

# The **NLP** **TOOLKIT**

For Teachers, Trainers  
and School Leaders

The perfect  
companion to

**NLP for  
Teachers**  
How To Be a  
Highly Effective  
Teacher

**Roger Terry &  
Richard Churches**

# The NLP Toolkit

*Innovative activities and strategies  
for teachers, trainers and  
school leaders*

**Roger Terry and Richard Churches**

*Illustrations by Alison Mobbs*



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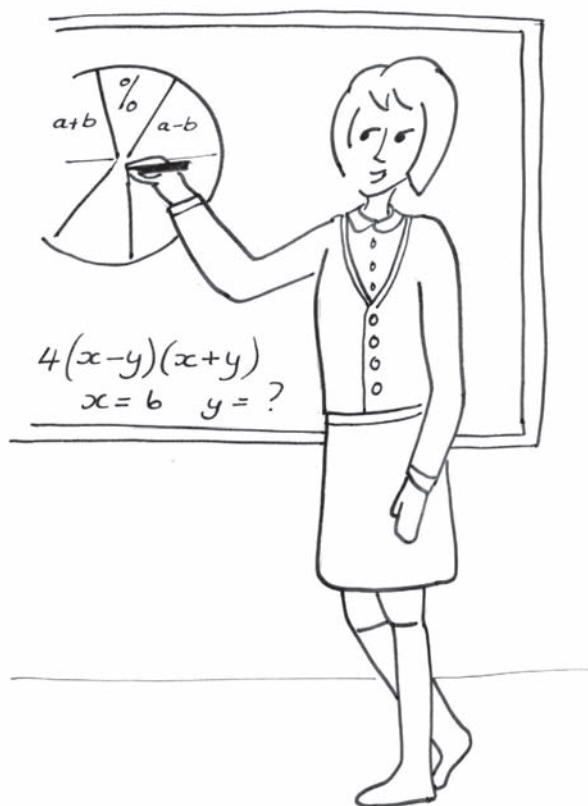
# Contents

<i>List of resource chapters</i>	x
Introduction	xvii
Getting the most out of this book	xxi
Part 1 - In the classroom activities	1
Part 2 - Emotional and social literacy with children	47
Part 3 - Stagecraft and presentation skills for teachers and trainers	83
Part 4 - Personal development and effectiveness for teachers	151
Part 5 - Leading with NLP	187
<i>Glossary of commonly used NLP terms</i>	241
<i>Alphabetical list of chapter titles</i>	247
<i>A chronological bibliography of key texts in the development of NLP</i>	251
<i>Selected articles and publications by Roger Terry and Richard Churches that may be of interest to teachers and school leaders</i>	253
<i>Bibliography of education perspectives and research</i>	255
<i>Index</i>	263

# Introduction

Although this book is mostly aimed at teachers and school leaders, there is much in the book that trainers, lecturers and others involved in adult learning and teacher training will find useful. There is also a specific section (*Stagecraft and presentation skills for teachers and trainers*) that has been aimed at people who work with adult learners as well as children. Also many of the activities in sections 1 and 2 (*In the classroom activities* and *Emotional and social literacy with children*) can easily be adapted for use as part of adult learning – indeed, we include a number of these activities in our leadership development work with executives and business leaders. At the end of the day emotional literacy is emotional literacy whether you are 9 years old or 49!

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) is an ever growing collection of personal development and personal effectiveness tools. Although these tools frequently overlap with ideas from psychology, coaching and neuroscience, the basis of NLP is not the tools or ideas, but rather a research methodology known as ‘modelling’. Modelling differs from other areas of behavioural science research in that it looks at highly effective people and how they do what they do. The processes of modelling were first developed by Richard Bandler and John Grinder at the University of Santa Cruz in the mid-1970s, and although much has changed in NLP over the years the fundamental principle of finding out the ‘difference that makes a difference’ between people who are just good at what they do and people who excel remains the same. Today, as well as much practitioner-led modelling, there are a number of projects in university departments throughout the world – particularly at the University of Surrey in the UK where NLP is being applied as a formal research methodology by Paul Tosey and Jane Mathison.



