Teach the Future
comes to the Teen Library

Idaho Commission for Libraries

TEACH THE FUTURE

1 March 2023

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Sacramento CA

https://bit.ly/Teens2023

Objectives

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- **To recruit Idaho libraries into a social movement to introduce futures thinking to young people**

- **To briefly share the what, the why, and the how of doing so**

## Our Aspiration

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Every student is prepared
to navigate an uncertain world and
has the agency to imagine and
create their preferred future.

Our Mission

To provide materials and training
for teaching about the future
to students and educators
around the world and
to inspire them to influence their futures.

World Futures Day – Young Voices
1 March 2022
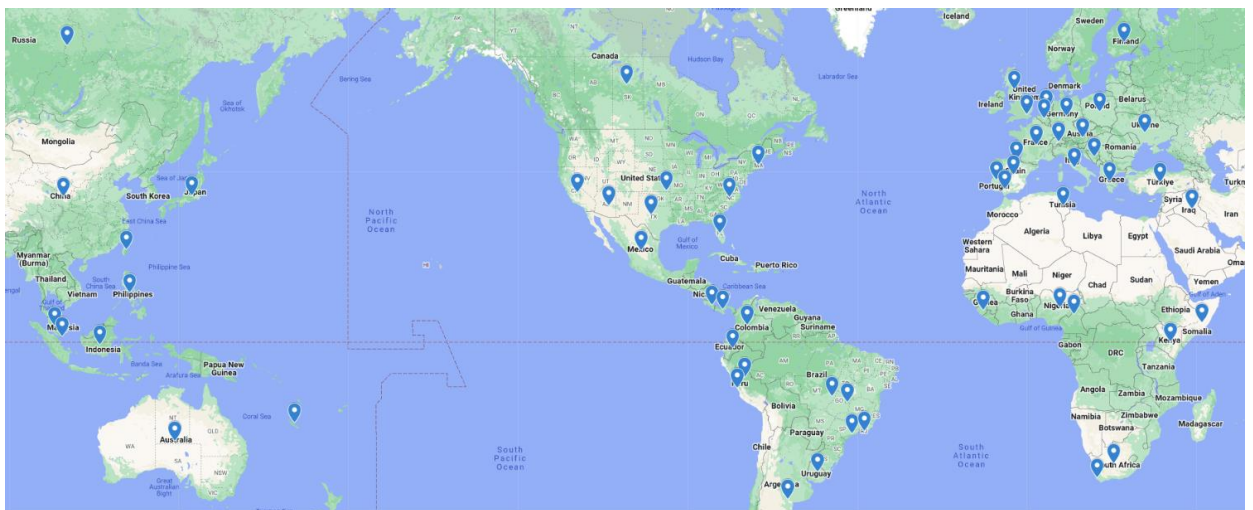
Key Questions

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1. **How much** about the future is in your libraries?

2. What do young people **expect** for the future?

3. Is teaching about the future **effective**?

4. Is it **hard** to learn?

5. Can we **try it**?

6. **Next steps**?

1. How much future in your libraries?

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1. How much about the future…

    i.   …in holdings?

    ii.   …in programs?

2. How much of a typical student's overall learning should be about the future?

1. How much future in your libraries? TEACH THE FUTURE

1. How much future in libraries? TEACH THE FUTURE

1. How much about the future is in your library?

    i.   In holdings?

    ii. In programs?

2. How much of a typical student's overall learning should be about the future?

3. Why is there a difference between what is and what should be?

2. What do students expect?

The Washington Post

Ipsos

This Washington Post-Ipsos poll was conducted online May 7-June 15, 2021, among a random national sample of 1,349 teens between 14 and 18 years old and 1,284 of their parents or guardians.

Compare your expectations with their findings

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Washington Post/IPSOS poll
P Bishop, 3/1/2023

How do you believe that 14-18 year olds would answer the following questions?

