

Assignment

POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE NEURO COACH

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1 Introduction

In this assignment, the impact the NLP Practitioner course had on me will be reviewed as well as how it relates to my personal development and learning, my work, career, and clients.

The theory of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), which I learned in the course, is explained and a theoretical and practical basic approach to senses, modalities, representational systems and submodalities are given. Application of these with a client suffering from anxiety will also be presented at the end of this paper in the reflective client case section.

In this assignment the Gibbs reflective model is used. The main reason the model was chosen was that it is simple while still providing an opportunity to reflect on learning from multiple perspectives. In the last part, I will reflect on the client case using the Gibbs reflective cycle.

2 Reflective models

The Gibbs reflective cycle (1988) as introduced in lifelong learning OT website (B, 2016) is used in this assignment because it offers a framework that allows for reflecting on one's own experiences, feelings, and thoughts. In the Gibbs model, the positives and negatives of my experiences can be reflected on and analysed. Additionally, it allows me to think about what I would do in a similar situation again. I have reflected my experience in practice by using the Gibbs model in a summary.

There are also other reflective models that were considered such as Driscoll's Model of Reflection (B, 2016), which was found to be too simple for this assignment. Another model which was considered was Kolb's Model of Experiential Learning (B, 2016), however, it was found to be a little bit too similar to the Gibbs model. The biggest concern in Kolb's model is that it focuses only on how teaching is experienced but does not consider of other learning experiences. Another option that was weighed up, was Atkins and Murphy's Model of Reflection (B, 2016) but it was better suited for professional settings or where there are similar recurring situations and actions.

As one research example, Gibbs' reflective cycle was used by students doing foreign language literature analysis. Gibbs' well-structured model seemed to provide better

learning results in the literature classroom environment than other models (Kolb and Johnson) in comparison (Adeani, Febriani, & Syafryadin, 2020)

In another example, usage of Gibbs' model in teaching and validation of nurse's work was examined and the main finding was that negative feedback about the model was mainly caused by lack of emphasis on student's reflective work by supervisors. Usage of reflection was seen as a valuable tool, but in practise it suffered from personal privacy barriers and students having too little education on the topic. (Timmins, Murphy, Howe, & Dennehy, 2013)

Ingham-Broomfield (2020) compares 4 different reflective models as seen on the table below. Their review, "Provides information on four different models of reflection, discussed in a systematic and logical order, with a view to highlighting the value of their use to support reflective practice. A comparative framework is provided to highlight similarities and differences." (Ingham-Broomfield, 2020).

COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK

Model	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6
Gibbs (1988) Reflective Cycle⁹	Description What happened?	Feelings What were you thinking and feeling?	Evaluation What was good and bad about the experience?	Analysis What sense can you make of the situation?	Conclusion What else could have been done?	Action Plan If it arose again what would you do?
Kolb (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle^{10,11}	Concrete learning Doing/having an experience	Reflective observation Reviewing and reflecting on the experience	Abstract conceptualisation Concluding/ learning from the experience	Active experimentation Planning/trying out what you have experienced		
Atkins and Murphy Model of Reflection^{12,13}	Awareness of uncomfortable thoughts and feelings, actions or new experiences	Describe the situation Include salient (most noticeable or important), feelings, thoughts, events or features	Analyse feelings and knowledge Identify and challenge assumptions. Imagine and explore alternatives.	Evaluate the relevance of knowledge. Does it help to explain/resolve the problem? How was your use of knowledge?	Identify any learning which has occurred?	
Borton's Model of Reflection^{14,15}	What? What have I learnt? What did I hope to learn? What surprised me?	So What? So, what is the importance of this learning? So, what more do I need to know about this? So, what have I learnt about this? So, what was different to what I knew previously?	Now What? Now what can I do? Now what do I need to do? Now what might I do to improve or enhance the care I give to my patients? Now what might be the consequences of this action			

3 Review of the NLP Practitioner course

I did my first NLP Practitioner course in 2008 and by 2018 I had attended 4 more NLP Practitioner training courses with different trainers. Initially, I chose the course for personal reasons, however, after completing a few NLP courses my motivation for continuing had also become about improving my professional skills.

