

## Strategic Design Approach – Teaching the Future

### Strategic Design Approach

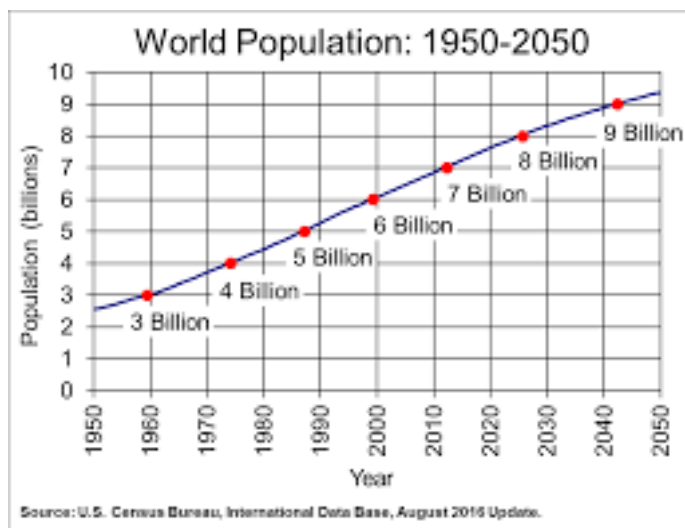
The brief from my perspective asked us to explore how pleasure could be used as an agent to bring about social innovation and social justice for a real world social conflict (problem). How could we use a strategic design approach by using existing social resources that might be able to be reimagined and using those resources to achieve the social change that is the benefit for humanity.

### Why? 21<sup>st</sup> Century conflict challenges

Our education system teaches history but not the future. Education currently is well suited to a world of little change.

A key driver in change is speed by which information moves around the world. The digital revolution has put the ability to create and transmit information into the hands of more people than ever before.

So the problem I am proposing is are we training the next generation of leaders to responsibly handle the hard decisions and the complex issues and demands of a future they will live in. Are we preparing students for that reality? Many schools today are hardly different than those of a hundred years ago. Much of our society assume that the future will



be business as usual just bigger and better.

But the world is about change and change is the future and this is occurring at a much rapid pace. As Alvin Toffler said in 1970 that this generation would be the first to routinely live in its own future, what he called "future shock".

Learning to deal with the future requires learning how to manage uncertainty and conflict.

So as our world accelerates with the world population anticipated to reach 9.9 Billion, by 2050, growing evidence of the planet warming and our natural resources diminishing rapidly how we think and act now will impact our way of life in our life time and for children who are not even born yet. So how do we prepare future leaders so they can deal with the future when there is so much uncertainty?

Bishop and Strong also describe the pace of the world has quickened, driven by fast-paced information flows. Flattened organisations, net-worked workers and collaborative technologies facilitate flexibility and quick response to the information age. As the world environment changes so do the skills of success.

The current model of public education was created to prepare students for the industrial age as I have outlined the world has become more complex and uncertain and although this is acknowledged in much of today's media, there is a sense of helplessness and a belief that tomorrow will be what it will be. In other words we will have little say in our fast approaching future.

It is my belief and passion that we need to help the next generation of leaders to learn new skills to better anticipate, to better manage uncertainty and ambiguity and ultimately how to create the changes necessary to bend the future to more preferable outcomes for all of society.

### **Vision - Teaching the Future**

So what does this mean. My initiative is to develop and facilitate workshops with secondary school students and their teachers to help develop a capacity for strategic foresight which Assistant Professor Stuart Candy suggests will be essential in the 21st century of education (Candy 2013).

It is also about giving them new skills and ways of thinking to better understand and articulating futures that have at their heart a vision of social justice, environmental and economic sustainability and widespread cultural change to foster intellectual public discourse (Fontaine 2016).

It is more about challenging our assumptions about the future so we can make better decisions today. It is about better managing uncertainty by helping today's students who will be our future leaders develop a wider deeper and longer perspective of the future.

In many ways it is about the survival of humanity. If our society continues to be driven by the gratification of short termism and not develop social foresight skills to anticipate probable futures than we may all find us in a world that we do not want or like.

