NLP for Testers
– a brief introduction
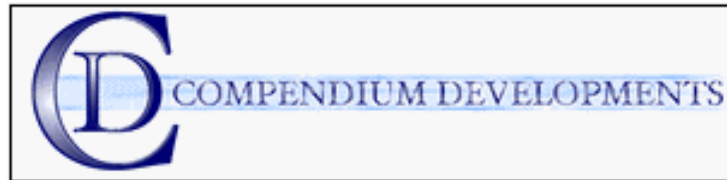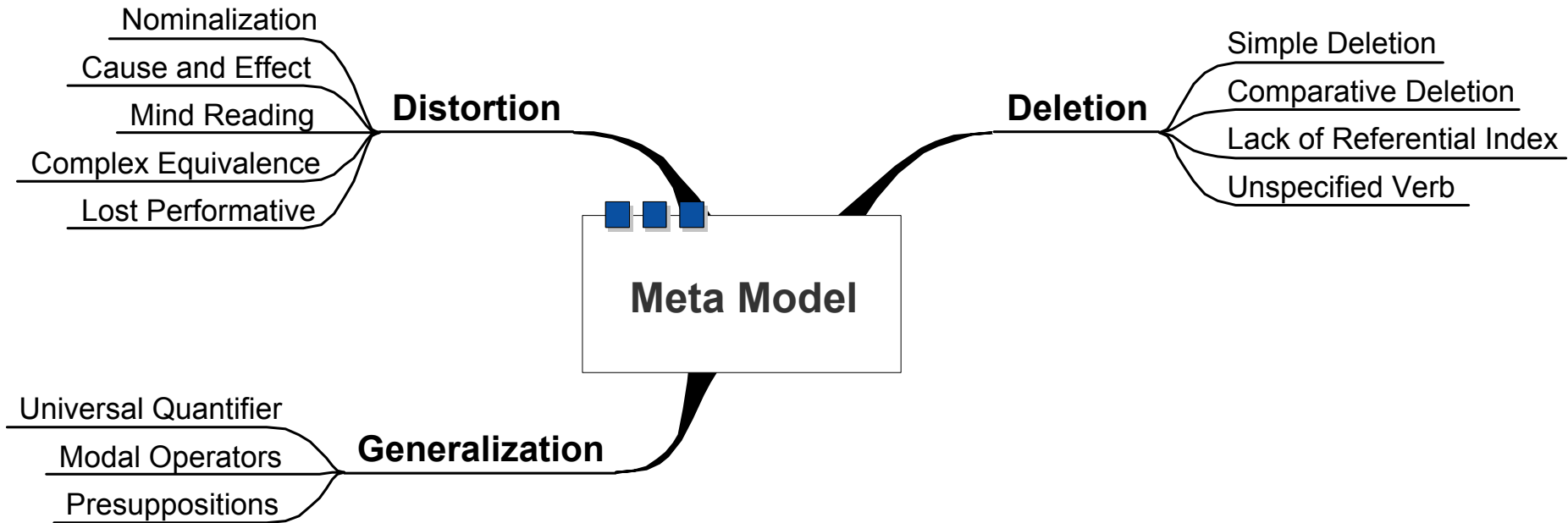

Alan Richardson

Compendium Developments

http://compendiumdev.co.uk/nlp

(Supporting Paper and Web Links)

Equivoque

- Transformations (Distortion, Deletion, Generalization) can create ambiguity

- Ambiguous statement:
  – "The daily trade file must be processed in under 5 seconds when the system starts up."

