Systems Wisdom

Steve Byers, M.S., M.A.

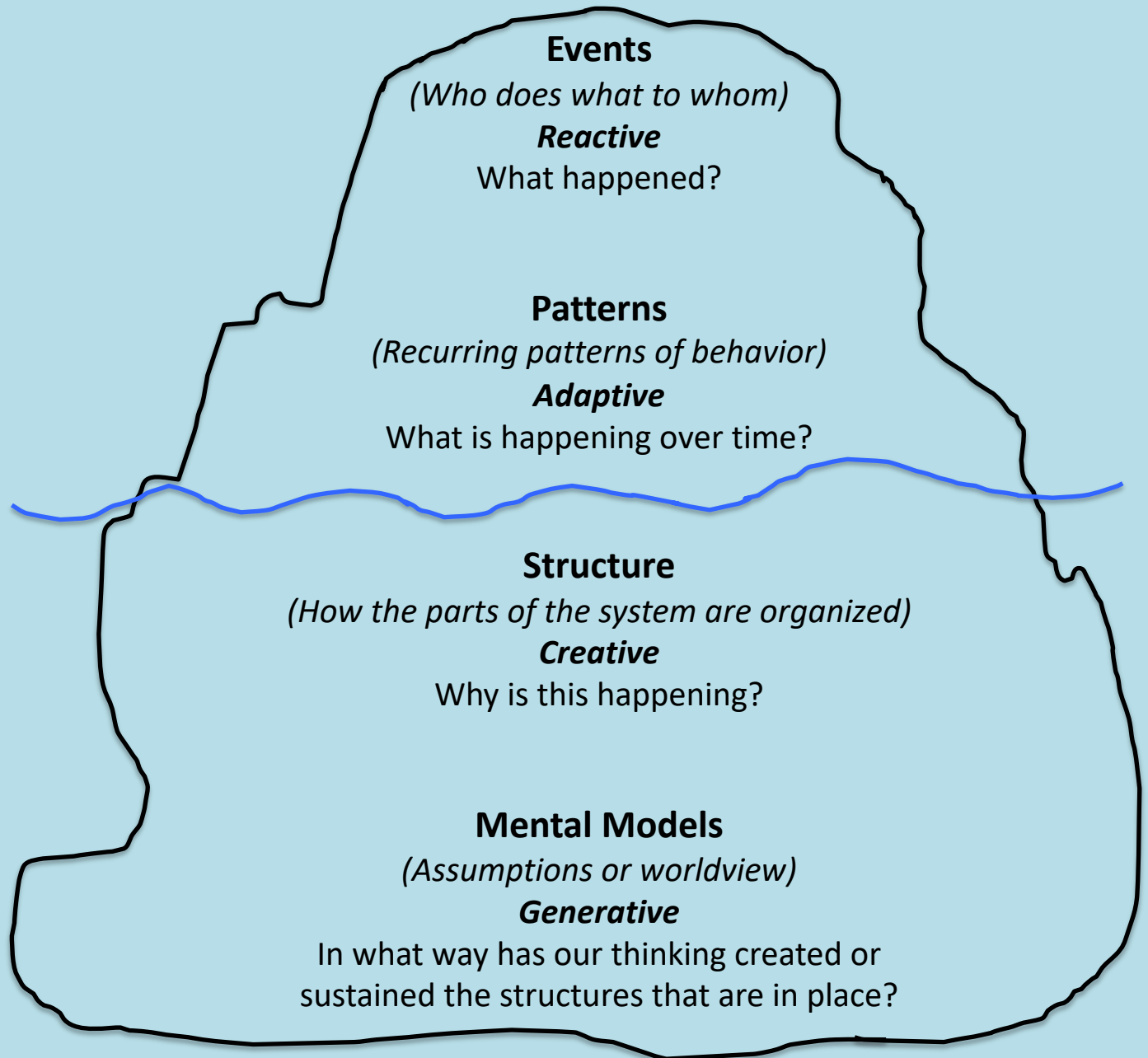(He/Him)

www.helpinghumansystems.com

"Lowering the waterline"

Events
(Who does what to whom)
Reactive
What happened?

Patterns
(Recurring patterns of behavior)
Adaptive
What is happening over time?