1. When you think about the future of the United States, do you feel confident that the best years are **Ahead** or Behind? Percent you believe answered 'Ahead': _____ %
2. Generally speaking, do you think NOW is a (**Good**) time or a (Bad) time for teenagers to be growing up? Percent that answered 'Good': _____ %
3. How likely is it that someday you will be **Rich**? Percent that answered 'Likely': _____ %
4. How likely is it that someday you will be **Famous**? Percent that answered 'Likely': _____ %
5. Regardless of whether you get rich, how likely is it that you will achieve **a good standard of living** as an adult? Percent that answered 'Likely': _____ %
6. Compared to your parents' generation, do you think, in general, your opportunities to succeed in life are **Better** or Worse? Percent that answered 'Better': _____ %
7. These days, would you say that getting a four-year college degree is **Worth** the cost, or Not? Percent that answered 'Worth the cost': _____ %

Washington Post/IPSOS Poll, May-June 2021 -- https://www.washingtonpost.com/context/may-7-june-15-2021-washington-post-ipsos-poll-of-teens/e33782f2-b8e5-45cd-9c8d-d1b13c117938/

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Expectations

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Questions	14-18 years olds (%)	Others (%)	Comparison
Best years are AHEAD	43	54	2005
GOOD time to be teenager	48	37	Parents
Likely to be RICH	51	63	2005
Likely to be FAMOUS	19	31	2005
Likely to have a GOOD standard of living	90	--	--
BETTER opportunities than parents	46	47	U.S. adults
College is WORTH the cost	58	59	Parents

Two different expectations

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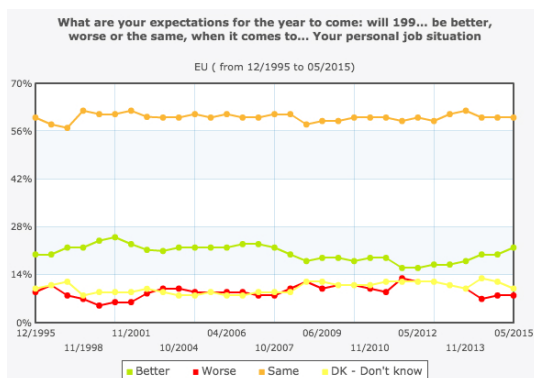
Personal future

Country's future

From Experience

From Media

Media expectations

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- Jean Twenge –
  - *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled--and More Miserable Than Ever Before,* 2014.
  - *iGen: Why Tody's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood…*, 2018.
- Lydia Denworth, *Scientific American -- "*Social Media Has Not Destroyed a Generation: New findings suggest angst over the technology is misplaced," 2019, a meta-analysis of over 200 studies.

Negative media bias

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- When asked, people said they **preferred good news**. On average, they said that the media was too focused on negative stories.
- Yet the same people often **chose stories with a negative tone** – corruption, set-backs, hypocrisy and so on – rather than neutral or positive stories. People who were more interested in current affairs and politics were particularly likely to choose the bad news. -- https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20140728-why-is-all-the-news-bad
- People **respond quicker** to negative words. In lab experiments, flash the word "cancer", "bomb" or "war" up at someone and they can hit a button in response quicker than if that word is "baby", "smile" or "fun" (despite these pleasant words being slightly more common). -- https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-9280.t01-1-01412
- Across 17 countries, from New Zealand to China, people on average showed **stronger emotional reactions** (measured by skin conductance and heart rate variability) to negative news stories. -- https://www.sciencefocus.com/science/why-do-news-reports-always-begin-with-bad-news/

…and it was always thus!

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They're lazy…

"Millennials are lazy and think basic tasks are beneath them." *A generation with a huge sense of entitlement, Daily Mail, 2017*

…self-obsessed…"They're out-of-touch hipsters who spend too much on coffee and too little on facial haircare. Many are spoiled, entitled, or both." *A Boss's Guide to Managing Bratty Millennials, Momzette, 2016*

"Whither are the manly vigour and athletic appearance of our forefathers flown? Can these be their legitimate heirs?" *Letter in Town and Country magazine republished in Paris Fashion: A Cultural History, 1771*

They think they know best…

"…their insistence that they are right despite the overwhelming proof that suggests they are not…"*Bret Easton Ellis in 'Generation Wuss', Vanity Fair, 2014*

"They think they know everything, and are always quite sure about it." *Rhetoric, Aristotle, 4th Century BC*

https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20171003-proof-that-people-have-always-complained-about-young-adults

3. Is teaching the future effective?

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What stakeholders want

P21 (Educational Leaders)

- 4 C's – Collaboration, Communication, Creativity, Critical Thinking
- Key Subjects
- Learning and Innovation Skills
- Information, Media, Technology Skills
- Life and Career Skills
- Social and Cross-Cultural Skills

Recruiters

- Ability to work collaboratively
- Adaptability
- Analytical thinking
- Communication skills
- Creative problem solving
- Decision making
- Leadership skills
- Motivation/drive
- Quantitative skills
- Strategic thinking

http://www.p21.org/our-work/p21-framework

https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2015-job-skills-report/

A Claim

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Learning about the future
not only supports the 4C's,
the P21 skills, and
Recruiters' preferences,
it requires them because
there are **no ready answers** (no facts)
about the future.
It's all about **learning and using skills**
for students and teachers alike.

