

Meta categories for human behavior and experience

Framework for communication * and change processes



** all behavior and experience*

What's in it for me?

Have you considered...

...that all you and others say and do carry information? We cannot not communicate. So why not become aware of what communication consists of, recognise patterns and evaluate what is useful in different situations? There is a lot of research and many theories, methods, models and concepts in the field of communication - including different understandings of individual, groups, organisations and society's behavior and interaction. The meta framework is not a substitute for all this, but a superstructure - a system that creates overview and understanding across disciplines, fields and backgrounds.

Do you have anything to lose if you continue reading?

Life without meta categories

- Human behavior, situations, challenges and experiences appear complex
- Methods and models are learned and followed in detail - difficult to assess what are success factors and pitfalls
- Communication and collaboration across disciplines is demanding due to different concepts, terms and understanding
- Unconscious resources and opportunities are not discovered, assessed or used

Life with meta categories

- Easier to recognise patterns, extract the essence, and distinguish significant from insignificant
- Greater flexibility in using methods and models - faster learning new and combining
- Easier to communicate across disciplines - the categories provide a superstructure for subject-specific and industry-specific terms
- Increased awareness of unconscious and untapped resources and opportunities increases the likelihood that they will be discovered, assessed and used

3 main categories with subcategories to describe communication*

Information sources for sorting

I//you

1./2./3. order

associated//dissociated

V//A//K//language

past//present//future

external//internal

front//back

upper//lower

left//right

conscious//subconscious

Information types

frames

presuppositions

intentions

VAK and language

submodalities

anchor

Communication patterns

pacing & leading

pattern interruption

congruence-incongruence

anchoring

strategies

logical levels

signature

language patterns

**all behavior and experience*



Information sources for sorting



Information types



Communication patterns

the origin of

expressed through

Information sources for sorting

	Short definition	Examples	Usefulness
I//you	Addresses the relationship, or balance, between the information sources "I" and "you", or "we" and "you/them" in groups and organisations.	Other terms for clear sorting between you and me: respect, integrity, autonomy, etc. Other terms for unclear sorting: ego fusion, disability and invalidation, projection, symbiosis, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set clear boundaries - both for yourself and in relation to others • Show respect and solicit respect from others • Discover and point out violations • Separate facts and interpretation • Prevent and mitigate conflicts
1.//2.//3. order	Addresses the relationship, or balance, between the information sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behavior (1st order) • intentions (2nd order) • presuppositions and frames (3rd order) 	Be able to sort information as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behavior (1st order) • intentions (2nd order) • presuppositions and frames (3rd order) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create change and development as effectively as possible for yourself and/or others • Awareness of what influences what we do - and how an unbalanced focus or lack of attention to one or more factors impacts
associated//dissociated	Addresses the relationship, or balance, between the information sources "associated" (being connected with all senses) and "dissociated" (having distance to/being disconnected)	Other terms for associated: engaged, being "on", all in, full blast etc. Other terms for dissociated: helicopter and distance perspective, disconnected, distanced, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep calm and get an overview of a situation • Enjoy the small and big everyday moments • Use the different perspectives more consciously: connect when you want to and take a step back when it is useful
V//A//K// language	Addresses the relationship, or balance, between the information sources V (visual), A (auditory), K (kinesthetic) and language.	Be able to sort information to the different senses in order to gather information and balance the use of sensory data and language, which is meta to sensory experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how the senses affect communication • Use your senses and language consciously to communicate more effectively • Get information from multiple sources for comprehensive check and access to additional resources

Information sources for sorting

	Short definition	Examples	Usefulness
past//present // future	Addresses the relationship, or balance, between information originating from the past, present and future, respectively.	Sort information according to time perspective and balance the perspectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how the time perspective affects communication and change processes • Choose focus consciously and realise how this can help you create balance, communicate more effectively, succeed in relationships, and find good solutions
external// internal	Addresses the relationship, or balance, between the information of internal or external origin, respectively.	<p>Other terms for external: environment, exterior, surroundings, outside.</p> <p>Other concepts for internal: inner attention, interior, own thoughts, inner environment, within.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use internal and external attention to affect communication and create change • Choose focus consciously to gather information flexibly both internally and externally - depending on what is useful
front//back	Addresses the relationship, or balance, between the information sources "front" (front of a system) and "back" (back of a system).	<p>Other terms for front: showcase, cover, what is displayed, front-end.</p> <p>Other terms for back: stock, rear, not shown, back-end.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a match between expectations and delivery • Be attentive to the relation between what is displayed and delivered • Ensure consistency and credibility over time
upper//lower	Addresses the relationship, or balance, between the information sources "upper" (upper part of the system) and "lower" (lower part of the system).	<p>Other terms for upper: top-down, plan, think, elitist</p> <p>Other terms for down: bottom-up, grass roots, carry out, do</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create balance between planning, thinking and evaluating on the one hand and doing and implementing on the other • Choose focus consciously • Create progress - without running around like headless chickens.

