No One’s Future Has Been Written Yet

Futures Thinking Can Better Prepare You for Multiple Futures
ICfL’s engagement with Futures Thinking
2019 – learned about Futures Thinking from Peter Bishop at the Futures Festival
2020 & 2021 – Peter led Futures Thinking activities with SPLAT
2021 – Completed Professional Certification in Foresight @ University of Houston
Peter Bishop

2013 to present – Founded and directs Teach the Future

1983 to 2013 – Taught and directed MS program in Studies of the Future and Foresight programs at University of Houston
Our MISSION is to teach futures thinking skills to students and educators around the world and to inspire them to influence their futures.

Our ASPIRATION is that every student is prepared to navigate an uncertain world with agency to imagine and create their preferred future.
What are we doing in this session?

- Overview of what Futures Thinking is
  - History
  - Introduction
  - Framework
- Play a Futures Thinking game
- Call to action!
- Share resources
Is there only ONE future?
NO! There are MANY futures.
Multiple Literacies

Types of Literacies...

- Critical Literacy
  - Whose voice is being heard?
  - Whose is being silenced?

- Digital Literacy
  - What digital technology is used to locate, organize, understand, evaluate and create information?

- Media Literacy
  - Can you interpret techniques and understand how media messages are constructed?
  - How do media messages manipulate and affect societal development?

- Informational Literacy
  - What information is needed?
  - Can you locate, evaluate and use needed information effectively?

- Cultural Literacy
  - Do you understand text in relation to their contexts?

- Scientific Literacy
  - Do you know and understand scientific concepts and processes?

- Financial Literacy
  - Can you make informed judgments and effective decisions about the use and management of your money?
Do you think it’s important for community members to...

**Change**
Be aware of changes going on today?

**Somewhere**
Accept changes are headed somewhere

**Assumption**
Challenge assumption those changes are inevitable

**Uncertainty**
Think contingently and embrace uncertainty

**Influence**
Be optimistic, because we can influence the future

**Vision**
Set a vision and pursue relentlessly!
Futures History

145-90BC
Sima Qian
Theory of Cycles of Virtue

1902
H.G. Wells
Advocated for new academic study, methodology vs. speculation

Mid-1960's
Rachel Carson
“Silent Spring” changed way look at environment

2002
APF
Association of Professional Futurists founded
# The Actual Futures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected</th>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Preferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where we are headed</td>
<td>What might happen instead</td>
<td>What we want to happen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If everything stays exactly the same</td>
<td>Plausible if something less likely/ unexpected happens</td>
<td>Expected or preferred alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The result of conditions and trends</td>
<td>The result of events and issues</td>
<td>Result of vision, goals, plans, and actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has momentum</td>
<td>There are contingencies</td>
<td>We have agency</td>
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Cone of Plausibility

Past

Present

Vision (preferred future)

Alternative Futures

Limit of Plausibility

Expected

Limit of Plausibility

Source: Charles Taylor, Army War College
Thinking about the Future: Guidelines for Strategic Foresight,
Andy Hines & Peter Bishop
Think about the authors in different subject areas in your library...

...and their different perspectives on the future
Do they present the future as... inevitable, foggy, a game of chance, predictable, ...?

History
Statics
Anthropology
Sociology
Science Fiction

Engineering
Future Scenarios Types

**Discipline**
Order is deliberately coordinated or imposed

**Collapse**
Society as we know it has come apart

**Transformation**
A profound historical evolution has occurred

**Growth**
“Progress” has continued
Let’s play a game!
We'll be using Jamboard to Play

THE THING FROM THE FUTURE!

In a society characterized by... there exists a... having to do with... that produces...

Scenario

Theme/location

An object

A mood

What is it?
Tell us about your things from the future
Multiple Literacies

futures literacy?

Types of Literacies...

- **Critical Literacy**: Whose voice is being heard? Whose is being silenced?
- **Digital Literacy**: What digital technology is used to locate, organize, understand, evaluate and create information?
- **Media Literacy**: Can you interpret techniques and understand how media messages are constructed? How do media messages manipulate and affect societal development?
- **Informational Literacy**: What information is needed? Can you locate, evaluate and use needed information effectively?
- **Cultural Literacy**: Do you understand text in relation to their contexts?
- **Scientific Literacy**: Do you know and understand scientific concepts and processes?
- **Financial Literacy**: Can you make informed judgments and effective decisions about the use and management of your money?
Call to Action!
Some things you can do...in the future

Read

- Teach the Future Newsletter, https://www.teachthefuture.org/newsletter

Play

- Play a game
- Provide feedback
Resources

Learn

• Introduction to Futures Thinking (Free), https://www.coursera.org/learn/introduction-to-futures-thinking
• University of Houston Foresight Certificate, https://uh.edu/technology/programs/professional/fore/

Read

• Institute for the Future Newsletter, https://www.iftf.org/partner-with-iftf/subscribe/
• Futures Thinking Playbook, https://www.teachthefuture.org/books

Play

• Game info http://situationlab.org/futurething-print-and-play-edition/
• Full Teach the Future Catalog, https://library.teachthefuture.org/
• Games SPLAT tried
Thanks!

Do you have any questions?

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- Idaho Commission for Libraries
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