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|------------------------------------- LP -------------------------------------|
 |-------------------------------- CE ---------------------------------|
  |---------------- Effect ----------------|      |------- Cause -------|
```

"The daily trade file must be processed in under 5 seconds when the system starts up"

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   |-- SD (1) --| |MO| |UV (1)||SD (2)| |-- SD (3) --|   |-- SD (4) --| |-- UV (2) --|
```
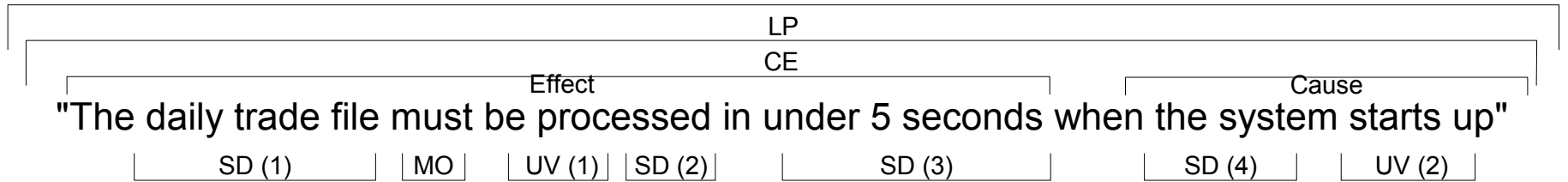
- Processed by what? How?

- Daily trade file – contains what? From where?

- 5 seconds – based on what?

- Starts up? How, When, How often?

The diagram shows a mind map centered on "Generalization" with three branches:

Modal Operators — *Rules for limits*
- "I can't run these tests" — "What stops you?" → Challenge and get more information on the limits
- "I shouldn't test this." — "What would happen if you did?"

Universal Quantifier — *A Limiting Generalisation*
- Counter, challenge / Identify exception
- "All developers hate testers" → "I develop and I don't hate you" / "*ALL* developers?" / "Microsoft have 2 testers for every developer, that must be hate city"

Presuppositions — *What is unstated and has to be true for the statement to be true* → Challenge, test
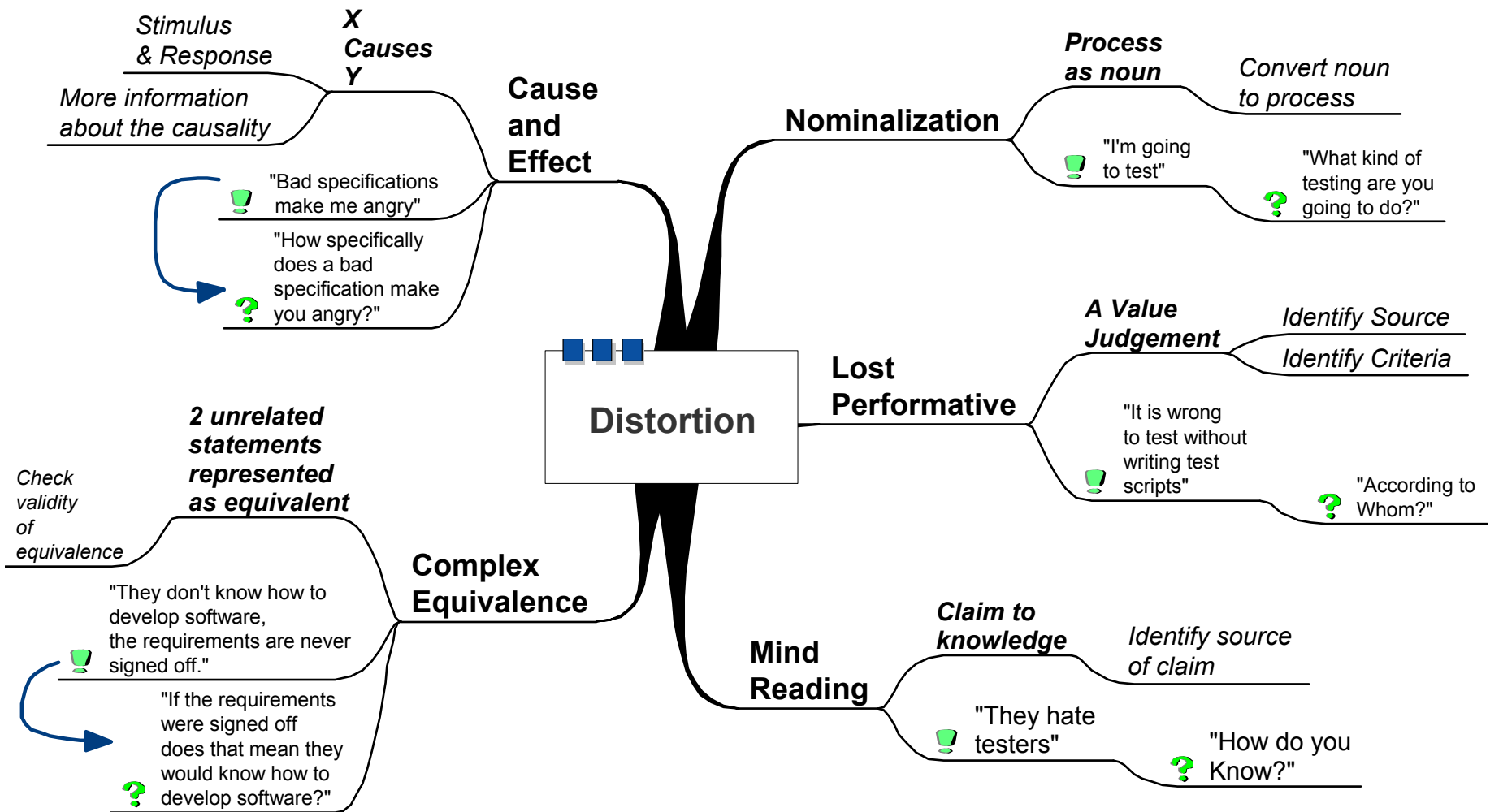
- Universal Quantifier: The system will always process the daily trade file at start up. *Even if the system is restarted in the middle of the day?*