A few years ago, if you mentioned NLP in education few people knew what you were talking about. Recently there has been a substantial growth in interest due to the use of NLP within government programmes, as well as emerging recognition of a gap in communication and personal development training for teachers. In terms of our own work, research and the training that we have delivered, the response from teachers has been overwhelmingly positive and suggests that a number of tools from NLP can make a significant contribution to areas of personalisation as well school leadership and classroom effectiveness. If you wish to follow up on this you may be interested in the research that followed the use of NLP as part of the Fast Track Teaching programme in England. This has been written up by Richard Churches and John West-Burnham (*Leading Learning Through Relationships*) and is available from CfBT Education Trust. You can also find a bibliography of research into NLP in education at the end of this book (page 255).

NLP approaches can be said to fit into four categories:

**Outcomes** – strategies for self-motivation and the motivation of others.

**Rapport** – approaches for building rapport and influencing others that support notions of *social intelligence* (as discussed by Daniel Goleman).

**Flexibility** – techniques for enhancing flexibility and awareness of others.

**Influential language** – language models derived from psychotherapists' communication skills (including, but not exclusively, hypnosis), much of which is now a standard part of sales and presentation skills training in business and industry.

Those of you interested in NLP and the research evidence, may want to read *Neuro-linguistic programming and learning: teacher case studies on the impact of NLP in education* which is available from CfBT Education Trust. This contains the first full literature review of research into NLP and its impact on children and learners (Carey et al. 2009) as well as over 30 teacher-led action research case studies.

Over the years research into effective teaching and learning has increasingly recognised that effectiveness involves more than strategies that create knowledge and understanding. Being a good teacher or trainer is as much about relationships and interpersonal skills as it is about learning approaches, although all of the above are, of course, important – as is subject knowledge. Teachers who are effective are able to draw on a range of skills and approaches and apply these in ways that support the context at the time, recognising that that context and learning situation is constantly changing and shifting. As John West-Burnham and others like Susan Greenfield, Uta Frith and Sarah-Jayne Blakemore note, neuroscience shows us that learning and emotions are fundamentally interconnected. Therefore, the emotional climate that teachers and school leaders create is not just a nice addition – it is essential for effective learning to take place. Alongside this, NLP has always adopted a positive view of the brain, its development and the way in which it can be affected through positive learning environments – ideas which are being reinforced in neuroscience today on a daily basis through research into neuroplasticity and the development of neural networks.



In *NLP for Teachers: How To Be a Highly Effective Teacher* we opened the book with the following thoughts:

*Teaching is about relationships as well as pedagogy. It is about feelings as well as facts and it is as much about what goes on inside your head as it is about what goes on in the heads of your students. It is about using your senses as well as your subject knowledge.*

*At the end of the day we all know that it is our mood when we enter the classroom that has the greatest effect on the children, our sense of motivation that drives the pace of the lesson and our abilities to relieve the tension in a difficult moment that creates the right classroom climate. Effective teaching begins and ends with our capacity to manage our internal responses and external behaviours.*

Several years on this still seems a good way to start, for if there is a formula for teacher or trainer effectiveness it probably goes something like this:

**Passion for your subject (whatever that subject is) – and by subject we mean the range of content that teachers impart – which, of course, can be much wider than the highly important subject areas in your curriculum**

+

**Passion for learners (and for helping others to learn)**

+

**Communication skills**

As well as subject knowledge, many studies point to the importance of teacher and school leader skills in areas such as engagement, values, questioning, positive atmosphere and teacher expectations. As a 'toolkit' of approaches for developing personal effectiveness, influence and communication we believe that NLP offers many ways to support existing good practice, and in many cases can be the key to moving from being good to being outstanding.