Playbook Skills

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Futures Thinking Playbook		21st century skills
• Build a team	⟶	• Collaboration
• Select a topic	⟶	• Decision-making
• Gather information	⟶	• Research
• Identify the Expected future	⟶	• Cause-effect reasoning
• Challenge assumptions	⟶	• Critical thinking
• Develop Alternative futures	⟶	• Contingency thinking
• Write scenarios	⟶	• Creativity
• Present scenarios	⟶	• Communication
• Be a Hero	⟶	• Empowerment
• Reflect on the process	⟶	• Reflection

Outcomes

Futures is a vehicle to learn skills because there are no facts about the future. There is no way to "**retreat to the text**."

Anticipating and influencing the future is a **judgment** based on the **critical analysis** of data and **discussion** among diverse perspectives.

Teaching the future can launch a new era in education…

   i. Where **skills are more important** than mere information.

   ii. Where students learn to **use information**, not just to know it.

   iii. Where students are **engaged in the issues** of the day and the future.

4. Is it hard to learn?

Science

Social Science

History

Statistics

Adults

Images of

the Future

from School

Confused?

- Is the future **predictable** and **inevitable** or **unpredictable** or even **random**?
- Is the future **determined** for us or **chosen** by us?
- Is the future **understandable**?
- Is the future open to our **influence**?

#1 Understanding the Future is...

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... not ~~ONE~~,

... but MANY

The Actual Futures

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The Expected Future – What we expect

- Where we are headed.
- The future if everything continues as it has.
- The result of conditions and trends (momentum).

The Alternative Futures – What might happen instead

- What might happen instead.
- The set of plausible futures if something less likely or unexpected happens.
- The result of events and issues (contingencies).

The Preferred Future(s) – What we want

What we want to happen.

Either the expected or any of the alternative futures that is preferable.

The result of our vision, goals, plans and actions (agency).

Three Futures

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Foresight
FUNDAMENTALS

FUTURES	FORCES	THINKING	TECHNIQUES
Baseline (expected)	Constants Trends	Definite Scientific	Historical analogy Extrapolation
Plausible (alternative)	Discontinuities Surprises	Speculative Imaginative	Scenarios Simulation
Preferable (visionary)	Choices Images	Aspirational Empowered	Visioning Planning

A Revolution in Thought

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STEEP ⬅ WIDER ➡ Systems

DEEPER

Assumptions
Uncertainty
Alternatives

LONGER ➡

Implications
Values, Preferences

#2

Influencing the Future is...

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...not like CONSTRUCTION   ... but more like GROWTH

A Revolution in Action

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Empowered

Adaptable
Resilient

Collaborative

Foresight Questions

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What is happening today? – **Present**

What happened to make it that way? – **Past**

What do you expect to happen? – **Expected future**

What might happen instead? – **Alternative futures**

What do we want to happen? – **Preferred future(s)**

What are we going to do about it? -- **Plans**

Zone of Proximal Development
Scaffolding

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Aids to Scaffolding	Futures activities
Gaining and maintaining the learner's interest in the task.	Would you like to know about the future? Would you like to influence the future?
Making the task simple.	Foresight questions
Demonstrate the task.	Personal examples
Emphasizing certain aspects that will help with the solution.	Playbook lessons, tools

Teen Outcomes

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Skills	Futures
Media literacy	What the media is and what it's not.
Optimism	Balance between challenges and opportunities.
Self-efficacy	I can influence the future in my own way,
Resilience	…even when things do not go as I expect.

