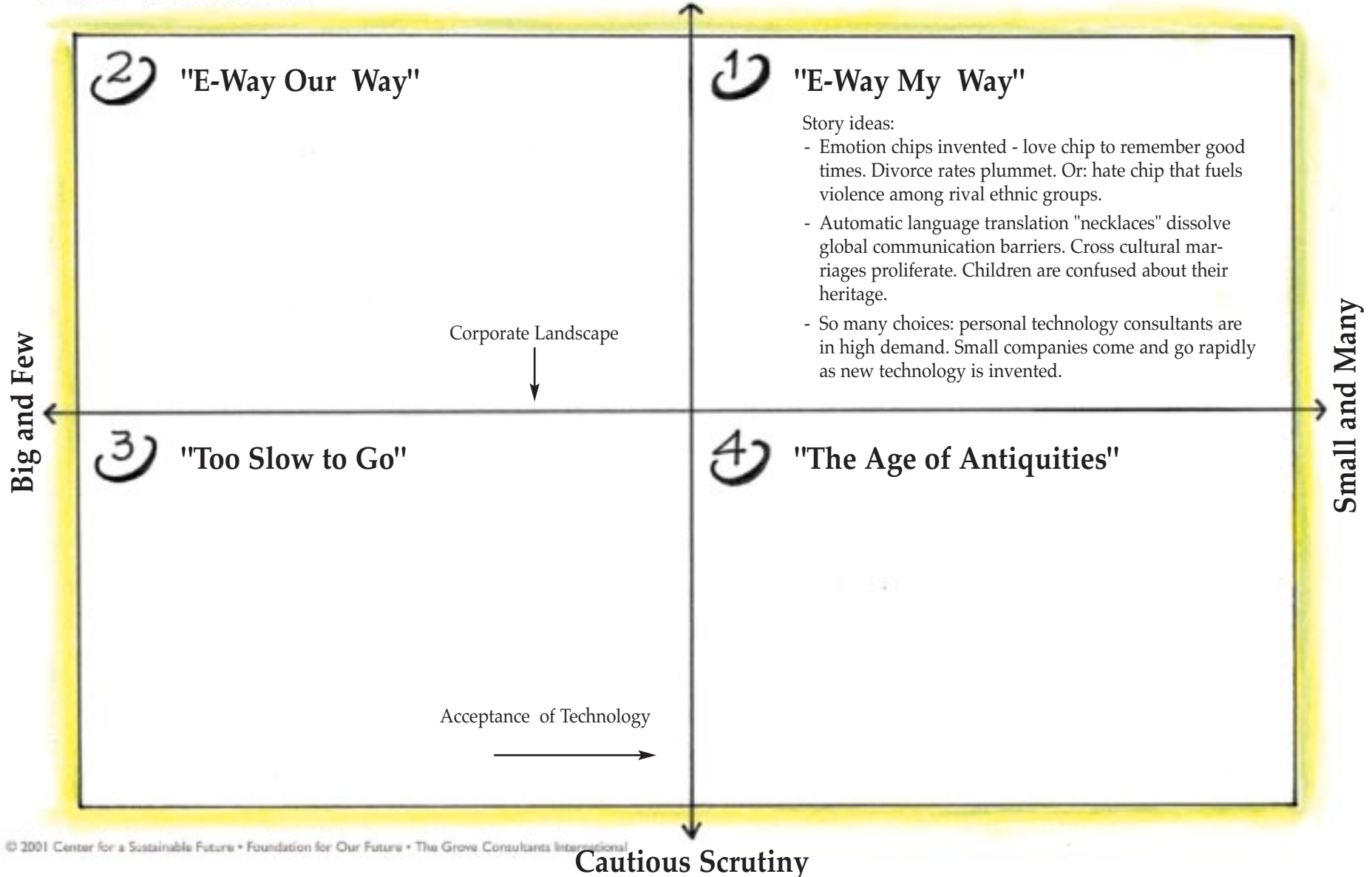


• What decisions can I make that will bring a better quality of life to me, my family and my community in the next twenty years?

# Four Futures

Quick to Embrace



# Write and Weave Stories Describing Future Scenarios

## 8.1 The Future Times Newspaper Template

**Purpose:** To take the ideas and storylines created in the previous step and work them into a series of stories that appear on the front page of the newspaper on a date many years into the future (use the date chosen at the beginning of the process).

