Lesson Title: *The Systems Thinking Playbook*, Exercise 10: Teeter-Totter

Overview:
Participants must work together as a team to successfully complete the goal of getting on and off a teeter-totter. The focus is on how teams interdependently function within a defined environment. The structure of the teeter-totter system creates inherent delays. The participants may not realize how those delays in combination with their individual actions impact the overall success of the team.

Related Characteristic(s) of Complex Systems:
The cause of the problem is within the system.

Ideas and Examples for Connecting to the Characteristic:
Extend the debrief conversation with additional questions that examine how the structure of the system generated the behaviors and, in some cases, the problems that emerge. Example questions include:

- What happened? List key events.
- What patterns emerge over time? Examples include frustration, success, and number of people on the teeter-totter.
- How are parts of the system interconnected?
- How does the system structure cause the resulting dynamics?
- How is the teeter-totter structure similar to or different from to other situations? Examples include teamwork and coordination of musicians in a band.

Use a visual, such as the Iceberg to help students see beyond individual events to the underlying interdependent structure.

The figure shows just one possible mental model of how the system functions. What is another mental model of the parts and interconnections? Where might delays exist within this system?