5. Can we try it?

www.futuremotions.nl/free-e-book/

Introduction to **Strategic Foresight**

Foresight in Business and Society, Syllabus

https://foresight.nd.edu/assets/128805/foresight_abr_syllabus_8_11v3.pdf

Video:
https://brandwein.org/shaping-our-future/
Text:
https://bit.ly/SOF_New

SHAPING OUR FUTURE
FACILITATOR'S GUIDEBOOK

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Futures Thinking Playbook
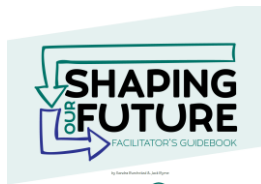
Review --
http://bit.ly/FTP_ISSU

Purchase – Amazon

Library of Teaching Materials

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TEACH THE FUTURE LIBRARY

Library | Cart | Checkout | My Account | Blog

Keywords:

Types:
☐ Activity
☐ Course
☐ Lesson
☐ Lesson Set
☐ Unit

Levels:
☐ Elementary
☐ Secondary
☐ College

Subjects:
☐ All
☐ Advisory
☐ Arts, Design
☐ English / Language Arts
☐ Foresight
☐ History
☐ Mathematics

A Framework for Brainstorming Products
Brainstorming artifacts from the future is meant to be both imaginative and useful. To help students thoughtfully consider what objects might fill in their future scenarios, teachers can use this structured framework for brainstorming product ideas. ...

Type: Activity   Level: College, Secondary   Subject: Arts, Design

An Educator's Guide: Realistic and creative tools for thinking about the future
Students' beliefs about the future often dictate their actions, mindsets, and sense of agency in the world. This activity allows educators and students to explore how they see the future, why they see it that way, and what it might be like to adopt a ...

Type: Activity   Level: College, Secondary   Subject: All

Big History Project: The Future
The Big History Project is not your average History course: it begins 13.7 billion years ago and ends in the future. Designed by scholars and educational experts, this free course takes a multi-disciplinary approach and highlights the enormous amount ...

Type: Course, Lesson   Level: Secondary   Subject: History, Science, Social Studies

www.library.teachthefuture.org

Time to try it!

1. **Self-awareness**, perspective, assumptions -- Views of the Future, identify the value, describe the downside

2. **Change**, signals, novelty – Scanning, share three strong signals (hits), three weak signals (hits), and which are problems vs opportunities

3. **Stories**, creativity, imagination – The Imagine Game

4. **Vision**, aspiration, legacy -- Appreciative Inquiry

5. **Creating change**, agency, empowerment – A Hero of the Future

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1. **Self-awareness**, perspective, assumptions   TEACH THE FUTURE

Futures Thinking Playbook

Play 01

Views of the Future

https://library.teachthefuture.org/product/**views-of-the-future**/

How do you see the Future?

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I'll give you two statements.

Review each statement.

Write down the **letter** of the statement

you **most agree** with.

What will happen in the future is **mostly set** and will follow the **path we are already on**. (A)

OR

The future holds **many possibilities** and is **not yet determined**. (B)

How do you see the Future?
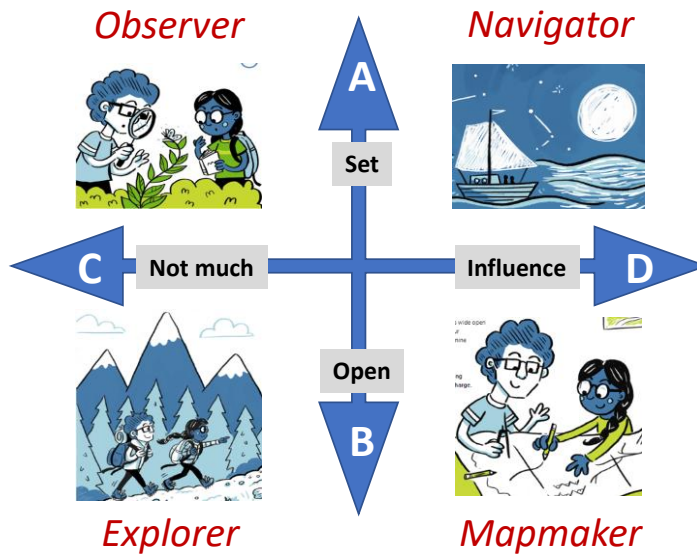
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Review each statement.

Write down the **letter** of the statement

you **most agree** with.

We each don't have much **individual influence** over what the future will be. **(C)**

OR

We each have a **great deal of individual influence** over how the future will be. **(D)**

Which are you?

Observer   *Navigator*

A

Set

C   Not much   Influence   **D**

Open

B

Explorer   *Mapmaker*

Each explains…

1. **Contribution** -- What they bring to a team?

2. **Downside** – How that can be overdone?