The most significant things that I learned in the NLP Practitioner course were about beliefs, how words affect me and other people, and that I can look at situations from at least three different perspectives. Learning these things increased my self-awareness and broadened my worldview.

The influence of the NLP Practitioner course on my learning was considerable. The most significant impact was watching and listening to the trainer who told stories and gave examples. He also did demonstrations in front of the class. I would write down word for word what he was saying and repeat his way of coaching when we worked in pairs or small groups. I have continued to develop my learning skills and I have added reflective conversations, colours in notes, images, and stories, and teaching as new tools for my learning.

After the NLP Practitioner course, I continued onto an NLP Master Practitioner course and then an NLP Trainer course. While I studied NLP, I studied relaxation and hypnosis coaching as well. I graduated as an NLP Trainer in 2010 and I continued to participate in NLP courses as an assistant trainer. I also started studying coaching and social panorama.

I started working as an entrepreneur in 2010 and did short training workshops, coaching and as a masseuse. I started doing long NLP trainings in 2015 and I have continued with them up to now.

4 Theory of Neuro Linguistic Programming

4.1 Definitions Neuro Linguistic Programming

Neuro Linguistic Programming, founded by Richard Bandler, John Grinder, and Frank Pucelik in 1976, is defined in different ways. One definition is given by Dilts and Delozier (2000, p. 849) as “The study of the structure of subjective experience, NLP studies the

patterns as ‘programming’ created by the interaction between the brain (‘neuro’), language (‘linguistic’) and the body.”

Another definition was given by a forum of experienced NLP trainers, at an NLP Leadership Summit. They described NLP as domain that started by modelling experts such as Virginia Satir, Fritz Perls and Milton H. Erickson and it continues to evolve. Several meta-models are used in modelling such as: Meta-Language Model, Strategy Model, Meta-Programs, Meta-Modes, Sub-Modalities to name a few. NLP is a field that examines how people achieve their goals and the resources needed. The theory of NLP is encoded in the NLP Presuppositions (NLPLeadershipSummit, 2021)

Neuro refers to the nervous system and how we process information and regulate our body (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000, p. 850). For example, the functions that take place in our neural network are thinking, remembering, imagining and other cognitive processes. Linguistic refers to language and how we communicate with other people and how language impacts other’s and one’s own experience (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000, p. 850). Programming refers to learned strategies and processes such as creativity, learning, memory, and what kind of models we have created from the world. (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000, p. 850). We interact with our world through our inner programming (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000, p. 850).

What resonates with me the most is the definition given by the NLP Leader Summit (2013). Although there are many aspects of their definition that are similar to Dilts and DeLozier’s (2000) definitions, I believe theirs encompassed everything essential in a nutshell.

The way I have demonstrated this in my life and professional practice was initially to increase self-awareness, broaden my worldview, changed my beliefs, and learned to better attitude. Later, when I learned modelling, it made a huge difference as it is a great tool for self-reflection and learning new skills, whether they are personal or professional skills. I remember from my first NLP Trainer course we needed to perform in front of the small group, and I was petrified. I taught my audience how they could feel very tense, as I was modelling myself at the same time. After that, I hardly ever get too tense and if I do I get very curious about how I am doing it.

The other time that modelling myself made a huge difference was when I had been struggling with my finances for a couple of years after separating from my spouse and for

the for first time in my life, I knew how it felt to be depressed. As I was sitting on my bed and contemplating suicide would not be too bad an option, I had the sudden thought of how I was doing this depression. I realised I was sitting in a slumped position, looking at the floor and imaging that the situation would last for at least another 5 years. When I changed my posture, came into the present moment, and looked at the ceiling, my feelings of depression disappeared, and a lot of positive things and possibilities came to my mind. After that I have not felt depressed as now I know how to do it. This experience refers to the interaction between the mind and the body. (Dilts & Delozier, 2000, p. 849)

In my professional life, I have used modelling when I was studying to become an NLP Trainer and a coach and, in those roles, I applied NLP skills as a part of my professional role. For example, I have had feedback where a student asked how I could be so patient and accepting and I realised it was built into my role because in my personal life I was more impatient and judgemental.

