural language (Morris, 1932, p. 280). What these authors are saying is: we cannot interface with the ÷realø world without dramatically changing it into a personal map of that world and each of our maps is different from the world and different from the maps of other people.

Figure 18 An Epistemological framework (Becker et al. 2005)

[I] What is the object of cognition? (Ontological aspect)	*(Ontological) realism.* A world exists independently of human cognition, i. e. independent of thought and speech processes [cp. e.g. Bunge (1977)].	*(Ontological) idealism.* The „world" is a construct depending on human consciousness [cp. e.g. von Foerster (1996)].	
[II] What is the relationship between cognition and the object of cognition?	*Epistemological realism.* objective cognition of an independent reality is possible . It claims the possibility of eliminating subject-dependent distortions of the cognition of reality, as soon as suitable measures for the removal of appropriate intervening variables are found [cp. e.g. Loose (1972)]	*Constructivism.* Cognition in is subjective , i. e. „private". The relationship of cognition and the object of cognition is thus determined clearly by the identifiable subject [cp. e.g. Glasersfeld (1986, 1987), Lorenzen (1987), Wyssusek and Schwartz (2003)].	
[III] What is true cognition ? (Concept of truth)	*Correspondence theory of truth.* True statements are those which correspond with „real world facts" [see below].	*Consensus theory of truth.* A statement is true (for a group), if and only if, it is acceptable for the group [see below].	*Semantic theory of truth.* A requirement for true statements is the differentiation of an object and a meta language [see below].
[IV] What is the origin of cognition/knowledge?	*Empiricism.* Experience-based knowledge is called *a posteriori* or *empirical knowledge* [Alavi et al., 1989, Berkley, 1975, Hume, 1978, Locke, 1982, Carnap, 2003, Quine, 1961, Carnap et al., 1929]	*Rationalism.* Non-experience-based knowledge is referred to as *a priori knowledge*. [Leibniz, 1962, Chomsky, 1965, Spinoza, 1992, Hanson and Hunter, 1992, Descartes, 1996, Bonjour, 1998]	*Kantianism.* Conciliating positions recognize both experience and intellect as sources of cognition. Thoughts are meaningless without content, cognitions are blind without being linked to terms [Kant, 1999]
[V] By what means can cognition be achieved? (Methodological aspect)	*Inductivism.* Induction is understood as the extension from individual cases to universal phrases, the generalization. An inductive conclusion means the transfer from statements via (observed, empirical) individual cases to a universal law a statement on the basis of an assumption of homogeneity on nature [cp. e.g. Rott (1995), Seiffert (1996)].	*Deductivism.* Deduction is seen as the derivation of a statement (thesis A) from other statements (hypothesis A_1, ..., A_n) with the help of logical conclusions . It is the derivation of the individual from the universal and is applied , for example , in mathematical axiom systems [cp. e .g. Gethmann (1995)].	

The basis of all our behaviour therefore is to be found in these maps of reality, not in reality itself.

It is worth re-stating how Einstein makes the same point slightly differently:

õI see on the one side the totality of sense experiences and, on the other, the totality of the concepts and propositions that are laid down in books. The relations between the concepts and propositions among themselves are of a logical nature, and the business of logical thinking is strictly limited to the achievement of the connection between concepts and propositions among themselves according to firmly laid down rules, which are the concern of logic. The concepts and propositions get õmeaningö or õcontent,ö only through their connection with sense experience. *The connection of the latter with the former is purely intuitive not itself of a logical nature.* (Emphasis added). The degree of certainty with which this connection, or intuitive linkage, can be undertaken, and nothing else differentiates empty fantasy from scientific truth.ö (Schilpp, 1979, p. 11).

Interviewee 1 gives us his view of the NLP Epistemology: õEpistemology is how do you know what is real and what is true, how do you testö (Interviewee 1, 22:40) and, õWhat the epistemology as I see it, basically radical empiricism.ö (Interviewee 1, 32:40)

So the key to NLP according to Interviewee 1 is in the Berkley, Hume and Locke camp in the figure 18. However this would be contrary to those who regard NLP as constructivist calling for a Kantian mixed epistemology, rather than a radical empirical A Posteriori epistemology.

Again within NLP it is not made explicit what the nature of this constructivism is. Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001) interpreting Korzybski tell us, õThere is an ambiguity in Korzybski's writing as to whether the territory he referred to is what we call here FA or the actual world itself.ö (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001, p. 46).

However Hall (2011) is quite explicit in his interpretation of Korzybski:

õAre you wondering about building a system on a negative premiseô on a negation? The power of this is that if it is not so, then all you need to do to contradict the system or show where and how it breaks down is to produce one example of the opposite. What symbol is the thing itself? This õdenial of identityö as Korzybski called it distinguishes õobjectsö that appear to us in our neurology via our nervous systems and the õeventsö out there in the world (the territory, reality) that we cannot know and experience directly.ö (Alfred Korzybski Series #4, para 8, Hall, 2011).

Even though, as Bostic St Clair and Grinder point out, the more general point is that the distinction between the neurological transforms and linguistic transforms is independent of which way you read Korzybski; the implications of the authorøs ambiguity in their reading of Korzybski has profound epistemological consequences.

If the territory is read to mean what NLP refers to as FA, then there is no objective world as in the ontological idealism of Von Foerster in figure 18. However, if the territory is read to mean the objective world õout thereö which we cannot know and experience directly then one has a very different Ontology and the possibility of entertaining an empirical stance where maps which have a similar structure to this territory and can be tested, makes sense.

For Bateson, who is regarded as the early mentor to both Bandler and Grinder, ontology and epistemology were inseparable. Charlton writes:

õHence, Bateson's ontology is inseparable from, and required by, his epistemology. His understanding of the process of perception is basically phenomenological. Our senses assemble images or representations of the world, but we have no access to the formative processes themselves. What we have to deal with is the report, not the direct perception of objects, processes, and (according to Bateson) mental "going on."

The reports are filtered through our presuppositions and through selective habits and assumptions formed from personal and cultural experience.ö Charlton (2008, p. 44).

Bateson merges his understanding of what is there to be known in the world with his understanding of how we can know about it, for him what can be known about the world is equivalent for all practical purposes to what is understood to exist and in unifying epistemology and ontology he transcends the whole idealism/realism argument. Bateson called the physical world, characterised by the natural sciences Pleroma, whereas Creatura is the realm of mind and mental systems. In determining the characteristics of mind, he held that one of the essential aggregating factors for a system to be regarded as a mind was the interaction between parts of mind must be triggered by difference. In the realm where distinctions are drawn, difference can be a cause. However within the world of Pleroma forces and impacts are the causes of events and difference can never be a cause.

In explaining the thinking of Bateson, Charlton tells us:

ðThe Gnostics, he said, accepted much earlier Pythagorean thought in which the world of mind was separate from the world of matter insofar as it dealt with differences within the material realm. Differences are not material things; they have no location. Location is a mental distinction, and so differences can only exist in Creatura.ö (Charlton, 2008, p. 44).

Bostic St Clair and Grinder (2001) state their position more clearly in discussing the limitation of a Jackdaw epistemology that can only appreciate one perceptual position, one description of reality. They comment:

ðí Such a position is fully congruent with the epistemology developed in Chapter 1. The question is NOT what is real? But, rather How many ways can we appreciate

what surrounds us? Triple Description itself is the ability to enter into three distinct and highly valued perceptual positions...ö (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001, p. 249).

For Grinder et al. it is the syntactical nature of the F^2 transforms and those limitations which tends to direct humans to this Jackdaw Epistemological stance of only being able to appreciate what surrounds us from one perspective. (Grinder & DeLozier, 1987, p. xix).

This research suggests that NLP indeed may have moved its practitioners away from a Jackdaw Epistemology, however, they have replaced that with another ornithological metaphor, that of a Magpie Epistemology:

> õ Magpies, as we all know, like shiny things which often makes them symbols of superficiality. As Handler and Gable wrote in their wonderful book The New History in an Old Museum about Colonial Williamsburg, õa magpie is a bird that weaves odd trinketsô tinfoil, gum wrappers, coloured yarnô into its nest.ö (Para 4, Rizzo, 2013)

It is this lack of critical analysis, and attention to detail as well as the lack of credible research and discussion in the academic literature which prevents NLP from becoming a field which can be tested alongside other paradigms in HRD, OD, consulting, and Therapy / Counselling to name a few. It is beyond the remit of this research to provide further examples of the internal inconsistency within NLP which is reflected in the Grounded Theory category of (1), however it is this lack of attention to detail which leaks out into the professional world and is picked up on very quickly, leading to the categories of (7) and (8) in the Grounded Theory.

After an article by Linder-Pelz and Hall (2007), a book by Wake (2008) on Neurolinguistic Psychotherapy, and the special issue of The Psychotherapist (2008) on Constructivism, Rowan (2008) noted all NLP authors made the same claim ó that NLP is based on constructivism. Rowan points out that nowhere in the NLP literature is reference made to

such well known constructivist authors as Danziger (1997), Gergen (1997), Davidson (1984) or Greer (1997).

Not only does NLP ignore these authors whilst claiming to be based upon constructivism, it also does not address the well-known distinctions within constructivism such as constructivism / constructionism, light constructionism / dark constructionism, weak social constructionism / strong social constructionism,

Rowan makes the point:

> õThis actually claims that NLP is not only constructivist but actually postmodern. There is, however, no evidence of this in the book itself, which is quite extreme in its attempt to include anything and everything and claim it for NLP. This is not a work of constructivism, it is a work of bricolage. (Rowan, 2008, p. 161).

Later on in the same paper he re-emphasises the point, õí it has to be said that they seem to want to include everything: this is not constructivism, but something different, and highly dubious. (Rowan, 2008, p. 162).

Even though individual NLP practitioners create their own NLP epistemology, making that quite explicit and working from that, for example, Andreas in his two volume, *Six Blind Elephants*, (Andreas 2006b and Andreas 2006c), Hall in *Self-Actualising Psychology* and *NeuroSemantics* (2008), Bolstad in *Resolve* (2002) and Derks in *Social Panoramas*, (2005), to name a few, there is no overarching curriculum telling us precisely what the founders and developers of NLP agree on and precisely what the ontology, epistemology and methodology of NLP are.

For instance not only does Grinder withdraw his idea that there is such a concept as PRS now, he goes further and points out one of the key mechanisms of NLP, the NLP strategy where a series of representations are anchored together as in classical conditioning to create a strategy, is also now something that needs to be investigated on account of such a linear sequencing being a function of the restrictions of the conscious mind and in fact being "arbitrary" (Carroll 2014). Grinder writes:

> "I urge a systematic investigation of the actual or illusionary sequencing to ensure that the enterprise has some relationship with what is actually going on. These are the arguments that I find compelling and the invitation to explore the foundations of strategies – I am, of course, proposing that the sequence is an illusion – before making the assumption that strategies have anything to offer to the study of the patterning of genius – the appropriate focus of NLP in my opinion." (Grinder 2007)

There is a further fundamental difficulty within NLP epistemology and something which could be regarded as an elephant in the room.

