






Imagining the Future

Reach a state of mind that expands your imaginative capabilities to develop a long-term vision

THINKING | Long-term Orientation and Visioning

→ What you will need:

-  Up to 40
-  Workshop or individual
-  30 mins preparation
-  1 hour execution
-  timer

→ Related Tools:



[Brainstorming with Eureka](#)

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“Discover the power of imagination, using guided meditation, metaphorical storytelling and freewriting. Imagine new pathways to a sustainable future by developing effective solutions that inspire change.”

—Hendrik de With





I. Overview

In today's complex and ever-changing world, it can be a challenge to see where it is headed. Envisioning a desired future enables change-makers to develop strategy, stay focused and remain motivated (Daysh et al., 2024; Tickell, 2024). However, imagining the future is not an easy task. Our minds often rely on familiar patterns and narratives, making it challenging to break free and explore new possibilities. When we try to imagine long-term futures, the sheer vastness of possible scenarios can feel overwhelming.

Through Imagining the Future, students will tap into their imaginative capacity, moving beyond existing thought patterns to envision a broader range of possibilities. As Milkoreit (2017) explains, imagination can help us step away from and cast a critical eye toward existing institutions and practices, and envision radically different futures.

Learning outcome



The student is able to imagine a personal vision of a desired future and develop the strategies and solutions to help reach that



II. Learning Activity

By engaging in guided meditation, listening to a metaphorical story and freewriting, students use their imagination to develop a long-term vision in a larger context.



1. Set the Scene 10 mins

In preparation, select and print one of the Breathing Exercises and one of the Metaphorical Stories.

Before starting the session, remove any possible distractions and create a safe space where students can focus and approach the exercise with an open mind.

First, create a comfortable setting, one where it is just the students, a piece of paper and a pen.

Then, briefly explain the goal and sequence of the learning activity. The goal is to imagine a long-term vision of the future, and they will get there in three phases:

- First, clearing and preparing the mind to create space and think creatively, by doing a breathing exercise.
- Then, a metaphorical story will inspire and expand thinking further into the future.
- The following freewriting exercise will let ideas start flowing from within.

Explain that during the first phases, students will be invited to keep their eyes closed and turn inward. Briefly discuss how 'meditation' can help clear the mind and foster creativity.

Finally, allow students to ask any questions they may have before Step 2.

Tip: to help students fully engage, creating a safe space is important. Let them know they can close their eyes but may open them anytime if they prefer. If the group is unfamiliar or hesitant to meditate, keep the exercise short and simple, framing it as a tool for focus or relaxation rather than using spiritual or abstract terms. Connect it to their own experience or needs, as much as possible.



2. Breathing Exercise 10 mins

Following the instructions for the selected Breathing Exercise, guide the students to let go of their thoughts and create space for creativity and imagination. You can combine and adjust the suggested exercises, and practice by yourself first to familiarise with the experience.

Tip: optionally, play calm, soothing music or nature sounds softly in the background. If needed, students can find a more comfortable position, either seated or lying down.



3. Narrate the Story & Freewriting 20 mins

After the breathing exercise, flow into the metaphorical story directly. Instruct students to keep their eyes closed while you read.

Then, ask the students to open their eyes again and start writing freely for 7 minutes, following the instructions on the Freewriting handout.



4. Sketching the Future 10 mins

Students continue to stay in their creative flow and go from abstract and unstructured ideas to more concrete and functional visions of the future.

Ask the students to individually reflect on what they have written down to see if there are



ideas, patterns or concepts to explore further. Guiding reflective questions are:

- Did anything surprise you about what you wrote before?
- Were there any thoughts or concepts you'd like to explore further?
- Do you see a recurring theme?

Then, instruct the students to use a new paper and start writing with purpose. Write down ideas, visions and plans for the future. Depending on the course or context of the session, this can be narrowed down.

Tip: while this is a more directed exercise, encourage students to let their imaginations run wild while still developing their visions on the future. Drawings could be part of this.



5. Envisioning the Future 10 mins

Using the Visualising the Future script, ask the students to close their eyes again and envision a scenario in the future where the ideas that they've written down are incorporated.

Optionally, encourage the students to share their experiences in smaller groups at the end of the session. This can inspire collaborative thinking and move from individual to shared perspectives on the future.

Please note, as part of assessment *as learning*, students reflect individually using reflective questions.



III. Assessment

By reflecting on their experience and learning process, students become aware of how this activity has contributed to shaping a long-term vision.



Purpose

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



Roles

Self-assessment and teacher-led assessment



Characteristics

Self-regulated learning and assessment with rubric



Materials

Reflective questions



Assessment

Reflective questions

1. Reflect on your imagination. Describe your experience with your imagination during the activity.

- Was it easy or challenging for me to tap into my imagination during the exercise?
- Did I discover new aspects of my imagination that surprised me?
- What techniques or moments helped me access my creative thinking?

