

FUTURE - OPEN FOR POSSIBILITIES!

FUTURES GUIDANCE WORKBOOK

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How to
guide into
the futures?

With 9
futures thinking
exercises

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LÄNSIRANNIKON KOULUTUS OY



Leverage from
the EU
2014–2020

INTRODUCTION



The foundation of Futures Guidance lies in multi- and interdisciplinary futures research. The objective of futures research is to invent, assess and suggest possible and likely futures, and help people go over different alternatives.

Futures Guidance was created from the combination of futures research and a comprehensive guidance model. The concept and guidance tools have been developed at the Finland Futures Research Centre in various projects since 2009. The central idea is to view the future as open and containing several different possibilities.

Futures Guidance helps individuals to recognise different alternatives and to act accordingly to achieve a wanted, desired or possible future. It allows us to take a peek, from today, into various possible futures, and, at the same time, to try and understand the world that is changing all around us. This workbook is aimed at answering questions:

- How to approach the future?
- How to guide people to think about their own future and the future of their environment?

Humans naturally like to think about and focus on the future, but future-oriented thinking can also be learned and taught. Reflecting on the future helps people see different alternatives and provides support for decision making. The objective of Futures Guidance is enabling people to understand their own personal future.

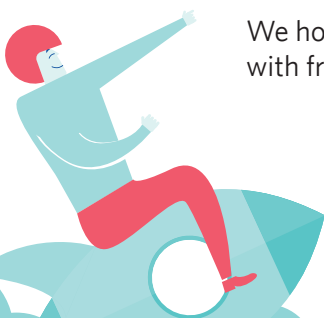
The Futures Guidance Workbook is meant for you who work with students, immigrants, unemployed job seekers or others searching for their own educational or working path. The workbook will tune you and those under your guidance into futures thinking, and provide tools for handling the future in the context of, for example, career and education choices.

The exercises in the workbook are developed jointly by instructors and participants, and they provide support for reflection and choices related in particular to life's turning points. The techniques presented in the workbook can be applied flexibly and extensively to the instruction of different groups, or to personal guidance situations. Choose the techniques that suit your work from the workbook and use them in the order you want.

More information about futures thinking and guidance can be found from the reference list of the workbook and at www.tulevaisuusohjaus.fi. Begin your journey into the world of Futures Guidance by taking the Futures test for instructors. This humorous test provides insight into the way you approach the future.

This workbook was created during the projects UTUA - Get another life, and OMASI - Futures images of working life as seen by young women, both co-ordinated by the Finland Futures Research Centre operating at the University of Turku. The projects were co-funded by the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment of Central Finland, and they belong to the Sustainable growth and jobs 2014-2020 - Finland's structural funds programme.

We hope that you will find the workbook useful and that it will provide you with fresh tools for your guidance work!



FUTURES TEST FOR INSTRUCTORS

There are no right or wrong answers in the test, as its purpose is to give you insight into how you yourself perceive the future. At the same time, the test questions orientate you to use this workbook and guides people towards the future.

WARM-UP EXERCISE

Write down the first three words you find in the word box.

Which words did you find? Take a moment to ponder your own future in relation to these words.



WORD BOX

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | H | S | K | I | L | L | S | C | T | L | I | F | E | Y | O |
| R | M | N | D | R | E | A | M | S | D | P | L | A | V | S | P |
| F | Y | V | B | A | P | R | E | D | I | C | T | I | O | N | L |
| E | K | W | L | T | Y | O | I | M | D | T | C | A | H | N | N |
| F | N | V | D | V | Z | R | G | H | E | N | I | G | M | A | P |
| U | O | A | N | T | I | C | I | P | A | T | I | O | N | W | I |
| T | W | L | B | A | T | T | I | T | U | D | E | H | K | O | E |
| U | L | U | Z | S | A | R | Y | L | R | H | Y | B | E | R | I |
| R | E | E | V | C | H | O | O | S | I | N | G | L | G | K | M |
| E | D | S | N | F | E | C | U | X | G | Q | R | N | X | L | N |
| F | G | U | I | D | A | N | C | E | F | W | E | M | I | B | E |
| S | E | A | D | V | P | I | T | G | X | M | D | T | Y | O | I |



FUTURES TEST FOR INSTRUCTORS

The futures test holds ten questions that focus on how you, as an instructor, view the future. Answer the questions by marking the alternative that best describes your own outlook. Finally, you can calculate the points you get for your answers by using the table on the following page. Remember that there are no right or wrong ways to perceive the future!