When Interviewee 1 tells us the fundamental epistemology of NLP is "radical empiricism" this seems to be in keeping with the key stages of the methodology of NLP. This methodology which is unequivocally represented as NLP modelling by Bostic St Clair and Grinder is critiqued by Grimley (2013)

> "i) Selection of expert and rationale as to why this person is regarded as an expert and how this person has demonstrated excellence over an extended period of time compared with other experts in the field.
>
> ii) Unconscious uptake of the pattern. How was this done? Methodologically, how is it possible? Even if, as Andreas points out, it is not possible (Andreas, 2006), to what

extent has ÷unconscious uptakeø been successful or not successful? If analytical modelling has been used, how explicitly is this related to the NLP literature? How were NLP design variables used in the modelling project? Why were these particular design variables chosen rather than others?

iii) Deployment of the pattern. How has it been demonstrated that the modeller can now achieve the same outcome as the exemplar within the same context and time frame? How does this compare with a base measure of the modellerøs competence and the competence of other experts in the field? How are these comparisons made and what is the evidence for any claim?

iv) Codifying the pattern. Where is this model written up in such a way that following the reduced set of elements others can now learn how to perform as well as the exemplar? What is the context for learning? Are any groups of people excluded from the learning process for this model? Can the model be refined into a design so as to include those who would ordinarily be excluded from learning?

v) Testing of the model. Where is the evidence that people who have been exposed to the model and who are motivated to learn the skills do perform as well as the exemplar in similar contexts and time frames? What is the nature of this evidence? How reliable is it? How valid is it? What methodological processes have been followed? What are the benefits and drawbacks of such a methodological approach? Do the learners now perform at a higher level compared with other experts in the field? What is the evidence for this?ö (Grimley 2013, pp. 166 ó 167).

Despite NLP formally having a methodology which encourages coding, testing, specifying a context, and predicting, there has not been one model in the history of NLP according to the

NLP Interviewees interviewed nor in the extant literature of NLP that has accorded with this methodology, with Andreas critiquing even the first model of NLP which arguably is the most comprehensive and the only one that obtained favourable comments from Bateson. Again in concluding it may be useful to re-emphasis this critique from Chapter 1:

> õThe meta model is described as "the first model in NLP" (Bostic St Clair & Grinder 2001, pp. 142-163), so it presumably satisfies their criteria for a new model. However, they repeatedly describe it as an application and adaptation of a model already existing in transformational grammar:

> The meta model can, for example, be usefully understood to be an application of the modelling of linguistic patterning inspired by Transformational Grammar (Bostic St Clair & Grinder 2001, p. 51).

> There already existed an explicit code for capturing verbal patterning: the descriptive and formal vocabulary for syntactic studies used by professional linguists (Bostic St Clair & Grinder, 2001, p. 146)ö (Andreas, 2006).

My overall sense after having conducted this research is that the majority of NLP interventions fit into the magpie ontology, epistemology and methodology which is characterised more obviously by the second model of NLP according to Grinder and Bostic St Clair (2001)

> õWe were Jamming-we seemed to do little but eat, drink and sleep patterning-well, maybe there were a few other things. As Richard stepped back into the car, interrupting my reverie, he was laughing. I asked what was so funny. He said (more or less),

You know, John, people say the weirdest things, the woman I was talking to at the counter. She said, õI see what you are saying.ö

He then relapsed into convulsive laughter. As I pulled onto Highway 9 heading for Santa Cruz, I watched him in my peripheral vision, wondering to myself what it was that made the statement so funny to him. After several moments, I said to him,

Does the statement, õI feel that what you are saying is unclear.ö Strike you as funny as well?

Bandler looked at me sharply, appearing to be simultaneously bemused and startledö. (Grinder & Bostic St Clair, 2001, pp. 164-165).

With Grinder being insistent that the other 12 types of modelling which Burgess refers to in her latest research of 15 years, (Burgess 2014) having nothing to do with NLP, (Inspiritive 2008b) then NLP seems to be at odds with itself and is neither elegant nor congruent. The essence of what is under investigation (Ontology), how we know it is real and how we test it for õrealityö (Epistemology) and how we investigate and obtain this knowledge (Methodology) not only is quite different for each person you speak to, but not thoroughly discussed, evidenced and shared in the appropriate journals for the contexts within which such NLP patterns operate.

For Grinder who is insistent one must suspend oneøs map of the world and enter a õknow nothing stateö as much as possible in order to assimilate whole the structure of another personøs subjective experience if one is to engage in NLP, he leaves other more conscious and analytical methods of data gathering (modelling), as something outside of NLP. This state of affairs cannot continue because if NLP is the former, this says something fundamental about Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology. Essentially, Grinderøs stance

is that the conscious mind will only generalise distort and delete in order to assimilate that which is consistent with what is already known as is the case of the Jackdaw.

Bolstad (2002, p. 5) tells us NLP is a Meta discipline (a way of analysing and describing other disciplines). He goes on to suggest that it is the research of these other disciplines which have been independently tested. He cites Cheek (1981), in the field of clinical hypnosis, as providing validation for the NLP modelling of Erickson's use of ideomotor signalling in light of no research being available using NLP language. However, he does not tell us precisely how NLP is different from anybody else who would wish to study clinical hypnosis. Either NLP practitioners who study and practice clinical hypnosis can provide evidence such that NLP study, (modelling), creates students who are more competent compared with psychology students and others not using NLP but specialising in clinical hypnosis, or they can't. This would be tested using standardized outcome measures. At the moment it is very much the case that NLP cannot do this exercise for any of the disciplines it has borrowed from and encourages people to practice with members of the public on the basis of comparatively very little training.

The above is just one of the Elephants in the room concerning NLP ontology, epistemology and methodology. According to this grounded theory of NLP, this is one of the Elephants that means that this theory which is based upon a stable system, will remain in place unless / until a significant change occurs within the world of NLP at an international level. Hopefully, this research can act as an irritant to motivate the NLP system to demonstrate that I am wrong, however, my overall feeling (having come to the end of this part of the research) is this is not the case. As is the case at the moment, it is not possible to comprehensively and in a nutshell define NLP, however a definition which incorporates the 8 categories which have emerged from this research would be as accurate as any other:

"NLP is a human development activity which is primarily commercial, controversial, and unproven. It borrows from psychology and other disciplines in an eclectic way to provide perceived gains in a short period."

Category 4 in this grounded theory points to the history of disagreement amongst leaders in the practice of NLP to the point of litigation. Much of this disagreement seems to be based upon not paying attention to the very tenets of NLP. A passage from a well-known NLP text, Turtles all the way down, seems to point to the paradox that is NLP.

> õDon Juan said then that in strategic inventories of warriors, self-importance figures as the activity that consumes the greatest amount of energy, hence, their effort to eradicate it. One of the first concerns of warriors is to free that energy in order to face the unknown with it," Don Juan went on. "The action of rechanneling that energy is impeccability." (DeLozier & Grinder, 1987, p.148).

In explaining the conversation Don Juan and Carlos Castaneda were having De Lozier and Grinder point out:

> õThe argument between Don Juan and Carlos could only proceed from Carlos's presupposition that he and Don Juan had to agree about their perceptions of the world. And that's exactly one of the self-indulgent qualities of first attention. Why not embrace the difference?ô and from the difference discover new information, a synthesis. Answer: Because of his predilection for self-importance. His perception, his description, has to have priority. Or, alternatively, he has to come to an agreement with Don Juan about their perceptions. They have to agree on a single description of realityô a Jackdaw epistemologyô which is exactly what Juan is talking about.ö (Grinder and DeLozier 1987, p. 149).

If NLP really was about communication as NLP Interviewee 10 suggests: õtherefore would a better definition of NLP rather than be modelling be something around communicationö (NLP Interviewee10. 57:51)

One would expect an eliminating of self-importance, so the self-indulgent qualities of first attention could not stand in the way of generating new patterns of understanding that worked within a context and could be shown to work through testing. The findings of this research is in fact category 4 does exist, and the fact that systemically NLP practice cannot role model its own pre-suppositions, is problematical for the practice of NLP; ontologically, epistemologically and methodologically.

Action Research, revisited.

I started this research 8 years ago wanting to understand if NLP worked and have ended up asking what is NLP?

As my theory of NLP began to take place, it was increasingly incumbent upon me to change how I practiced as a psychologist.

Since January 2008 when I first started my PhD studies and as I explored the topic of NLP I chose to continue to write in psychology journals and psychology books helping fill a perceived gap. After writing my first chapter on NLP in *Handbook of Coaching psychology* (Palmer & Whybrow 2007) I have contributed to 5 further psychology chapters on NLP as a part of my PhD studies (Cox et al. 2010, McMahon and Archer 2010, Wake et al. 2013 Cox et al. 2014, Palmer & Whybrow 2015) and have written my own book, looking at the topic of NLP in coaching from the perspective of psychology; (Grimley, 2013). In 2010 and 2012 I wrote in a popular NLP magazine first asking where is the research in NLP (Grimley, 2010) and then providing signposts for those who would wish to engage in qualitative research, in a

series designed to promote research: õResearch in practiceö Qualitative Research, (2012b). Papers have also been published where the promise of NLP is explored in a coaching context; õNLP a promising coaching paradigmö (Grimley, 2012) and the findings of this research are discussed in the context of understanding NLP more fully; õNLP: Misunderstood by psychologistsö, (Grimley, 2015). All of these writing projects and others as well I believe are necessary to ask the õdifficultö questions which are not presently being asked. NLP Interviewee 1 said: õI didn't get anything back nobody is ready willing to really grapple with the serious questions in NLP.ö (NLP Interviewee 1, 18:40)

I believe as a result of these writings and my current research I have grappled with some serious NLP questions and have formulated a theory which allows me to move forward both as a professional psychologist and as an NLP practitioner and trainer. My developing theory in practice continued as in Croatia I was present and instrumental in forming NLP as an applied psychology.

Professor Dr Karl Nielsen writes:

> õí í we decided to found Neuro Linguistic Psychology (NLPsy) on our 3rd NLP & Coaching World Congress in Croatia 2012. NLPsy is designed so that only NLP Trainer with an academic Master in Psychology and a Psychotherapy qualification according to WCPC standard (NLPt level) are accepted as õNLPsy Master Trainer, INö. The content of NLPsy trainings is defined as scientifically proven applicable Psychology knowledge and scientifically proven NLP.ö (Personal correspondence. 30th September, 2014)

It was decided by Dr Nielsen that P should stand for Psychology rather than the computer term Programming and was more in keeping with the academic beginnings of NLP.

The quality standard of trained NLPsy content includes:

1. NLP training content connected to fundamental psychological schools of thought

2. NLP training content connected to fundamental psychotherapeutic schools of thought

3. Scientific findings regarding NLP and procedures of proofing Scientific Effectiveness

Being a part of the above adventure allows me to take part in many of the multiple perspectives and multiple descriptions NLP has usefully brought to the fore and integrate them into a psychological framework, which has a practice which flows from an ontology, epistemology and methodology which I intend to write about in the future and publish in the academic literature for peer review, but more importantly will be tested using traditional scientific methodology. Making use of our sensory experience to calibrate whether or not a well-formed outcome has been achieved is not at all incompatible with writing this up and testing the validity of such sensory calibration. These tests would include the reports of others, psychometric assessment / testing, self-reporting and eventually comparisons with other modalities which seek the same outcomes for clients / patients within prescribed contexts.