- Modal Operator: The system *might* ask the user to save the file.

- Presuppositions: Daily trade file exists. *What if it doesn't*? The daily trade file can be processed. *What if it is corrupt*?
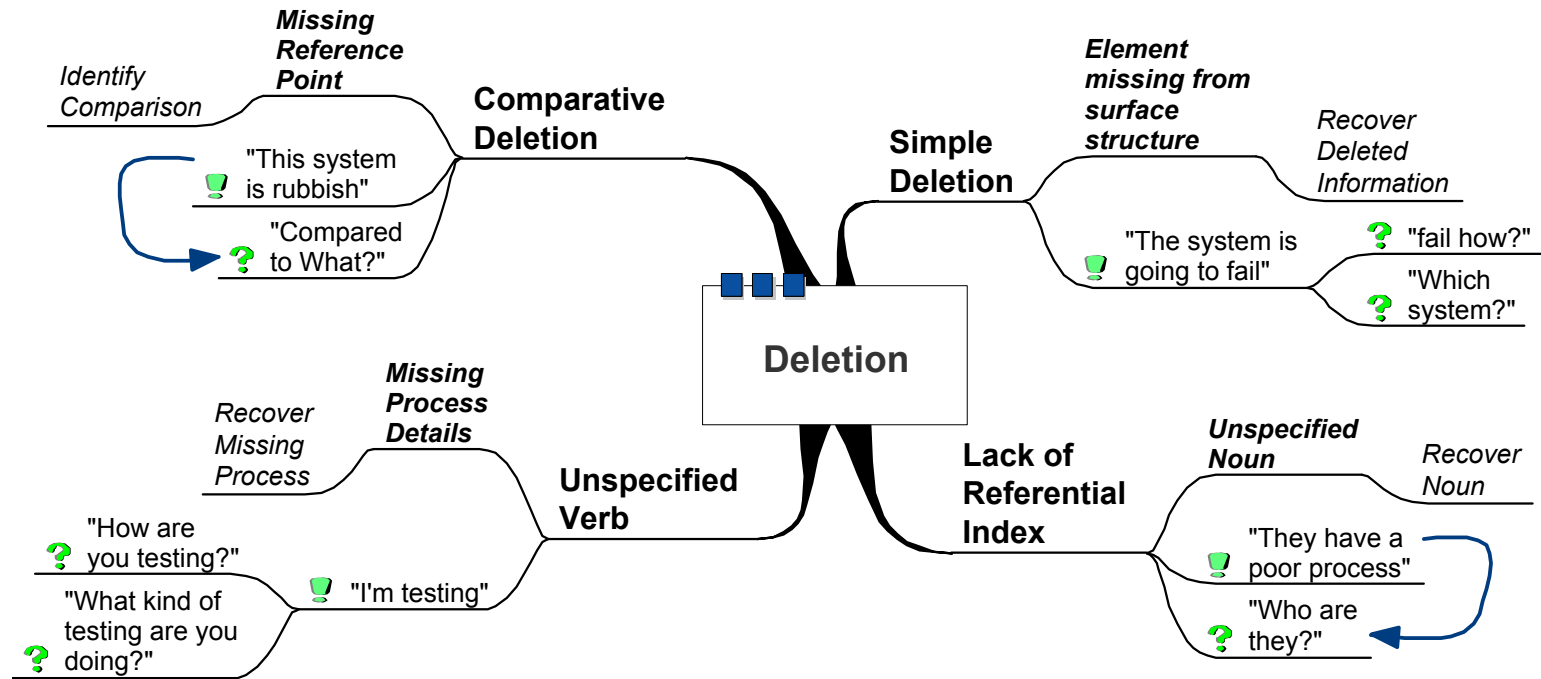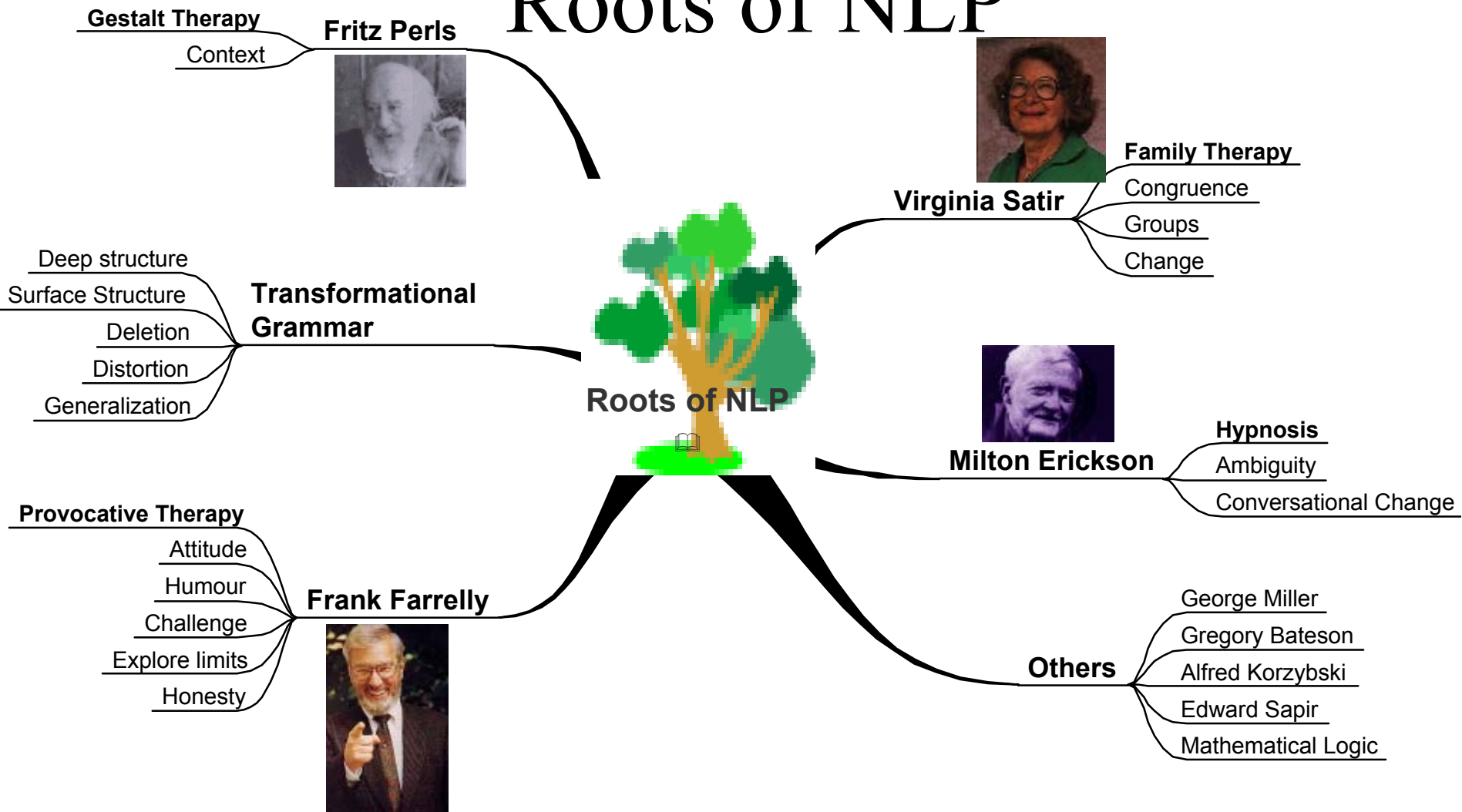
- Deletion can cause special cases not to be identified
- Deep Structure deletions identified through presupposition analysis & model building

