

**Tool 3.4**

Exploring the Iceberg

CLARITY Competence Area:

Embracing values that sustain the lives of all living beings

GreenComp Competence Area:

Embodying sustainability values

Why use this tool?

The Iceberg Model helps to understand the root causes of what we “see” in the world. For instance, it helps us move from the various sustainability issues and crises we see, and the values, assumptions and beliefs we and others hold, and which underlie these issues and crises. Our individual and collective values are important dimensions to explore in this context.

Activity 3.4.1

Exploring the iceberg

Overview

The iceberg model helps to understand i) our patterns of behaviour, ii) systems and structures, and iii) the inner and cultural dimensions that underlie a given situation, such as the climate crisis. The iceberg model can help to analyse the crisis and at the same time what inner and cultural change is needed to move to climate resilience and regeneration (e.g., as part of a Futures Literacy Laboratory).

Curriculum linkage

Most topics, including Science (biology), Physical Education & Health and Civics & Social Studies.

Competences built

Self-reflection, critical thinking, systems thinking, exploratory thinking and perspective-taking.

Prep

Familiarise yourself with the iceberg model. Prepare an image or slide with an iceberg and identify good examples for explaining and illustrating the Iceberg Model, particularly examples that relate to learners' interests, experiences and needs. Some of these can be shared in the class to support learners during their brainstorming

Steps in the activity

1. Above/below water
2. Diving underwater



BASIC INFO

Age range:

6+

Duration:

10-90 minutes

Group size:

Flexible

Level of difficulty:

Intermediate and advanced

Materials/space required:

None, but a picture/illustration of an iceberg might be helpful

Location:

Indoors

Engagement of external stakeholders:

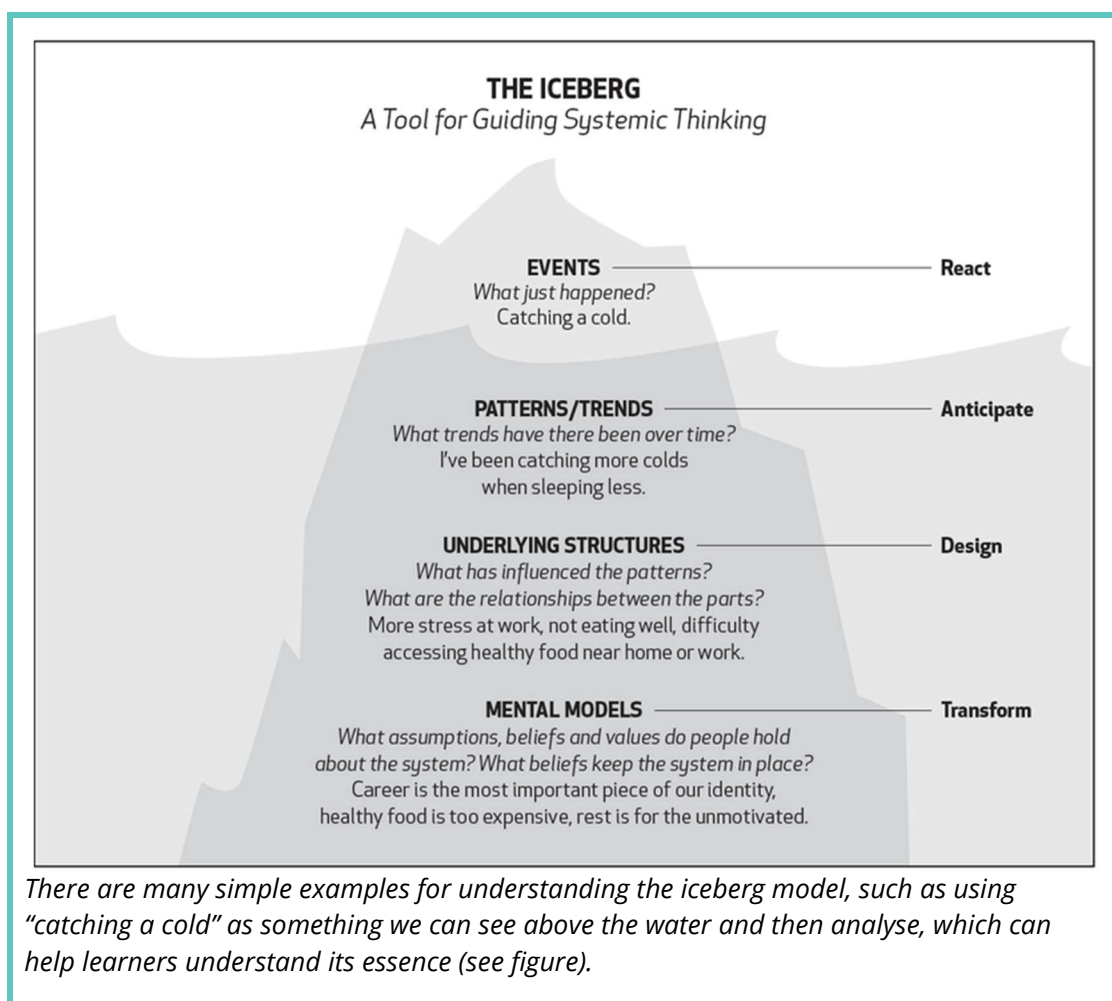
No



Step 1: Above/below water

Introduce the iceberg model in simple words for young audiences through specific examples. The explanation has to be adapted based on the age group.

1. In simple terms, the Iceberg Model illustrates that what we can see—the part of the iceberg that is visible above the surface of the water—are the events or crises that define our world today.
2. But much more – around 90% – of the iceberg is invisible to us. In human terms, what is hidden beneath the surface are the underlying aspects (**our patterns of behaviour, the systems and structures we live in, and our inner dimensions or mindsets and culture**) that are responsible for creating the events or crises that characterise our world today.
 - a. What we here call inner dimensions, mindsets and culture include our individual and collective beliefs, values, worldviews and associated inner capacities (cognitive, emotional, relational).



Step 2: Diving underwater

After explaining the iceberg model and its essence, bring the discussion to sustainability challenges, such as climate change and ask the learners to apply the Iceberg Model to this collective challenge.

Possible instructions to the learners:

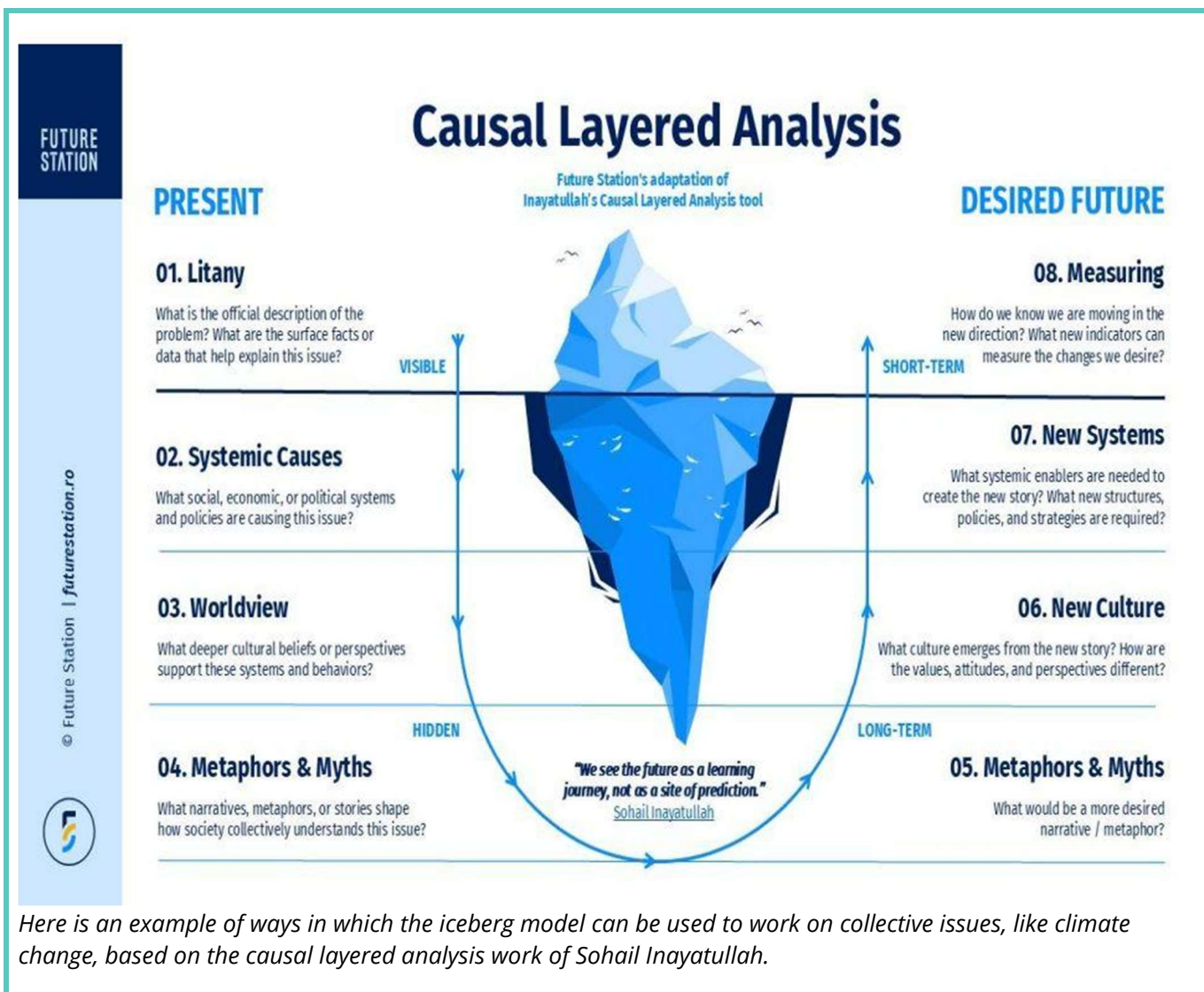
1. Select a recent event that strikes you as urgent, important or interesting.
2. Then write the event (what is observable about the event) at the top of the blank iceberg.
3. Work your way down through the underlying patterns, systems and inner dimensions or mindsets, adding as many as you can think of. It can also be useful to move up and down between levels as you think more about the event.

