Future Folktales

Building a pluriverse of futures

THINKING | Long-term Orientation and Visioning

What you will need:

- 5-50
- Workshop & course
- 1 hr preparation
- Minimum of 2 days execution

Related Tools:

- Purposeful Storytelling
- The Power of Storytelling

Menu:

I. Overview
II. Learning Activity
III. Assessment
IV. Key Advice
V. References

"Buckminster Fuller said: "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete." This tool can help us open our imagination to the myriad possible futures that are possible. "

—Shweta Srivastav

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

I. Overview

Indigenous and local wisdom traditions relied on folktales often about the “wise conduct of life”. Folktales are some of the first lenses we receive through which we see and understand the world.

What might be folktales from the future?

How can we draw on future visions to develop narratives of “being” to guide us through the transition to a regenerative world?

The workshops invite participants to bring together stories from their own personal experience and their imagination of a just and regenerative future. We re-tell these stories by contextualising them in the world of the future by adapting them into different worlds that engage with possible, probable or desirable futures.

Learning outcome

- The student is able to formulate long-term oriented visions of a desirable future

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

II. Learning Activity

Through two sessions, students engage in the art of crafting folktales, actively shifting existing narratives and creating room for (re)imagining desirable futures.

1. Folktales that Shaped us

1 hr

Start with exploring how the tales we grew up with influence our identity and understanding of the world. Instruct the students to choose a folktale or story that had a significant impact on them during their childhood and share it with their peers in small groups.

Encourage the students to share their personal experiences and perspectives and to listen actively to their peers during the discussion.

Tip: potential questions to guide the discussion are:

- How did the folktale make you feel? What emotions did it evoke?
- What aspects of the folktale had real meaning for you? Why were they important?
- Which character did you relate to the most? Why did you connect with them?
- What lens did you adopt from the folktale to understand the world? How has it shaped your worldview or beliefs?

2. Visions of Desirable Futures

2,5 hrs

Invite students to pick their favourite character from the folktale in the previous step, using the following guidelines:

Now choose a time in the future, for example, 10, 50 or 100 years from now. Think of a situation that might change in the future. What if there was no waste? What if wars were fought virtually? Ground this change by imagining it concretely in a particular place.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Imagine yourself as this character engaged in this situation in this place. Write or draw what this scene might look like. Think about what the place looks like, what sounds you hear and what it feels like to be there.

3. Crafting a Story

4 hrs

In accordance with the vision outlined, instruct students to make a journey outline using the following guidelines:

Begin by considering the vision as the endpoint of your story. From there, think about your character's journey from the present to reach that endpoint in the future. What experiences will they encounter? Who are the other significant characters in this story? What pivotal moments, locations, and events will arise along the way? What challenges will the characters face and what must they learn or unlearn to reach the endpoint?

To further craft the story, students fill the outline with a narrative in the form of a folktale. Encourage students to think creatively and critically about the future and draw on storytelling skills.

Tip: as a guide, Peter Fruhmann's structure of a folktale can be found under Key Advice.

4. Developing a Format

4 hrs

The folktales can be developed and shared in multiple forms, depending on the time available, as written stories or oral narratives, comic books or animations, using AI or creating VR scenarios. This can be decided early on or open to choose based on the narrative.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

5. Sharing Future Folktales

30 mins

Invite the students to share the final folktales in the group.

After each presentation, allocate some time for peers to fill in the peer-reflection assessment on the shared folktales. Emphasise the importance of respectful and constructive feedback, focusing on both positive aspects and areas for growth. Next facilitate a discussion where students can share peer feedback.

Please note, as part of assessment *as* learning, students reflect using peer reflective and self-reflective questions.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

III. Assessment

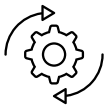
Assessment encourages students to reflect on their own and their peers' folktales, using a set of reflective questions that help them to evaluate their perspectives and the narrative process.

Purpose

Assessment *as* learning aims to strengthen the learning process and the development of metacognitive skills. It empowers students to direct their own learning and to become independent, critical self-assessors.

Roles

Self-assessment and peer-assessment



Characteristics

Self-regulated learning

Materials

Reflective questions

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Assessment

Self-Assessment

Reflect on your folktale by answering these questions:

1. Which specific elements of folktales have helped me to envision a better future for myself and society as a whole?

2. What impact have folktales had on my ability to think beyond my immediate circumstances and consider long-term possibilities for growth and development?