Action research is an approach which enables practitioners to rethink theory as a practical discipline oriented towards social renewal rather than a static thing. As such the last 8 years for me have been a lived experience as I have spoken to people from all parts of the world in an attempt to articulate a theory of NLP. Consequent to my research I have embarked upon personal testing of what I have found.

For example as I have lived my learning, I have over 3 years õmodelledö an ex international athlete in an attempt to improve my own athletic performance, both training and racing with

him over this time. Such an endeavour has not proved NLP õmodellingö works better than any other approach, however over 3 years I have developed from being ranked at the 90th percentile in 2012 to 97th percentile in 2014 within the UK, (N=10,980 Run Britain, veteran athletes 50yrs ó 59yrs. 6th December 2014). Figure 19 below sees me on my way to becoming the Cambridgeshire County Champion for the half marathon in 2014 (50-59yrs). During 2015 I became the County road running champion for athletes aged 60 and over and the Eastern Counties 5 mile road running champion in the same age group.

Figure 19 Cambridgeshire Athletic Association Championships, half marathon 2014

As my research pinpointed some of the gaps within NLP practice, I began to change how I trained delegates in NLP and in 2014 ran a pilot 8 day NLP practitioner course at the Huntingdon Marriott, where standardised measures were taken at the beginning, at the end and at 6 months follow up. This was supported by a more qualitative approach where interviews explored how the improvement occurred, from a more subjective account in an attempt to validate the response sets and research which parts of NLP worked and which parts did not. Interviews were also conducted with a third party who had previously agreed to provide a further perspective of change during the 6 months immediately after the 8 day

NLP training course. In figure 20 the reader can see pre and post test scores from 2 very different NLP delegates, one of whom on the standardised form scored initially as being within a clinical population. As a form of practical theorising in action it has been important for me to put into practice what I have learned as a result of 8 years researching and this process continues to be a dynamic form of learning and theorising for me.

Figure 20. 2 sets of pre and post test scores on Quality of Life inventory for 2 NLP participants

As Dilts has said in the past NLP can be defined as õWhatever worksö. (grassrootsnlp, 2013) I use the word borrowed rather than modelled as the modelling process within NLP is far from clear with Burgess (2014) recently offering 13 different versions of what it is to model. The very first descriptions of NLP modelling were unambiguous and clearly relied on a process of unconscious assimilation in the same way that the participants in the research of Bandura (1977) learned through modelling behaviour towards a bobo Doll, whilst playing with toys. Research into mirror neurons provides a possible mechanism as to how it is possible to gain insights into the actions of others without going through cognitive/rational pathways of information processing, (Rizzolatti et al. 2001, in Mathison, 2007). However this method has not provided anything new in 40 years of NLP. Using this process there has been no demonstration a human can move from the norm to excellent, either through the process of modelling in this way, nor as a result of undergoing any training by an NLP trainer claiming to train in any such model. Consequently there seems to have been shifts within the rank and file of NLP. For some NLP may still be a meta-discipline for building models of human excellence (NLP participant 5.45:50) However for others it is simply about doing something different, õFor me, NLP, the definition was never modelling ÷excellenceø Excellence, I mean you can say somebody who does something remarkable. Remarkable doesnøt necessarily mean excellent ó it means differentö (NLP participant 15 49:50)

NLP participant 15 elaborates on what she means later in the interview:

> õitøs not excellence versus average ó itøs what is the distribution among a certain class of people that this particular process is going to work for? I mean, I go to different cultures all the time; I have no illusion that the same thing works in different cultures as it would work in the United States ó that would be insane.ö (NLP participant 15 54:30)

However there has been no consistent flow of empirical evidence over 40 years in any domain to evidence positive outcomes of any significance even for this lite version of NLP.

It appears even the word modelling no longer needs to define NLP; we can simply rest with the word õstudyö or change the focus to communication. Many of the NLP practitioners interviewed believed by opening up how an NLP practitioner comes to appreciate the structure of subjective experience makes the õfieldö less limited. For instance it provides an opportunity to õmodelö people who are deceased on account of second-hand accounts. Eventually, this attenuating process could render NLP quite similar to any lay person picking up a book on psychology, or an area of interest, reading some tips on how to do something, developing their own interpretation and then giving it a go and, consequently, talking in enthusiastic terms concerning the results he / she has obtained. On the front of a popular NLP magazine is a picture of someone who is internationally regarded as excellent and remarkable, Paula Radcliff the world record holder of the Marathon for women. One would expect to find some mention of NLP within the magazine article, however on the inside is a two page spread written by staff writers on tips from everything from running technique, through goal setting, to keeping warm in the winter, diet, training tips and race pacing. (Little and Menezes Cunningham, 2007). The marketing association between NLP and excellence is clear for all to see visually on the front cover, however on reading the article, it is not even clear whether Radcliff was even interviewed by the staff writers; there is no evidence Paula Radcliff had heard of NLP, let alone made use of it. By dropping the emphasis on specified kinds of modelling, by moving from a study of excellence to just increasing performance through doing something differently, and by continuing to side step the issue of empirical testing, NLP as currently practiced does fit very well into the grounded theory produced.

NLP certainly has moved away from a Jackdaw epistemology, however according to this research it has moved towards a magpie epistemology, with a little of something for everyone with no coherent ontology, epistemology, methodology nor evidence to support the marketing rhetoric. In the words of NLP participant 5 (24:30) NLP currently is a bit of a dog's breakfast, which is, in the words of NLP participant 15 (2:01:56) lacking in aggregation.

Predictions of this theory and Road Map for NLP

Predictions

This theory of NLP claims both to describe NLP historically and currently and consists of a group of 8 interacting propositions about NLP practice which can be used as principles for both explanation and prediction. The theory predicts that even though NLP is seen by many as the practice of choice, adherents of NLP will practice according to an interaction of the 8 categories within this theory. That is they will continue to have as the main evidence base anecdotal material and will not systematically develop an evidence base within the appropriate peer reviewed journals to support the claims they will continue to make about their practice. The main motivation to practice NLP will be to create an income stream rather than to educate people in the application of practical psychology. As has historically been the case NLP will continue to be defined in apposition and opposition to the social science of psychology and those who wish to improve the scientific credibility of what they do, will move away from the NLP brand using different identifiers. These groups will produce their own ontology and epistemology in a coherent way and will seek to develop an evidence base for what they do. The incoherent epistemology, ontology and methodology within NLP will continue and thus standardization will not be forthcoming as NLP continues to be highly

attractive to a variety of people around the world as an unfalsifiable pop psychology practiced by energetic marketeers who have both charisma and commercial savvy.

Road Map for NLP.

I believe the road map for NLP is of course dependent on where it wishes to go. If it ever wished to develop into a credible scientific modality there are the options to research in the way Tosey and Mathison (2009, p. 195) suggest. However if it wishes to remain a highly popular form of practical pop psychology it should continue according to the principles of this theory. By not having a standard definition, NLP can claim to be both process oriented and multi-paradigmatic and use whatever is believed is needed for the job in hand without providing the evidence that in such a context the desired outcome is indeed probable. Such behaviour will provide satisfied customers and multi-level marketing strategies will ensure continued adherence to the brand. The NLP leadership Summits convened by Hall and Pucelik have created an association of experienced NLP practitioners and it will be interesting to see what direction this group take. In terms of addressing category 4 of this theory the NLP leadership summit is indeed a significant step. It is possible the theory of NLP will be substantiated if only on the basis that NLP can thrive according to the context within which it stands and that is the context of the acronym PEAS. As mentioned above it is entirely consistent for NLP to be defined both in terms of the theory of NLP and in terms of PEAS which describes NLP as **P**rocess oriented, **P**ragmatic, **P**ositive, **P**layful, **P**henomenological, and eliciting **P**atterns, **P**racticing within the **P**resuppositions of NLP. Also **E**clectic, **E**xperimental, **E**xperiential, with a focus on obtaining **E**legance in all we do. NLP also has a focus on **A**pplication rather than theorising, however evidence for the effectiveness of such application is mainly **A**necdotal. Finally NLP is **S**ystemic in orientation

with a focus on **S**tructure and a strong emphasis on **S**ales in the market place for ideas and utility. Indeed Participant 12 said concerning the success of NLP:

õWhile the nature of NLP has led to the fragmentation and issues that the field currently has, I believe it may have also been directly responsible for NLP being a huge and successful field. I say this to mean that NLP was always commercial, eschewed science (while borrowing eclectically and heavily from it) and didn't try to self-regulate. This meant it has really become quite a big field over the last 40 years. There aren't many other personal development modalities that have quite so many trainers, so many practitioners and made such a huge impact across so many domains. You find NLP now being used in or accepted by HR, Leadership, Coaching, Psychotherapy, Training, Education, Negotiation etc. etc. Indeed, I can't think of another Personal Development modality that is as big or as extant. So while the commercialisation etc. of NLP has been bad from one perspective it has helped the promulgation of NLP, it's take up by Trainers (looking to make a buck doing something they've become infatuated in) and its spread around the world. (Personal communication,15th June, 2015 00:48)

References:

Abbott, A. (2004). *Methods of discovery: Heuristics for the social sciences.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Alder,H and Heather,B (1998) *NLP in 21 days. A complete introduction and training programme.* London. Piatkus

Alden,P (1998) When Hypnosis looks like magic, remember electricity! *Contemporary Hypnosis.* Vol 15 Number 2 1988 pp71-75 London. Whurr Publishers

Allan, F., Bourne, J., Bouch, D., Churches, R., Dennison, J., Evans, J. J., Fowler, J., Jeffers, A., Prior, E. and Rhodes, L (2012) Training in influencing skills from neuro-linguistic programming (modelled from hypnosis and family therapy), in combination with innovative maths pedagogy, raises maths attainment in adult numeracy learners. *ERIC Educational Resources Information Center.* Retrieved 19th September 2012 from;

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/simpleSearch.jsp?newSearch=true&eric_sort Field=&searchtype=basic&pageSize=10&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=Training+in+infl uencing+skills+from+neuro-linguistic+programming+%28modelled+from+hypnosis+and+family+therapy%29%2C+in+c ombination+with+innovative+maths+pedagogy%2C+raises+maths+attainment+in+adult+nu meracy+learners.++&eric_displayStartCount=1&_pageLabel=ERICSearchResult&ERICExt Search_SearchType_0=kw

Altmann, G,T,M. (1997) *The Ascent of Babel.* Oxford. Oxford University Press.

American Optometric Association (1985) The Effectiveness of Vision Therapy in Improving Visual Function. Report by the American Optometric Association. Documentation on the Clinical Research and Scientific Support Underlying Vision Therapy. Retrieved on 29th October 2013 from: http://www.fvdcpc.com/pdf/the-effectiveness-of-vision-therapy.pdf

Andreas,S (1979) in Bandler, R. & Grinder, J. (1979) *Frogs into princes: neuro linguistic programming.* Moab, UT: Real People Press.