4.2 NLP 'Code of Ethics'

There is a code of ethics to guide NLP practitioners on how to treat other people in business, society and in general too. Responsibility and ethical behaviour are the hallmarks of NLP best practices. There are 3 principles which are meant to guide NLP practitioners' behaviour and decisions. The first one refers to flexibility, diversity, and freedom, the second refers to ecology and the third refers to ethical foundation values. (InternationalAssociationforNLP, 2022)

4.3 Senses and modalities

In the NLP framework senses are fundamental structure on which our lives and perceptions of reality are built. "In the model of NLP, the senses form the basis for the entire system of input, representation, and output which make up to 'representational systems' (sight, hearing and feeling) from which we construct the models of the world that guide our lives and actions." (Dilts & Delozier, 2000, p. 1200)

According to Dilts and Delozier (2000, p. 789) the term 'modalities' refers to the main channels of our various senses. Modalities act as an input channel for the information produced by the senses and are responsible for our representational system. In our nervous system, different modalities gather different qualities of information about the world we live in and influence our perceptions of it. Each modality utilizes different

channels to receive and encode some information from our environment which causes us to only perceive a part of the world around us. For example, our sense of sight called 'visual modality' allows us to detect pictorial information, while our sense of hearing, 'auditory modality' allows us to receive different sounds and our sense of touch, and 'kinaesthetic modality' to recognize emotions.

My experience is that this is not always so straightforward. For example, when I started my NLP Practitioner course, I could not recognize my feelings through kineasthetic sensations but through visual channel as I saw what I felt.

4.4 Representational system

The neurological process behind the 5 senses is called the representational system. Originally, this was based on Aristotle's categorization (Aristotle) of the 5 primary senses which are sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. The representational systems are visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, olfactory, and gustatory. Certain basic qualities such as colour, tone and pressure can be perceived by representation systems. (Dilts & Delozier, 2000, p. 1347)

Gumm, Walker and Day (1982) studied the NLP assessments of people's preferred representational system (modalities: visual, auditive, kinaesthetic). A group of 50 women was assessed by listening the use of words, following eye movement, and asking direct questions. In this study they found no evidence of agreements between different methods and questioned the application of certain NLP principles.

On the other hand, Grosu et.al. (2015) studied modalities with a group of sport students and found that use of NLP mental training helped to improve correlation between different modalities (in tests performed by the students. The also cited to Fanelli's (2010, p.92) statement that "NLP tends to individualize representational systems based on what a person prefers: V – visual, A – auditory, K – kinaesthetic or tactile, olfactory and gustatory". They described in their paper that some people focus more on their appearance, dress, and are interested in colours, while others pay more attention to words and others are more interested in their feelings. (Grosu et. al. 2015)

I think everyone has all the modalities and representational systems in use. Referring to the Gum et. al. (1982) research, I think it is quite normal that one system does not rise above the others because this indicates the balanced use of the senses. Additionally, I

also believe that self-knowledge and self-awareness of your processing mechanisms is vital to helping you recognize what your preferred representational system is.

Furthermore, I have noticed when teaching modalities and representational systems that I needed to remind my students that everyone has them all as they tended to classify themselves or other under just one or two systems.

However, I agree with Grosu et. al. (2015) that there are certain contexts or situations where certain modalities and representational systems are used more than others. For instance, in some situations a person might sometimes use more of the visual system when choosing a car or a spouse but a kinaesthetic or auditory when exercising, studying or while on vacation.

In a client case where I was observing Joy, I noticed she used mainly a kinaesthetic system as she was crying a lot and talking about her feelings and when we started to examine her anxiety there was also a visual system in use as she saw the anxiety was dark. From her mother I had heard that she was very talented in languages so I guess it might be the context where she was using the auditive system more.

4.5 Submodalities

Submodalities are the perceptual qualities that may be registered by each of the five primary sensory modalities. (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000, p. 1347). For example, these qualities in visual system can be location (close, far away, above, under, on side), size (small or big), shape (round, square, triangle, lump, indefinite etc.) and so on. Auditory and kinaesthetic modalities have finer distinctions too such as volume, tone, intonation, speed, etc. and pressure, temperature, structure, and movement (Toivonen, 2008). Bandler and Grinder as mentioned in (Lazarus, 2010) found that “These finer distinctions determine the meaning we place on things and changing the submodalities of a given ‘thing’ changes its meaning.”