Information sources for sorting

	Short definition	Examples	Usefulness
left//right	Addresses the relationship, or balance, between the information sources "right" (intuitive, quick, broad perspective) and "left" (logical, slow, focused perspective).	Other terms for right: intuition, system 1 (Kahneman), creative, systemic, holistic Other terms for left: structured, system 2 (Kahneman), detailed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create balance between creativity and structure• Choose focus consciously
conscious//subconscious	Addresses the relationship, or balance, between the information sources "conscious" and "subconscious".	Other terms for conscious: short-term memory, attention, focus, thoughtful, aware, for all to see. Other terms for subconscious: unconscious, explicit and implicit memories, out of focus, not aware, not thinking, out of mind, mindless.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find resources - especially those that are not obvious to you• Detect the obstructions and find trust in all your hidden resources• Delegate to the subconscious• Apply all resources

« *A simple and easy way to categorise behavioral and change theories and principles.*

- Course participant

Information types

	Short definition	Examples	Usefulness
frames	A summary or compilation of what applies. Provides opportunities and constraints and indicates what is inside and outside.	Collective term for context, situation, circumstance, condition, prerequisite, "under ... conditions", setting, structure, act, scene, section, piece, lesson, rules, area, process, device, batch, boundary etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be clear and clarify boundaries• Important attention when managing teams, meetings and projects - as well as organising at home• Awareness of different types of frames and how you can relate to them flexibly
presup-positions	Everything that is implied is "true." Anything that is consciously or unconsciously used in our communication; "That which must be subjectively true - consciously and especially unconsciously - in order to make sense of someone's behavior and/or experience".	Collective term for expectations, theories, decisions, attitudes, hypotheses, convictions, beliefs, equations, opinions, prognosis, projections, pre-understanding, myths, assumptions, rules, prejudices, preferences, ways of understanding, dogmas, values, generalisations, models etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attention to how our beliefs etc creates opportunities and limitations - and often end up as self-fulfilling prophecies• Become aware of what hinders and promotes what you want to achieve, for example: your own goals, common culture, collaboration, innovation, the desired state and results, etc.
intentions	What a system desires to achieve, what gives energy and direction.	Collective term for terms referring to desired state/condition, such as goals, objectives, purpose, mission, vision, dream, "the point", ambition, determination, desired result, milestone, objective, meaning, motivation etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use intentions consciously to ensure progress and that everyone is moving in the same direction• Clarify goals to create results and release energy

Information types

	Short definition	Examples	Usefulness
VAK and language	<p>Modalities, in this context sensory modalities, and language are chosen as categories for</p> <p>Primary information types/modalities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual information (V) - visual impressions • Auditory information (A) - sounds • Kinesthetic information (K) - information via the body <p>Secondary information type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words (meta to primary experience) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how the senses affect communication • Use your senses and language consciously to communicate more effectively • Get information from multiple sources for comprehensive check and access to additional resources
submodalities	<p>Behavior and experience can be described by submodalities (sensory sub-modalities) - ie what sensory information consists of</p>	<p>Detailed description of sensory experience, e.g. visual information can consist of colors, contrast, size, shape, distance, location, movement, etc. Auditory: tempo, volume, pitch, rhythm, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give concrete feedback and precise descriptions • Become aware of what you see, hear and feel consists of • Distinguish clearly between facts and interpretation • Regulate emotions and thoughts
anchor	<p>A link between different situations or experiences (information).</p>	<p>Other terms for anchor: link, trigger, association, connotation. Anything that connects to something else, what reminds and/or describes something else. All words are anchors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quickly create a good atmosphere • Lead focus in the desired direction • Consciously use the brain's ability to connect information • Disconnect what is useless • Quick access to resources - including high-performing states



Why haven't I learned this before?

- Course participant



Very important material that many more should know about.