Structure
(How the parts of the system are organized)
Creative
Why is this happening?

Mental Models
(Assumptions or worldview)
Generative
In what way has our thinking created or
sustained the structures that are in place?

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Patterns of Behavior

"…the more ____, the more ____."

Morale is getting worse & worse…

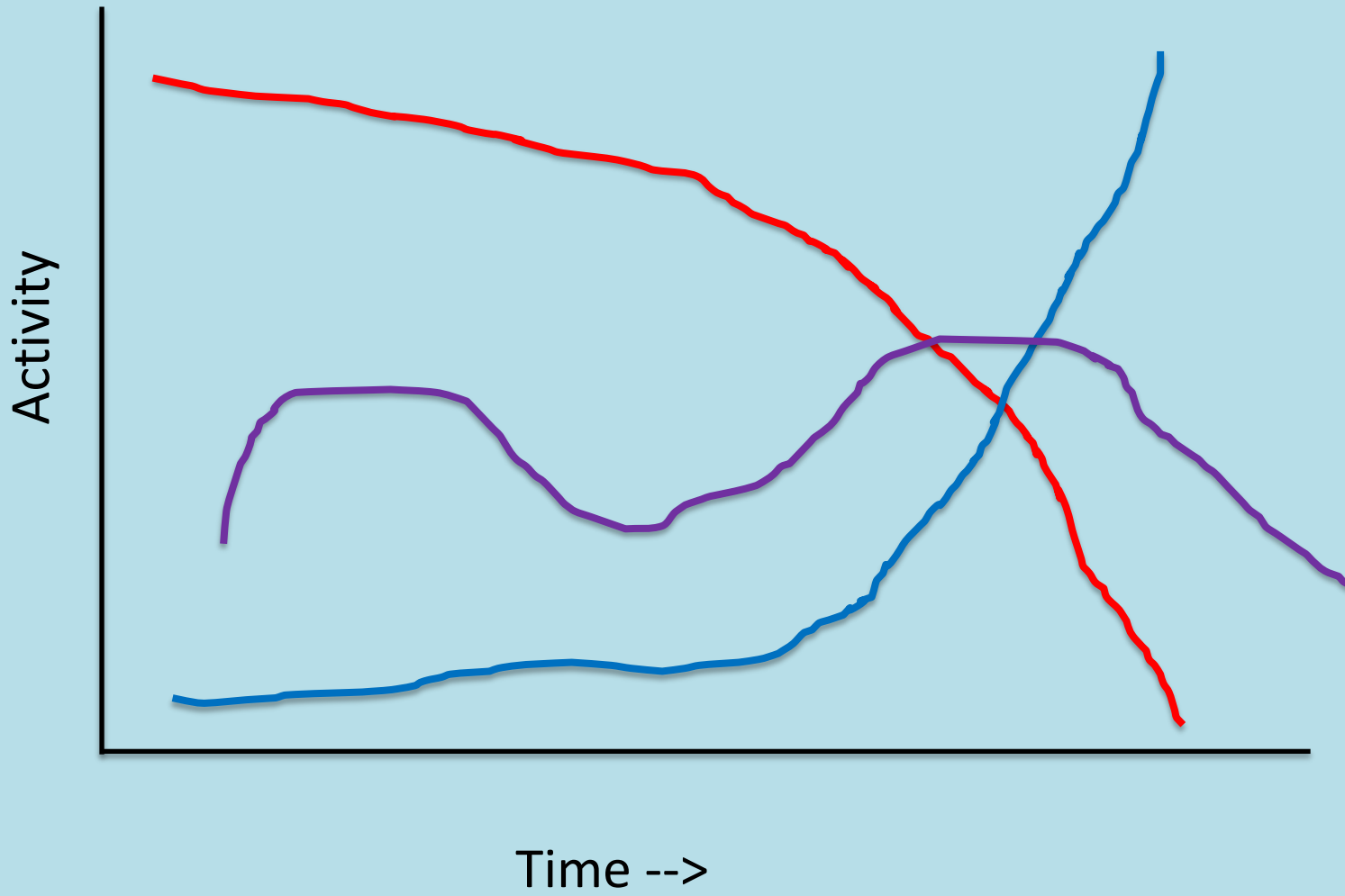Haven't we solved this problem before?