3. How can the lessons and morals from folktales be applied to current societal challenges and contribute to creating a better future for all?

4. What was the most difficult hurdle in building the narrative from the present to the future?

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Peer Assessment

Reflect on your peer's folktale by answering these questions:

1. Do you relate to the desirable future told through this folktale? Why or why not?

2. Does the plot present a plausible pathway to a long-term vision? If yes, how does it do that, if not, what seems to be amiss?

3. What aspects of the narrative do you find most effective and why? What aspects do you find least effective, and what might make it more effective?

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

IV. Key Advice

A possible variation of this tool is Collaborative Future making, where participants bring together future visions with local communities. This also allows voices of underrepresented communities to be brought into the discourse and valorised.

Peter Fruhmann's structure of a folktale (Step 3):

- Context – where the characters and setting are explained;
- Turning point – where the problem is introduced;
- Action – where the characters in the story react to the problem;
- Reversal – where more things go wrong and the problem gets worse;
- Resolution – the story's dilemma is resolved and the characters react to that resolution.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

The Report

Why
Why are we here?
To agree on this.

Who + What
Who and What are we going to be talking about?
These are our players. These are the things in play.

Where
Where are they located? Where are they going? They are here and they overlap like this. This is where they will end up.

When
When do they interact?
The sequence of events is like this.
This is when things happen.

How
How does it occur?
This is how each impacts the other. This is the cause and effect.

How Much
What are the numbers?
We have this many players.
We have this many things.
We have this much money.

The Explanation

The lay of the land
Where are we now, where are we going, and what's between here and there?

Do we agree on our destination?

Our roadmap
Here is the route we'll take to get to our destination.

Do we agree on our route?

Our 1st step
Every journey begins with a step, and this is our first.

Are we all still together?

Our next steps...
Here's the next step...and the next, and so on...

Do we know what we've done and where we are?

Almost there...
We're just about there. Let's take a look back over how far we've come.

Do we see how much we've learned.

We've arrived!
We made it! We now have some new knowledge or ability.

Can we repeat it on our own?

The Pitch

The Hook
We end with an added benefit.

The Windup
We start with a quick summary of where we are today.

The Hurdle
We Introduce a problem we're facing.

The Vision
We show a glimpse of a way over the problem.

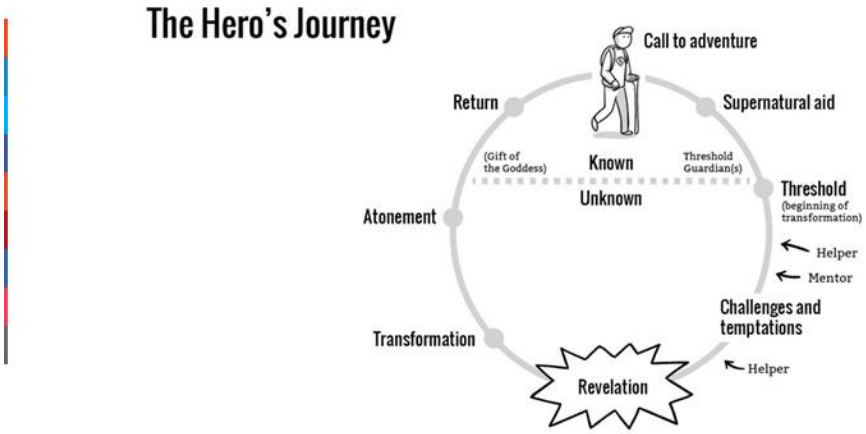
The Options
We present two ways to reach the vision - a boring one and an inspiring one.