**Materials needed:** Future Times Newspaper Templates (Appendix B), magazines and other print materials from which to clip pictures and graphic elements to use with their stories, access to the internet and a printer, scissors, glue, tape, paper, pens, markers, newsprint or flipchart paper.

**Time needed:** 3 hours, more if available.

### Learning outcomes:

- ~ integrate all our data gathering, analysis, decision making, and collaborating skills in developing a series of stories that describe the future they are responsible for in their small group.

### Learning objectives:

- ~ identify consequences of the alternatives;
- ~ make generalizations and draw conclusions;
- ~ recognize bias and stereotypes;
- ~ view problems or issues from multiple perspectives; and
- ~ communicate and collaborating with others in the problem solving process.

### How to:

1. Explain to students that they will work in the same small groups they were in when they fleshed out the four scenarios. They will use the Future Times Newspaper Template to write up the various stories they began to outline in the previous step. Each of the four groups should do one front page for their particular scenario (but they are not limited to one either).

They should include pictures that depict elements of the stories they are telling and choose some quotes from people in their future that capture the essence of life in that future. Use humor, drama and imagination to tell the stories. Ask each person to also write a short highlight about themselves and something they are doing in that future. They can use the “Today’s Highlights” column on the Future Times template.

2. Have students break into their small groups and give them time to work on their front pages.
3. When all the front pages are ready have students reconvene and share the results of their work with each other.

**Note:** You may want to arrange for students from other classes, parents, or other people attend the presentations, or perhaps there is a gathering associated with the work you are doing, like a luncheon or banquet, where the students could share their work.

4. In addition to the written stories, and if time permits, students should also be encouraged to develop poems, skits such as an evening news broadcast, and other forms of story telling that they would like to use to communicate their ideas for their future. It is very helpful to have an audience to whom the stories and skits can be presented – even if it is to the other members of the group.

## 8.2 Create A Scenario Story

**Purpose:** Crafting an individual story begins a process of personalization of the future to each learner in a unique and lasting way. It is through this personalization that the transformation takes hold that every one of us can “write” our own future, based upon the actions we take on a daily basis. The story becomes a metaphorical map for these students to begin to move through life with a much more sensitive compass. This activity is a capstone effort for the entire process.

**Materials needed:** A completed set of the four templates completed in step 8.1 In addition, access to all data from the templates utilized to develop the scenarios in Chapters 5-7. These materials could be posted in a central location for students to access, or compiled and copied, or stored on a project WWW site so that each student has easy accessibility to the information. Students should have access to a Word Processor and the Internet. Their final products can be printed and shared, posted on the local project WWW site or [www.ffof.org/](http://www.ffof.org/) site.

**Time needed:** 3-5 hours, more if available.

### Learning outcomes:

- ~ reflect on our experience during the Shaping Our Future process;
- ~ draw upon the individual scenario stories we create; and
- ~ use these stories to craft an essay that lays out a plausible future incorporating the specific scenarios into our future life’s story.

*...when you see everything written down, you say hey, this is real, this is my future, this may happen...*

~ Felipe

### Learning objectives:

- ~ reflect on external experiences and internalize them for personal growth.
- ~ integrate of a set of complex issues into a seamless story.
- ~ improve writing skills.
- ~ view problems or situations from multiple perspectives.
- ~ begin to link scenarios to action in one’s life.

### How to:

1. Instruct students to use the Future Times Newspaper templates that each of the teams completed in 8.1 and the data from chapters 5-7 of the process.
2. The students are now ready to begin creating their Scenario Story. It is best if this is done as a homework assignment in a place that invokes a creative mood. Each story should be developed to include vignettes of each of the four world’s described in each of the Newspaper templates. You may want to include each under separate sub-sections or weave the stories throughout your essay.
3. Ask the students to put themselves into the story. They could write it their essay as:
  - a.) a reflection projecting themselves into the future and looking back on this world in a historical narrative, or
  - b.) they may want to look forward from today and write about the world as you think it will unfold based on what you have learned from the four worlds described as a future fiction piece, or
  - c.) they could write is as a case study (personal strategic plan) identifying this now world and how it will impact on the decisions they have to make in order to reach their goals.