Andreas,S (2003) Book Review Whispering in the Wind by Carmen Bostic St Clair and John Grinder. Retrieved on 4th October 2014 from:

http://www.steveandreas.com/Articles/whispering.html

Andreas,S (2006) Modelling, modelling. Retrieved on 4th October 2014 from:

http://www.steveandreas.com/Articles/mmodeling.html

Andreas,S (2006b) *Six Blind Elephants. Volume 1. Understanding ourselves and each other. Fundamental principles of scope and category.* Moab UT. Real People Press

Andreas,S (2006c) *Six Blind Elephants. Volume 2. Understanding ourselves and each other. Applications and Explorations of scope and category.* Moab UT. Real People Press

Angart, L. (2005) *Improve your eyesight naturally. See results quickly.* Carmarthen. Crown House Publishing.

Angart, L. (2014) Personal email correspondence on Tue 29/10/2013 10:34 and Mon 30/06/2014 21:45 at bruce@achieving-lives.co.uk

Argyris,C (1957) *Personality and Organization.* New York. Harper and Row.

Argyris,C (1964) *Integrating the Individual and the Organization.* New York. Harper and Row.

Bandler,R. (2013a) What is NLP? Retrieved on Monday 14th October 2014 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vlcsFJyEXQ

Bandler,R.(2013b) Richard Bandler - NLP. What technique can a person develop to be more Resilient? Retrieved on Monday 14th October 2014 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAVjI6AuxSY&list=PL6icwV3dqHr9CuGd2rBAA-dwF3tTEobYw

Bandler,R. (1989) in McClendon,T,L (1989) *The Wild Days NLP 1972-1981.* Cupertino, California. Meta Publications.

Bandler, R. (1985) *Use your brain for a CHANGE.* Moab, UT: Real People Press.

Bandler, R. & Grinder, J. (1975). *The structure of magic. A book about language and therapy.* Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behaviour Books.

Bandler, R. & Grinder ,J. (1975b). *Patterns of the hypnotic techniques of Milton H. Erickson. MD: Volume 1.* Capitola, CA: Meta Publications.

Bandler, R., & Grinder, J. (1979). *Frogs into princes.* Moab, UTv Real People Press.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Bandura, A. (1986). *The social foundations of thought and action.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Bateson,G (1972) *Steps to an Ecology of Mind.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) (2013) Neuro Linguistic Programming: Mental health veterans therapy fear. Retrieved on Friday 25th October 2013 from http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-24617644

BBC 4 (2010) Vision training with Leo Angart - BBC4 2010 retrieved 3rd October 2014 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxZXnL08BwM

Becker, Joerg, Niehaves, Bjoern and Klose, Karsten (2005). 'A Framework for Epistemological Perspectives on Simulation'. *Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation* 8(4)1 retrieved 10th October 2014 from: http://jasss.soc.surrey.ac.uk/8/4/1.html .

Birholtz, L. (1981). Neurolinguistic Programming: Testing some basic assumptions (Doctoral dissertation, Fielding Institute, 1981). *Dissertation Abstracts International,* 42, 3565B. (University Microfilms No. 8118324)

Blumer, H. (1969) *Symbolic Interactionism.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bodenhamer, B & Hall, M.L. (1999) *The user's manual for the brain. Volume 1.* Carmarthen, Wales: Crown House Publishing.

Bolstad, R (2002) Resolve. *A new model of therapy*. Carmarthen. Crown House Publishing

Bostic St Clair, C. & Grinder, J. (2001) *Whispering in the wind.* Scotts Valley, CA: J&C enterprises.

BosticSt.Clair,C and Grinder, J. (2005) "A Proposed Distinction for Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)" *The Model Magazine*, Vol. 3, pp. 1-3, 2005

Bourke, F. (2011) email correspondence in Grimley,B. (2013) *The theory and practice of NLP coaching*: A Psychological Approach. London, Sage Publishing

Bradbury,A (2013) All roads lead to Sharpley-Part 2. (Second Journey to the Emerald City). Retrieved on Thursday 25th April 2013 from

http://www.bradburyac.mistral.co.uk/sharpley2.html

Briggs Myers,I and Myers,P,B. (1980) *Gifts Differing.* Palo Alto, CA. Consulting Psychologists Press.

Brock, V. (2006) Key influences on the field. *Choice: The Magazine of Professional Coaching*, 4 (2), 26. Toronto Garry T. Schleifer,

Brown, D. (2007) *Tricks of the mind (2nd edn).* London: Channel 4 Books.

Burgess,F. (2014) *The bumper bundle book of modelling. NLP modelling made simple.* Clitheroe, Lancs. Kilmonivaig publishing

Carnegie,D (1953) *How to win friends and influence people.* Cedar

Carroll, M (2014) NLP Strategies Another Redundant Format In NLP? retrieved on 6th December 2014 from:

http://www.nlpacademy.co.uk/articles/view/nlp_strategies_another_redunadant_format_in_nlp/

Charmaz, K (2008) Grounded Theory in Smith, J.A. *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*. SAGE Publications. Kindle Edition.

Churches, R (2013) To research or not to research that is a good question. Retrieved on Saturday 12th January 2013 from http://www.anlp.org/files/to-research-or-not-to-research-richard-churches-changes-82-2011_6_169.pdf

Clark,D (2006) NLP training s shameful, fraudulent cult? Retrieved on 7th October 2014 from http://donaldclarkplanb.blogspot.co.uk/2006/11/nlp-trainings-shameful-fraudulent-cult.html

Clark,D (2012) Bandler NLP: No Longer Plausible: training s shameful, fraudulent cult? Retrieved on 7th October 2014 from: http://donaldclarkplanb.blogspot.co.uk/2012/04/bandler-nlp-no-longer-plausible.html

Conrad, P. (1987) The experience of illness: recent and new directions Research in the Sociology Smith, J.A. (2012-06-30). *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods* (Kindle Locations 5328-5329). SAGE Publications. Kindle Edition.

Costa, P,T and McCrae,R,R. (1994) in Heatherton,T,F. and Weinbergr,J,L. (1994) *Can Personality Change?* Washington. American Psychological Association.

Cox,E., Bachkirova,T., and Clutterbuck, D. (2010) *The complete handbook of coaching.* London Sage.

Cox,E., Bachkirova,T., and Clutterbuck, D. (2014) *The complete handbook of coaching, 2nd edition.* London Sage.

Damon, W. (1983). *Social and Personality Development: Infancy Through*

Adolescence. New York: W. W. Norton.

Danziger, K. (1997). The varieties of social construction. *Theory & Psychology,* 7(3), 399 416.

Davidson, D. (1984). On the very idea of a conceptual scheme. In *Inquiries into truth and interpretation.* New York: Oxford University Press.

DeLozier,J. & Grinder,J. (1987) *Turtles all the way down. Prerequisites to personal genius.* Scotts Valley. CA Grinder & Associates.

Derks, L (2005) *Social Panoramas. Changing the unconscious landscape with NLP and psychotherapy.* Carmarthen. Crown House Publishing.

Dilts,R (1990) *Changing belief systems with NLP.* Capitola, CA: Meta Publications.

Dilts,R (1998) *Modeling with NLP.* Capitola, CA: Meta Publications.

Dilts, R. & DeLozier, J. (2000) *Encyclopedia of systemic neuro-linguistic programming and NLP new coding.* Scotts Valley, CA: NLP University Press.

Dilts (2012) Email to Bruce Grimley. (bruce@achieving-lives.co.uk 9th July 2012).

Dilts, R., Grinder, J., Bandler, R. & DeLozier, J. (1980) *Neuro-linguistic programming. Volume 1. The study of the structure of subjective experience*. Capitola, CA: Meta Publications.

Einspruch, Eric L. & Forman, Bruce D. (1985) *Observations concerning research literature on neuro-linguistic programming.* Journal of Counseling Psychology, 32 (4), 589ó696

Fagan, J. (1971) The task of the therapist. In J. Fagan & I.L. Shepherd (Eds.) *Gestalt Therapy Now: Theory, Techniques, Applications* (pp 88-106). New York: Harper & Row.

Falzett, W. C. (1981). Matched versus unmatched primary representational systems and their relationship to perceived trustworthiness in a counselling analogue. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 28, 305-308.

Faugier & Sargeant, (1997). Sampling hard to reach populations *Journal of Advanced Nursing,* 1997, 26, 790ó797

Fenno, R, F. (1978). *Home Style.* Boston. Little, Brown. In King,G., Keohane,R,O., (1994) Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research Princeton University Press - A. Kindle Edition.

Frankl. V. E. (1962). *Man's search for meaning.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Fredricks, R (2014) The Relationship Between Eye Movement Integration (EMI) and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) retrieved on 10th October 2014 from: tinyurl.com/lnezbj8 and http://www.ahtainc.com/RelationshipEMI-EMDR.pdf

French,W,L and Bell, C,H (1995) *Organizational Development. Behavioral science interventions for organizational improvement, 5th ed.* New Jersey, Prentice Hall.

Gergen, K.J. (1997). The place of the psyche in a constructed world. *Theory & Psychology,* 7(6), 723ó746.

Giorgi, A. 1985, *Phenomenology and Psychological Research* Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh PA. in Tosey,P and Mathison,J. (2010) "Exploring inner landscapes through psychophenomenology: The contribution of neuro-linguistic programming to innovations in researching first person experience", *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 5. 1, pp.63 - 82

Gibson N, Gibson G, Macaulay A. Community-based research: negotiating research agendas and evaluating outcomes. In: Morse J, SwansonJ,Kuzel A, eds. *The nature of qualitative evidence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001 pp161-84.

Gibson, S. & Hanes, L. A. 2003, "The Contribution of Phenomenology to HRD Research", *Human Resource Development Review*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 181-205. In Tosey,P and Mathison,J. (2010) "Exploring inner landscapes through psychophenomenology: The contribution of neuro-linguistic programming to innovations in researching first person

experience", *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 5 Iss: 1, pp.63 - 82

Glaser B,G and Strauss A. (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research.* Chicago: Aldine.

Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of Grounded Theory: Emergence vs. forcing.* Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glasser, W. (1965). *Reality therapy.* New York, Evanston; London: Harper & Row.

Gordon,O (1995) *What is NLP? A brief history. Anchor Point* May, July 1995

Gormley, H., & Van Nieuwerburgh,C. (2014) Developing coaching cultures: a review of the literature, Coaching: *An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 7:2, 90-101,

Grant,A (2001) Neuro-Associative Conditioning *Australian Psychologist* November 2001 Vol36 number 3 pp232-238

Grant, A.M. (2001b). Towards a psychology of coaching: The impact of coaching on metacognitions, mental health and goal attainment. *Unpublished doctoral dissertation,* Macquarie University, Sydney. Retrieved on 2nd December 2014 from

http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED478147.pdf

Grant, A. M. & Cavanagh, M. J. (2004). Toward a profession of coaching: Sixty five years of progress and challenges for the future. *International Journal of Evidence-based Coaching and Mentoring*, 2(1).