### **Strategic Vision**

To initiate, boost, support, strengthen and replicate the teaching of strategic foresight skills into Australia's educational system by 2020. I have specifically chosen not to define at this stage what this may look at this moment, preferring to be the agent that helps this design emerge as it is co-created by its stakeholders.

However, my initial task is to trigger, promote and facilitate the development of foresight workshops at my children's school.

## Pleasure

The use of pleasure in this design approach is about energy to create movement on first our problem and then potential responses. The manifest suggests a number of pleasure typologies. Initially I chose media and this evolved to include the pleasure of drugs. After further iterations, and reflection I felt that all suggestions could be used in the intervention and so a hybrid of both could be used.

So in terms of my design how or what could we use to create the experience of pleasure in our everyday life that could contribute to transformation of the problem I have posited.

The pleasure I wanted to create was something that was not artificial or drug induced. It was a feeling a sense of purpose and a value meme that creates a more holistic and systems approach, where the pleasure of being able to influence change was its own pleasure. Where increasing the level of awareness and promoting discourse is valued more than money, power and status. An area of human development that Clare Graves described as the Yellow 'integrative' Systemic VMeme (Beck and Cowan 1996).

Clare Graves, discovered vMememes also known as Spiral Dynamics. His research discovered eight human developmental levels that have been defined so far. His work showed that each level displayed different levels of values or what he described as the mature individual, this can be seen in personal growth, organizational development and cultural/political change (Cowan 1996).

The other area I wanted to introduce in the Foresight workshop was the work of Viktor Frankl who was an Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist as well as a Holocaust survivor. Frankl was the author of "Man's Search for Meaning". His work was around our ability to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way. When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.

So the pleasure I hope to introduce to them is to find their life's true purpose. Although we live in a world of materialism and monetary wealth that paradigm cannot be sustained on a finite planet. The pleasure of learning new skills and awareness that we all have the ability to make a difference in how our world could be in the future.

Richard Neville, who recently passed away once said, "The revolution that we seek is in the mind", if this can be achieved at an individual level this might evolve where enough individuals change how we do things which in effect changes culture and what as a society we value.

The foresight workshops should also be designed around pleasure. A particular activity will be described in more detail about how we can combine art, games and theory in an approach that can be fun and creative.

Finally, the other area of pleasure and a constant reservoir of energy is the enjoyment of those who help design and implement this design initiative and the pleasure and learnings that the designer can experience as well.

### **Strategy and Approach**

Strategy: Relearning (to make the world another way). In general, education has been well suited to a world of little change. Change is happening so fast that this generation will live in its own future – remember FUTURE SHOCK. Are we preparing students for that reality? Schools today are hardly different than those of a hundred years ago. Perhaps a few more computers, but at its core the structure & process of education remains the FACTORY MODEL geared to the top-down transmission of the knowledge accumulated over previous generations.

Given the unprecedented rate of social change, the exponential growth of the digital universe, the proliferation of new technologies, how useful is yesterday's knowledge to a generation that will routinely live in its own future. To cope with change, we need to understand change and to think systematically about anticipating and managing change and its implications on the unfolding future.

So my plan is to create a foresight workshop that can be taught to year 9 to 12 students as follows:

The workshop focus is on developing the capacity of the participants to think about the kinds of futures we might find ourselves in and prepare our minds to explore these exemplary kinds of worlds. The workshops are concerned with three kinds of future scenarios: The Possible, the Probable and the Preferable – what could happen, what we think is likely and what we prefer.

But we need to remember thinking about the future is difficult. Our minds are very plastic and adaptable but the ability to adapt is not the same as the ability to anticipate. And the future does not exist, but we tend to think of it in terms of the past. Keeping this in mind, our initial strategy is to introduce both educators and students to the following rubric.

- The value of foresight approaches
- Environmental scanning – identifying trends and drivers
- Challenging assumptions – learning to challenge the existing state of affairs our unquestioned assumptions
- How to get started with using foresight

## **Pedagogy Approach (how to best teach for this design)**

### Facilitation

My approach is twofold, initially the workshop will be delivered in a facilitated manner. At the heart of facilitation is the process of helping people to explore, learn and change. The facilitator guides people to understand the common objectives and provides support and energy to create an environment that is conducive to learning so new thinking can be explored.