Just after the last book was published someone in a chat room discussing the book called it 'sneaky psychology'. If the application of ideas, without telling the children or learners, is 'sneaky' then we have been doing 'sneaky sociology' (not to mention 'sneaky pedagogy') for years. Social theories have, without doubt, added richness and depth to our understanding of learning processes and how we run schools. Learning is after all a social process. However, as we move into the 21st century, it is also clear that effective social processes involve high-level interpersonal skills and relationship management and that these in turn are affected by our intrapersonal skills (how we manage ourselves and our own minds, and thinking, whilst we are teaching or leading). It is these two elements (the interpersonal and the intrapersonal), we believe, alongside an understanding of social process, that sit at the heart of what writers like Michael Fullan are talking about when they speak about the moral imperatives of school leadership.

What some NLP tools demonstrate (particularly those modelled from hypnosis) is just how simple it can be to create social conformity and compliance through storytelling, metaphor, the effective communication of expectancy and an understanding of influential language (both verbal and non-verbal). This is



particularly true if you apply the principles of emotional and social intelligence effectively and get your followers and the children you teach to fall into line without any emotional ‘push back’ from their amygdalas! Recent fMRI research (by Gregory Berns and others) has shown that social conformity is associated with a shutdown of the amygdala (the brain’s gateway to emotions and feelings) and an increase in blood flow in the brain to areas associated with internal imagery compared to the expression of independence (were the amygdala gets involved). Interesting, isn’t it? That’s why it is also important to understand these tools and the other side of personal development and effectiveness that is included within the range of NLP skills and approaches – such as effective coaching and questioning.

It is also why it is so important for teachers and leaders in schools and the public sector generally to balance such leadership styles with a coaching style and approach. For not only does questioning help to change behaviours – by getting people to think about what they are doing – asking questions helps to ensure that there is a process of genuine interdependence (rather than just dominance and compliance) between you and your learners, or you and your followers. NLP has much to offer in these areas also, and is the reason why it is so widely used in coaching and therapy. We hope that we have practised what we preach and that you can find in this book the right balance between the skills of influencing and the skills of consulting and involving.

We should at this point thank all those people who have made suggestions and given us ideas for this book – in particular the 1,000-plus teachers that Roger and Henrie Lidiard have trained in NLP over the last six years. We should also perhaps mention here Gillian Atkins and Claire MacLean who put so much effort into getting the learning environment right for the training over the years and the *Times Educational Supplement (TES)* for enthusiastically profiling *NLP for Teachers: How To Be a Highly Effective Teacher*. Finally, thanks to Emily Terry, Jenni Churches, Geraldine Hutchinson and Nick Austin for their help in the preparation and development of this book, Ali Mobbs for the illustrations – and our children Sam and Lucy for putting up with the loss of family time!

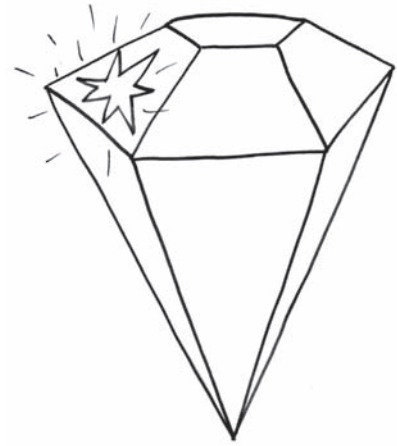


Emotional and social literacy with children			
Self-awareness	Self-management and motivation	Relationship awareness and empathy	Managing relationships and social skills
* * *	* * *	* *	* *

# 16 Diamond mine

## *How to develop self-awareness and explore values with children*

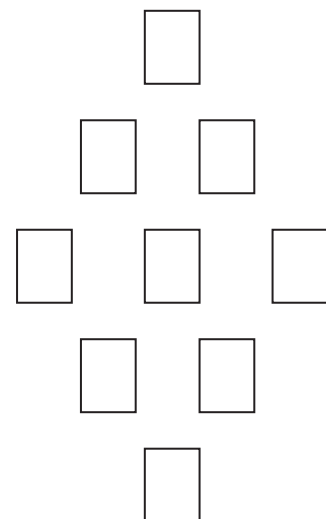
Although children are still developing their values and underlying motivations, in many ways this is the time to start them thinking and exploring such concepts. In fact, many adults would probably function better if they also had some tools to help them understand some of their underlying motivations and values. Teaching children to coach each other is also a great way of developing relationship skills and understanding.