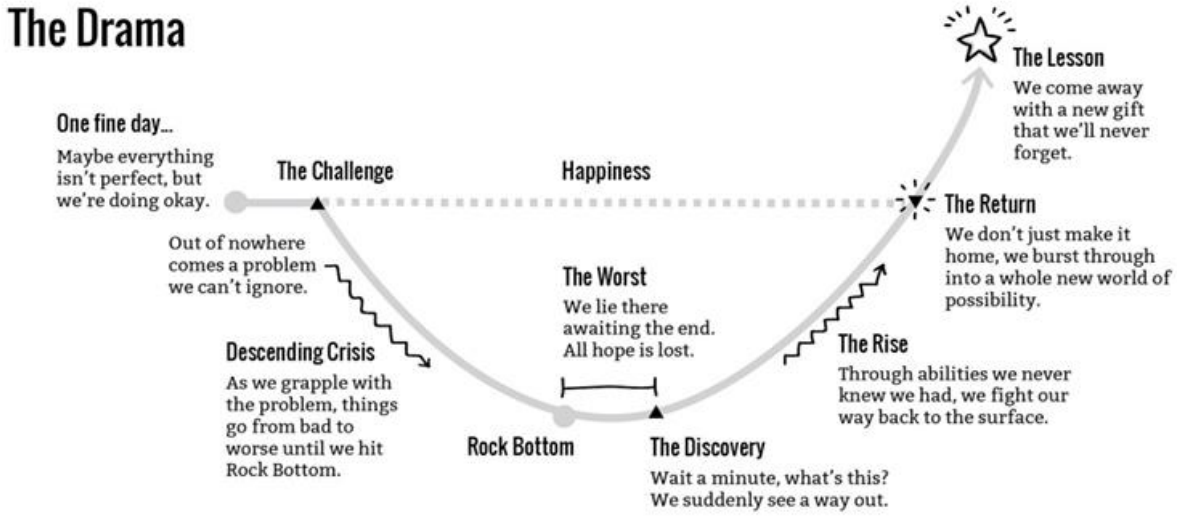
The Close
We show why the inspiring option is really the only option.

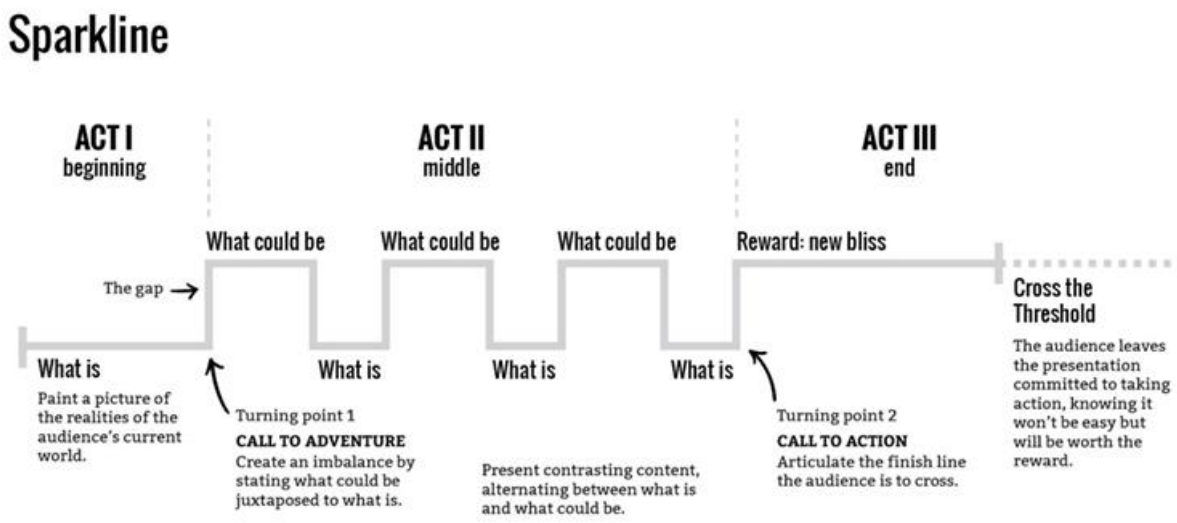
The Fine Print
With our audience excited, we cover the details of how we make it happen.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

You can be present in the story, but only as that ally or helper. What Campbell prods us to remember is that it's always the audience who play the hero.







Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

V. References

Kulkarni, S. (2013). Panchatantra : an example of using narratives in teaching in ancient Indian education. Tampere: Tampere University Press, 119–216. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/250148004.pdf

Remembering futures. (2021, 9 august). Sitra. https://www.sitra.fi/en/cases/remembering-futures/

UvA Teaching and Learning Centres (TLC) (n.d.). Storyboarding https://tlc.uva.nl/en/article/storyboarding-for-knowledge-clips/?lang=en

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.