In Richard Bolstad’s NLP Practitioner Manual (2020) he referred to a study (Berry, 1961) which shows that “Changes in one sensory system will result in changes in the other sensory systems and in emotional changes.” (Dr Bolstad, 2020, p. 259)

Kotera, Sheffield and Van Gordon (2019) offered an example in their review on how submodalities could be utilized in organizations in a situation where an employee is afraid to perform. The employee could explore their own mental image and take note of how

submodalities such as size, colours and brightness affect their emotional reactions. They also suggest that an employee who is afraid of performance has different submodalities in his perception of the performance situation than a person who is a confident performer.

Derks (Derks, 2018) has researched mental space psychology and claims that space is “the primary organizing principle in the mind”. The meaningful factor in how people construct their model of the world is related to location and it has been proven to be a stable event in clinical work as a social panorama model and the personal timeline. Derks (Derks, 2018, p. 41) also referenced Gendlin (1978) who stated nearly 50 years ago that the problem state always had a kineasthetic part, which could be felt somewhere in the body and can be described through different qualities including weight and pressure, as described by Joy in the applied client case when she felt anxious.

I agree with all these opinions as I have plenty of experiences of how changing the submodalities impacted one’s experience and even reduced pain, and that location is a very meaningful factor in one’s experience. I have noticed that for children it is normal and easy to talk about the submodalities when they are asked but sometimes adults believe it to be nonsense and they were amazed when they had an experience of changing submodalities.

For me, the most significant experiences were a couple of cases, where changing submodalities was challenging. One example is of a client who was really stressed out and wanted to get some help for that. She had a mental image from the stressful situation and when I suggested various changes in visual submodalities, she could not make any changes. Eventually, I suggested that she turn the picture upside down and shake it and suddenly she started to laugh. As a result, the picture disappeared as did the stress.

Another example is from peer coaching where I was the one being coached. It was the first time I had studied my limiting belief through visual submodalities. The farther forward the picture moved from me, the worse it became for me. Right after my coach asked me, “What should happen to the picture that could help you feel better?” The picture began to move closer, went through me and then moved far behind me. This brought on an immediate sense of relief. I think my experience is supported by Derks’ (2018) research on how meaningful modality location is. In my case the right place for my belief was behind me, as that is where my past also is.

In a client case, described in next section, I used submodalities with Joy to explore her experience of anxiety.

5 Application to client case

Below is a real client case written and reflected using the Gibb's framework. The client will be referred to as Joy to protect her privacy and according to the code of ethics.

5.1 Description

Description, the first stage of the Gibbs model: I met Joy in December 2019 when she came to me seeking help for her anxiety.

Before the session I took time for myself and grounded myself in my resourceful state as a coach. During the first meeting, Joy cried a lot, and she went through a whole package of Kleenex. When I asked her what the cause of the tears was, she could not name it. She told me she was being bullied at school and that she did not want to go to the school anymore. I asked her what she would like to happen during our session, and she stated that her desire was not to feel so anxious anymore but to feel relaxed and calm instead. I asked her how she knew she was feeling relaxed and calm, and she replied that her body felt relaxed and there was no longer that heavy feeling in her chest so she felt she could breathe easier.

While I was listening, Joy described her experiences and based on what I heard, I decided to explore her experience of this heavy feeling in her chest by asking for details about submodalities. She described her feeling as being dark grey and black, hard, heavy and that it was located inside the chest and extended from diaphragm to throat. On a scale of 1 to 10 her anxiety was nearly 10 (max.) When I asked her what she was seeing and hearing she said she couldn't see anything and there was only buzzing in her head. We examined the feeling and when it got lighter, smaller, and softer, she felt relieved and was able to see and hear again, which supports the research finding that Bolstad (2020, p.259) presented in his book. After the session, Joy felt more relaxed and told me she could breathe better.