Grassrootsnlp (2013) What is NLP? Defining Neuro-Linguistic Programming. Retrieved 11th January 2013 from http://www.grassrootsnlp.com/book/free-nlp-book/what-nlp

Gray,R.M., Liotta,R.F., Wake,L. & Cheal,J (2013) Research and history of methodological flaws in *The Clinical Effectiveness of Neurolinguistic Programming. A critical appraisal.* Ed. Wake,L., Gray,R.M. & Bourke,F.S. London and New York. Routledge.

Greer, S. (1997). Nietzsche and social construction. *Theory & Psychology,* 7(1), 83ó100.

Grimley,B (2007) Time for NLP to get positive: A response to Linder-Pelz and Hall. *The Coaching Psychologist*, Vol. 3, No. 2, August 2007

Grimley,B (2010) Where is the evidence in *Rapport the magazine for NLP professionals* Winter 2009/10 Issue 18 pp4-5 Hemel Hempstead. ANLP CIC.

Grimley,B (2012) NLP a Promising Coaching Paradigm in *The Coaching Psychologist,* Vol. 8, No. 2, December 2012 pp86-91 © The British Psychological Society ó ISSN: 1748ó1104

Grimley,B (2012b) Research in Practice: Qualitative research in *Rapport the magazine for NLP professionals* Summer 2012 issue 28 pp52-54. Hemel Hempstead. ANLP CIC.

Grimley,B (2013) *Theory and Practice of NLP Coaching. A psychological approach.* London. Sage.

Grimley,B (2013b) *Unpublished draft of Theory and Practice of NLP Coaching. A psychological approach*. London. Sage.

Grimley,B (2014) Origins of EMDR ó a question of integrity? In *The Psychologist* vol 27 no 8 august 2014

Grimley, B (2014b) email from bruce@achieving-lives.co.uk on Sun 12/10/2014 08:21

Grimley,B (2015) NLP, misunderstood by psychologists in *Sport & Exercise Psychology Review, Vol. 11 No. 2* pp66-72. © The British Psychological Society ó ISSN: 1748ó1104

Grinder,J (2014) email to bruce@achieving-lives.co.uk on 09 August 2014 20:25

Grinder, J (2013) Developing NLP and Training skills retrieved Tuesday 29th January 2013.

http://www.nlpacademy.co.uk/videos/view/developing_nlp_and_training_skills/

Grinder,J (2013b) What is NLP? Retrieved Thursday 7th March 2013.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=hJzO5x6ko6w

Grinder (2007) in Carroll, M (2014) NLP Strategies Another Redundant Format In NLP? retrieved on 6th December 2014 from:

http://www.nlpacademy.co.uk/articles/view/nlp_strategies_another_redunadant_format_in_nlp/

Grinder,J. and Pucelik,F. (2013) *The origins of Neurolinguistic Programming*. Carmarthen SA, Bethel CT Crown House Publishing.

Grinder, J. & Bandler, R. (1976). *The structure of magic 2. A book about communication and change*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behaviour Books.

Grinder, J., DeLozier, J. & Bandler, R. (1977). *Patterns of the hypnotic techniques of Milton H. Erickson. MD Volume 2*. Capitola, CA: Meta Publications.

Grinder, J. & DeLozier, J. (1987) *Turtles all the way down*. Scotts Valley, CA: Grinder and Associates.

Grinder, J., & Bandler, R. (1981). *Trance-formations*. Moab, UT: Real People Press.

Gumm, W., Walker, M., & Day, H. (1982). Neurolinguistic programming: Method or myth? *Journal of Counseling Psychology,* 29, 327-330.

Gurnani, P (2014) EMDR ó origins and anomalies in *The Psychologist* vol 27 no 9 september 2014 p 638. Leicester, The British Psychological Society

Habermas,J (1975) *Legitimation crisis* (translation T. McCarthy) Boston. Beacon. In McNiff,J and Whitehead,J (2006). *All you need to know about Action Research.* London. Sage.

Habermas, J (1987). *The theory of communicative action. Volume two: The critique of functionalist reason.* Oxford, Polity.

Hall, C (2001) In the matter of Richard Bandler, Brahm von Hueme and Dominic Luzi, Plaintiffs vs John Grinder, Carmen Bostic St Clair, Christina Hall, Steve and Connirae Andreas and Lara Ewing. Defendants. *NLP World* vol 8 number 2 pp15-24. In Tosey, P. & Mathison, J. (2009) Neuro-linguistic programming: a critical appreciation for managers and developers. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hall, M (2008) *Self-Actualization psychology. The Psychology of the Bright side of human nature.* Clifton CO Neurosemantic Publications.

Hall, M (2011) NLP presuppositions from Korzybski retrieved on Wednesday 10th December 2014 from: http://www.giannicoladeantoniis.com/2011/02/nlp-presuppositions-from-korzybski-by.html

Hall, M (2013a). The 1980øs When NLP fragmented. Retrieved on Sunday 27th October 2013 from http://www.neurosemantics.com/nlp/the-history-of-nlp/the-1980s-when-nlp-fragmented

Hall,M (2013b).The lawsuit that almost killed NLP. Retrieved on Sunday 27th October 2013 from: http://www.neurosemantics.com/nlp/the-history-of-nlp/the-lawsuit-that-almost-killed-nlp

Hall,L,M. & Rose Charvet,S (2011) *Innovations in NLP for Challenging times.* Bethel, USA and Carmarthen, Wales. Crown House Publishing.

Hall, M.L. & Bodenhamer, B. (2003) *The user's manual for the brain. Volume 2.* Carmarthen, Wales: Crown House Publishing.

Hall, L.M. & Belnap, B. (1999). *The sourcebook of magic: A comprehensive guide to the technology of NLP.* Carmathan, Wales: Crown House Publishing Ltd.

Heap, M. (1988) Neurolinguistic programming: An interim verdict. In M. Heap (Ed.) *Hypnosis: Current Clinical, Experimental and Forensic Practices* (pp 268-280). London: Croom Helm.

Heap, M. (1989) Neurolinguistic programming: What is the evidence? In D. Waxman, D. Pedersen, I. Wilkie & P. Mellett (Eds.) *Hypnosis: The Fourth European Congress at Oxford* (118-124). London: Whurr Publishers.

Heap, M. (1989b) Neurolinguistic programming, a British perspective. *Hypnos: Swedish Journal of Hypnosis in Psychotherapy and Psychosomatic Medicine,* 15, 4-13.

Heap, M. (2008) The validity of some early claims of neuro-linguistic programming, *Sceptical Intelligencer,* 12, 6-13

Hesketh, B. (1997). Acquiring and developing transferable skills: An essential ingredient of career survival. *Paper presented at conference on Career Planning: Signposting the Future,* Career Services Ruapara, New Zealand.

Hilgard, E,R. (1977) *Divided Consciousness. Multiple controls in human thought and action.* New York. John Wiley and son.

Holton, J,A. (2010). The Coding Process and Its Challenges in *Grounded theory review, an international journal.* Issue 1, March 2010, Volume 09 retrieved on 24th September 2014 from: http://groundedtheoryreview.com/2010/04/02/the-coding-process-and-its-challenges/

Inspiritive (2008) Dr. John Grinder explains more about Modelling in NLP. Retrieved on 4th October 2014 from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CO_cHCuz9BU

Inspiritive (2008b) What is NLP? Retrieved Thursday 7th March 2013 from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=hJzO5x6ko6w

James, T. & Woodsmall, W. (1988) *Time line therapy and the basis of personality.* Capitola, CA: Meta Publications.

Kemmis, S. and McTaggart, R. (1984) (eds.) *The Action Research Planner,* Geelong,Australia, Deakin University Press.

Kahneman,D. (2011) *Thinking fast and slow.* London, Penguin

King,G., Keohane,R,O., and Verba,S. (1994) Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in *Qualitative Research* Princeton University Press - A. Kindle Edition.

Kingerlee, R (2014) EMDR time will tell. *The Psychologist.* vol 27 no 10 october 2014. p725. Leicester. The British Psychological Society.

Korzybski, A. (1994) *Science and sanity: an introduction to non-Aristotelian systems and general semantics (5th edn).* New York: Institute of General Semantics.

Linder-Pelz, S & Hall, M (2007) The theoretical roots of NLP-based coaching. *The Coaching Psychologist,* Vol. 3, No. 1, April 2007 © The British Psychological Society ó ISSN: 1748ó 1104

Linder-Pelz, S. (2010) *NLP coaching: An evidence-based approach for coaches, leaders and individuals.* London: Kogan Page.

Lingard,L, Albert, M and Levinson,W. (2008) Qualitative research.Grounded theory, mixed methods, and action research in *British Medical Journal* 23rd August 2008, Volume 337 pp 459-460

Little, W and Menezes Cunningham, E 2007. How Paula Radcliffe's marathon goal setting could work for you and your goals in *Rapport* issue 7 Spring 2007 pp22-23

Lund Research Ltd (2012) Laerd dissertation. Purposive sampling. Retrieved on 9th October 2014 from http://dissertation.laerd.com/purposive-sampling.php

Little, W. (2010) *Power to persuade: the story of NLP.* BBC Radio 4, 29 November.

Mathison,J (2007) Mirror Neurons: a neurological basis for making sense of the words, feelings and actions of others. Retrieved from file 29th October 2013. www.NLPresearch.org

McMahon,G. Archer,A. (2010) *101 Coaching Strategies and Techniques.* Routledge.

McNiff,J (2000) *Action Research in Organisations.* London, New York. Routledge.

McNiff,J and Whitehead,J (2002). *Action Research: Principles and Practice. (2nd ed)* London. Routledge Falmer

McNiff,J and Whitehead,J (2006). *All you need to know about Action Research.* London. Sage.

McClendon T.L. (1989) *The wild days: NLP 1972–1981.* Capitola, CA: Meta Publications.

Mead,G,H. (1934) *Mind, Self and Society.* Chicago. University of Chicago Press.

Meyer,J (2000) Using qualitative methods in *health related Action Research.* British Medical Journal. 320 178-181

Mill,J.S. *On Liberty* (1859) Harvard Classics. P. F. Collier & Son (Kindle Locations 585-587)

Morris, C.W. (1932) Six *theories of mind.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Morris, C. (2010) NLP connections. Retrieved on 26th October 2010 from: www.nlpconnections.com/forum/16114-frank-pucelik-early-days-nlp.html

Moxom, K. (2014) personal email to bruce@achieving-lives.co.uk on Mon 01/09/2014 10:58

Munro, A (2013) *Is NLP authentic? Or yet another wheeze?* Retrieved on Thursday 19th September 2013 from http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Is-NLP-authentic-yet-another-4219015.S.232053362?qid=c27dd879-c873-4f2b-bd5f-1f5d2923f4c0&trk=group_most_popular-0-b-ttl&goback=.gmp_4219015

Neisser, U. (1982) *Memory observed.* San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Co.

Nielsen,K (2014) Personal email from Dr Karl Nielsen Tue 30/09/2014 18:46 bruce@achieving-lives.co.uk

NLP Academy (2001-2003) Real NLP Modelling. NLP Academy Ltd.

NLP Academy (2008) John Grinder on Modelling. Retrieved on 3rd October 2014 from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDCUYhXNEME

NLP Life Training (2008) NLP - Richard Bandler - What is NLP? Neuro linguistic programming. Retrieved on 7th March 2013 from:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vlcsFJyEXQ

Norcross,J.C., Koocher,G.P., Garofalo,A. (2006) Discredited Psychological Treatments and Tests: A Delphi Poll *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, Vol 37(5), Oct 2006, 515-522.