- Course participant

Communication patterns

	Short definition	Examples	Usefulness
pacing & leading	<p>pacing Communication that establishes contact and trust in one or between people.</p> <p>leading Communication that creates progress, development, change, etc.</p>	<p>Other terms for pacing: keep pace with, establish contact, adapt, pay attention, meet, build trust, rapport, mirror, break the ice, be on the same wavelength, have good chemistry, flirting, catering to, adapting to, etc.</p> <p>Other terms for leading: lead the way, take the lead, instruct, show, persuade, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create contact and build trust• Get people to join you• Sales and marketing• Get a message through• Lead others• Get to know new people• Make new and keep old friends
pattern interruption	<p>Communication that breaks the pattern - something new, unexpected and/or surprising.</p>	<p>Other terms for pattern interruption: intervention, stop effect, wake-up call, game-changer, take a time-out.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Break old patterns• Get rid of useless habits• Create new opportunities and results• Finding a solution when everything seems stuck
congruence-incongruence	<p>Compliance, or mismatch, between parts of the communication. Mathematical term for equal size and shape.</p>	<p>Other terms for congruence: compliance, consistency, credibility, integrity, authentic, genuine, make sense, come together.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discover what you and others really want• Awareness of signs that people say one thing and think or do something else• Explore useful information from incongruence
anchoring	<p>Communication that creates anchors</p>	<p>Other terms for anchoring: conditioning, coupling, connecting, wiring, association, linking, "what fires together, wires together".</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quickly be able to create good atmosphere• Lead the focus in the desired direction• Consciously use the brain's ability to connect information• Disconnect what is useless• Quick access to resources - including high-performing states

Communication patterns

	Short definition	Examples	Usefulness
strategies	A sequence of anchors that gives a certain result.	Other terms for strategies are mental programs, "one thing leads to the next", a fixed routine, approach, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Succeed with what you want• Perform your best – every time• Decode what makes things happen the way they happen• Discover and change patterns
logical levels	Sorting and categorising information by type and level of detail.	Other terms: logical types, generalisation vs detailing, classification, aggregation, taxonomy, sorting, categorisation, frames in frames, quantity distribution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check the depth of the agreement and whether people talk past each other• Discover and be aware of the extent to which you and others communicate at a more general or detailed level• Become aware the energy drop when things seem illogical
signatures	Anchor (word(s) and/or behavior) that repeats and creates opportunities and limitations.	Other terms: characteristics, pattern, predictable action, striking/typical features, recurring, "here we go again."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid being annoying or perceived as a pain-in-the...• Discover so-called "signatures" in your own and others' communication and assess whether they are useful
language patterns	Collective terms for the structures in language.	Examples: non-specific language, modality-specific language and submodality-specific language, use of linking, "but" and reference indices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Become aware how patterns in language and some words inhibit or promote communication• Use language and words consciously in interaction with the other categories

The categories and framework are non-normative with no claims as to what is useful or will create specific results in a given situation. What may be focussed depends on intention and frames.

Examples of application: Usability

Change project in organization

- Everyone can communicate more consciously to create the desired outcome
- Common understanding and terms across disciplines
- The meta-understanding creates overview and focus in complex situations and challenges
- Managers and employees can more quickly analyse, evaluate, and find effective solutions.

Innovation and strategy

- Easier approach that provides overview
- Categories that reveal what inhibits and promotes
- Awareness of creativity vs. structure, planning vs. implementation, prerequisites and intentions.

Cooperation and work environment

- Common understanding and terms across disciplines
- Categories that promote respect and prevent conflicts
- Categories that enable constructive feedback.

Building culture

- Common language and terms
- Awareness of what drives and affects behavior
- Meta perspective
- Discover and choose effective change measures.

Artificial Intelligence programming (AI)

- Integrated framework with categories to describe all human experience and behavior
- Categories that enable high awareness of usually unconscious factors (eg, presuppositions and intentions)
- Categories for "soft skills" including social intelligence, empathy and care
- Meta-perspective on developer/team's preferred perspectives versus what is actually available for human and artificial intelligence.

#consciousliving

- You can quickly understand what is happening, which patterns are triggered and why they unfold as they do- and respond adequately
- The categories allow you to make more conscious choices and create what you want.

How to get started

Quick and easy to learn - full effect requires practice

Our experience is that the categories describe recognisable phenomena and can be learned in a short time. For integrated and automatic access, conscious exercise and attention are required in everyday life. It's a bit like how you improve your driving skills after getting a license until it is an integrated competence. We recommend taking 1-3 categories at a time until they become an integral part of how you - the organisation or team - understand the successes and challenges. Feel free to use the resources below to learn, practice and create the results you desire.

Best of luck!



