



"Futuring"

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PURPOSE

To give students confidence through a sense of hope and control over their futures; to develop skills in hypothesizing, extrapolating, and discovering relationships and/or connections.

THEME STATEMENT

Cultures, Continuity & Change (CCC): Throughout periods of time, human beings have sought their historic roots while creating, learning, and changing their cultures.

SUGGESTED TIME

Two to five sessions (activities may be fused with other lessons).

KEY VOCABULARY & CONCEPTS

- futurist = one who studies and forecasts conditions and events yet to come
- trends matrix = interactive grid

MATERIALS NEEDED

- large charts
- markers
- resource sheets [Teacher Background #1-#3]

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Curriculum traditionally focuses on the past and present with little attention to the future which encompasses most of the lives of the current students. This lesson presents several strategies for forecasting the future and for applying information to open-ended settings and conditions.

INITIATION (Inquiry, Preview, Involvement)

1. Head a large chart with the phrase, "T-K-W Futures." Divide the chart into three columns with column headings written in bold letters: "T: I think...", "K: I know...", and "W: I wish..." (If the group is large, use three separate charts positioned somewhat apart so smaller groups can rotate.) Engage students in brainstorming any thoughts that come to mind for each of the prompts.

SUMMARY

Adaptable Levels
Grades 5-12

Related Themes
TPDC, PPE

Values
Positive futuristic attitudes,
openness to change

Skills
Creative thinking,
hypothesizing, extrapolating

Integration
Creative writing

2. Before starting, review basics of brainstorming: (1) all contributions which are on the topic are recorded, (2) no editing is done at this stage, (3) no “put-downs” (criticisms) are allowed for any of the contributions, and (4) everyone is encouraged to participate in order to promote a feeling of ownership. Ask students to share their contributions in a normal voice until the recorder hears and adds the suggestion to the chart. To ensure that each makes a contribution and that no one person dominates, the student sits down when his/her entry is recorded and waits until all are seated before making another suggestion.

DEVELOPMENT (Instruction, Data Collection, Organization)

3. Engage students in analyzing their overall future perspectives by placing a “+” in front of entries reflecting “good future” outlooks, a “-” for “bad future” outlooks, and a “?” for those which cannot be classified. These may be additionally graphed and compared according to what we *know*, what we *think*, and what we *wish* for the future.

4. After assessing the students’ overall feel for the future, apply the same process to more specific topics, such as “What is Hong Kong’s future?” (Teacher Background #2).

5. Supply needed information such as current news articles to enhance background for projections.

6. Use background data to complete a grid entitled “Futuring Trends Matrix” (Teacher Background #2) which encourages an analysis of interacting trends and events.

EXTENSION/ENRICHMENT (Articulation of Ideas, Ownership, Experimentation)

- Encourage students to think about controlling their futures by discussing the “Three Worlds of the Future” activity whereby they identify dominant characteristics of each world:
 - probable world: what will happen if we don’t make changes
 - possible world: what will happen if we make major changes
 - preferred world: what we would wish as the best possible world for all people

Follow with a parallel activity in which students view themselves as citizens of other places and cultures (*e.g.*, Japan, China, Korea) and identify descriptors for each of the worlds. Compare cultural perspectives and explain similarities/differences.

- Brainstorm possible consequences of events and actions with a “Consequences Corkscrew” (Teacher Background #3) starting with “What if...”

ASSESSMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT

Construct individual or group timelines divided between the past and future. Identify and record key events of the past which will continue to be influential in the future, and project events and conditions for futurists’ categories of “The Five Futures”: (1) now (and this year), (2) short term (1-5 years), (3) middle range (5-20 years), (4) long range (20-50 years), and (5) far future (50+ years).

Use the following rubrics for individual and cooperative group assessment of the timeline:

- 4 = Our products creatively incorporate futuristic principles and techniques
- 3 = Our products utilize futurists’ techniques with limited creativity
- 2 = Our products are past-oriented with little imagination
- 1 = Our products show little or no evidence of futuristic thinking

KEY QUESTIONS

- Compare past roles of select populations (*e.g.*, women, aging groups, unskilled laborers) in East Asian countries with current and future roles in probable and preferred worlds.
- What single advances in technology, production, and distribution will contribute most directly to reaching and sustaining a high quality of life and environment in Asian countries?
- How might views of the population change about their people, places, environment and cultures within the near future? the far future?

ALTERNATIVES

(See "Extension/Enrichment" section)

TEACHER BACKGROUND #1:

K-T-W Futures: A Brainstorm Activity

Use this resource sheet as a guide for constructing class charts.

ABOUT THE FUTURE OF _____:					
K: "I KNOW..."		T: "I THINK..."		W: "I WISH..."	