Daily traffic density

I can't seem to get to the gym consistently…

"…like a snowball rolling down a hill."

Another fire to put out…

Family stress as children grow up

Student excitement over the school year

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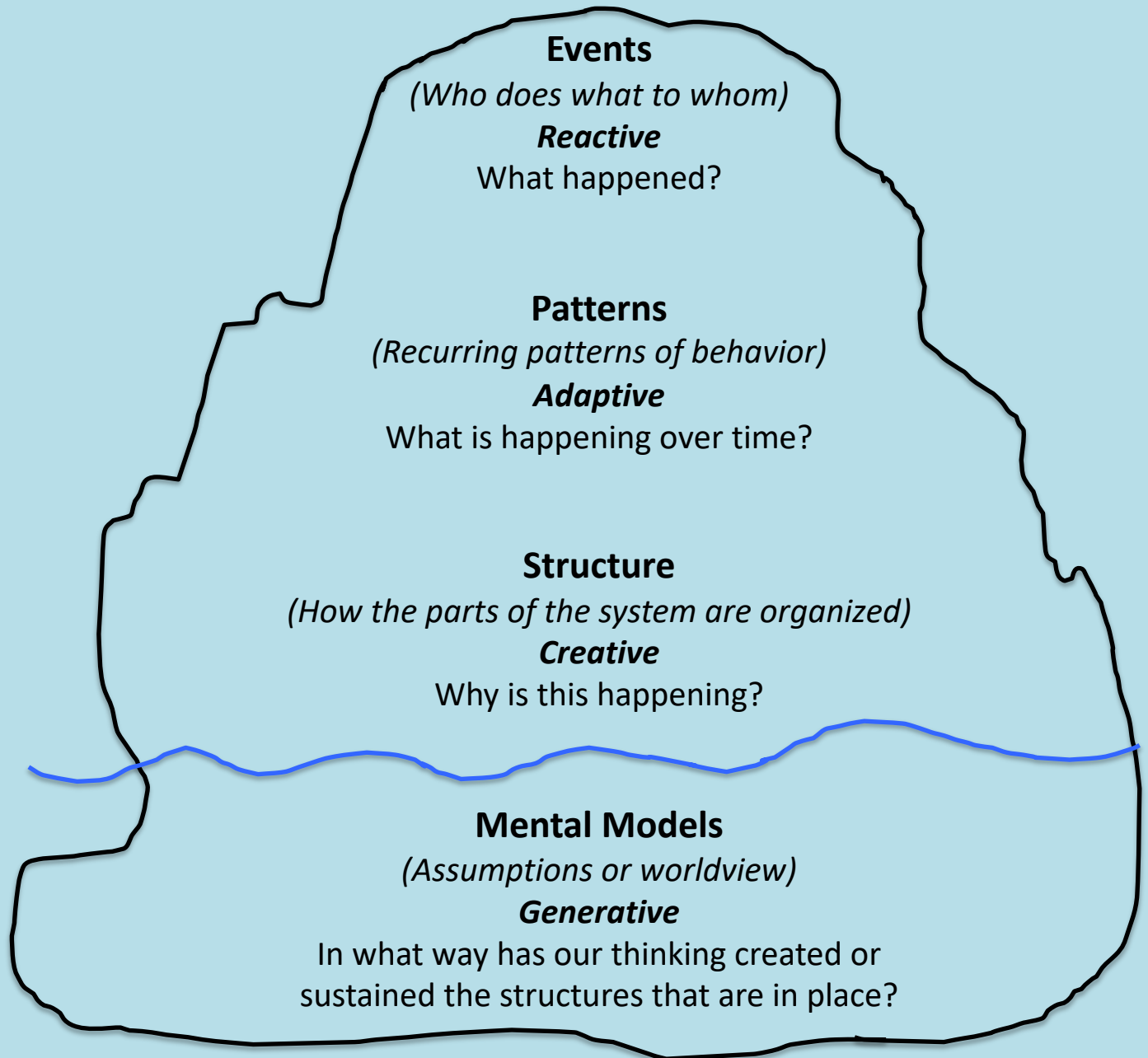
Formal Relationships (organization chart)