24 hours to learn



Practice in everyday life



Create results

Introduction films

Each category has its own introductory film with examples from work and home (3-6 minutes per movie). The movies are collected in [a playlist on YouTube](#)



Online courses

If you want a thorough introduction to the framework and all the categories, we recommend [Explore and enjoy communication and change](#). You can test the first category for free.



Consulting

For physical and tailor-made courses, training and workshops based on the framework, please contact:

info@xlo.academy

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Some examples:

- Communication keys
- Constructive feedback
- Conflict management
- Change management
- Innovation

Background and references

The framework for communication and change processes is defined by the two Norwegian educators Truls Fleiner and Jorunn Sjøbakken (1) and (2).

The subcategories of the framework are mainly taken from NLP (Neurological Linguistic Programming - (3)) with important exceptions such as presuppositions which in the framework are given a further definition, I//you (4) and 1./2./3. order (5).

NLP and Communicology share common inspiration from:

- Gregory Bateson and others: communication research and systemic approach
- Virginia Satir: Family Therapy
- Fritz Perls: Gestalt Therapy
- Milton Ericson: Medical Hypnosis

In a larger context, several of these were part of different directions within psychology in the 60s, such as The Human Potential Movement, humanistic psychology, self-actualisation and Maslow's needs pyramid. Michael Hall summarises the historical roots of NLP to be Gestalt Therapy (Perls), Family Therapy (Satire), Cognitive Therapy (George Miller, Noam Chomsky), Semantics (Alfred Korzybski), Anthropology (Bateson) and Human Potential Movement (Maslow, Rogers, Huxley) (6).

John Grinder and Richard Bandler, who created NLP, modeled Perls, Satir and Erickson based on linguistics (Grinder's subject area) and ended up with a communication model. NLP focused on formats - ie methodology for creating change.

The starting point that was modeled in NLP came from therapy / pathology (groups, family, individual). This was also Sjøbakken and Fleiner's background and profession. Sjøbakken and Fleiner had a hypothesis that they could find meta-categories for different disciplines and industries. However, it turned out that the categories worked interdisciplinary and across industries and system levels (assessment of Sjøbakken and Fleiner and confirmed by students). The NLP environment has reached the same conclusion.

Sjøbakken and Fleiner chose to focus on the category's intrinsic value (the meta-categories) and the value of a concise, summarized framework. They taught NLP until the nineties when they changed the name to "interdisciplinary meta-competence" and later to "Communicology". They have chosen to document their work through their education program.

Background and references

The relevance of the categories in organisations is documented through the following (in Norwegian):

- Monika L. Eknes and Randi Kveine (2016): *GPS for endringsledelse*, Fagbokforlaget
- Eli Skjeseth (2014): *Ledelse som kommunikasjon*, Høgskolen i Lillehammer (Arbeidsnotat 202)

The [Association of Communicologists](#) has published "Disciplinary Documentation for Communicologists. Terminology." (7) which describes the framework, words and concepts in Norwegian, Swedish and English translation. The documentation represents the best interpretations of Scandinavian communicologists and their agreed understanding.

In 2016, the association conducted a questionnaire on the effect of competence and experienced utility among communicologists in Scandinavia. (8) From the summary:

- 125 communicologists and students chose to answer all or parts of the study.
- Almost 90% of respondents say that they use their communicology skills to a large or very large degree in their work.
- About 90% of the respondents say that they have great or very great benefit from their communicology skills in their work.
- More than 90% of the respondents reported that the combination of meta competence and other professional competence gave much higher or higher competence in analysing different situations, issues etc..
- About 90% reported much higher or higher skills in doing change work and proposing change measures after analysis. Just over 80% reported much higher or higher expertise in quality assessment after analysis.

Notes:

1. Skandinavisk Institutt for kommunikologi: www.kommunikologi.no
2. A short film about the search for key factors in communication and change: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcN2-WUt1Pk>. A film about the framework: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJ-a7dejzRQ&>
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuro-linguistic_programming
4. In the Norwegian NLP network, some have this attention, most likely inspired by Fleiner and Sjøbakken from their time as NLP trainers. In the international NLP network and literature, we have not come across this sorting.
5. John Grinder has introduced the concepts of 1st and 2nd order, but with other content, and for all practical purposes, this key is not deliberate in NLP education, methodology or practice.
6. Meta-reflections on the history of NLP, L. Michael Hall: <http://www.neurosemantics.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Reflections-on-History-1.pdf>
7. <https://kommunikologforeningen.org/en/what-is-a-communicologist/>
8. <https://kommunikologforeningen.org/sv/enkat-blant-kommunikologer-och-studenter-varen-2016/> (in Swedish)