## THE CULTURAL ICEBERG

# HALL'S ANALOGY FOR APPROACHING INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

The concept of the cultural iceberg was coined in 1976 by Edward T. Hall, who suggested that culture is analogous to an iceberg in that only about 10% of the iceberg is visible at any given time and that a large part of it is hidden beneath the surface. Culture has components that are external facing or above the surface and visible, and the majority of culture, about 90%, is hidden below the surface.

The iceberg analogy of culture is highly referenced as it illustrates how much of culture is invisible and intangible. It also demonstrates that values and beliefs are deeply set.

Please keep in mind that the cultural iceberg, like any analogy, is limited. For example, the image of the iceberg is static and fixed, while culture is dynamic and complex. Culture is not a 'thing' as this image suggests, and the iceberg is used as a means of illustrating a concept.

### THE CULTURAL ICEBERG

**SURFACE CULTURE** 

Food
Flags Festivals
Fashion Holidays Music
Performances Dances Games
Arts & Crafts Literature Language

#### **DEEP CULTURE**

#### **Communications Styles and Rules:**

Facial Expressions Gestures Eye Contact
Personal Space Touching Body Language
Conversational Patterns in Different Social Situations
Handling and Displaying of Emotion
Tone of Voice

#### Notions of:

Courtesy and Manners
Frendship Leadership
Cleanliness Modesty
Beauty

#### Concepts of:

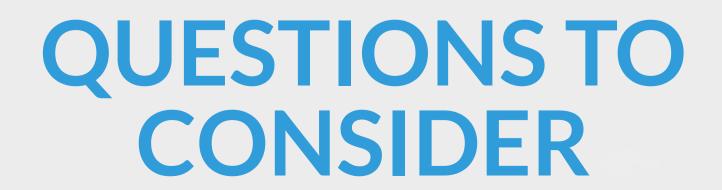
Self Time Past and Future Fairness and Justice Roles related to Age, Sex, Class, Family, etc.

#### **Attitudes toward:**

Elders Adolescents Dependents
Rule Expectations Work Authority
Cooperation vs. Competition
Relationships with Animals Age
Sin Death

#### Approaches to:

Religion Courtship Marriage
Raising Children Decision-Making
Problem Solving



Take time to consider the values and beliefs that lie beneath your own waterline.

How has working in international education made you aware of the dynamics of your own culture that you had not been aware of before?