From my perspective the facilitator should remain neutral and mindful of their own cognitive biases. Charles Duhigg, also suggests facilitators need to be skilled at intuiting how others felt based on their tone of voice, their expressions and other nonverbal cues to help understand how people are feeling and thinking (Duhigg 2016).

This all adds up to creating a safe environment to allow people to feel safe so they can explore their beliefs, values and worldviews so that they can be explored, challenged and better understood about how they are making of a situation.

### Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning is the process of learning through experience and is more specifically defined as learning through reflection on doing. Hands-on learning is a form of experiential learning but does not necessarily involve reflecting on the product (Wikipedia).

Experiential learning is a basis for bringing change in how we think and what we do.

Learning to reflect and to develop reflexivity. It is a process as basis for developing group consciousness raising.

So my approach to the introduction of teaching foresight is through a pedagogy of experiential learning as developed by David A. Kolb.

Professor Stuart Candy has devised many pedagogical innovative processes to bridge the gap between abstract thought and concrete experience. One example that could be used as a process to help people learn as a team about the future is his Time Machine/Reverse Archaeology method which creates and an experience or artifact from the future so people can generate scenarios of futures to come. This helps take people into alternative futures and to create new futures other than the accepted/expected future (Candy 2013).

Another is his brain storming card game called the “The thing from the future. In this game it allows us to create a framework to help us think about the future which allows us to consider and generate many scenarios. This allows us to think of the kinds of futures we can find ourselves in and prepare our minds to explore these exemplary kinds of worlds (Shah 2015).

The open space technology process is also a unique process that allows participants to slow down. Open space technology (OST) is a fun self-organizing method that is an alternative to facilitation. It is an approach to purpose-driven leadership but begins without any formal agenda, beyond the overall purpose or theme.

To learn to listen, reflect and examine their own assumptions and beliefs by inquiring as to why others are thinking the way they do. This allows peoples mental models to become transparent and explored but in a process purposefully designed to slow people from speaking and jumping in (down loading their own thoughts) without first reflecting on why they might be thinking this way. This can be a useful collaborative exercise that helps people to connect, learn to trust and share their feelings and aspirations.

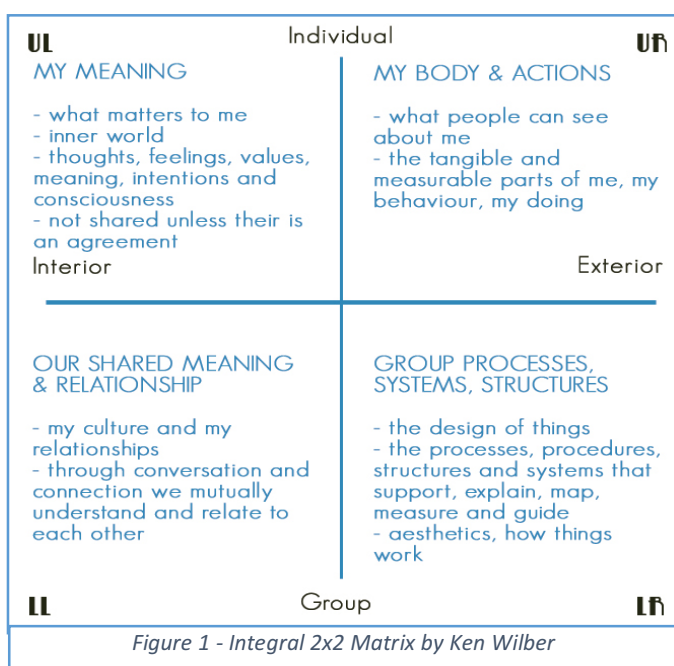
These approaches' mentioned so far are about creating incremental change from both the bottom up and top down. By first involving teachers, the decision makers and then the students. It is an approach that allows the freeing up of time, to slow our thinking down and to delay the often urgent need to come up with decisions (Ford 2016).

From my experience we are living in a world where technology is creating the space for us to have so much spare time, however we never seem to do so. The urgency to make decisions can be paramount but I wonder are the decisions we are making for the right questions.

The above mentioned approaches are about creating trust first with the facilitator and then with one another. To learn techniques that allow us to listen and take the time to understand other people's worldviews and then to experience and reflect on the theme at hand. It is my way of creating a place of safety and to free up time and give ourselves permission to think about the future.

