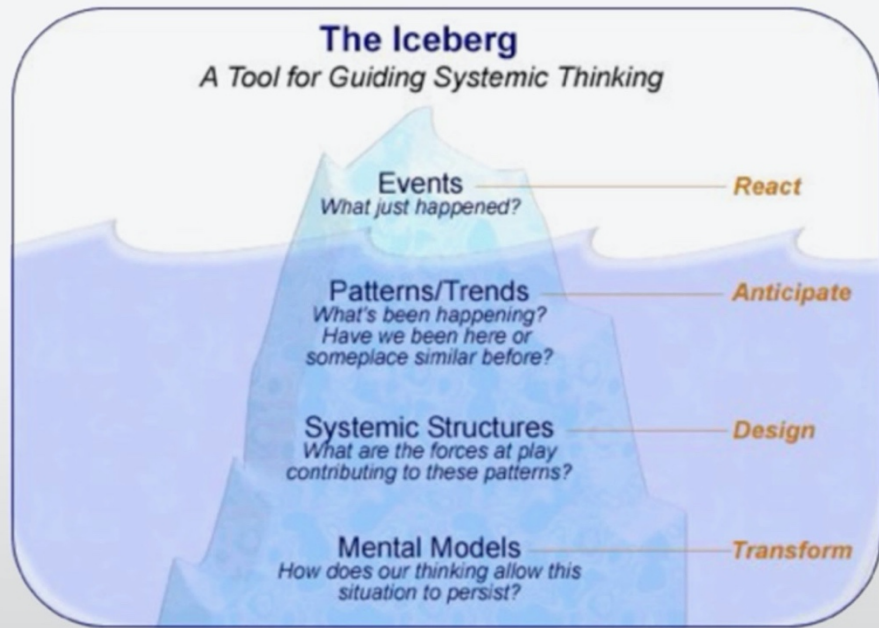


Discussion Boards Within a Context



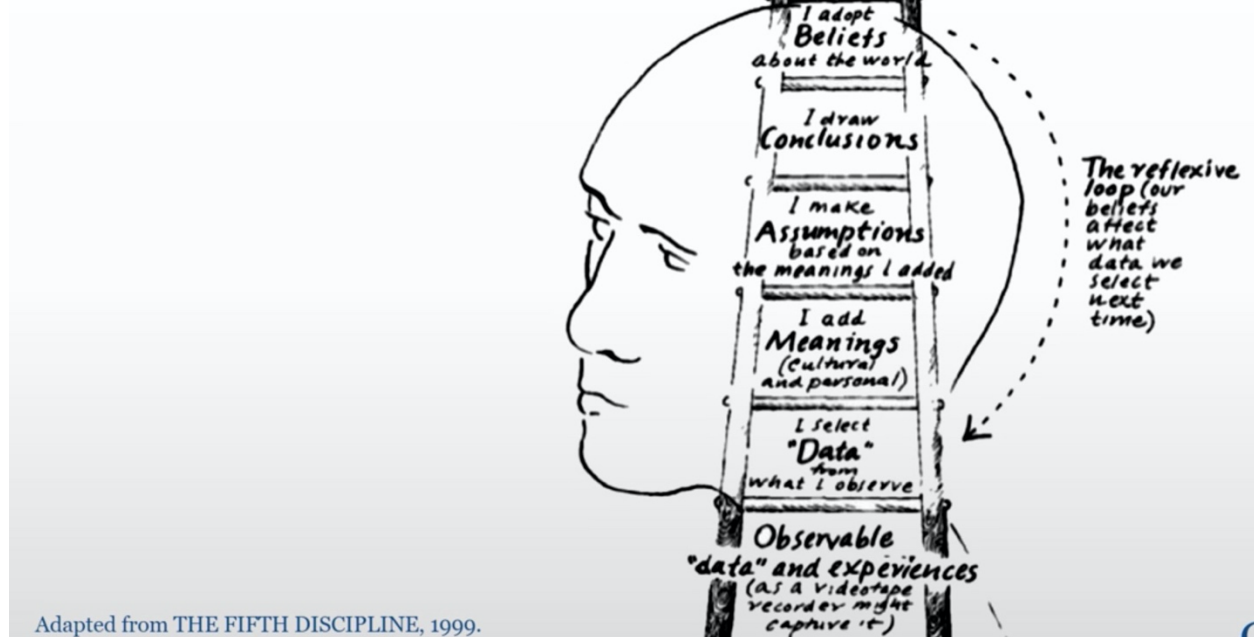
Characteristics of Mental Models

- They are critical to our effectiveness
- They filter what we see and hear
- We often treat our mental models as the “truth”
- They are flawed and can get us in trouble
- It's easier to see others' mental models and harder to see our own