---

2. **Change**, new information, novelty

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Signals

Strong

An **Event** or
a new piece of **Information**
that is changing
or will **change the future**

Weak

An **Event** or
a new piece of **Information**
that could **change the future**

Share

Three <u>Strong</u> signals:

- Ongoing trends
- Announced plans

Three <u>Weak</u> signals:

- Potential future events
- Novel ideas

Which are problems? Which are threats? Which are both?

3. **Stories**, creativity, imagination

IMAGINE: THE GAME

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INSTRUCTIONS

DRAW

The object of the game is to develop the best scenarios given the parameters from the Spinning Wheel. The player with the best scenario in a round gets a point. The player with the most points at the end of the game is awarded all due honor and recognition! 😊

1. Place the Scenario template face up in the middle of the table.

2. Someone goes to https://www.teachthefuture.org/imagine, spins the Wheel and fills in the Draw (the criterion for the best scenario). They also spin to fill in the second sentence.

3. Each player writes the third and fourth sentences on paper or a device: 1) a Change that occurs in 2022, 2) the Impact of that Change, and 3) the Scenario that follows to 2032. (5 min or however long it takes)

4. Each player reads their Change, Impact and Scenario in turn, and the group decides (by consensus or vote) which Scenario fits the Draw criterion the best.

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It's 2032, and we are in a _____ society. Our _____
is/are
                                             (future type #1)   (place)

_____, and _____ is/are _____.
                     (future type #2)   (people and things)   (future type #3)

Back in 2022,_____. Because of that,
                                                    (change)

_____.
                                                    (impact)

Since then, _____

_____
_

_____
_
                                             (the scenario)

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EXAMPLE 1

It's 2032, and we are FACING HARD TIMES. Our RABBIT HOLES are STAGNATING and OUR BRAINS
are in CONFLICT. Back in 2022, POPULATION GROWTH led to DECLINING BIRTH RATE and CLIMATE
CHANGE. Since then, humans are unsure whether they should have children, creating conflict between
their brains and their instincts. Rabbit Holes, an underground transportation technique by which people
have been transporting goods since climate change and rising seas that have left ships stranded at sea and
some ports unusable, is proving to be an unsustainable solution due to different soil types and underground
infrastructure.

EXAMPLE 2

It's 2031, and we are EXPANDING. Our PARKS are STRETCHED THIN and PAPER production is
experiencing a BOOST. Back in 2022, the INCREASE IN WILDFIRES led to HAVING TO FIND OTHER
TREES TO CUT DOWN TO USE FOR RESOURCES. Since then, paper production companies have received
permission to cut down trees in people's backyards and neighborhood parks to meet the demand for paper
products. New conflicts are arising among people who want to save the trees, but the expanding economy
is proving a tough match for conservationists.

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4. **Vision**, aspiration, legacy

Positive questions bring out the best in people, inspire positive action, and create possibilities for positive futures.

-- Diana Whitney

Definitions

Appreciation
The act of recognizing the best in people or the world around us; affirming past and present strengths, success and potentials; to perceive the things that give life.

Inquiry
The act of exploration and discovery; to ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities.
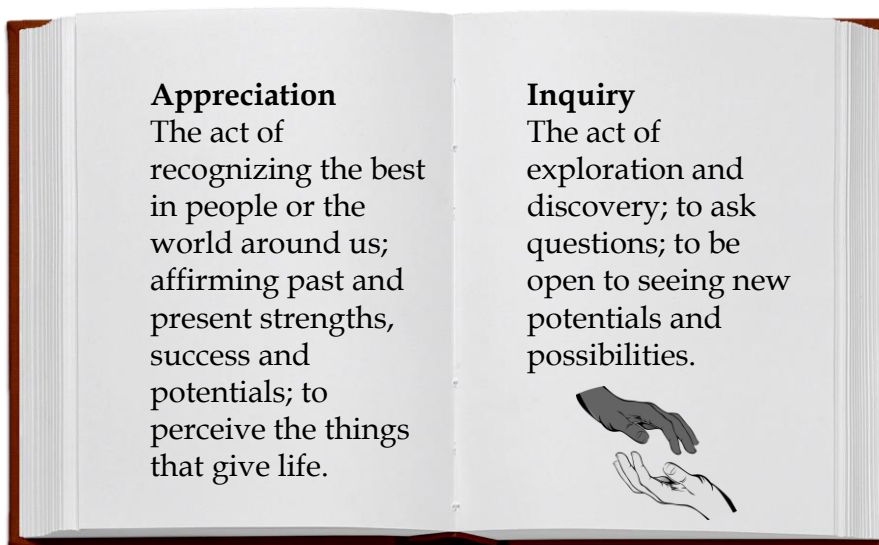
Three-Step Process

Appreciate
Identify "what has worked" for a person, a group or an organization.