2. Reflect on your long-term vision for the future. Consider the long-term vision you formulated during the exercise, reflect on its origins and its potential impact.

- Was this vision something entirely new, or have I contemplated it before?
- What elements of the vision were most compelling or exciting to me?
- How realistic or achievable does this vision feel? Why?

3. Analyse your experience of the activity and the impact it had on you.

- How did I feel before the session, compared to afterwards?
- What did I notice about my mind or body during the breathing exercises?
- Was I calmer, more focused or restless?
- Were there any specific sensations, thoughts or emotions that stood out?
- What part of the meditation techniques felt helpful (or unhelpful) to me? Why?
- What did the writing exercises do for me? How was the experience of writing freely?
- Did this stimulate imagination? Did it help to access different layers of thinking?

4. Applying imaginative capacity to other areas in life. Think about how the creative thinking you practiced may be applied to other aspects of your life and studies.

- In what ways can I incorporate elements of the session (e.g., meditative techniques, freewriting) into my academic pursuits?
- Can any insights from this session be applied in my personal or professional life?
- What actions can I take to nurture my imagination or creative thinking in my daily life? In what ways could this affect me?





IV. Key Advice

This tool empowers individual students to think creatively and develop their vision. The output can be used to discuss and develop shared visions of the future. Therefore, the tool can be used as a starting point of a larger assignment or group project.





Metaphorical Stories

Metaphorical stories lead listeners on a journey where they can imagine and create their paths and endings. Select one of the three scripts for your session that feels most fitting and adjust where needed. Each of these stories stimulates imagination, allowing listeners to fill the gaps and project their own interpretations and visions.





1. The Impossible Train Script

Keep your eyes closed. I have a story I'd like to tell you.

It's about a train and a group of people who live on that train and know of nothing else. This train has been moving since anyone can remember. The people on the train can't imagine a time when the train wasn't moving and when they were not on the train. Everyone works to keep the train moving. The train never stops. It never stops. It cannot stop.

People on the train live in constant churn. The work to keep the train moving is hard and inhumane. On the train, people are treated with cruelty and oppression. Some are treated worse than others. But nobody is truly living. Sometimes they get breaks, but it is hard.

One day, a fire breaks out in one of the carriages of the train. There is panic. The fire spreads throughout the whole train... Without getting off the train, everyone is going to die.

Then the impossible happens. The brakes no-one believed existed start to work. In the emergency, no-one notices how extraordinary it is that the train is stopping. They're too focused on the fire. The old rules go out the window.

For years on the train, the "worker class" of people have been dying from the awful conditions of the work they have to do on the train. They sleep in the aisles and sometimes have nowhere to sleep at all.

Suddenly, there are orders to house them and treat their ailments.

The train stops and people begin to get off. Apart from the sound of the fire, suddenly there is a great silence. The sound of the engines dies down and the people can hear all sorts of sounds they've not been able to hear. Birds are singing, the rustle of leaves.

The fire is unforgiving. The different carriages, which exist as different nations, are responding in different ways. Many people die and mostly the people who have suffered most by the rules of the train.





Without the operation of the train to worry about, there is suddenly time to consider how they have been living. Why aren't people always given places to sleep? What is the purpose of keeping the train going? Could it be different? Should we start the train again?

And suddenly, they glimpse what's ahead of the train. Not so far off, the track gives way to a cliff-edge and a deep canyon many miles deep. They have been hurtling toward a cliff-edge, unable to stop. The fire and disaster continues, but now they see a larger crisis.

People had spoken of this cliff-edge before, but it hadn't made a difference. Because the train couldn't stop, the train people would push this out of mind, unable to see a solution.

Now suddenly, some of the people got to work, ripping up the track from the ground.

Others were eager to get the train moving again. They had investments and beliefs in the train and couldn't face an alternative. A great conversation began, among the carriages. The fire continued to blaze. More and more people realised it was a life-or-death situation. Yet, the impossible has happened. We've stopped the train.

How will the story end?

What is ours to do in this time?

What is there to lose?

Who do you choose to be?

And what will we sacrifice in order to build a different future?

Take a moment to return to your regular breath. Then, gently open your eyes again.





2. The Garden of Infinite Paths Script

Keep your eyes closed. I have a story I'd like to tell you.

In the heart of an ancient, enchanted forest lies the Garden of Infinite Paths, a place where time bends, and nature weaves dreams into reality. Legend says the Earth itself shaped this sanctuary — a haven for those brave enough to explore life's boundless possibilities. Here, the garden holds answers to unasked questions and glimpses of futures not yet imagined.