Overdurf,J and Silverton,J (1998:viii) in Alder,H and Heather,B (1998) *NLP in 21 days. A complete introduction and training programme.* London. Piatkus

Palande,A. (2015) School of excellence retrieved on 15th March 2015 from: http://www.soexcellence.com/NLP-Eye-Accessing-Cues

Palmer,S and Whybrow,A (2007) *Handbook of Coaching Psychology.* A guide for practitioners. London, New York. Routledge.

Palmer,S and Whybrow,A (2015) *Handbook of Coaching Psychology 2nd edition.* A guide for practitioners. London, New York. Routledge.

Peal, N,V. (1952) *The power of positive thinking.* New York. Prentice Hall.

Perls, F. (1973) *The Gestalt Approach and Eye Witness to therapy.* Science and Behavior Books.

Pessoa,L and Adolphs, R. (2010) Emotion processing and the amygdala: from a ‑low road‑to ‑many roads‑of evaluating biological significance in *Nature Reviews, Neuroscience.* Volume 11. November 2010. pp773-782

Poole (2012) Your brain on pseudoscience: the rise of popular neurobollocks in *The New Statesman* retrieved on 7th June 2013 from: tinyurl.com/8jkndqc

Rizzo, M (2013) *The magpie and the mole: Thoughts on an epistemology.* Retrieved on 15th December 2014 from: http://66.147.244.130/~maryrizz/2013/10/26/the-magpie-and-the-mole-thoughts-on-an-epistemology/

Rizzolatti, G., Fogassi, L. and Gallese, V. (2001) õNeurophysiological mechanisms underlying the understanding and imitation of actionö *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience 2,* 661 ó 670

Rock, P. (1979) *The Making of Symbolic Interactionism.* London: Macmillan.

Roderique-Davies, G (2009) Neuro-Linguistic Programming: Cargo Cult Psychology? *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education Volume 1 • Number* 2 Épp57ó63 JULY 2009

Rowan, J. (2008) NLP is not based on constructivism. *The Coaching Psychologist,* 4 (3), December, 160ύ2.

Run Britain (2014) *Run Britain national ladder* retrieved on 6th December 2014 from :

http://www.runbritainrankings.com/rankings/ladderlist.aspx?agegroup=V55&sex=M

Ryles,G (1990) *The concept of mind.* London, Penguin.

Saldana, J (2009) *The Coding manual for qualitative researchers.* London, Sage Publications.

Schilpp, P.A. (1979) *Albert Einstein: autobiographical notes.* La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing.

Schon,D (1983) The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action. New York, Basic in *All you need to know about Action Research* McNiff,J and Whitehead,J (2006) London, Sage.

Schon, D (1995) Knowing in action: The new knowledge needs a new epistemology. *Change* November-December in McNiff,J (2000) *Action Research in Organisations.* London, New York. Routledge.

Schumpeter, Joesph A. [1936] 1991. ὃCan Capitalism Survive?ὄ In Richard Swedberg, ed. *The Economics of Sociology and Capitalism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Seligman, M E. P and Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000) Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, Vol 55(1), Jan 2000, 5-14.

Senge,P,M. (1990) *The fifth discipline. The Art and Practice of The Learning Organization.* Century Business an imprint of Random House Ltd. London.

Shapiro, F (1985) Neuro-Linguistic Programming, the new success technology in *Holistic Life Magazine,* summer 1985.

Sharpley,C,F. (1984) Predicate Matching in NLP: A Review of Research on the Preferred Representational System. *Journal of Counseling Psychology.* 1984, Vol. 31, No. 2,238-248. American Psychological Society.

Sharpley, C,F. (1987) Research findings on neurolinguistic programming: nonsupportive data or an untestable theory? *Journal of Counseling Psychology,* 14 (1), 103ύ7.

Smith,J,A and Osborn,M. (2008) Interpretative phenomenological analysis in *Qualitative Psychology A Practical Guide to Research Methods Second Edition* London, Sage.

Smith,J,A (2010) *Interpretative phenomenological analysis*. Birkbeck University of London Kings September 2010. Retrieved on 9th October 2014 from: http://www.cmpcp.ac.uk/JASSlides.pdf

Smith,J.A., (2012) *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods* (Kindle Locations 3-4). SAGE Publications. Kindle Edition.

Stipancic,M., Renner,W., Schutz,P., and Dond,R. (2010) Effects of Neuro-Linguistic Psychotherapy on psychological difficulties and perceived quality of life. In *Counselling and psychotherapy research.* March 2010; 10 (1): pp39-49. London, Routledge, Taylor&Francis group.

Sturt,J., Ali,S., Robertson,W., Metcalfe,D., Grove,A., Bourne,C., and Bridle,C. (2012) Neurolinguistic programming: a systematic review of the effects on health outcomes. *British Journal of General Practice,* November 2012 pp 757-764

Sturt, J. (2012b) Little evidence for NLP in Healthcare, Para 3. Retrieved 6th October 2013.

http://www.kcl.ac.uk/nursing/newsevents/news/2012/Little-evidence-for-NLP-in-Healthcare.aspx

Sutton,J (2012) Never mind the Neurobollocks in *The Psychologist* November 2012 Vol 25 Number 11 page 813Tosey, P. & Mathison, J. (2009) *Neuro-linguistic programming: a critical appreciation for managers and developers.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tosey,P and Mathison,J. (2010) "Exploring inner landscapes through psychophenomenology: The contribution of neuro-linguistic programming to innovations in researching first person experience", *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal,* Vol. 5 Iss: 1, pp.63 ó 82

Velmans, M. 2000, *Investigating Phenomenal Consciousness* John Benjamins

Publishing Company, Amsterdam. In Tosey,P and Mathison,J. (2010) "Exploring inner landscapes through psychophenomenology: The contribution of neuro-linguistic programming to innovations in researching first person experience", *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal,* Vol. 5 Iss: 1, pp.63 ó 82

Vermersch, P. 2004, "Prendre en compte la phénomenalité: propositions pour une psychophenomenologie", *Expliciter* no. 57 (December), pp. 35-46 In Tosey,P and Mathison,J. (2010) "Exploring inner landscapes through psychophenomenology: The contribution of neuro-linguistic programming to innovations in researching first person experience", *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal,* Vol. 5 Iss: 1, pp.63 - 82

Vaihinger, H. (1924) *The philosophy of as if.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Wake, L. (2008). Neurolinguistic Psychotherapy. Hove: Routledge.

Wake,L (2010) *NLP Principles in Practice.* St Albans, Hertfordshire. Ecademy Press.

Wake,L., Gray,R.M. & Bourke,F.S. (2013) *The Clinical Effectiveness of Neurolinguistic Programming. A critical appraisal.* Ed. London and New York. Routledge.

Walker, W. (1996) Abenteuer Kommunikation Bateson, Perls, Satir, Erickson und die Anfange des Neurolinguistischen Programmierens (NLP) (4th edn). Stuttgart: KlettCott.

Wenger,E (1991) *Toward a theory of cultural transparency: elements of a social discourse of the visible and the invisible.* Institute for Research on Learning 2550 Hanover Palo Alto, CA 94304

Wikipedia (2013) Neuro-Linguistic programming. Retrieved Wednesday 24th April 2013 from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuro-linguistic_programming

Wiseman,R., Watt,C., ten Brinke, L., Porter,S., Couper,S., & Rankin,C. (2012). The Eyes Don¢t Have It: Lie Detection and Neuro-Linguistic Programming. Retrieved on 1st June 2013 from: http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0040259

Witkowski, T, (2010) *Thirty-Five Years of Research on Neuro-Linguistic Programming. NLP Research Data Base. State of the Art or Pseudoscientific Decoration?* Retrieved on 27th October 2013 from: http://www.tomaszwitkowski.pl/attachments/File/NLP.pdf

Yapko, M. (1981). *Neurolinguistic Programming, hypnosis, and interpersonal influence* (Doctoral dissertation, United States International University, 1981). Dissertation Abstracts International, 41, 3204B. (University Microfilms No. 8103393)

Appendix A.

Standard pro forma read to NLP Participants before interviewing.

1. The purpose and nature of the study is to explore and understand more fully from the perspective of Senior NLP Practitioners what the future for NLP is, what they would like it to be and what needs to be done in their opinion to secure that future. What I am particularly interested in exploring is whether a standard curriculum fits into that future, along with internationally agreed standards, or whether the present trajectory is acceptable to such people.

2. This interview and all outputs can be in total confidence. The reason I say CAN is it is possible some people may wish to go on record. I intend to make my dissertation widely available and the intention is to make clearer to people strategically what options are currently available to NLP practitioners concerning the future of NLP according to the present leaders. It is hoped that this will facilitate high quality discussions and consequent appropriate action to further NLP education and practice. Readers may wish to know who has contributed to this discussion. If you wish this interview to be confidential you can be assured of total anonymity concerning this recording and any written output of this work.

3. Some of my questions may appear strange, provocative or even leading. The reason for this is no two people are the same and what might be the right question for one participant will not be for another. I intend to ask specific questions to each NLP expert based upon their speciality, however also, for comparative purposes wish to ask the same questions to all participants. Please answer freely as I am only interested in your opinions and experiences.

4. Please feel free to interrupt me, ask for clarification, criticize a line of questioning or whatever you need in order to be heard in this interview.

5. Finally I would like to record this interview for transcription by myself at a later time. Do I have your permission to do this?

6. Do you have any questions?

Appendix B

Initial set of Questions for NLP experts.

Altogether there are 19 questions 4 on Vision, 7 on NLP definition and 7 on NLP university curricula. Finally there is one general questions

VISION.

1. What do you see as the future of NLP as an international movement, realistically.

2. Where would you like NLP to be in the future?

3. Where do you see NLP now?

4. How does NLP get from where it is now to where it needs to be in the future?

DEFINITION

1. If we say NLP works it is useful to know what NLP is. What is your definition of NLP?

2. What practices naturally flow from such a definition?

3. How does that differentiate the practice of NLP from other developmental/educational activities taught within many psychological curricula?

4. How would you test whether the application of an NLP pattern is more effective than the application of another intervention?

5. Can such fundamental differences within NLP as Content / Process, õrealö NLP modelling / analytical modelling be appropriately and credibly explained within a single definition of NLP?

Also

Can you give me an example of an NLP pattern (a) finding of an excellent exemplar, (b) unconscious uptake (or assignment of NLP design variables to modelling project), (c) application of pattern with demonstrated and measurable results, (d) coding of pattern in such a way congruent application of such pattern provides predicted results which are verified by some form of measurement (e) transfer of the pattern to other students and testing of the transfer in such a way the pattern is demonstrated to be robust across a population of students and results are measurable and take students from within one standard deviation from the mean to over 3 standard deviations?

6. NLP has been described as the study of the structure of subjective experience and its stated concern is with modelling excellence and then transferring this to other students. What has prevented NLP demonstrating whether it has or has not been able to do this in appropriate scientific journals?