**Making it Concrete**

So I have discussed the why and purpose of developing a foresight workshop for students and using this as an approach to increase all stakeholders (students, teachers and others) to develop skills for increasing awareness to explore possible, probably and desirable futures and the appreciation of the key forces influencing change in a world that is changing so rapidly.



However, apart from making these workshops effective and successful, the other critical elements are how do we make it happen.

A useful approach I have found to help make a design intervention successful is the integral 2x2 matrix. It suggests that to really understand the best approach, we must look at it holistically, starting with individual values then behaviour and looking at the cultural views and finally the support systems or infrastructure. A lot of the contradictions come from a lack of cultural and/or infrastructure support. As innovators, we might be cautious of approaching an innovation solution that lacks cultural support it means we'll be dealing with the fringe, not the mainstream (Conway 2016). But in cases where the problem is more around "systems support or infrastructure", often the solutions or pathways are more obvious but not necessarily any easier to effect (Esbjorn-Hargens 2009).

So each quadrant lends itself to a particular process. The upper left quadrant focuses on how the educators and students feel about the future, their individual views or that of the teacher's views, assumptions and beliefs in other words the filters they might be thinking through as I present my workshop idea.

The lower left quadrant focuses on ensuring the organisational culture is taken into account. This would be the school, its administrators, the educators, the parents and the children. This is about discovering their beliefs and unwritten norms. It is about discovering and unpacking how the culture of the organisation is feeling and experiencing and making sense of what futures study is about e.g. How can we predict the future, are we wasting valuable time and money? How will this help their child. Shouldn't they be teaching important stuff.

The success of any design intervention needs to deal with all these quadrants to ensure the following:

- That the workshop happens
- It is seen as successful by those who have the power
- It shifts the thinking of attendees either incrementally or radically
- New learning (relearning) we identify and challenge our assumptions individually and culturally
- New thinking and awareness is developed
- Energy is created in the form of a purpose that might effect change in the future
- It is considered to add value and worthy of continuing (replicating)
- We had fun

### **Making it happen**

The first challenge is to get the school to agree to piloting a foresight workshop. So my design proposal has now become more about having the school accept this opportunity as

something that could be of importance for the children's educational development not just a University project.

Although, my initial approach to my children's school was received with a willingness to support I soon realised that maybe I could do more. The real challenge and opportunity was to develop workshops that would be sort after and recognised as critical both to the success of dealing with the world's problems, but necessary for the children's education and provide a competitive advantage for the school for it to replicate through the education system. Not just a project that a parent was passionate about that would be delivered and forgotten about quickly afterwards.

The strategy so far is best described as a hybrid model influencing students from the bottom up to develop and create new responses for the future and for teachers to recognise and co create workshops from the top down, both stakeholders helping to co-create the foresight workshops.

However, I feel for real traction to be obtained, a business case needs to be developed that could be used to promote the wider benefits to the school administrators and those who have the power to allow it to proceed and potentially be the seeds for further workshops both at this school and potentially through the education system (replication).

My experience in business tells me preparation is critical. So keeping this in mind I need to do more research to better understand what has already been developed or being taught. Are there existing programs already in place in other schools or institutions that are offering foresight teaching to children? If so what can I learn from this. How do I find out? What is happening in other parts of the world. Can the Association of Professional Futurist provide guidance?

How do I best position this in the school. Do I create a business case and from what value position? Do I aim it as a competitive advantage to attract students or more funding? Or should it be aimed at enhancing the curriculum that enhances the school's reputation as an innovative thought leader.

Exploring through the lens of integral 2x2 matrix what knowledge do I need to consider to enhance the success of this strategy.

What is the current culture at the school? What do they value as important what is promoted and ignored?

Do they have a vision for the school and will this workshop connect and add to this vision? Should the presentation be analytically driven or more visual inclusive? What will be accepted as truth. So I need to better understand their beliefs and goals, what motivates them. I need to better understand the culture and design a proposal that communicates in a way they will listen to and pilot.

Do I need to be concerned about the regulatory environment both at the school level and education department level?