In each case students should include “lighthouses or markers” that are based on actual events that they could be observing for each of the four “worlds” to determine the direction the real world is evolving. It is in these markers, that they will learn to adjust their actions to maintain the path necessary to reach their goals. It is these lighthouses or markers that they will look for as they read the daily paper, watch the news or converse with their friends. They are the link to self-enlightened action!

To help students with their essay writing, provide them with the handout: “Madman, Architect, Carpenter, Judge: Roles and the Writing Process” by Betty S. Flowers (see Box).

**Note:** There is an opportunity to create an essay contest within your school, community, or youth organization. If you decide to do this, you will want to select a panel of independent judges and set limits as to the word count for the essays. We would suggest in keeping the essays to a maximum of 2500 words. You may want to define certain style parameters, font sizes, margins, type face etc. so as to have the judges identify most with the written words and not the layout and design. You should have the students understand that the essays need to be grammatically correct, with proper spelling, and punctuation. You may also want to identify some financial sources in the community that could contribute some cash scholarships for the winning essays, and try to have them printed in the local newspapers.



...we got to write stories on what we think is going to happen in the future and just the creativity part of it was something that I think excited many people and it was a good way to tie everything that we've been doing together.

~ Amit

## MADMAN, ARCHITECT, CARPENTER, JUDGE: ROLES AND THE WRITING PROCESS

by Betty S. Flowers

"What's the hardest part of writing?" I ask on the first day of class.

"Getting started," someone offers, groaning.

"No, it's not getting started," a voice in the back of the room corrects. "It's keeping on once you do get started. I can always write a sentence or two-but then I get stuck."

"Why?" I ask.

"I don't know. I am writing along, and all of a sudden I realize how awful it is, and I tear it up. Then I start over again, and after two sentences, the same thing happens."

"Let me suggest something which might help," I say. Turning to the board, I write four words: "madman," "architect," "carpenter," "judge." Then I explain:

"What happens when you get stuck is that two competing energies are locked horn to horn, pushing against each other. One is the energy of what I'll call your 'madman.' He is full of ideas, writes crazily and perhaps rather sloppily, gets carried away by enthusiasm or anger, and if really let loose, could turn out ten pages an hour.

"The second is a kind of critical energy-what I'll call the 'judge.' He's been educated and knows a sentence fragment when he sees one. He peers over your shoulder and says, 'That's trash!' with such authority that the madman loses his crazy confidence and shrivels up. You know the judge is right-after all, he speaks with the voice of your most impervious English teacher. But for all his sharpness of eye, he can't create anything.

"So you're stuck. Every time your madman starts to write, your judge pounces on him.

"Of course this is to over-dramatize the writing process-but not entirely. Writing is so complex, involves so many skills of heart, mind and eye, that sitting down to a fresh sheet of paper can sometime seem like 'the hardest work among those not impossible,' as Yeats put it. Whatever joy there is in the writing process can come only when the energies are flowing freely-when you're not stuck.

"And the trick to not getting stuck involves separating the energies. If you let the judge with his intimidating carping come too close to the madman and his playful, creative energies, the ideas which form the basis for your writing will never have a chance to surface. But you can't simply throw out the judge. The subjective personal outpourings of your madman must be balanced by the objective, impersonal vision of the educated critic within you. Writing is not just self-expression; it is communication as well.

"So start by promising your judge that you'll get around to asking his opinion, but not now. And then let the madman energy flow. Find what interests you in the topic, the question or emotion that it raises in you, and respond as you might to a friend-or an enemy. Talk on paper, page after page, and don't stop to judge or correct sentences. Then, after a set amount of time, perhaps, stop and gather the paper up and wait a day. "The next morning, ask your 'architect' to enter. She will read the wild scribbles saved from the night before and pick out maybe a tenth of the jottings as relevant or interesting. (You can see immediately that the architect is not sentimental about what the madman wrote; she is not going to save every crumb for posterity.) Her job is simply to select large chunks of material and to arrange them in a pattern that might form an argument. The thinking here is large, organizational, paragraph level thinking-the architect doesn't worry about sentence structure.

"No, the sentence structure is left for the 'carpenter' who enters after the essay has been hewn into large chunks of related ideas. The carpenter nails these ideas together in a logical sequence, making sure each sentence is clearly written, contributes to the argument of the paragraph, and leads logically and gracefully to the next sentence. When the carpenter finishes, the essay should be smooth and watertight.