### Here's how

You will need nine pieces of card for each learner and some paper.

1. First run a simple 'values elicitation'. Get the children to question/coach each other to define what their values are in relation to a particular context (e.g. learning, relationships). This is easy to do. One child becomes the coach and the other the coachee. The coach simply asks 'What's important to you about . . .?' The answer is written down. Then the question is repeated and another value will emerge. Again the coach should keep asking 'What's important to you about . . .?' until there are nine values.
2. Note: it is really important to keep going as some of the values that we are least aware of may be the ones which we need to pay more attention to or modify.
3. When nine values that are important have emerged the coachee should write them on their nine cards.
4. Then the coachee should sort them into a 'diamond mine' with the most important values at the top and the least important at the bottom.
5. Once this has been done the coach should ask the coachee some good coaching questions, for example:
  - Think of a problem that you have or an issue for you in this area of your life.
  - Are there any of these values which you might benefit from prioritising higher up in your diamond? Re-sort the order.



The Diamond Mine

- What behaviours do you need to change in order to achieve this?
- What would the ideal 'diamond mine' look like to solve this problem?
- Are there any values that you currently don't have in your mine which you might want to begin to develop? Write these down and add them in by re-sorting your priorities.

## Top tip

Some values will emerge as 'towards a goal values' and others as 'away from values'. With values it is often good to phrase them in our internal dialogue as 'towards' motivations rather than 'away from'. This is because 'away from' have no goal in mind, other than getting away, whereas 'towards' values are goal directional and can presuppose behaviours. For example, the value:

*I don't want to fail my next test*

does not have any positive behaviours presupposed within it. It could include the behaviour to leave school early and never take a test again! It might be better to develop internal dialogue and values awareness with a more specific and 'towards value' such as.

*It is important to me that I start early with my revision*

This sort of thinking (and reframing) can be particularly powerful in relation to exploring values about relationships and behaviour management.

## Learn more about this

Leading figures in education, such as Michael Fullan, have suggested that it is important for leaders in schools to practise and develop the behaviours that go with the values associated with moral purpose and that real breakthroughs in development come not just from doing but also from 'thinking about the doing'. In our experience in applying NLP to other contexts, the same can be said for many other walks of life, including learning how to become an effective learner and in the development of children's self-awareness and self-management.

### Read some more about values and NLP

- Read Chapter 11, 'The teacher within', in *NLP for Teachers: How To Be a Highly Effective Teacher* (page 131)



## When else can you use this?

Exploring values is a great way to engage any group to begin to develop effective behaviours and understanding. This can be just as effective with adult teams as it can be in the classroom with learners.

- Use the exercise with yourself to support an exploration of your own priorities.
- Use with teams in team leadership contexts. Get the team to agree on its top nine values first (this may take some time) then get them to 'diamond mine' what their current values hierarchy looks like and compare this to the ideal hierarchy for them to achieve their goals as a team. What should they change? Are there any other values that they would benefit from adopting?

- Use in a coaching session with a colleague or someone you line manage.
- The diamond approach is a great training and teaching structure – think of other ways to use it with more content specific activities and learning.
- Use with children who need one-to-one coaching to support their behaviour management and career planning.

***What are you going to do with this?***

(Your ideas and thoughts)