Goals & Targets

Laws, Rules & Regulations

Information Flow (feedback loops)

Schedule/Calendar

Rewards & Punishments

Policies & Procedures

Meeting Agenda

Personal Relationships

Job Descriptions

Shape of Conference Room Table

Material Flows

Expectations, Real & Perceived

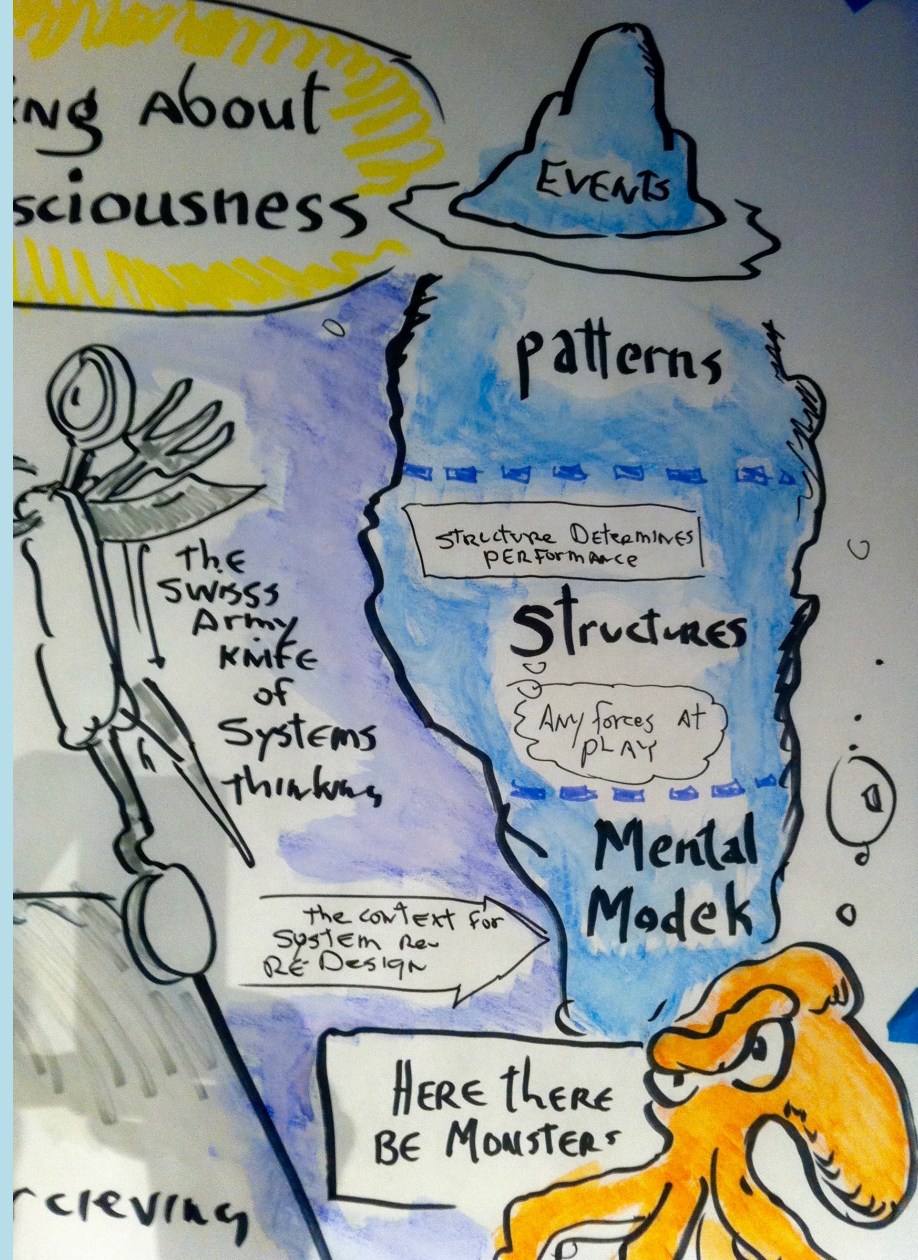Workspace Layout

System Structures

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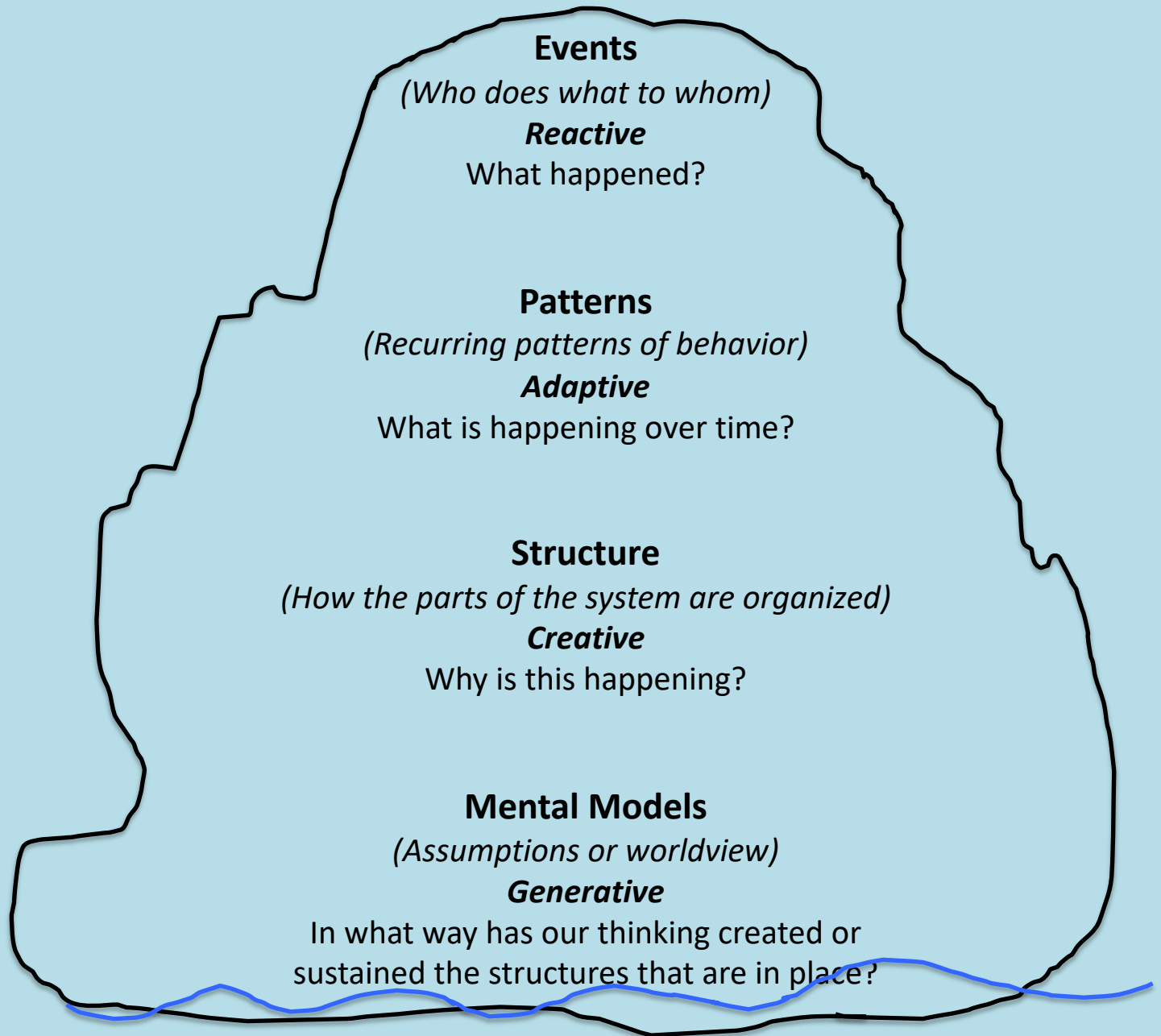
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What has been *happening over time*? What pattern(s) do you see? Draw a Behavior-Over-Time graph. (about 5 min)

What *structures* do you think might be contributing to this behavior or these behaviors, to the current situation? (about 5 min)

What might be some underlying *mental models* that enabled these structures to be designed or established? (about 5 min)

Everything is connected.

Everything changes.

Pay attention.