"And then the judge comes around to inspect. Punctuation, spelling, grammar, tone-all the details which result in a polished essay become important only in this last stage. These details are not the concern of the madman who's come up with them, or the architect who's organized them, or the carpenter who's nailed the ideas together, sentence by sentence.

Save details for the judge.

# Create a Shaping Our Future Action Plan

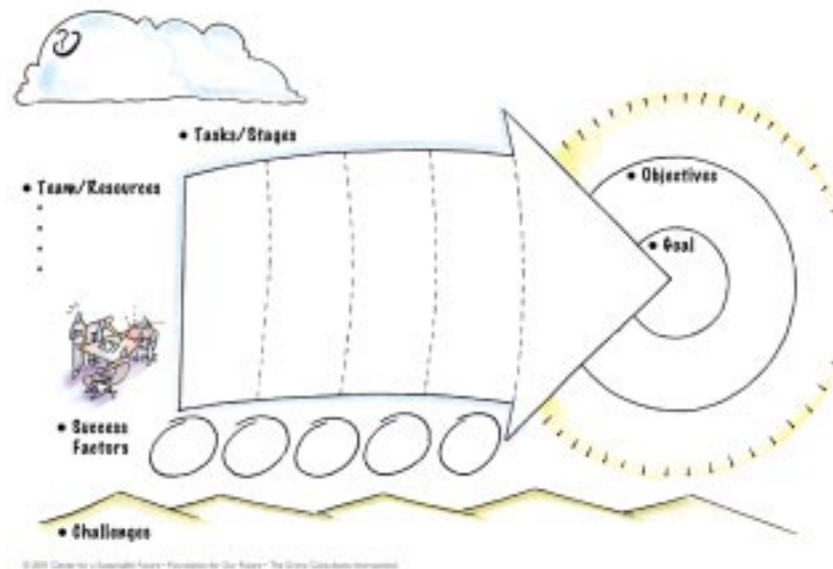
**Purpose:** This is the end of the Possibility Based Learning process – and the beginning of a new cycle for the participants. This is the stage where they go from exploring the future to developing a plan for taking actions that will lead to a more sustainable future.

We have devoted a lot of good energy and effort into creating alternative versions of the future. In the process of doing so we have sorted out forces that we believe are certain, and less in our control, from those that are uncertain and over which we can exercise some control. The question we face at this point is: What will we do to steer the future toward some desirable, positive outcome? How can we affect the forces in our control to bring about changes that will improve our well being in the world?

Our scenarios of the future give us an advantage: they can help us develop strategies that could work in two or more of the four futures we explored. Such strategies have a higher probability of succeeding than strategies that assume only one kind of possible future. So, as you work on these action plans keep asking “How would this work if the future was like each one of our four scenarios?”

Depending on the time available and the nature of the group, the action plan could be something the whole group will create and carry out, or it may be something that each person does for his or her own future. Or, each of the four groups that have been working together could choose its own action plan. Each person/group could share their plan and the groups could keep in touch with each other over time to see how each other’s plans are going.

## Shaping Our Future Action Plan



**Time needed:** 60 minutes to define the plan. Longer to implement it.

**Materials needed:** Shaping Our Future Action Plan Template (Appendix B), paper, pens, markers, tape, newsprint or flipchart paper.

### Learning Outcomes:

- ~ generate, classify and evaluate ideas, objects, and/or events in unique and/or new ways in order to construct original projects that illustrate solutions to real-life problems or concerns.

### Learning Objectives:

- ~ select one outcome from the student-created scenarios that the students are passionate about making happen; and
- ~ brainstorm and plan actions and resources that will have to occur to achieve the outcome/goal, and follow-through on the plan to implementation.

### How to:

1. Explain to students that they will select one outcome/goal from their scenario that they would like to make happen. They will use the Shaping Our Future Gameplan Template to create their Shaping Our Future Action Plan.
2. Ask students to share ideas for a goal that they want to achieve with regard to making a better future. On a flipchart record all the possibilities. Choose one or more by consensus (you may want to use the Nominal Group Technique in Appendix A). If you choose to do more than one Action Plan, have the groups break out and work separately.
3. Have students brainstorm what has to happen to realize the outcome/goal. Explain that they will use the Shaping Our Future Template to arrange the actions, events, and/or resources that will have to occur to achieve the outcome/goal.