1. The future is unlike the present, it is uncertain and full of surprises.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Disagree | Partly disagree | Partly agree | Completely agree |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

2. The instructor's task is to present realistic possibilities and help people to discover several alternative solutions.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

3. Thinking ahead into the future benefits also those who do not yet have plans even for the short term.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

4. People are responsible for their own future and the consequences of their actions.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

5. It is important for instructors to be aware of the local employment opportunities, so they can make tangible suggestions regarding working or educational possibilities.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

6. Thinking about one's own future is based on imagination and dreaming.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

7. It is important to remain neutral as an instructor, and not to offer participants your own personal views.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

8. People should take the opinions of others into account when making decisions for their own future.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

9. The knowledge and guidance tools available for futures thinking are insufficient.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

10. Thinking about the future does not result in any explicit outcome.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

| | Disagree | Partly disagree | Partly agree | Completely agree |
|----|----------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|
| 1. | 0 p. | 1 p. | 1 p. | 3 p. |
| 2. | 0 p. | 1 p. | 1 p. | 2 p. |
| 3. | 0 p. | 1 p. | 1 p. | 3 p. |
| 4. | 0 p. | 1 p. | 1 p. | 1 p. |
| 5. | 0 p. | 2 p. | 2 p. | 2 p. |
| 6. | 0 p. | 1 p. | 1 p. | 3 p. |
| 7. | 2 p. | 1 p. | 1 p. | 0 p. |
| 8. | 2 p. | 1 p. | 1 p. | 0 p. |
| 9. | 1 p. | 2 p. | 2 p. | 0 p. |

POINTS TABLE

In the field of futures research, the ways of perceiving the future are traditionally divided into inactive, reactive, preactive and proactive. Calculate your test score and see into which category your own view falls:

0-5 points:

PASSIVE: You take the future as it comes. You act in the present moment in a way you deem sensible.

6-10 points:

REACTIVE: You keep track of the changes in the world and in your operating environment. You react to them and adapt your actions when necessary.

11-15 points:

PREACTIVE: You anticipate potential future changes and prepare yourself for them.

16-21 points:

PROACTIVE: You see the future as a world of possibilities. You actively try to influence the future with your own choices and solutions.

HOW TO GUIDE INTO THE FUTURE?

- THESES OF FUTURES GUIDANCE

The core feature of Futures Guidance is enabling people to think about the future in various ways and from different perspectives. There is no right or wrong way of dealing with the future and the attitude towards it. The appropriate way depends also on the context and situation.

The task of Futures Guidance is to offer analyses and models of how you can approach your own future or the future of your environment. Reflecting on your attitudes opens the possibility to act differently in different situations. For example, people may discover things they themselves can actually change, whereas other things just happen and we must learn to live with them.

The goal is to envision the future as a more comprehensive set of entities. We talk about possible, desirable and likely futures. The purpose of thinking about possible futures is to broaden our perspective and help us discover new things or things that at first appear unfamiliar. Desirable futures bring values and value-related reflection into the discussion. Thinking about them helps us to define what we view as important and desirable, and why. Likely futures make us ponder on the different factors of change and their joint effects. They also guide us towards critical reflection on the courses of development, and awaken the desire to make a difference.

The future is always unpredictable, and even major changes can take place all of a sudden. There are no guarantees that we could somehow control or steer our future, making it exactly how we want it to be. Futures Guidance provides people with tools for thinking and acting; with these tools, people can analyse their expectations for the future and prepare themselves for different chains of events. Guidance also strengthens the ability to perceive oneself in the future, as part of the community and the environment.

1. Thinking about the future at different scales - temporal perspective

Futures thinking and preparing for things that are present in the future are natural for us all. Although people may claim to live one day at a time, they still have some thoughts about events that take place even during a relatively extensive period of time. Futures Guidance enables flexible and individual movement between the past, the present and the future. For some people, tomorrow can be a suitable temporal perspective, whereas others can think about themselves and the way of the world on a time scale of several decades. The most important aspect of guidance is getting in contact with the existence of the future, and, consequently, finding a meaningful way of thinking about the future and of doing deeds that have significance for the future.