Reinforcing Structure of Mental Models

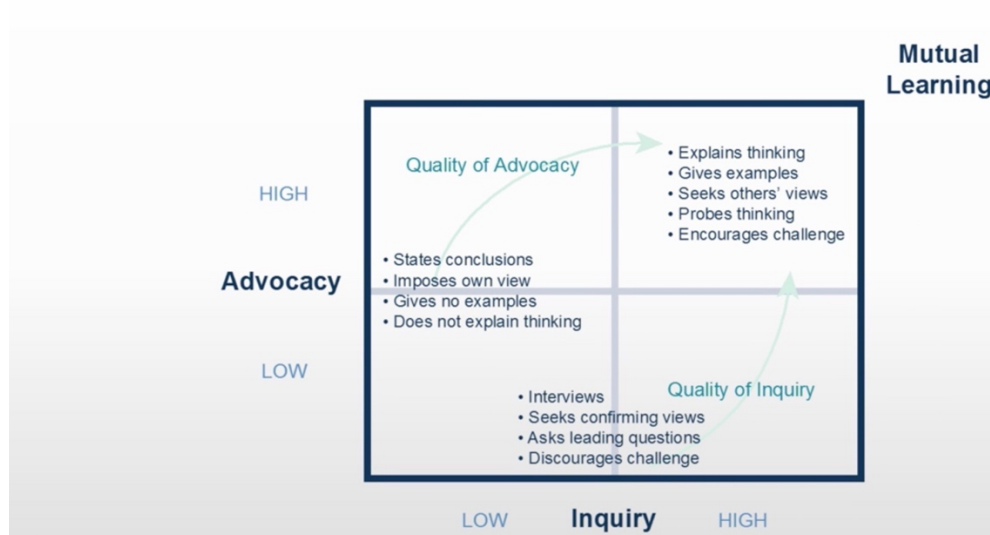


Ladder of Inference



Adapted from THE FIFTH DISCIPLINE, 1999.

Inquiry and Advocacy



Thoughts and Actions to Maximize Advocating

- **Reveal your thinking and your conclusions when taking a position. (Gently walk up the Ladder of Inference.)**
 - Describe the data you are using to draw your conclusions.
 - Explain your assumptions.
Example: "Here's what I assumed..."
 - State why you're saying what you're saying.
Example: "Here's what I think and here's how I got there."
- **Publicly test your conclusions and assumptions.**
 - Encourage others to explore your assumptions and your data.
Example: "Do you see any flaws in my reasoning?"
 - Reveal where you are least clear in your thinking.
Example: "I'm not sure about this part. Do you see any gaps in what I just said?"

Advocating Continued

- **Encourage others to provide different views or confront yours.**
Example: "Do you see it differently? Does anyone have different data?"
- **Listen and stay open.**
 - Avoid building your "case" when someone is speaking from a different point of view.
 - Avoid being defensive when your ideas are questioned.

Thoughts and Actions to Maximize Inquiry

- **Ask others to describe their thought processes.**

(Gently walk them down the Ladder of Inference.)

- Find out what data they've selected and are using to make assumptions.
- Verify the assumptions they are making about the data.
- Draw out their reasoning, i.e., why they're saying what they're saying.

Example: "What leads you to conclude that . . .?"

- **Share your reasons for inquiring; your concerns, hopes, and needs.**

Example: "I'm asking because . . ."

- **Listen for a new understanding that may emerge rather than prepare to destroy the other person's argument.**

Example: "What are the implications of looking at it this way?"

Thoughts and Actions that May Limit Discussion

- **When you disagree with a point of view**

- Ask what has led the person to that view.
- Example: "You may be right, but I'd like to understand more. What leads you to believe...?"
- Make sure you truly understand the view.
- Example: "What is an example of the kind of thing you are saying (or) recommending?"

- **You doubt the relevance of your thoughts check for relevance.**

- Example: "This may not be relevant. If so, let me know and I will wait . . . (If others do not find your comments relevant, ask for their reasoning.)"

- **You perceive a negative reaction in your thoughts.**

- Share the consequence of another's actions, but take responsibility for your reaction.
- Example: "This may be more my problem than yours, but when you said (give illustration). I felt . . . Is that what you intended?"