5.2 Feelings

Feelings, the second stage of the Gibbs model: I felt relaxed, present, and empty headed when Joy arrived. When she told me, she was a little bit nervous, I felt compassion for her, and I told her I feel nervous too when meeting new people. I hoped my confession might help her to relax.

Joy told me she was being bullied at school and she felt ashamed because he had dropped out. Furthermore, even the word school made her feel a pressure in her chest and a heavy feeling inside and she also had difficulties breathing. This could be explained by looking at the theory and definition of NLP as we were exploring Joy's subjective experience and interaction between brain, language, and body (Dilts & DeLozier, 2000, p. 849)

While I listened to Joy, I felt angry for her, but I did not show my feelings and did not let them affect me and my coaching. When she described her experience of anxiety, I was curious and throughout the process of examining her anxiety and its relief, I felt satisfaction. That is a normal feeling for me because I find the process very interesting and rewarding, when the coachee becomes aware of submodalities and notices changes in her feelings and experience.

Later, when I discussed anxiety with my colleague, and she reminded me that there are several feelings included in anxiety I felt embarrassed, and I was angry with myself. After our first session and collegial discussion, I searched through my workshop materials for more information about anxiety and found material from a workshop about anxiety, depression, fear, and stress conducted by Marja-Leena Savimäki FMT IANLP (2017), The material explained that anxiety involves a wide variety of emotions such as fear, anger, shame, worry, helplessness, and that different anxieties contain different emotions.

5.3 Evaluation

Evaluation, the third stage of the Gibbs model: What was positive about the experience was that I stayed in my coach state and maintained my boundaries. The biggest sign for me that the coaching session was successful is that Joy felt relaxed and satisfied after the session.

What was negative was my self-regulation despite being in the coach state. I gave in to my own need to make Joy feel better, and because of that, I didn't spend enough time exploring her experiences of anxiety.

Later, after I had talked with my colleague, I reflected on my coaching, and thought about how I could have asked more questions about anxiety and what emotions were involved. I felt ashamed which was not good, but it helped me to learn and to remember it the next time.

Overall, Joy was satisfied and felt she had gotten help and wanted to schedule a new appointment.

5.4 Analysis

Analysis, the fourth stage of the Gibbs model: I think there are several reasons why Joy was able to relax during the session and felt much calmer afterwards. One factor was my resourceful coach state, which allowed Joy to express her feelings without being affected by my feelings. During the session I let her cry without trying to comfort her. The coaching submodality exercises with her went smoothly and she felt better immediately. I believe it was because that is the way our brains process information.

The aspect which made the most significant difference to her feelings was the submodality change we did, as at the beginning the heavy feeling in her chest was very strong, and she could not see anything and heard only buzzing in her head. However, as the emotion lessened, she was able to see and hear her surrounding again. This is exactly how Bolstad (2020) describes submodality change in his book and which is supported by Kotera et.al. (2019) study results.

The reason why my self-regulation failed was that I let my need to make Joy feel better take over and guide my coaching. It probably happened because I had been bullied at school and Joy's situation reminded me of it. The other reason was that my focus changed from the present moment to the future without me realizing it.

As I realized only later what had happened in me, I could not do anything during the session. It is possible to strengthen my coaching role and boundaries and remind myself to stay in the present moment next time.

5.5 Conclusion

Conclusion, the fifth stage of the Gibbs model: I learned that even though I had built my coach state, it needs to be checked, as now my own need to make the client feel better had influenced my coaching. I was also reminded that anxiety includes a variety of

emotions, and it is good to stop to examine anxiety without rushing forward. I also remember now how important it is to discuss with colleagues, ask opinions and share experiences as it really helps me to grow as a coach.

I could have stayed in the present moment the whole session, asked more questions about anxiety, and let Joy possibly learn more about it. The skills I would have needed were the ability to recognise that I was being triggered by Joy being bullied at school and the skill to maintain my boundaries.