2. We make the future - together and apart

The future is uncertain, and we have no precise knowledge of it - sometimes even the probable things do not happen like we imagined. In guidance this means that opportunities open and close continuously.



The key is finding out how we can and want to steer our own lives. We all have a personal future that we partly create ourselves. Things happen in our operating environment which we cannot directly influence, but there are many things that we do have an impact on either way. We are all in the same boat with our uncertain future, and we are making the future together.

3. Reflecting on one's own future is based on trust and openness

It is not always easy to share one's own perceptions of the future with others. It is quite common that people are sometimes unaware of "what they want out of life", and sometimes it can even be impossible to find words for feelings regarding the future. There are many feelings present when we think about the future, such as the feelings of freedom, optimism and enthusiasm, but also of fear and anxiety. The guidance situation is a very sensitive one, which is why in Futures Guidance interaction must be based on trust and the feeling of being accepted. In group guidance situations it is beneficial if the instructors can openly share their own thoughts, experiences and feelings as well.

4. Peer support and feedback

Other people can help us see the future in a way that differs from our own perceptions or experiences – therefore, feedback received from peers or "near and dears" is important in Futures Guidance. Support and encouragement received from peers is often easier to accept than feedback from instructors. Peers can speak directly and at a concrete level among themselves, because they share the same experiences. Practising futures thinking helps us to discover different and new opportunities, and highlights the fact that we are all part of a common social system.

5. World of personal possibilities

The future is something different than the past or the present. We can no longer affect our past, but the future, and the world of open possibilities it holds, is open for everyone. Recognising possibilities, as well as creating them, takes place in the present. In the present, we can modify our actions in accordance with what we want or wish would happen – taking into account the limitations of the surrounding reality, of course. The objective of Futures Guidance is to find many different ways to realise one's dreams and goals, but it also aims at helping people to discover new and different things and ways to act.

6. Future is built of notions

In guidance we can create and process mental images and expectations we have of the future. The participants may be going through extremely difficult phases in their lives, but it is always possible to find some new perspectives or thoughts that give hope. Images can be created and strengthened with, for example, art-based methods, such as writing or drama work. Images provide the possibility to distance oneself from the present and think freely about the future. When we guide people towards finding positive mental images, thinking about the future can become motivational and energising.

7. Responsibility for oneself and the environment

Our actions always have an impact on our surroundings, and, therefore, our own futures orientation inevitably affects also others. A person's future is not only time from the present onwards or a world of possibilities; instead, futures awareness is an essential part of the person's character and temperament. Understanding one's own actions and taking responsibility for them and their consequences are a part of futures awareness, which denotes an entity more extensive than merely solving upcoming problems or making individual choices. Self-determination and an active sense of self are essential goals in Futures Guidance. They can be strengthened by reflecting on the consequences a person's actions may have for themselves and others.

FUTURES GUIDANCE PITFALLS

1. Not investing enough in the first meeting

Sometimes people enter the guidance situation with a negative attitude, which is why particular attention should always be paid to the first encounter. It is advisable to emphasise to the participants that the instructor is “on their side” – not against them. Starting the guidance must be made pleasant, so that the participants are left feeling positive about the situation.

2. Strong notion or presumption about a participant

Instructors must avoid categorising the participants: “If they are weak at something, they will always be weak at it”. Everyone can evolve and learn. If a participant has poor skills in some area, it does not mean that he or she could not excel in others. Not all of us come from a similar background. This inevitably affects the choices we come across and the ones we make, but it does not predetermine the end result. It is the instructors’ task to help the participants to recognise their own strengths. Instructors can also change the participants’ preconceptions of themselves and their possibilities.

3. Difficulties to engage the participants

In Futures Guidance, instructors should avoid placing themselves above the participants. When an instructor discusses the future with a participant on the same level and in a supportive manner, she/he can create an atmosphere that promotes the guidance. A hierarchical setting and the handing of instructions “from above” can make the participants feel that their own thoughts and experiences have no value.

The instructors should also avoid making too many presumptions, but rather let the participants themselves share their wishes and dreams. The instructors’ job is to support the participants in their situations, not, for example, to frighten them with the aspect of losing different social security benefits.