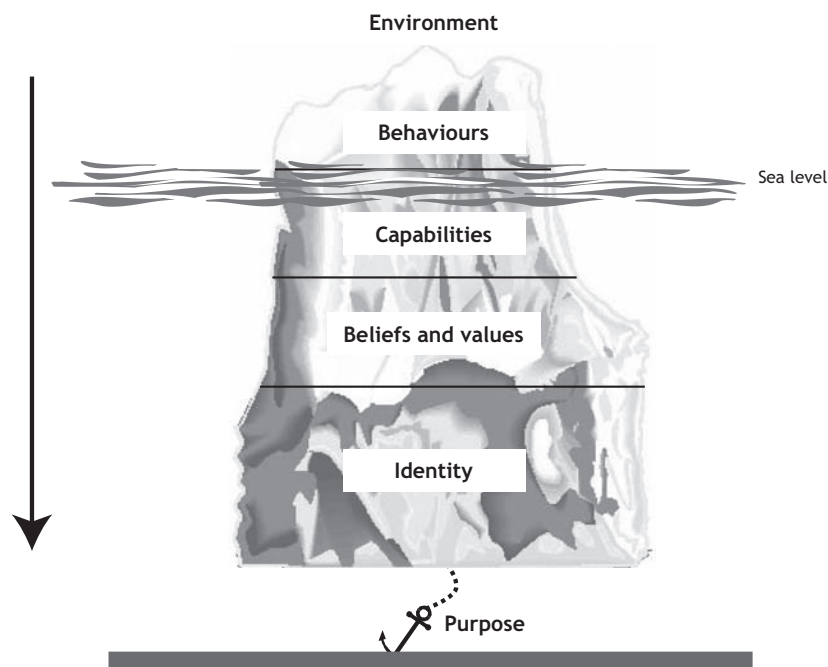


Leading with NLP			
Self-awareness	Resilience	Relationship awareness and influencing skills	School improvement
* * *	* * *	* * *	* * *

## 67 The iceberg for school improvement

### *How to analyse your school using a levels of thinking tool*

Just like an iceberg, a major part of a school's philosophy, beliefs and values lie below the waterline and out of sight during the working week. It is only when we come to make changes, in an effort to bring about improvements, that the issues that are below the waterline can (like an iceberg) sink our improvement ship. Robert Dilts, one of the developers of NLP, developed a useful model that he called neurological levels of change (i.e. these are the levels of thinking that affect our language and our mind when we start the change process). You can use this model to map out the sort of improvement and changes that would work best. During the process you can find any sticking points that lie below the waterline and decide how to address them.



The iceberg has six levels – three of which are visible above the waterline and three lie below.

These three are observable and are often paid more attention:

- Environment
- Behaviours
- Capabilities (or skills) – only visible when they emerge as behaviours. This level includes the untapped talent in your school.

The next three, which are often invisible, are part of the unspoken traditions that all institutions tend to generate over time. By paying attention to these categories we can begin to create school improvement plans that will fit our needs and aspirations:

- Beliefs and values
- Identity
- Purpose.

## Here's how

Study the Quick start sheet below and familiarise yourself with the categories and the types of questions that are helpful to ask. Begin your analysis with the environment category and work towards the purpose level, identifying the gaps and answering the questions. The questions below are a guide and you may want to add your own questions in each category, taking care not to mix the categories together. This will very much depend on the context in which you are using the tool.

Quick start - School improvement planning with thinking levels		
Levels		Key questions to ask
<b>Purpose</b>	Vision	What is our overarching purpose for existing? What is our purpose in particular areas? What is our intention?
<b>Identity</b>	Role and mission	Who are we in our context? What is our role? What is our mission? What specifically do we want to achieve?
<b>Values</b>  <b>Beliefs</b>	Motivation - what is seen as important  How thinking about the situation is expressed at the moment	In the context of this review: Why are we doing it this way? What are our values? What are our states of mind? What are our limiting beliefs? What are our empowering beliefs?
<b>Capabilities</b>	Perceptions Direction	What are our capabilities? What capabilities do we lack? What are the strategies currently being applied? What do we need to change?
<b>Behaviours</b>	Actions Reactions	What behaviours support the current situation? What behaviours do not support the current situation?
<b>Environment</b>	Constraints and opportunities	What is our context? School infrastructure Cultural connections Social and societal connections Financial constraints Human resources  What are the opportunities?

Once you have completed your survey you can begin to map the essential parts of your improvement plan.

1. This time start with the vision – make it short, clear and succinct to bring clarity (see present state to desired state resources (on page 168) for ideas about how you might do this – particularly if your thinking is still stuck in problem mode). Define your mission. Make a comparison between the current values and beliefs that you uncovered in your review and any new values and beliefs that will be needed in order to complete the mission. Are there any new capabilities that will be required in order to fulfil the vision and mission and actualise the beliefs and values needed? What behaviours are useful in building the capabilities?
2. Finally, what changes are needed in the environment in order to support the vision, mission, values and beliefs, capabilities and behaviours? Your aim is to create alignment of categories so a supportive framework is built and improvement can be a success. Create some detailed plans and an execution strategy. Aim to take the level of thinking in the iceberg that is currently most out of alignment with the overall purpose and mission.