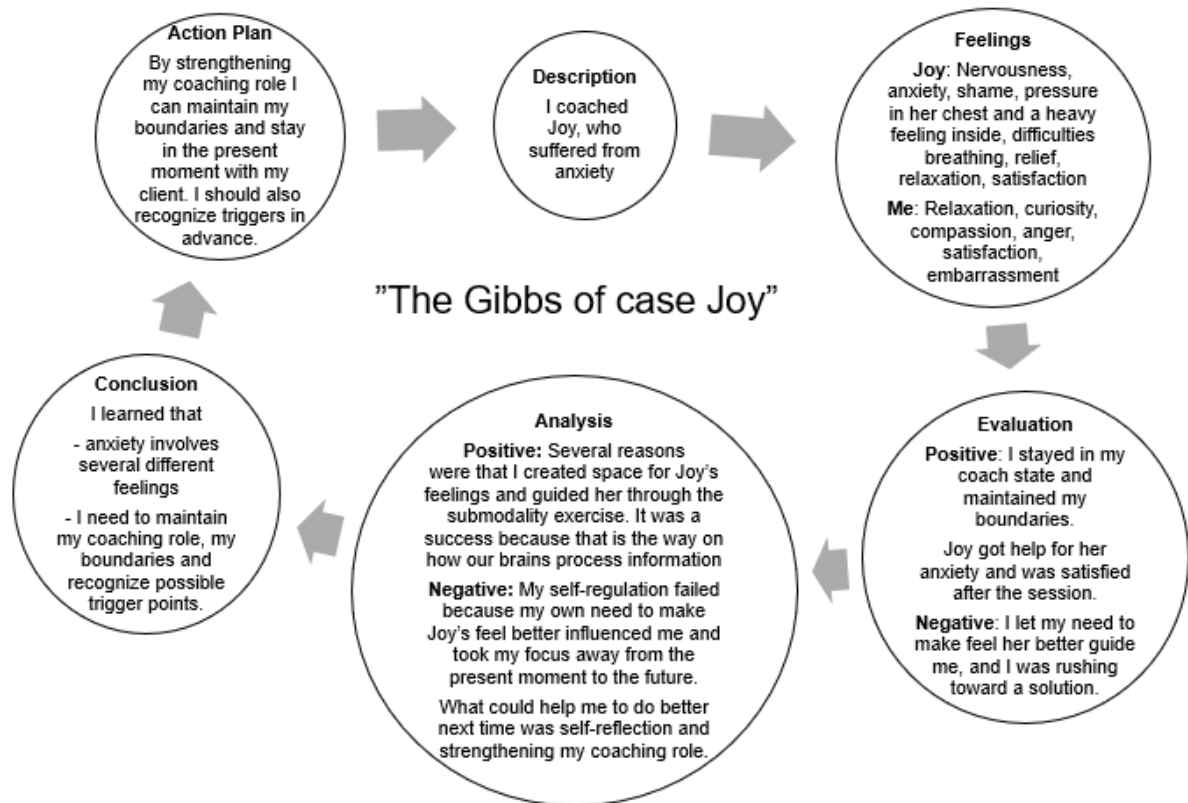
5.6 Action plan

Action plan for the future, the sixth stage of the Gibbs model: After Joy's case I decided to double-check my coaching role before the next client and find out if there were other factors that might trigger me and break through my boundaries. The way I let it come through my boundaries. I could have a conversation with my colleague to refresh my thinking and gain new perspectives. I reminded myself to stay in the present moment with the client without rushing to find a solution.

I developed my skills by exploring my beliefs and by adding needed thinking skills to my coach role. I made sure I acted differently with the next clients by reminding myself of the first meeting with Joy and by testing my coaching role in different situations in my mind.

6 Summary

NLP theory was discussed in this assignment, along with what I have learned in different NLP Practitioner courses. I have also described the skills I've used and how my learning has developed. I have never had to use any reflective model earlier in my prior studies or work, but I have reflected me on learning and my work through by having conversations with my friends and colleagues and by studying. As I have now used the Gibbs model writing this paper (see diagram below), I found it is a valuable method for my future work. However, I still prefer reflecting together with someone as it helps me to think better.



Now, when I am looking at the diagram, I notice that I mainly focused on the analysis part as I learned a lot about myself which I can utilize in my work in the future. The other important stages for me in reflection were feelings and evaluation.

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