4. Commitment to guidance and understanding a student's situation

It is important that the instructors are committed to guiding and supporting the participants in the different situations and choices in their lives. Instructors should encourage and support the participants in, for example, continuing their education. The participants must be guided towards finding the best alternatives in their situation and seeing the bigger picture, of which the individual choice is a part. Guidance is everybody's job – not just student counsellors. Teachers should understand that guidance is also their responsibility.

5. Equal treatment is merely a phrase

Equal treatment is not a truism, but requires the instructors to recognise and evaluate their own operating models and presumptions. Instructors must treat all participants equally, including those with whom they do not necessarily "have chemistry". Equal guidance means also availability, accessibility and the recognition and acknowledgement of various differences in the guidance situation. Everyone shall be offered guidance, and everyone must be supported in the way required in the specific situation.

6. Getting stuck in solving problems of the present

Participants are often anxious about the present and its problems. In Futures Guidance, the objective is always to guide participants further than just taking the next step, or the one after that. When the guidance is directed further into the future, even the present may show itself from a new perspective or seem more easily approachable.

7. Narrow gender perception

Guide a person, not a representative of a gender. Base your guidance on the participants' interests and dreams. Do not offer solutions based on the participants' assumed gender or gender expression. The metal industry suits everyone, as does child care work. You can also bring up and question the participants' own stereotypical perceptions of occupations or fields suitable for different genders.

8. Dismissing the meaning of culture and background

Cultural awareness in the guidance means that instructors consider the impact of culture, both on themselves as instructors and on their participants. Our culture, worldview and values affect our ways to act, and different cultures value different things differently. Instructors must acknowledge this in their guidance work, and act in a way that respects these differences. Instructors should also consider whether they strengthen the cultural stereotypes in their work or enable breaking them.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE EXERCISES

General information:

- The duration of the exercises varies between 15–45 minutes, depending on the number of participants and their activity.
- Some of the exercises are suitable for individual guidance in addition to group guidance.
- You can use the exercises in accordance with your group's needs: you can try out just one exercise, or do more during one meeting. You can also form a suitable combination of the exercises, and do them all during one day. In essence, the exercise cards can be used in a way that best suits your needs.
- All the exercises can be found at: www.tulevaisuusohjaus.fi. You can print out the desired number of exercises, or use a video projector to project some of the exercises on the wall.
- It is advisable to have a closing discussion at the end of each meeting. What thoughts did the meeting evoke? What felt interesting or boring? Was something difficult or unpleasant, and if so, why?
- Some of the exercises may take the conversation to a very personal level. Take this into account in relation to the group dynamics and resources. If necessary, make an effort to steer the discussion to a neutral level and ensure that confidentiality is not broken.

The following instructions promote working in a group and doing the exercises. It is advisable to go over these instructions with each starting group:

- Everyone introduces themselves to others in the first meeting. Participants can, for example, write their names on a note or a piece of tape and place it somewhere visible. If new people join the group, the introduction round should be repeated.
- Exercises are carried out in groups and alone. Everyone participates in the group activities according to their own resources.
- Talking is not the only method of participation: you can also write, draw or just listen.
- There are no right answers or wrong questions. The group work revolves around joint discussion, listening to others and attempting to look at things from new perspectives.
- Do not assume: we often assume to know a lot about people based on their assumed gender, appearance or background. Give everyone the opportunity to share their experiences as themselves.
- Do not talk on behalf of others or about the experiences of others; just focus on your own experiences.
- The instructors are encouraged also participate and share their own experiences.



The duration of the exercises varies between 15–45 minutes.



Exercises are suitable for individual and/or team work

TIPS AND LINKS



Additional information about Futures Guidance and exercises:

Futures Guidance: www.tulevaisuusohjaus.fi/english

Utua - Get Another Life: www.utua-hanke.fi/in-english/

Omasi - Futures images of working life as seen by young women: www.omasi-hanke.fi/english/

More information about futures studies:

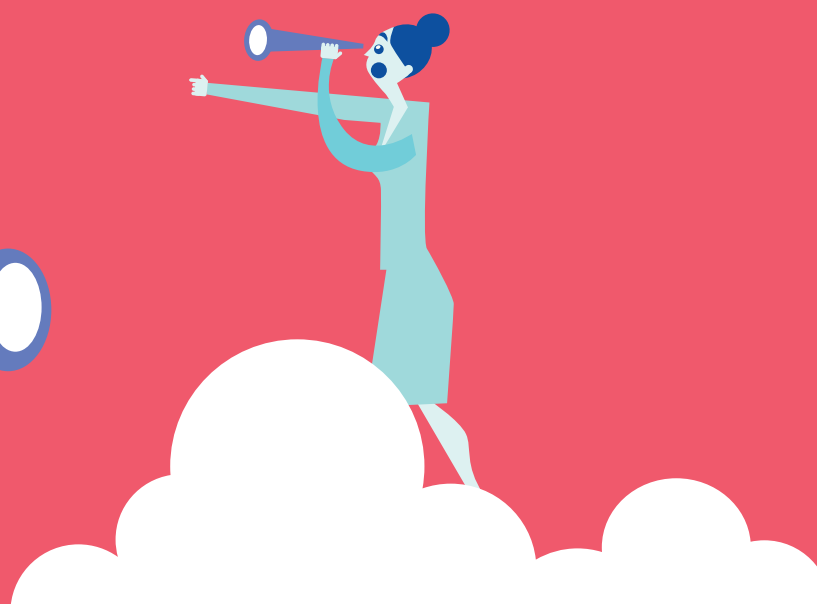
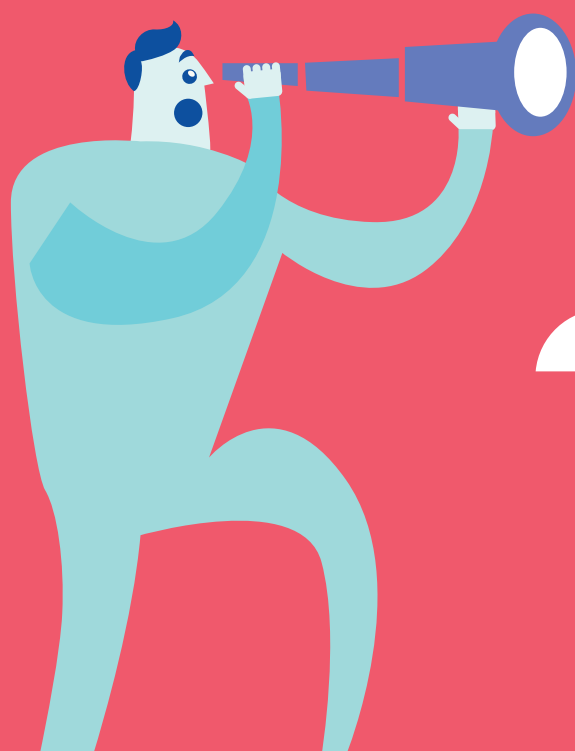
TOPI - Education material for Futures Studies: www.tulevaisuus.fi (in Finnish)

Finland Futures Research Centre, University of Turku: www.utu.fi/en/units/ffrc

Videos:

- Theses of Futures Guidance: <https://youtu.be/SeQ2W0rxWIA> (in Finnish)
- New problems of educational choices: <https://youtu.be/VgEK5ti0vks> (in Finnish)
- Skills required in the labour market of the future: <https://youtu.be/UxZyYvsSauk> (in Finnish)
- Futures Conference 2015: Arts Workshops Compilation: Arts as Means to Shape the Future: https://youtu.be/PkH79L_By5c

60°27'15.7"N 22°17'16.7"E



Other useful sites to support guidance:

Educational material for equality work in comprehensive schools: <http://www.lapinletka.fi/pages/in-english.php>

Educational video about sexual and gender diversity among young people: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8K-sVpUrKs>

MIMO – Moving In, Moving On! project. Application of Art Based Methods to Social and Youth Work. <http://mimo.turkuamk.fi>

The Agency for Cultural Well-being project: <http://www.hvvt.fi/inenglish/>

Literature:

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Wilson, John P. (2008) Reflecting-on-the-future: a chronological consideration of reflective practice. Reflective Practice Vol. 9(2), May 2008, 177–184.

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MOVING IN! Art-Based Approaches to Work with the Youth (article publication)
<http://loki.turkuamk.fi/>