For example, students might decide to create a nature center on the school grounds. See completed Shaping Our Future Action Plan Template for an example.

I think we do have an opportunity  
to shape our future

~ Nittaya

The bad things. When we think about the bad things that might happen in the future, we can prevent that, we can think of ways to prevent those things from happening and when it comes to good things, we can look forward to it.

~ Nittaya



## EXAMPLE

### Goal

Establish a nature center on the school campus

### Objectives

- Provide a place where teachers and students can study natural systems and carry out science and nature projects.
- Cultivate flowers, shrubs and trees that can be used for plantings around the school grounds.
- Make the nature center so attractive that community members will help support it and volunteer to work there.

### Team Resources

Who else do we need to have on board to achieve our goals?

- Local garden club to provide experience and volunteers and fundraising opportunities;
- A nursery to provide expert advice on native plants and stock plants, shrubs, and trees for the nature center.
- Our school's Parent Teachers Association to help with publicity and support from the school administration.
- A local landscape architect to help design the center

**Now I feel like I have more power because I get to decide. This is what I want to do - change the future.**

~ Nittaya

### Tasks

(These could be broken down into stages specifying what has to happen 1st, 2nd, and so on.) We recommend that a person's name be placed beside each task.

- Find volunteers to coordinate the effort
- Contact plant nurseries to see if they will donate plants
- Research native plants
- Compile a list of best practices in regards to nature centers
- Visit other school-based nature centers
- Draw up a master plan for the nature center

### Success Factors

- Get OK from the administration
- Raise the Funding
- Faculty member to act as the point person for the project

### Challenges

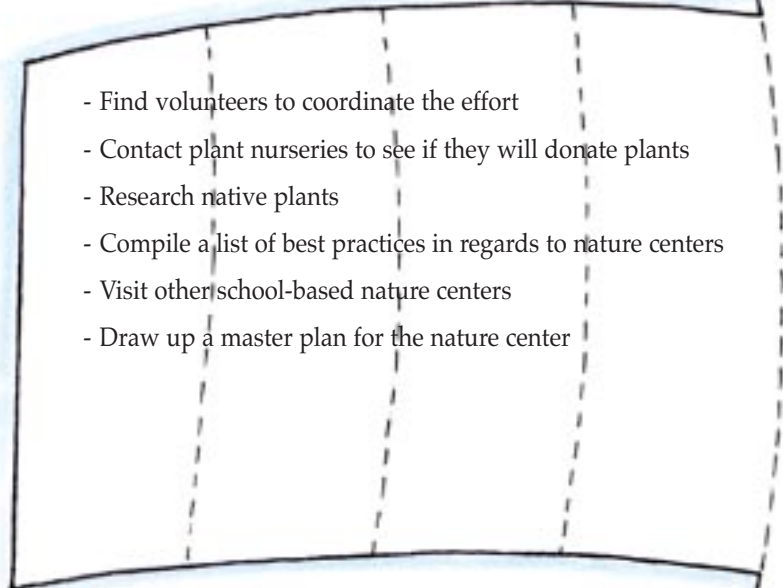
- Funding
- Community Support
- Ample supply of volunteer help
- Secure a location for the center
- Partners that will help with the center

# Shaping Our Future Action Plan

Example of Completed Shaping Our Future Action Plan Template

• What decisions can I make that will bring a better quality of life to me, my family and my community in the next twenty years?

## • Tasks/Stages



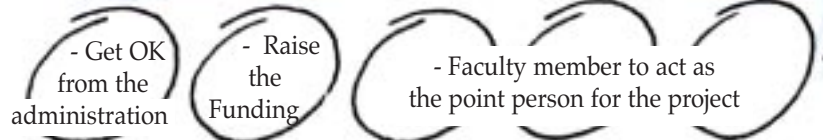
## • Team/Resources

- Local garden club to provide experience and volunteers and fundraising opportunities
- A nursery to provide expert advice on native plants and stock plants, shrubs, and trees for the nature center
- Your school's Parent Teachers Association to help with publicity and support from the school administration



## • Success Factors

- A local landscape architect to help design the center



## • Objectives

- Provide a place where teachers and students can study natural systems and carry out science and nature projects.

