

Supporting the Emotionally Challenged Undergraduate Using Neuro-Linguistic Strategies: A Qualitative Narrative Approach

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Using Narrative constructsthis qualitative research provides an insight into emotional and mental challenges encountered by severalstudents of the English Language Teaching Unit,University of Colombo.Introduction of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) strategies to help these students overcome stressful situationsis discussed through two case studies. NLP is an art and science of personal experience where its patterns, skills and techniques are being used in counselling, education and business for effective communication, personal development and accelerated learning. Research questions are whether students had the opportunity to obtain support for emotional challenges faced, and whether the approach adopted by the researcher had been successful. Opinions of twelve lecturers of the ELTU and two permanent student counsellors were obtained through semi-structured interviews.Two case studies out of eight, conducted by the researcher are described with the ‘Narrative Theory’ which contains specific tools and terms used in qualitative texts that incudes elements of story, character, focalization and plot. Data obtained through observation, journal entries of participant interactive sessions, semi-structured interviews with lecturers and colleagues of relevant students and the mother of one participant was coded and analysed. Two permanent student counsellors mentioned that from approximately 50 students, who came for counselling in 2013, 90% were due to academic related stress, 10% to relationship problems with partners or peersandeconomic problems.Outof thelecturers interviewed, 96% mentioned that each had counselled at least two students during the academic year. One lecturer had 10 students of whom some were referred through the Student Counselling Centre. Of these, 98% of the problemswere academically related. Economic, relationship and personalloss accounted for 02%, and one student had mentioned guiltfeelings due to a sexual problem.The researcher concludes that it could be possible to use NLP techniques to build rapport between teachers and students to gain confidence of the students, and together with NLP stress relieving strategies, help students face crisis situations successfully.

Key words: Nero Linguistic Programming, qualitative approach, narrative theory, emotional challenges, stress