# Whole-school PD: Introducing Systems Thinking

*by Samantha Peiffer*

| Tool(s) used: | • Sustainability Compass  
• Systems Iceberg  
• Systems Mapping |
| Purpose of using tool: | • Generating Questions  
• Synthesizing Thinking  
• Guiding Discussion  
• Professional Development |
| **Overview:** | We used introduced three systems thinking school to our school community to introduce Compass Education and Systems Thinking into our educational mindset. We chose the Compass, Iceberg and Systems Mapping (basic) to demonstrate complexity and interconnectedness of our school community. |
| Context of lesson/case study: | Professional Development |
| Participants (# and description): | 19 participants, general director, principals from elementary, middle school, school counselor, library tech specialist and teachers across all departments. |
| **Topic, Theme, or Key Understanding of unit/project:** | Provide an overview of Compass Education and introduce three Systems Thinking tools. |
| Length of unit/project: | 1 hour |
| Resources/materials & setting required: | Posters, youtube video, compass template, iceberg, school related vocabulary, string, post its in a classroom and utilizing outside space. |

## Lesson Plan/Description of the Project:

Compass Education Training: January, 2017  
Facilitators: Ella Williams, Samantha Peiffer, Theresa LeValley  
Audience: Colleagues at College Internamericano  
Duration: 1 hour  
Learning objectives:  
1. Define sustainability and systemic thinking  
2. Apply three systemic thinking tools in the classroom/committees/leadership  
3. Define Compass  
4. Define Iceberg thinking systems  
5. Define Web  
6. Reflect and make a plan to move forward with the newly acquired skills  
Materials:  
Video of partnering case  
Posters  
School related words  
Post its  
Markers and pencils  
String  
Iceberg  
Compass templates  

Activities:  
(Elia) 5 min. Go over COMPASS Education and the learning objectives from the posters. Define sustainability and systemic thinking on a piece of paper (30 sec.). Time you, stop, and switch papers explain the other person’s definition… switch again. Put your definitions on the posters!  
(Theresa) Summation: Explaining someone else’s thoughts allows you to give up control/ownership of your own thoughts and have a more profound connection to other’s perspectives.  
(Sam) Reveal posters with the definitions…  
Sustainability: Compass definition: A set of systems conditions that allows humans to flourish indefinitely. (Emphasis: not the right definition, just theirs) For example, some disagree with dictum of humans  
Systemic Thinking: a collaborative analysis that allows thinkers to examine ALL aspects in the situation that would affect the outcome in a positive or negative way. When individuals have a better understanding of systems, they are better able to identify the leverage points that lead to desirable outcomes.
Reflection

Plusses:
We had really positive feedback, our planning and resources from the training helped us be very effective in delivering maximum take away from a really limited time slot. We were re-inspired to use Compass and these models in our leadership groups and classrooms all over again.

Challenges:
In the future we would extend the time of our training. Change and do a Compass introduction and Iceberg in small groups rotating.

Suggestions for other practitioners and educators:
They could use this as a great introductory tool, but would recommend to use a longer time period to introduce and to do the Systems Mapping in whole group.
Evidence and Resource:

Compass Education
- Empower & Connect Learning Communities to Educate & Act for a Sustainable Future -
Case study submitted by: Samantha Peiffer, 2017, while serving as Grade 3 Subject Teacher at Colegio Interamericano de Guatemala