As you step into the garden, the air wraps around you, heavy with the sweet scent of jasmine and honeysuckle, mingling with the earthy aroma of moss-covered stones. Sunlight filters through a canopy of ancient trees, painting the ground below with shifting patterns of light and shadow. A gentle breeze dances through the leaves, whispering secrets of the past and faint hints of the future.

With each step, you lose yourself in the magic of the garden. Its paths twist and turn, inviting you to explore whichever corners call to you most. But as you walk, your mind drifts beyond the garden to the world outside. Out there, people live in endless cycles of movement, bound to hard work and struggle. Many endure cruelty; some suffer more than others. Yet, even in moments of rest, it seems no one is truly living.

These thoughts weigh on you, but the garden's spell won't let them linger. To your left, a stream flows gently, its waters sparkling like liquid silver. Tiny fish dart beneath the surface, their quick movements like fleeting thoughts that flicker and vanish. The murmuring stream calms your spirit, a quiet reminder of life's endless ebb and flow.

You turn to your right. There stands a towering oak, its branches stretching high into the heavens, its leaves rustling like the pages of an ancient book. It feels alive with stories — those told long ago and those still waiting to be written. Standing before it, you feel grounded in the present, yet deeply connected to the past and the future, as if the tree itself holds all time within its roots.

Ahead of you, paths stretch in all directions, each one alive with its own unique energy. Some glow with luminous flowers, pulsing gently like heartbeats, hinting at stories yet to





unfold. Others are framed by ferns and towering trees, their branches arching overhead like the arms of giants.

You step forward, and the ground beneath you hums with quiet energy.

Each path calls to you, offering a different journey:

- *The Path of Reflection:*
This peaceful trail winds beside a shimmering river, its surface alive with sunlight. Along this path, the garden mirrors your innermost thoughts, inviting you to pause, reflect and gain clarity. Here, you can examine your dreams and choices, finding the inspiration to imagine the future you wish to create.
- *The Path of Compassion:*
A lush meadow stretches along this trail, dotted with wildflowers swaying gently in the breeze. Laughter rises in the distance. You follow the sound to a group of people gathered beneath a tree, sharing stories and dreams. They invite you to join them — people of all walks of life, united by empathy and understanding. Walking this path, you feel the warmth of connection and the power of community, a vision of a world built on unity and collaboration.
- *The Path of Innovation:*
This vibrant path winds through greenery shimmering with iridescent hues. Visions emerge as you walk — a world where technology and nature thrive together in harmony. Clean energy powers cities, and innovation respects the Earth's rhythms. The line between the possible and impossible dissolves, inspiring you to imagine bold solutions to the challenges of today.
- *The Path of Adventure:*
This rugged trail climbs toward distant mountains, promising untold discoveries. Along the way, you see explorers venturing fearlessly into the unknown, charting new frontiers. The air buzzes with excitement and wonder, urging you to embrace the thrill of curiosity and courage as you push beyond the limits of what you know.





Each path reflects a piece of your soul—a desire, a hope, an aspiration. The garden is a mirror, challenging you to consider how your vision of the future shapes the choices you make today.

Here, you realise that the future isn't a fixed destination but a vast landscape of possibilities.

How will this story end?

Which path will you take?

What will you do with this moment in time?

What is there to lose?

And, most importantly, who do you choose to be?

Take a moment to return to your regular breath. Then, gently open your eyes again.





3. The City of Dreams Script

Keep your eyes closed. I have a story I'd like to tell you.

High above the clouds, where the sky blazes with hues of sunrise and sunset, there exists a city like no other, the City of Dreams. This city isn't built from bricks or steel, but from the aspirations of countless dreamers who dared to imagine a world beyond reality's constraints. Though invisible to most, the City of Dreams has quietly inspired the design of many cities on Earth, its influence a testament to the boundless power of imagination. Here, the line between fantasy and possibility fades and the future unfolds as an endless canvas waiting to be painted.

As you step into the City, you feel it breathe around you. The wind carries a soft, melodic hum, as if the city is alive and singing to you. Beneath your feet, the streets shimmer in shifting mosaics of color, forming patterns that change with every step you take. Buildings and trees rise majestically on either side, their surfaces alive with movement, as though they are dreaming alongside you.

You wander through the streets, marveling at the personality woven into every corner of the city. A massive tree stands ahead, its sprawling branches cradling homes made of glass and wood. Just beyond it, waterfalls cascade like liquid jewels, sparkling in the sunlight. Bridges arch gracefully between the falls, and people move across them with ease, as if gravity bends to the city's will.

Here, time feels irrelevant — a forgotten concept in a world fueled by creativity and endless potential. The city's residents walk with purpose and peace, their faces alight with contentment. They live in harmony, free from the pressures and limitations of the world below.

Your thoughts drift to life on Earth. Down there, time rules everything. Life is a constant race against deadlines, burdened by responsibilities and the weight of survival. Dreams often fade into the background, overshadowed by the grind of daily life. People are always in motion, working hard to stay afloat. Cruelty and oppression are all too common, with some enduring far greater hardships than others. But here, in the City of Dreams, those struggles feel distant, replaced by a sense of freedom and possibility.





