

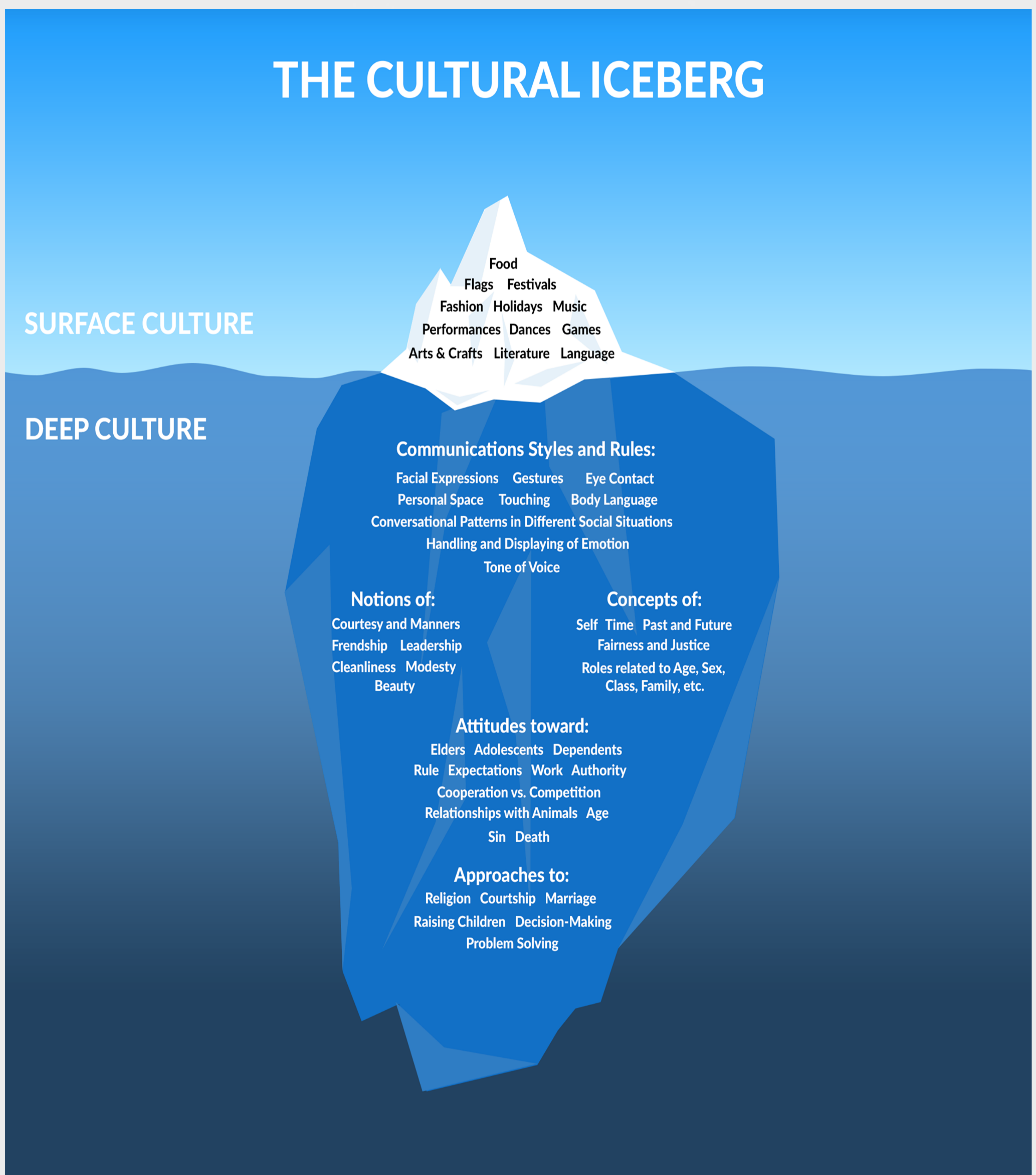
THE CULTURAL ICEBERG

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.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

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?