## Learn more about this

The importance of values and moral purpose for effective school improvement is recognised by a number of writers, particularly Michael Fullan. Fullan suggests that it is important for leaders in schools to practise and develop the behaviours that go with the values associated with moral purpose and that real breakthroughs in

development come not just from doing but also from ‘thinking about the doing’. Other writers, like John West-Burnham, also stress the importance of the moral dimension in school leadership as well as the spiritual. The levels tool, particularly when used in a group context, prompts us to think at a purpose, values and identity level by challenging our thinking to go much deeper than just thinking about those things that appear in the environment around us.

### Read some more about levels and values and how you can use them

- Read Chapter 11, ‘The teacher within’, in *NLP for Teachers: How To Be a Highly Effective Teacher* (page 131)



## When else can you use this?

- Use it to help develop your own thinking about your purpose as a leader and whether your behaviours and values are aligned with this. Run a team session in which you explore all the levels on flipcharts
- Use it as a coaching tool. Write each level on a piece of paper and walk your coachee through the process – what in NLP we call a ‘spatial sort’.
- In the classroom use as a framework for teaching creative writing to help with character creation in stories or to help understand a famous historical figure in a historical context.

### ***What are you going to do with this?***

(Your ideas and thoughts)



*The NLP Toolkit* is packed with easy to use tools, activities and techniques. Organised in an accessible way and grounded in experience and practice, it provides a comprehensive toolkit that uses NLP techniques to improve all aspects of learning and teaching from using a simple spelling strategy to developing leadership and training skills. NLP is often described as 'the technology of emotional intelligence'. *The NLP Toolkit* gives you practical 'how to' ways to develop your own emotional resilience as well as ways to work with leaders in the area of emotional and social skills. The five sections cover:

- In the class activities
- Emotional and social literacy
- Stagecraft and presentation skills for teachers and trainers
- Personal development and effectiveness
- Leading with NLP

*The NLP Toolkit* is the perfect companion to the highly acclaimed *NLP for Teachers: How to be a highly effective teacher* and will be invaluable for both teachers with experience of NLP and those who are new to the subject.

"NLP is a treasure trove of learning ideas. Rich in content, deep, visually engaging, accessible, flexible, comprehensive. NLP presents an endless supply of great ways to spark the learner by sparking the teacher. Terry and Churches have furnished us a toolkit that keeps on giving, getting at the learner's mind and feelings in a way that is irresistibly stimulating.

Michael Fullan, Professor Emeritus, OISE/University of Toronto

"Packed with well explained strategies that help teachers to support their learners. Through activities that work on the social or emotional aspects of learning the mysteries of why people succeed or survive are exposed. Using the book will bring learning alive for young people and add interest and enjoyment ... and success.

Professor Mick Waters

NLP techniques hold the secret to success for many leaders and teachers. *The NLP Toolkit* turns the theory of NLP into practical activities that all schools can use with individuals or classes.

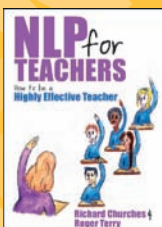
Jackie Beere, Author, Educational Consultant, Trainer, AST, School Improvement Partner and Master Practitioner of NLP

I was going to start this review by saying that this toolkit is a gold mine for educators but it is actually better than that. To find gold you have to spend time sorting through dross! This Toolkit is a tightly organized and highly accessible resource full of powerful strategies which are tried and tested and directly relevant to the daily work of teachers and school leaders.

John West-Burnham, Professor of Educational Leadership, St Mary's University College

**Roger Terry** is an NLP trainer and runs a training business called Evolution Training [www.evolutiontraining.co.uk](http://www.evolutiontraining.co.uk). He has trained over 1,000 teachers to use NLP in the classroom.

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