Distortion

Cause and Effect
- *Stimulus & Response*
- *X Causes Y*
- *More information about the causality*
- 💚 "Bad specifications make me angry"
- ❓ "How specifically does a bad specification make you angry?"

Nominalization
- *Process as noun*
- *Convert noun to process*
- 💚 "I'm going to test"
- ❓ "What kind of testing are you going to do?"

Lost Performative
- *A Value Judgement*
  - *Identify Source*
  - *Identify Criteria*
- 💚 "It is wrong to test without writing test scripts"
- ❓ "According to Whom?"

Complex Equivalence
- *2 unrelated statements represented as equivalent*
- *Check validity of equivalence*
- 💚 "They don't know how to develop software, the requirements are never signed off."
- ❓ "If the requirements were signed off does that mean they would know how to develop software?"

Mind Reading
- *Claim to knowledge*
- *Identify source of claim*
- 💚 "They hate testers"
- ❓ "How do you Know?"

- Distortions can taint beliefs and attitudes
- Good source of resistance in communication

Roots of NLP

Gestalt Therapy
Context
Fritz Perls

Virginia Satir
Family Therapy
Congruence
Groups
Change

Deep structure
Surface Structure
Deletion
Distortion
Generalization
Transformational Grammar

Roots of NLP

Milton Erickson
Hypnosis
Ambiguity
Conversational Change

Provocative Therapy
Attitude
Humour
Challenge
Explore limits
Honesty
Frank Farrelly

Others
George Miller
Gregory Bateson
Alfred Korzybski
Edward Sapir
Mathematical Logic

"The Structure of Magic" volume 1,
Richard Bandler & John Grinder

Learning NLP

- What is left to learn?
  - Strategies, Meta Programs, Accessing Cues, Anchoring, Belief Systems …
- How to learn
  - Books (Bandler, Dilts), training, videos, practise groups, study roots of NLP
- IT Related
  - Gerald Weinberg: Are your lights on? (More) Secrets of consulting.
- Apply it, Apply it to testing