Inquire
Find out the reasons for that success.

Envision
Use that success and those reasons to create further success.
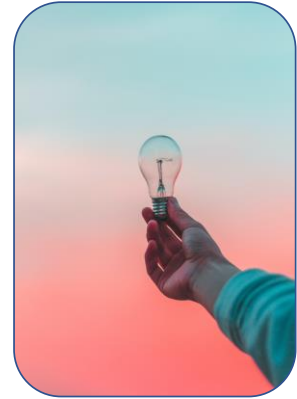
Step 1 – Appreciate ③

Select one of you to share and the other to listen (and keep time)

#1
Think of a **time** or an **incident** that you or your group was successful, reached a goal, or did something significant.

#2
Share that time or incident with your partner. At the end, your partner briefly paraphrases what he or she heard, and you verify that they got it right.

Step 2 – Investigate

1

Treating this list as a set of scientific data, identify the underlying factors that led to your success. Cast these factors into "provocative principles", such as "We were successful when we…"

2

Share those factors with your partner. Your partner briefly paraphrases what they heard, and you verify that they got it right.

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Step 3 – Envision

1

What are you doing now or what could you or your group now achieve if you acted according to these principles?What do you want to do with this experience and energy?

2

Share that vision or goal with your partner. Your partner briefly paraphrases your vision or long-term goal, and you verify that they got it right.

Take a breath, switch roles and go back to Step 1.

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Reflect

Play **15** # A Hero For the Future

5. **Creating Change**, agency, empowerment

In this play, you will decide what a hero for the future would do to bring about the future you'd like to see.

128   Reflect / **A Hero for the Future**

I am a hero for the future! My name is _____ and I am here to take a stand.

Today, it is the year _____ , and we have achieved _____

_____ .
(description of preferred future)

It wasn't easy! I had to stand up for _____
                                    (what you took a stand for in last play)

_____ . I faced many obstacles such as _____

_____ .
(obstacle to achieve the preferred future)

Thankfully, I had my _____ to help me
                      (imaginative use for Object #1)

along the way. My first step was to talk to _____
                                          (person who can influence the future that you can access)

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25

129

_____ and persuade them to _____
_____ (action step)

_____ .

Then, I had to travel to _____
_____ (location)

_____ and _____
_____ (action step)

_____ . I had no idea I would run into

_____ and have to
(obstacle)

_____ finish my journey. In the end, I was able to
(imaginative use for Object #2)

_____
(final action step!)

_____

_____ .

(5 MIN) **Gather** the entire group or small groups together and have everyone perform their stories, getting into the role of the hero for the future!

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Now that you've tried it…

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1. **Self-awareness**, perspective, assumptions -- Views of the Future, identify the value, describe the downside

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…Next Steps!

Deana Brown

Dylan Baker

Annie Gaines

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 – Earned Professional Certificates in Foresight
    at the University of Houston

2022 – SPLAT Futures Thinking room & presentations at ILA

2023 - SPLAT's Futures Thinking Toolkit

Toolkit Sections

1. Teens	2. Book Displays	3. Staff Development
Gettings Teens on Board	Display Ideas	Why use with staff
• Using the Playbook • Passive Programs • Active Programs	• Passive Displays • Active Displays	• Individual Activities • Group Activities • Department Activities
Resources		

What might this look like in your library?

ICfL Idaho Commission for Libraries

Brainstorm!

How might you use something you've learned about futures thinking?

- Have tables count off by 3's:
  - Table #1's >> Teens
  - Table #2's >> Book displays
  - Table #3's >> Staff development
- Brainstorm for 5 minutes
- Repeat, but using next topic 1 >> 2, 2>>3, 3>>1
- Share ideas with whole group

Objectives

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- To recruit Idaho libraries into a social movement to introduce futures thinking to young people
- To briefly share the what, the why, and the how of doing so

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We should teach the future as well as the past

Prepare students for tomorrow
Teach the Future today

https://www.teachthefuture.org/
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@teachfutures, #teachfutures