

Following Rules or Creating Choices?

Do you like plenty of choice ... or not?

Level	lower-intermediate onwards
NLP focus	metaprograms: options and procedures

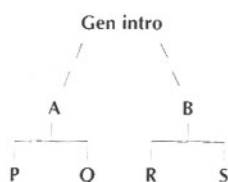
Before the lesson

Choose a subject (or story), eg The geography of Australia. Prepare to talk about/tell it in a series of sections, each a breakdown of the section before. Use this example as a model.

For the first minute talk about your topic in broad terms. For example: *Australia is a huge island. Some coastal areas are inhabited. The interior is mostly desert. The north has a tropical climate and the south is temperate.*

Explain to the students that you are going to talk more on this subject, and they can choose between two areas. Do they want (i) A: the population of Australia or (ii) B the physical geography? If they choose A, talk for a minute or two about immigrants and indigenous people. If they choose B, then talk about rivers and deserts.

When you finish your talk (A or B, whichever the students chose) you then give them a further choice. If they chose A you ask if they now want (i) P: recent immigrants or (ii) Q: pre-WW2 immigrants? If the choice was B you ask if they now want (i) R: rivers and deserts in Western Australia, or (ii) S: rivers and deserts in South Australia?



- 1** Tell students the title of your talk/story and the first two choices.
- 2** Start the talk, ie give the broad overview.
- 3** Give students the second choice; and so on.
- 4** In groups of six, students answer these three questions:
 - Did you like having choices?
 - Would you have preferred a straight talk without choices?
 - Would you have preferred some other format?
- 5** Groups report briefly to the whole class.
- 6** Students rule two columns on their papers.
 - Column 1 has the heading CHOICES
 - Column 2 has the heading PROCEDURE
- 7** Dictate the following situations and ask students to put them in the correct columns: if they prefer choices in the given area, then they put them in the corresponding column and if they prefer to follow a 'standard procedure', then they write down the situation in the procedure column:
 - Getting from home to school or work
 - Ordering food in a restaurant
 - Planning a holiday
 - Packing a bag/bags for a holiday
 - Putting clothes on in the morning
 - Doing mental arithmetic
 - Choosing what to watch on TV
- 8** Ask students to individually add three or four more areas in which they prefer either choices or procedure.
- 9** Group them in threes to discuss their categorisations. Ask them what it would be like to do things really differently.

The Story of a Skill

*Get to know how you do things well
and how well you do things*

Level lower-intermediate onwards
NLP focus strategies

Before the lesson

This activity takes two lessons.

Lesson One

- 1 Choose a skill (physical or cognitive) that you have and tell the class how and when you developed it, eg memorising names, horse riding, pancake making. Tell the students when you first realised you needed or wanted to have that skill and your first steps trying it out. What mistakes or setbacks did you experience while trying to learn the skill? Who helped you? Do you still have/use this skill today? Is it more or less developed now than it used to be?
- 2 As homework, ask students to choose a skill of their own and prepare to tell the story of acquiring the skill. They should look up any technical words they need to use. They should not write out their text. They should practise by sub-vocalising the text to themselves. Suggest they do this several times, looking to improve their English each time.

Lesson Two

- 1 Students shut their eyes and practise telling the story of their skill quietly to themselves. Give time for most of them to get through to the end of their texts.
- 2 Get them to start a second time but, after 20 seconds, ask one student to continue his/her text aloud. At this point all the others 'hold' their text and listen. Allow the speaking student to say between two and five sentences before you switch to another person, and to another, and so on. After the class have heard eight to ten snippets, get everyone to resume subvocalising their text from where they left off.
- 3 Repeat the process.
- 4 Ask students to get up and go and listen to the story they find most interesting: the teller tells the story from the beginning. The listener(s) then tells his/her story.

Acknowledgement: We learnt this technique from Anne Pechou.

How We Learn Things

Learning has a hidden structure

Level intermediate onwards
NLP focus strategies

- 1 Ask for a volunteer willing to choose and talk about how he/she has learnt a particular skill eg skateboarding, driving, dancing, singing, speaking a language, remembering,
- 2 Ask the volunteer the questions below. All the other students copy them down as you ask them. They also copy down any extra questions you might ask. An alternative would be to give the students the questions on a handout, one for each pair.
- 3 Students work in pairs. Student A chooses a skill area. Student B puts the questions.
- 4 They exchange roles and repeat.
- 5 Group the students in fours and ask them to compare their skills-learning process, eg Are there any similarities or striking differences in the processes?
- 6 Encourage general, whole-class feedback.

QUESTIONS

- When did you first notice other people doing (name of activity)?
- What did you notice about how they did it?
- When you first tried it what three things did you discover?
- Did anyone else help you? How?
- How long before you were able to do some of the basic things?
- How much did you have to make a conscious effort to do the basic things?
- How long did it take before you were able to do these basic things without noticing you were doing them?
- If you didn't succeed straightaway, how did you react?
- How did you know you had learnt the skill? How did you judge?
- In this activity are there still skills you don't yet really know about?
- Are there skills you still have to consciously practise?