## • Goal

Establish a nature center on the school campus

- Make the nature center so attractive that community members will help support it and volunteer to work there.

- Cultivate flowers, shrubs and trees that can be used for plantings around the school grounds.

## • Challenges

- Funding
- Community Support
- Secure a location for the center
- Partners that will help
- Partners that will help
- Ample supply of volunteer help

# Celebrate Our Accomplishments

Acknowledge and celebrate the good work we have all done and the new relationships and understanding that have developed during the process. We can do this in any number of ways from formal to informal: have a banquet or potluck for all who participated, give certificates of achievement as part of a graduation ceremony, ask each person to reflect on and share their thoughts (using the 3-2-1 activity) record what each person says and provide a written summary for the group, take a group photo and send one to each participant.

I think everyone has power. If you want to do something, you want to bring about change, you put your mind to it and I think anyone can do anything!

~ Amit



# Share Our Work and Plans With Others

The Foundation for Our Future has a website where you can:

- ~ get updates to this guidebook;
- ~ use interactive electronic versions of the graphic templates in this guidebook to record and print your work;
- ~ share the scenarios and stories you have created and see the stories that others have created;
- ~ learn more about how other groups are using scenarios to shape a future that is more peaceful, just, sustainable and prosperous.

The website of the Foundation for Our Future website is at <http://www.ffof.org>. We encourage you to use it and please let us know your ideas for making it better.



# Appendix A.

## Process Tools for Facilitators

The process tools described below have different uses. Collectively, they provide the facilitator with an assortment of activities that can help:

- ~ if the process needs some redirecting or to get “unstuck” or to find a different approach to making decisions.
- ~ to get useful feedback from participants that can be used to monitor progress and make adjustments in the process.
- ~ to stimulate a richer picture of what the future may be.

### A.1 Plus - Minus - Interesting (PMI)

**When to use:** This technique is useful if you notice that the participants are too narrow in the ideas they are generating, or if the tone of the conversation has become one-sided (pessimistic, superficial, overly optimistic, etc.) or if one person or group has become too dominant in the process. It can help restore some balance.

**Time needed:** 15 minutes.

**Materials needed:** Newsprint paper, easel, tape, markers, paper and pencils or pens.

**Learning outcomes:**

- ~ demonstrate confidence, knowledge and techniques in evaluating complex problems by viewing them from various perspectives.

**Learning objectives:**

- ~ learn to suspend judgment;
- ~ develop lateral thinking skills; and
- ~ increase our ability to recognize plausible and or logical ideas, distinguish relevant from irrelevant, and examine the adequacy of data.

Edward De Bono developed PMI. It will help students think about an issue, idea, or decision with three distinct lenses, the “plus” lens, the “minus” lens, and the “interesting” lens.

**How to:**

Before you begin explain to the students that this session will be done in a different way.

1. On a piece of newsprint paper where all can see it write the question or topic under discussion as a heading. Then make three columns labeled “Plus”, “Minus” and “Interesting”.
2. Ask students to brainstorm the pluses about the idea, issue, concern or decision that is under discussion. Ask them to each quietly reflect and then write down their thoughts.
3. Have each student provide one plus. Write it down in the plus column on the newsprint and then go on to the next student until you have gone to each student. Start a second round and continue until all ideas are up.
4. Repeat the process for the minuses and for what is interesting about the issue, idea, concern or decision.
5. As a group decide which of the items on the PMI list should be carried over into the next step of the process. You may want to use the voting process described in the Nominal Group Technique if there is a lack of consensus.

## A.2 Nominal Group Technique

**When to use:** This is a good technique if the group is having a hard time coming to consensus about a question or decision that needs to be made, or is having difficulty prioritizing a list of items.

**Time needed:** 30-45 minutes.

**Materials needed:** Red, yellow and green stick-on dots (or colored markers), newsprint, markers, paper and pens.

### Learning outcomes:

~ select ideas according to predetermined criteria.

### Learning objectives:

~ rank ideas individually and within a group; and

~ increase our ability to recognize plausible and or logical ideas, distinguish relevant from irrelevant, and examine the adequacy of data.

