

Future Scenario Planning

Method	Future Scenario Planning
Introduction	
<p>Scenario planning is a method for thinking about and planning for the future. The goal is to produce opposing narratives (stories) about how certain aspects of reality might/or could be influenced by certain attitudes, circumstances, events, which are driven by underlying environmental, natural, demographical, societal and cultural, technological and scientific advances, political, etc... forces and concerns. The so-called 'forces' are uncertainties that could move in one direction or in another opposite direction, depending on reactions by leaders, but also circumstances. The scenarios are stories about potentialities. They are not predictions about the future. Even though some of the stories might come true, the stories are meant to help companies/institutions/organisations/governments/influential persons to develop policies, ideas or actions to plan for the future and when necessary to counter-act possible negative potentialities.</p>	
Aim	<p>The original purpose of scenario planning is thinking about and planning for the future, however, within an educational context although scenario planning method can be used for such purposes, it can also be used as a tool to help students learn about the inter-connectedness of reality as well as to enter into dialogue and collaborate with others from potentially different perspectives. Hopefully, they learn how to work together in order to create positive possible futures for all.</p>
Target group	Can be successfully applied in social sciences, education, as well as in business administration and marketing, design.
Intended learning outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students appreciate and respect the different perspectives/backgrounds/opinions of others • students understand life as a rich and complex interconnected reality • students collaborate respectfully and successfully with persons from different backgrounds, religions, cultures, language groups etc. • students formulate sound research questions concerning future scenarios based on trends in data • students research big data on societal themes e.g. health, education, demographics, ... • students imagine future scenarios in a certain disciplinary area based upon available data • students reflect and formulate consequences of different future scenarios for a certain disciplinary area • students collaboratively compile a report and make a presentation about their findings concerning future scenarios in a certain disciplinary area • students discuss respectfully future scenarios and different perspectives 	
Description	

Start from a question: for example, what will this or that job look like in 2050? (e.g. educator, teacher). The idea is that students should have an opportunity to envision the future from different aspects/points of view.

Compose “scenario groups”

In scenario planning there are various models that planners can use to understand the factors that can affect their thinking. In the current case of IEC (International Educating Class, UCLL), the teaching staff member uses ENDSTEP. ENDSTEP is an acronym of a model that helps you to think about and remember the factors/forces, which could affect education. That is, factors/forces, which are related to: Environment, Natural Resources and Nature, Demography, Society, Technology, Economy and Finance, Political forces, trends, ideas, events... Students identify driving forces related to these factors in order to identify trends. Uncertainties are crucial in this: they can go either way in the future, which needs to be taken into account in scenario planning.

Every group builds a “Scenario Matrix” : a four-fold “possibility grid” on how to plan or be ready for those future uncertainties regardless of whether the future is good or bad – utopic or dystopic.

Students create stories (narratives) about the future in the area of the subject chosen, with possible uncertainties

Example of assessment of scenario planning :

Students should be graded according to the quality of the interaction process and according to the quality of the products and presentation of their work in class. Process and participation, i.e. willingness to question, to discuss, to add to the discourse, conduct research, prepare presentations and intellectual curiosity. Here is a possible breakdown of marks:

25% Futuristic and Imaginative Newspaper Article (pair grade)

25% ‘Uncertainties Report 2050’ – (Individual research paper)

25 % Individual Participation Grade (based on internal team presentations, intellectual curiosity, preparation for OECD meeting and Final Presentation in the Town Hall (including a peer evaluation report) and attendance.

25% Final Presentation and Scenario Narrative (Team Grade)

Preparation	The teaching staff member introduces the method to the student. It is important to stimulate this “scenario thinking” by giving many examples of trends in societies and scenarios developed by international institutions.
Required resources and equipment	Magazines, online and offline articles, drawing paper, post-It notes, markers.
Success factors	Students need to have a good level of basic and general knowledge, they need to be willing to think outside of the box and about complex issues without judgement or pre-condition. To be successful, you as the facilitator need to be knowledgeable in various fields and able to direct the students into deeper levels of research and to see connections with other fields of interest.

Advantages	<p>Students have a lot of space for personal processing of the content.</p> <p>Useful as a way to link different disciplines and opportunities for interdisciplinary group work.</p>
Disadvantages	<p>The students must be willing to do a lot of individual and independent research which means that this method may be overly time-consuming.</p>
Additional information	<p><u>This website provides a more precise description of scenarios and explains further why you might like to use them.</u></p> <p>This information is based upon the work of Melanie van Oort-Hall who can provide additional information if required.</p>