



Grade 8 Social Studies Investigation: Does God Exist?

(Submitted by Anna-Marie Brunskill, 2017, while serving as Secondary Principal at International School of Havana, Cuba)

Tool(s) used:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability Compass • Systems Iceberg • Systems Mapping
Purpose of using tool:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesizing Thinking <p>Overview: We used the Systems Iceberg to synthesise thinking around cultural expectations and religious beliefs. In particular, we were investigating whether and why religious belief is important.</p>
Context of lesson/case study:	Grade 8 Social Studies class
Participants (# and description):	14 Grade 8 students.
Topic, Theme, or Key Understanding of unit/project:	Investigation: does God exist?
Length of unit/project:	6 weeks
Resources/materials & setting required:	Textbook (AQA Religion & Philosophy) Access to the internet Board markers & chart paper

Lesson Plan/Description of the Project:

In a six-week unit investigating the core beliefs of the six major world religions, we took some time to think about why it matters to people that God, or gods, exist. This required an unpacking of ideas about religion, and in particular cultural differences.

Reflection

Plusses (Things that went well):

- The students really engaged with the deeper ideas that the iceberg led them towards. This informed later work that was formatively assessed.
- The students enjoyed being in self-organised groups and sharing ideas with the wider group.
- The Iceberg helped students to deepen their thinking about what religion is, why religion is meaningful (for some!) and what its impact can be.

Challenges (Things I would change):

- This was the first time these students had done a Systems Iceberg. Getting them to 'dig deeper' required complex analytical skills and the use of open-ended questioning. Some of the students struggled with this and needed more guidance than (in retrospect) I provided.
- In the future, I would provide guiding questions, prompts or ideas that would scaffold the more complex analysis the students work towards.





Suggestions for other practitioners and educators:

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Evidence and Resources:

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Evidence of Activities

Level 1 Certification Submission
 Name: Andres Lio Busquet
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EAL students working on T-chart with Mr. Michael Lees (School Director) on T-chart highlighting what would make a perfect community as opposed to an imperfect community. Students then must reflect and write ideas/conclusions on bottom part of chart. Details of the poster created. >>>>>>>>



Students acting out a systems: They chose A Cuckoo clock to demonstrate how each component had a distinct role, but also depended on the other components' well-functioning. Images show the girl moving hands as pendulum, while others at the back perform the second, minute and hour hands, the one underneath is the cuckoo.



Analyzing how SDGs related to the compass tool (Nature, Economy, Society and/or Wellbeing). Students spread SDGs icons on Compass poster, and discuss how systems thinking has guided the development of goals to propose solutions to global issues. SDGs icons and symbols are matched with their corresponding explanations taken from the UNO website ("Verb harvest" activity to highlight usage of formal register of language.)



Understanding iceberg levels better: students distributed slips of papers across the icebergs, in order to distinguish between Events, Patterns of behaviour (which evidence trends and development over time), System structures (which emphasize the implications derived from other realities). Final proposals shared by students on the icebergs. Mental Modes added on post-it notes by students.

Other instances when icebergs have been used as thinking tools to analyze problems and their causes