7. Are there lessons that can be learned from the past?

CURRICULAR

This research is looking at what a curriculum for NLP would look like at University.

In your opinion;

1. What must be on that curriculum in order for it to be recognised as NLP?

2. Is there anything that should not be on an NLP curriculum?

3. Can NLP credibly be taught at University level with the poor reputation it seems to have in the scientific community?

4. Is there anything within the NLP epistemology / pre-suppositions which suggest it should not be studied at University.

5. Would such a curricular benefit NLP in any way or could it be counter-productive?

6. With so many NLP Associations around the world, how could a unified NLP curricular be decided upon, especially when in the history of NLP there appears to be a history of Mismatching?

7. My research question is õwhat is missing from the NLP paradigmö. How would you respond to that assumption?

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE WHICH I SHOULD HAVE ASKED WHICH I HAVE NOT ASKED?

Appendix C

A consumer guide through the multiplicity of NLP certification training – a European perspective by Peter Schütz, (with permission, Sun 28/12/2014 13:36)

NLP certification training, following a U.S. professional tradition, (practitioner of law, practitioner of medicine...) are usually named "NLP-Practitioner", however they extremely vary in profile, length, in depth, content and style. Lacking professional and credible standards, the same interestingly enough is true for NLP trainer certificates. So if you meet people who describe themselves as NLP practitioners or trainers itøs not easy to discern what may be expected from them in terms of competence, skills and attitude.

NLP focuses on the structure of subjective experience and its change and development, meaning, thoughts, feelings, and social roles of people and ó quite frequently ó their spiritual understanding. NLP training partly focuses on knowledge, skills and procedures (mainly Learning I), and partly on values, beliefs and deep personal change work (learning II+III).

Therefore it might pay off to very carefully take a look, whom do you entrust your social, emotional, psychophysical and spiritual wellbeing in a professional and ethically sound way.

NLP courses and books very often promise instant healing and change procedures. So many people seek these courses as "therapy in disguise." More than in many other methods in the field of psychology and human resources the power hungry and needy are attracted by NLP courses both as participants and to quickly become trainers.

Of course many professionals take up NLP as professional training for coaching, consulting, counseling and therapy.

Because of that variety in attendance it might be wise to very thoroughly check out the qualification of the trainers and the specific typical clientele of their course. You may also check out whether and how screening processes are applied.

Some courses may be used within a state education credit system for coaching or counseling licenses or universities.

With some exceptions the rule applies: the shorter the program, the more you pay per day, and the less professional soundness can be expected. Watch out for marketing ploys of "accelerated learning" ó as an argument for shorter NLP courses versus longer courses. Any validation for that has yet to be made.

Of course it is possible to profit from every form of NLP training and to have deep and valid human experiences. Following an NLP tradition it may be sad that there is a positive intent of organizing the courses in any specific format.

One of the key positions in NLP culture is to bring out the best in everybody and put emphasis on the good features and the good intentions of behavior.

Incidentally over the last 15 years this attitude has practically blocked a traditional 2nd position format of evaluation and assessment of different types of training, as it is common

standard in other educational settings (grad schools, Science, flight training centers,.., Aikido, Tai chi, sports).

While in the world of lawyers, cardiologists, Airline Transport Pilots, Aikido teachers, clinical social workers, Zen Monks, Judges .... because of tradition, standardized access criteria, length of training, etc. the average minimal knowledge and competence is quite high and standardized, in NLP all these parameters vary much in diversity, and a profound discussion about them is rare.

This has led to quite unfortunate occurrences in several countries, i.e. NLP getting associated with cults like scientology, getting labeled in unfavorable political ways (nazilinguistic programming) and ó mainly because of not pacing the established scientific community ó not getting respected by them for what NLP could contribute, which actually is quite a lot.

While looking at content and wealth of NLP materials and curriculums it could be expected that an NLP trainer has very high and over and above average levels of personal stability, experience in psychosocial work, proficiency and knowledge in humanities, the current reality does look quite different.

Money hungry quick certification centers are widely available for the status hungry.

Esoteric bankruptees, who achieve their trainer certificates with a few weeks of attending training, are to be seen on one side of the curve, and more often than not create a difficult public image of NLP. Well educated consultants and psychiatrists with a 5 year + >300 day solid trainer education are to be found on the other side of the continuum, however, as most of their work is evidently more on the quiet side, it also is by far not so well known and PR effective.

From a socio-anthropological perspective the following areas in a portfolio of NLP teaching institutes can be described. They do resemble the 4 types of Francis Bacons typology of idols.

A Fragmented esoteric NLP

Length of training varies, dancing, singing and a quite animistic approach are in the foreground. Semi-reflected quasi-spiritual work on self esteem has a much higher emphasis than methodology, occasionally even quite science phobic notions are carried.

B Power guru clubbings ("soft fascist") NLP

Rather short courses with a happening character, very alpha type leader behavior of trainers. Large to very large groups, emphasis on power and empowerment. Young power male oriented, short term power up, very often targeted to sales persons, scientific quotes out of context are used to legitimize hyping up unecologically.

C Visionary spiritual dogmatic NLP

Usually Block courses over a month, with a lot of structured and sound material, a very positive attitude, and while basically methodical, a lot of emphasis on relationship, values and a structured spirituality, as a basis for growth.

D Scientific pragmatic organized NLP

Courses with longer perspective, orientation on both personality development and evidence based proven methodological competence within a framework of values and a strong emphasis on state of art didactic tools (video), well connected to traditional government and educational systems.

Training styles and orientations may only partly be judged on the appearance of brochures. It usually pays off to research more in depth who the trainers are and what is their profile. With some exceptions of highly experienced and sound trainers it also seems more advisable to seek training led by more than one or two trainers, as the diversity of models and descriptions and the chances of a good resolution of conflicts will probably be richer, and dependency towards one person is not so easy to establish.

The following typologies of training standards are "IDEALTYPES" which of course are rare in their pure form and serve only as an orientation.

Out of track, but a player in the field are correspondence study courses

0.3 * Standard Your certified mail order NLP practitioner. A few manuals, tapes, sometimes a day of course for "certification".

The main phenomenology of NLP practitioner courses

* Standard Speed 5-7 days. Up to 300 participants, large group trance, rock music, motivational business emphasis.

** Standard Quick 130 h (16-18 days), one or two blocks, very often trainers and assistants with no or little grounding in personal coaching/ therapy.

Nice clubbing experience (DV NLP standard).

*** Standard Commercial 180 h, 24 627 days stretched over r > 9 months trainer qualification, variety of trainers.

Special form: Standard or Commercial block (holiday camps in USA and Europe). Quality in didactics and experience of trainers, + design vary very much. Rarely creditable in education systems.

Frequently producing short time highs with little follow up and reinforcement possibilities. Medium to large groups. Interesting due to multi-nationality and languages and group dynamic.

**** Standard Solid (NLDÖ 1) 200-250 h (27-34 days), training > 9 months, professional supervision, peer groups established and checked, high demand on trainers education and their supervision, using 3 or 4 trainers regularly.

Emphasis on personality development and methodology , group size limited.

***** Standard Professional (NLDÖ II) 240-28 h (35-40 days), > 9 months training, professional supervision, structured pre-assessment outcome, client video mandatory for certification, real persons testing, group size limited, assessment of 4 days, trainer with > 5 years education before entering training plus sufficient self experience and supervision of trainers, >3 master trainers, who also are fully accredited and qualified psychotherapists, M.D. s counselors.

Appendix D

Email letter to NLP Participants on 24th August 2014.

Hello NLP colleagues.

I hope this email finds you well.

I am wondering if you can help me with some feedback subsequent to my interviews with you. A part of grounded theory is that the researcher compares and contrasts themes which emerge from analysis and then feeds back into the field so to speak. The idea is eventually new themes emerge. A part of the Action Research paradigm is that research is participatory too. We research a topic with each other, thus you are not my õsubjectsö in this venture, you are my colleagues and co-researchers.

I started out wanting to examine what was missing from NLP and the assumption behind that research question.

As you can see from my attachment which represents all the words in my data corpus, mapping occurrences to size, not surprisingly the word NLP is the largestí .and thus the most occurring.

I also attach some themes which have emerged from the transcripts you have provided me with and also the transcript of a Linkedin discussion on this topic in a psychology forum which you may find interesting. I apologise for the poor quality of the mind map software, however the words are just about recognisable.

So this brings me full circle back to õwhat is NLP?ö

As you can imagine I have looked at the topic from what I believe is virtually every angle, some believe we donøt need a definition and we get too hung up on believing we do, it is a practiceí so letøs get on and do it. Others believe it is a bit like a shopping list of patterns which have been applied, and others believe we already have all the multiple definitions we need, all of them coming under a somewhat õMetaö definition of õThe study of the structure of subjective experienceö.

However when I take a 2nd position perspective from psychologists, apart from the politics of the situation many earnest people who seek to understand, see NLP as simply a collection of patterns which have more or less been borrowed from psychology and thrown together to produce commercial profit without any thought to development of systemised theory, psychological mechanism, philosophy of science / methodology and appropriate testing.

This PhD for me is not only grounded theory, but it is Action Research too. I am doing this because I want to improve my practice as both a psychologist and an NLP practitioner and I am personally coming to some intuitive ideas which I would like to run by you and am requesting feedback around.

For me after a 20 year journey in NLP and also this PhD, what makes NLP a unique discipline and what creates the boundaries which differentiate it from other modalities (which I think are currently needed), is the focus on the structure of subjective experience and modelling as a methodology to explicate precisely what the structure of those who are good at stuff is. (And of course modelling to understand how people limit themselves as a part of helping them develop more choice).

Even after reading Franøs excellent new book on modelling, when I look back historically at NLP I see 2 things which stick out a mile for me, and it is these things which I would like to test in this email.

Firstly the type of modelling which NLP has always expounded is this unconscious assimilation stuff. Steve I have read your articles and agree with you, and Fran I accept currently this is only one type of many types of modelling in NLP, however as an NLP practitioner what I find myself consistently wanting to do when I model is to act õas ifö there was such a thing as a know nothing state. I find when I attempt to do this the quality of the information I receive is so much more useful compared with information gathered through many of the more analytical, and dare I say it, traditional psychological methods. The other thing I find is rather than thinking about my new project I am actually acting it out as some of the modelling begins to take place in my personal / professional life. For me this is a defining characteristic of NLP. Many of you have said NO Bruce, NLP is now defined by analytical modelling too, however for me when that happens and I read such books, for me it drags NLP back into the more traditional psychological camps. I consistently teach my delegates that the conscious mind is the reducing valve of sensory awareness and the more we rely upon it to make important decisions, the more we rely and act on a very reduced data set.

The second intuition which I have come across is that again as I talk with you all and assimilate your views, what really is missing in NLP is the testing of patterns which emerge from modelling projects. It is interesting one of the reasons given for this is that it is too boring and who the hell wants to do all of that stuff   I really do get that perspective and agreeí í .but unless someone does it I really think NLP is going no-where. I accept probably all of us have absolutely tons of heartfelt thank you correspondences from decades of experience telling us how much we have helped individuals and organisations when they had given up and others could not help, however unless we are going to cut ourselves off totally from what the modern world calls scientific investigation, this does not count as evidence, it is personal stories.