### How to:

1. Clarify the issue or question that is being considered and write it down on the newsprint where all can see it.
2. Ask students to each silently brainstorm responses and write them down.
3. Record each person's ideas on the newsprint in front of the group. Post the newsprint on walls surrounding the group.
4. Discuss each of the participant's ideas for clarification of their meaning.
5. Ask students to vote on each of the items on the newsprint by placing a dot or dots by the idea or ideas they select. The group predetermines the criteria for selection. For example: if we are trying to decide which driving forces are important which are certain and which are uncertain. Students can place a red dot on the driving forces they feel are most important to their key question. They will place a green dot by the driving forces they feel are most certain, and a yellow dot by the driving forces they feel are most uncertain in relation to their key question.
6. Tally up the vote and organize the list based on the results. Use the results.

**Note:** You can vote more than once if needed.

### A.3 “3-2-1” End of Day Check - In

**When to use:** This is a feedback tool to give participants the opportunity to “check-in” on where they are, ask questions about the day and express needs they have. Facilitators can use this information to get a better sense of where the group is and what particular needs individuals have.

**Time needed:** 15 minutes.

**Materials needed:** Newsprint, markers, paper and pens.

#### Learning outcomes:

- ~ reflect on the day’s experience and share thoughts about where we are in terms of the value of the process.

#### Learning objectives:

- ~ summarize and categorize learning;
- ~ develop our inquiry skills; and
- ~ better articulate what kind of help is needed to become a stronger learner and participant.

#### How to:

1. Write the questions below on a newsprint or chalkboard:
  - What are three things you learned today?
  - What two questions do you have?
  - What one thing do you need?
2. Ask each participant to fill out a piece of paper answering each of the questions. Tell them it is OK if they have no answer for some of the questions.
3. Read over the responses and summarize. Report back to the group when time is available about what they are learning, what questions they have and your responses to them, and what needs you can address and how that will be done.

### A.4 What did you like best about today? What would you have changed?

**When to use:** This is also an end-of-day or periodic check-in tool to get useful feedback from participants. It’s shorter and simpler than 3-2-1.

**Time needed:** 10 minutes.

#### Learning outcomes:

- ~ reflect on the day’s experience and share thoughts about where we are in terms of the value of the process.

#### Learning objectives:

- ~ strengthen inquiry skills; and
- ~ articulate what kind of help is needed to become a stronger learners and participants.

**Materials needed:** Newsprint, markers, paper and pens.

#### How to:

1. Write the two questions above on a newsprint for all to see.
2. Ask students to write their responses to the two questions above on a piece of paper.
3. Collect the papers. Read and summarize the responses.
4. When time is available share your summary, making sure to address what changes you will make as a result of their suggestions and which ones you won’t, or can’t, and why.

## A.5 Visioning Activity

**Purpose:** To stimulate student's imaginations and to get them more into a "future perspective". This activity can be used to help students imagine a particular future scenario, or a preferred future (which you might use during the "Create Action Plan" step).

**Learning outcomes:**

~ use our imaginations to create clear visions of a particular future.

**Learning objectives:**

~ think imaginatively about the future.

**Time needed:** 30 minutes.

**Materials Needed:** markers, crayons, colored pencils glue, colored paper, other materials with which students can represent the images, thoughts and ideas they had during the visioning exercise.

**How to:**

1. Explain to students that the visioning activity is used to help them create robust, vivid, descriptive images of a particular (or a preferred future) that will stir them to action. When students have a fully formed vision of a preferred future it will serve as a "pull", inspiring them to identify and take actions that will continually move them closer to their preferred future.
2. Do the visioning activity as a whole group even though you have assigned students to one of the four future scenarios. Advise them to keep their particular scenario characteristics in mind when envisioning the future.
3. Before you begin the visioning exercise you might want to set the stage so that the students' visions will be as vivid and fully fleshed out as possible. Some suggested ways to set the tone for the exercise are as follows:
  - darken the room,
  - play quiet soothing music in the background

4. Read the Visioning Script below.

**Note:** It is very important to read the script very slowly so that the students have time to form clear images in their mind's eye.

5. When you have completed the reading allow students a minute or two to silently reflect on their vision. Then ask them to draw a picture that illustrates it. Provide markers, crayons, colored pencils, glue, colored paper any and all supplies that will enhance their ability to capture their vision. When they have completed the picture of their vision have them write email headers, short story titles, newspaper headlines that clearly describe what life is like in their future. Prompt them to consider the following:

- work
- environment
- politics
- technology
- family life
- leisure time
- community
- economics
- education