What's your futuristic attitude?

Complete a frequency graph by placing "+" by descriptors above for "good futures", "-" for "bad futures", and "?" for unsure. Then record frequencies under corresponding letters in a chart similar to the one below.

ABOUT THE FUTURE OF _____:			
	K: KNOW	T: THINK	W: WISH
+			
-			
?			

Student Questions:

1. Which column above had the most positives? negatives? undetermined?
2. Explain current attitudes using the frequency table as the basis for your explanations.

TEACHER BACKGROUND #2:

Sample: Futuring Trends Matrix

In corresponding cells along the top and left axes, record prevalent trends/issues related to Hong Kong. In the intersecting cells for each of the two trends, record the probable results of the one trend interacting with the other trend. When finished filling out the matrix, have students formulate a summary statement about the trend interactions.

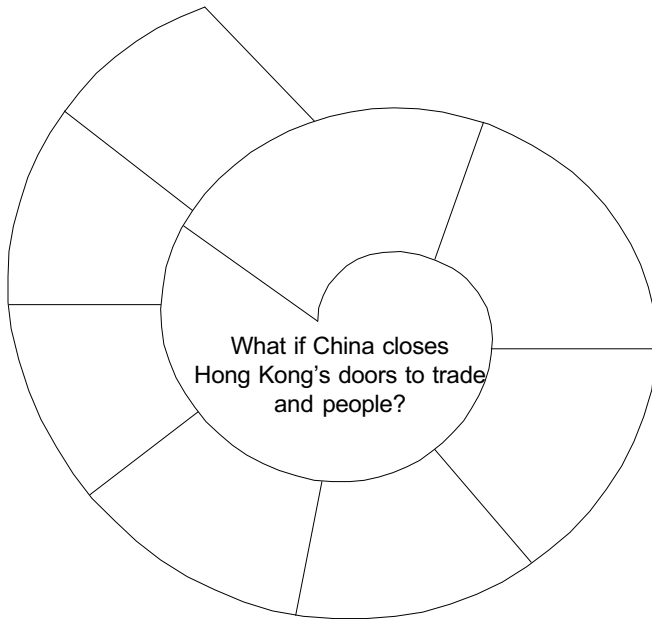
<div style="text-align: center;">TRENDS</div> <div style="text-align: center;">TRENDS</div>	#1: Transfer from British to Chinese territory	#2:	#3:	#4:
'A' Decreasing foreign investment in Hong Kong	<i>(Predicted results of interacting trends #1 and 'A')</i>			
'B'	<i>(Predicted results of interacting trends #1 and 'B')</i>			
'C'		<i>(Predicted results of interacting trends #2 and 'C')</i>		
'D'				

TEACHER BACKGROUND #3:

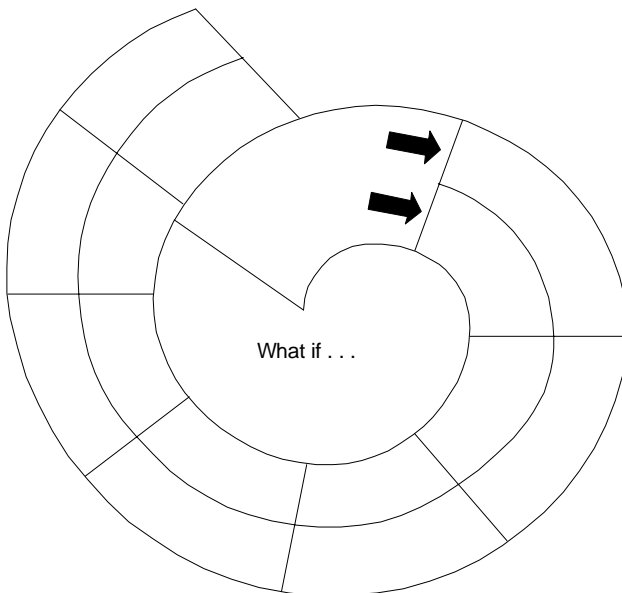
Sample: Consequences Corkscrew

Use this resource sheet as a guide for constructing a class chart.

Think about the “What if...?” in the corkscrew center and record response(s) to this hypothetical question in the first cell following the question. In each subsequent cell, record the results of the previous cell until you run out of ideas.



Also try a “branching corkscrew” which allows students to record more than one possible result/outcome where the branching cells exist.



IN A PROBABLE WORLD. . .

IN A POSSIBLE WORLD. . .

IN A PREFERRED WORLD. . .

This block contains three smaller corkscrew diagrams, each with a central circle containing the text "What if...". Each diagram has three concentric rings, each divided into five segments, for a total of 15 cells. The diagrams are set against a light gray background.