I am testing the proposition here that indeed the ontology, epistemology and the methodology of NLP all emerge from the historical act of Bandler, so effectively modelling Perls, Robert Spitzer used to sometimes call Bandler õFritzö by mistake. The subsequent coding, transfer and testing of what Bandler and then Grinder obtained, (and subsequently Bandler and Grinder with Erickson) seem to have a host of challenges that in my opinion the NLP world has yet to get right. Of course it is important I mention Frank and the many Meta kids who were also Co-founders of NLP at that time.

I would really appreciate what you think. It does not have to be too considered. We have already spoken on this topic, just 5 minutes to let me know your thoughts. Thank you so much.

I am aiming to finish my dissertation by Christmas and can imagine sending you draft copies for comment / amendment in November 2014.

With best wishes and kindest regards as always,

Bruce

Appendix E

Formal email to all participants.

Dear Participant, (Interviewee Number (participants number) in draft dissertation),

I want to thank you for your time last year in being interviewed to assist me with my research understanding precisely what NLP is. I have been fortunate enough to have had feedback from some of you, however not all have responded to the email sent out, (24.08.2014), asking for interim thoughts after concepts and categories began to emerge through the coding process. Those ideas which have been received back have been incorporated into the draft theory.

This year, I would like to take the opportunity to send out the draft dissertation again and ask you for your comments on the theory of NLP which I have developed. I have drafted 3 questions below and will be most grateful if you could answer them as best you feel you can. I attach not only the draft dissertation again, but also in the word document the 8 interacting dimensions which make up the theory of NLP which sits within the acronym P.E.A.S. where the Joy and positive aspects of NLP exist in our individual practice. Also in the word document, besides the new õtheory of NLPö I have also provided some explanatory notes on parts of the rationale from the dissertation to refresh your memory on why the 8 dimensions exist as they do.

I have provided you with your coded number so you can see where I have made use of your comments in our interview. If you would like me to alter or amend my interpretation of what you have said or if I have incorrectly transcribed what you said please let me know and I will make the necessary alterations. In most cases your number is preceded by õparticipantö. Therefore if you type õparticipant 10ö into your search bar you should obtain a short cut to your contributions.

I have managed to get a paper accepted for publication in the Sport and Exercise Psychology review, citing my draft dissertation and talking about my theory of NLP and am in the process of writing another for the Coaching Psychology sector as a part of my PhD journey.

If you could answer the following questions and get back to me within one month I would be most appreciative as this will enable me to include your feedback and if necessary moderate the current theory before publication.
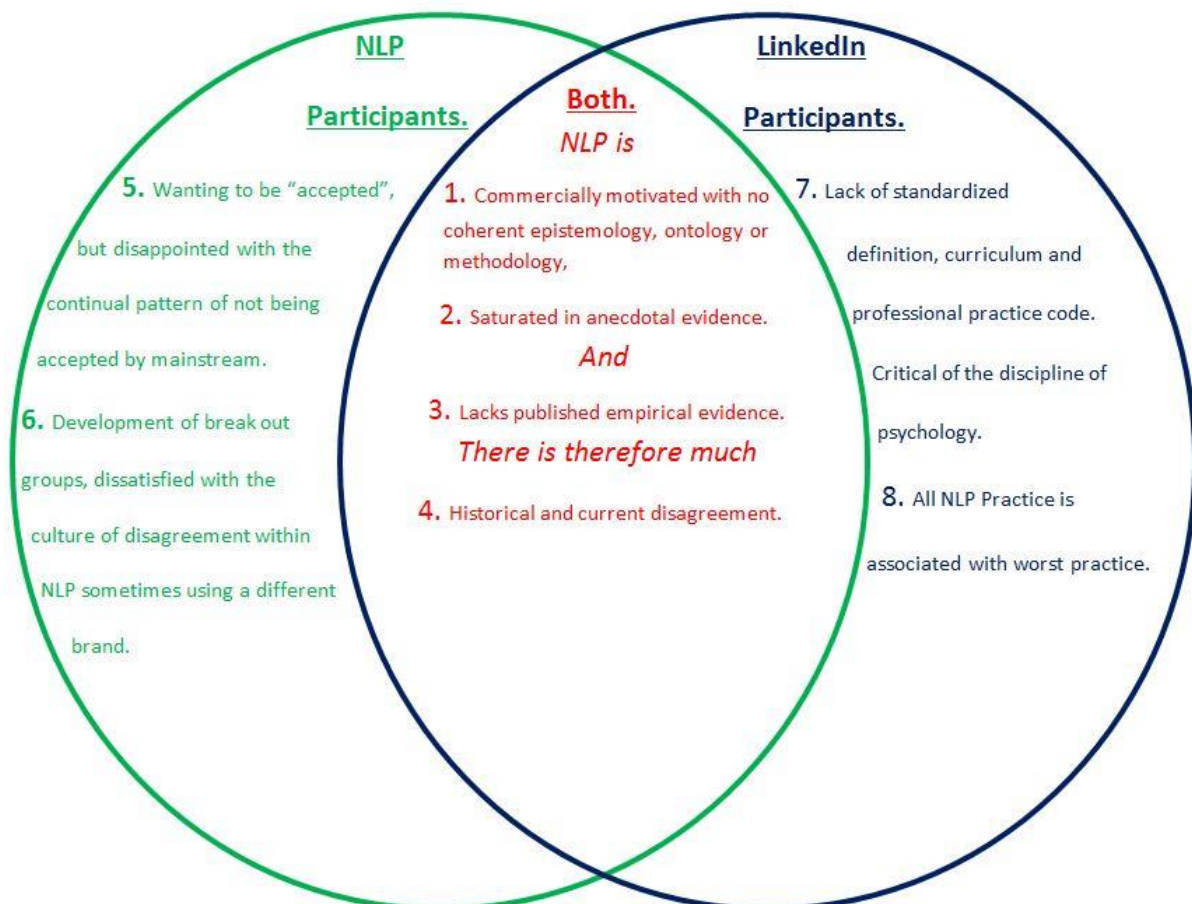
1. What are your thoughts about the theory of NLP in the attached word document?
2. Is there anything you would change about the theory and why would you change it?
3. What aspects of the theory represent your personal experience of NLP and which aspects do not?

Thank you very much for your assistance,

With kind regards and best wishes as always, Bruce.

Appendix F

Venn Diagram version of NLP theory making more explicit areas of contribution.

NLP Participants.

5. Wanting to be "accepted", but disappointed with the continual pattern of not being accepted by mainstream.

6. Development of break out groups, dissatisfied with the culture of disagreement within NLP sometimes using a different brand.

Both.
NLP is

1. Commercially motivated with no coherent epistemology, ontology or methodology,

2. Saturated in anecdotal evidence.
And

3. Lacks published empirical evidence.
There is therefore much

4. Historical and current disagreement.

LinkedIn Participants.

7. Lack of standardized definition, curriculum and professional practice code. Critical of the discipline of psychology.

8. All NLP Practice is associated with worst practice.

Appendix G

Explanation to Participants in email of how grounded theory emerged from their data.

Explanatory notes on theory of NLP above:

1) Commercially motivated, short courses lack of standardisation. This dimension is more difficult to provide a one liner for refreshment drawing from the complexity of the dissertation. I will go out on a limb, (and maybe slightly miss understood, please contact me if you wish to discuss further), however especially with the input of the extant literature and the Linkedin group what emerged was Standards without some form of standardisation seems somewhat meaningless. Courses have become incredibly short (which is not synonymous with low quality), however cannot hope to include fully much of what is NLP in this reduced time. Fully answering the question is it the process or pattern which works is an ongoing epistemological difficulty for NLP with the content and process dialogue continuing unresolved across the board.

2) Saturated in Anecdotal evidence. This is where a lot of the õJoyö and õPositivityö comes from within NLP. Many people will talk in very positive terms about their NLP experience, whether this is workshops, or seeing a coach or counsellor who works from an NLP perspective. NLP is spoken of by one academic (R.Churches) as an oral tradition. It is this dynamic or oral tradition actually and on social media, as well as in the grey literature, which creates this dimension as definitional.

3) Lacking in published Empirical evidence. Even though there is a lot of õGreyö literature (PhD dissertations and M.Sc manuscripts), compared with many other approaches to human development there is very little presence of NLP in the relevant and good quality academic journals. Even though some participants believed this is something that needed to be addressed, others pointed out the belief it needs to be addressed has always been present since the early days and thus talking about NLP and the importance of being present in this literature (and 5 thus being more accepted in that community) is a pattern that has defined NLP to date. Despite this dialogue, contrasted with for example EMDR, NLP generally has not taken this route.

4) Historical and current disagreement. This dimension not only came from interviewing the 15 NLP participants in this research, but also was regarded as quite definitional from the 19 participants of the Linkedin discussion on the authenticity of NLP which was another data corpus for this research. Not only are there the obvious candidates in the well-known litigation history, however also the quite public statements on Social Media as well as the silences and non-participation of many key players in NLP initiatives loads into the definitional dimension. Although from an NLP perspective this may seem unfair, from a perspective outside of NLP it unfortunately still seems quite definitional and even though the court cases happened a long time ago, many outside of NLP still refer to them in defining NLP in the present.

5) Wanting acceptance but disappointed. There are a significant number of NLP practitioners who I interviewed who, despite the pattern of 40 years of not being substantially represented in the appropriate good quality academic literature, not only recognised the need for it, but also had engaged in substantial efforts using their own resources and skills to attempt to make this happen. The fact it had not happened to their satisfaction created disappointment and also to a great extent was tied into and linked with category 7 where critique of the poor quality of much of psychology research became quite standard as well as the many commercial and political arguments as well. Their lead on this critique, along with the well-known anti academic stance of Bandler and Grinder co-created and contributed to the definitional nature of both categories 5 and 7.

6) Development of break out groups. This referred to the many of us who have rebranded what we do as something other than NLP and have made our own appropriate distinctions to justify the re-branding. This has now become so commonplace as to justify a place in any modern definition of NLP.

7) Lack of standardised definition, curriculum and professional practice code. The processes leading to the adhominem accusations of many psychologists in the Linked In group towards NLP as a whole. What was characteristic of the tone of much of the LinkedIn discussion was that there were bits of NLP that seemed to work (from their perspective taken from psychology), however not even these had been tested in a standardised way, which was commensurate with production of an explicit code (pattern) and testing of it in an evidence based way. Also that when an individual begins to take a õhelicopterö view to ask what is in and what is out of NLP, this seems to be increasingly difficult on account of a lack of standardisation, epistemological standpoint (content / process), Internationally accepted standards, professional statement and ethical considerations.

8) All NLP is associated with worst NLP practice. This is a rather blunt generalisation which emerged from both the LinkedIn group and the media signposted by them which was plentiful. With the lack of NLP evidence which met their criteria many participants from this group drew conclusions the whole NLP enterprise was not valid. This is where many of the unfortunate Ad hominem arguments came from, however it is a defining feature of NLP in the eyes of many who do not practice NLP and who are plentiful. Demonstrating good NLP practice does not seem to sufficiently counter this current perceptual skew.