What will the parents think about such a program and should we get them involved or how do we address any of these issues.



Does the school have sufficient time or resources to devote to this project even if they wanted too?

Do they have the resources to offer to help this project get started?

Should the workshop be co-designed by myself and teachers who might participate in its delivery? If so would a design with the school promote and improve collaboration and potentially improve on its effectiveness/acceptance and its ongoing success and thus enhancing its ability to be sustained.

What does the school and its administrators hope to achieve if they agree to this project? How do we measure its success and what will be the critical factors that determine if it is successful and from whose point of view?

These questions and potentially many more need to be considered to win the approval of the school and to find a successful way to ensure my vision starts, evolves and expands.

### Integral Map Approach – Promoting a Foresight Workshop

<p><b>WHO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus initially is selling this to the decision makers (Principal, senior teachers and potential parents)</li> <li>• How do we get access to them</li> <li>• What will they think e.g. mental models. What are our responses (sales pitch)</li> <li>• Who owns the workshop</li> <li>• What do they think of me (can we get testimonials or references, past successes or concrete examples)</li> <li>• Which teachers will assist. Do they believe in the workshops or being instructed to assist. If so how do we over come this.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WHAT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a sales presentation that highlights the reasons it is beneficial</li> <li>• What is the problem we are trying to solve for the school</li> <li>• What is the best way to position this opportunity with the school</li> <li>• How do we make it grow</li> <li>• Develop a Foresight workshop – keep it simple &amp; make it a collaborative</li> <li>• Road test/Remember your audience</li> <li>• Teach some tools they can use ongoing (simple is better)</li> <li>• Identify 5 major trends to watch</li> </ul>
<p><b>WHY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can we position this as a competitive advantage to attract students or funding</li> <li>• What are the values being described &amp; are they valid or words</li> <li>• Position the school as leading by participating</li> <li>• How do we over come objections (what value will they see)</li> <li>• How do we really find out if they support</li> <li>• What are the unspoken norms that I need to navigate</li> <li>• Who really has the power or influence</li> </ul>	<p><b>HOW</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review if the education Dept currently teaches foresight</li> <li>• Does the targeted school have any programs in place</li> <li>• How would we position Foresight studies</li> <li>• Thinking hybrid sell from top down, obtain demand from students and teachers who participate</li> <li>• Do we teach and leave or do we train and promote</li> <li>• How do you measure the outcomes, its effectiveness</li> <li>• How do sustain &amp; foster it &amp; make it spread</li> </ul>

2x2 Integral Matrix – developed by Ken Wilber

Steps	Task	By When
1	Research – who is teaching futures	
2	Develop a proposal to present to the school management	
3	Arrange an appointment with the school	
4	Draft a high level workshop aimed at the audience	
5	Practice in readiness to pitch the idea to the school	
6	Present to the school	

7	Redevelop the workshop with educators	
8	Map out times, places, expectations, measurement of success, next steps etc.	
9	Deliver workshop	
10	Agree of actions from the workshop. What initiatives can we implement to impact our problem	
11	Review outcomes	
12	Agree on next steps	

### Potential Foresight Workshop Strategy

The workshop will be a “Futures Game” created by Dr Stuart Candy. He calls the game, The thing from the Future”.

#### Potential learning outcomes

1. Not one future but futureS plural
2. Humans have agency; meaning they can influence the future
3. The image of the future can pull us towards a future desired
4. Images of the future can be based on historical narratives that have travelled through time and cultures
5. Explore, challenge assumptions about the future forecasted or predicted so that we can create alternative perspectives on the future as an active agent in the present

### Summary

The intent of this strategic initiative is to develop future generations to become positive change agents. The workshop purpose is to provide tools to help the participants use future thinking to anticipate possible, probable and preferred futures that we all might find ourselves in. The brief was about using forms of pleasure to address an area of conflict that we had chosen. This design approach is multi layered, attempting to teach people to create new meaning in what we are doing to our world, what we think is important and to provide a higher purpose in life other than just owning stuff. Finally, the pleasure of learning to be responsible for our planet and for the yet to be born. The approach was to create a spark of change where teaching futures thinking would be adopted and spread with the hope of the next generation learning to think deeper, wider and longer and this might catch on and change the world.

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