Good questions to ask include:

- What is happening?
- What are the patterns/trends?
- What has influenced the patterns?
- What underlying values, assumptions or beliefs do you or others have?

In addition, it is important to discuss on which level common measures to address the event or crisis often focus on. If we design measures that address the deepest levels of the iceberg, they address deep leverage points for change. Whilst it is key to address these deep leverage points of change, it is important to highlight that ALL levels of the iceberg need to be addressed if we want to support transformation towards climate-resilience and regeneration. In other words, it requires addressing immediate needs and, at the same time, nurturing shifts in behaviour, systems and structures, culture and individual mindsets that underlie the climate crisis and related sustainability challenges.





Here is an example of ways in which the iceberg model can be used to work on collective issues, like climate change, based on the causal layered analysis work of Sohail Inayatullah.

Dos and don'ts

Do:

This exercise can be used to explore beliefs, values and worldviews associated with the climate crisis and find ways to increase climate resilience and regeneration, for instance as part of a Futures Literacy Laboratory.

Adaptations:

We invite you to adapt this activity to the specific needs of your learners, including by taking into account their neurodiversity. When adapting tools and activities for neurodivergent learners, please note it is not about treating others how you want to be treated, but how they want to be treated. Ask, listen, and stay open to different ways of learning and engaging.



References

This activity was designed by Lund University with some additions by One Resilient Earth.

Many theories that explain how inner development relates to climate change and other sustainability challenges are related to the Iceberg Model. During the past few years, the emergent field of inner transformation for sustainability has advanced related knowledge, education and practice.

Simple explanations and applications of the Iceberg Model:

- [Iceberg Model - Ecochallenge.org](https://ecochallenge.org/iceberg-model/)
- [Iceberg Model | Simply explained \(munich-business-school.de\)](https://www.munich-business-school.de/en/iceberg-model/)
- [How The Iceberg Model of Systems Thinking Can Help You Solve Problems? \(durmonski.com\)](https://durmonski.com/how-the-iceberg-model-of-systems-thinking-can-help-you-solve-problems/)

Theoretical foundations of inner transformation for sustainability:

- [Theoretical-Foundations-Report 2022.pdf \(consciousfoodsystems.org\)](https://consciousfoodsystems.org/theoretical-foundations-report-2022.pdf)
- Ives, C., Schäpke, N., Woiwode, C., Wamsler, C. (2023) IMAGINE sustainability: Integrated inner-outer transformation in research, education and practice, Sustainability Science <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11625-023-01368-3>.
- Wamsler, C., Hertog, I., Di Paola, L. (2022) Education for sustainability: Sourcing inner qualities and capacities for transformation. In: Revolutionizing sustainability education: Stories and tools of mindset transformation, Ivanova E., Rimanoczy (Eds.), pp. 49-62, Routledge. See https://www.routledge.com/Revolutionizing-Sustainability-Education-Stories-and-Tools-of-Mindset-Transformation/Ivanova-Rimanoczy/p/book/9781032135380?fbclid=IwAR1noRmrl_RY8bj4CZyEN0wT1RBEb7sRKBcWkrsOqFeoDqdDBukyfsJraOw.
- Wamsler, C., Osberg, G., Osika, W., Hendersson, H., Mundaca, L. (2021) Linking internal and external transformation for sustainability and climate action: Towards a new research and policy agenda, Global Environmental Change, 71:102373. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959378021001527>.
- See also other publications, presentations and podcast published by The Contemplative Sustainable Futures Program: www.contemplative-sustainable-futures.com





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