You continue exploring and find yourself on the Street of Whispers. The air here is alive with murmurs — soft voices carried by the breeze, sharing stories, dreams and ideas. The buildings along the street are made of books, their pages forming walls that rustle with whispered tales of the past, present, and future. One particular building catches your eye, its pages fluttering as if inviting you to step inside.

Within, you discover a library unlike any other. Ideas flow like rivers and the air buzzes with creativity. Groups of people gather around, deep in conversation, discussing the mysteries of the universe, the complexities of human nature and the possibilities of the future. Their words spark new thoughts within you, igniting a fire of inspiration.

Here, in the Street of Whispers, you realise the immense power of imagination and the importance of sharing dreams. The whispers around you are like seeds, waiting to grow into innovations and actions that will shape the world of tomorrow.

- *What whispers call to you in your own life?*
- *What stories are waiting to be explored and shared?*

Further along, you arrive at the Market of Infinite Creations, a bustling bazaar alive with color, sounds and energy. Here, artisans and inventors display their works — art and inventions that defy logic, each one a masterpiece of boundless creativity. The stalls overflow with impossible creations: sculptures that move like liquid, devices that hum with unseen energy and paintings that shift and change as you look at them.

The market pulses with life. Vibrant colors swirl around you, tantalising aromas fill the air and laughter mingles with lively conversation. Here, ideas are traded as readily as goods. The energy is infectious, a celebration of creation and collaboration.

As you explore, you feel a profound truth settle within you: every invention, every piece of art, begins as a spark in the imagination. Dreams have the power to shape the world and this market is proof of that limitless potential.





- *What creations do you see in your life?*
- *What dreams inspire you to create?*

As the day draws to a close, you find yourself at the River of Reflections, a tranquil waterway that flows through the heart of the city. The river's surface gleams like a mirror, reflecting the brilliant colors of the sunset and the dreams of those who gaze upon it. Its gentle current seems to whisper, inviting you to pause and consider your own journey.

You sit by the river, watching as the city begins to glow with the light of a million stars. The night sky unfurls above you and a deep sense of peace washes over you. The river doesn't speak with words but with an understanding — a quiet assurance that life, like the river, is a continuous flow of experiences and choices. Its surface reflects the dreams that guide you, offering glimpses of the paths you might take and the futures you could create.

- *What reflections do you see in your own life?*
- *What dreams and possibilities are mirrored in your journey?*
- *How can you use your imagination to shape the future you desire?*

As you prepare to leave the City of Dreams, you carry its lessons with you. While the real world may feel limiting, the imagination knows no bounds. The city has shown you that dreams are the seeds of reality, waiting to be nurtured into existence.

Stepping back into the real world, you feel a renewed sense of purpose. The City of Dreams lives on within you, a reminder that the future is shaped by those who dare to imagine it.





- *What dreams and possibilities will you carry with you?*
- *What futures will you create, guided by the inspiration of your journey?*

Take a moment to return to your regular breath. Then, gently open your eyes again.





Key Advice

Seven golden guidelines to create a safe learning environment

Creating a safe and inclusive learning environment is an ongoing process. By implementing these guidelines, you can foster open communication, a sense of belonging and collective learning:

1. Set clear expectations

Clearly communicate your expectations and routines from the beginning. Ensure that students understand what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. Encourage them to participate in creating these expectations, promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility.

2. Build trust

Establish a trustworthy and secure environment by emphasising that anything shared within the group should remain confidential. Encourage students to make their own decisions about sharing personal experiences and respect their individual levels of comfort.

3. Foster active listening

Emphasise the importance of truly listening and understanding. Foster an environment where students feel free to express themselves without fear of judgment or criticism and discourage interruptions. Strengthen active listening skills by teaching non-verbal cues and using prompts.

4. Encourage empathy

Encourage students to consider the feelings and experiences of others and to respond with kindness, acceptance and understanding, even when perspectives differ from their own. Foster an inclusive and respectful environment where empathy is valued and embraced as an essential aspect of communication and mutual understanding.

5. Be a role model

Lead by example and embody the behaviour you expect from your students. Treat all students with respect, fairness and kindness, and appreciate their diverse backgrounds, individual strengths and contributions. Ensure the safety and well-being of all students by promptly and decisively addressing any form of harassment or discrimination. Reflect on mistakes and offer apologies when necessary.





6. Adapt the pace and intensity

Recognise when emotions escalate and become overwhelming, adjusting the pace or intensity of the activity as necessary. For example, implement the "five-minute rule", where each student can express their controversial view in a respectful manner, or offer a short break for students to journal and reflect on their emotions, enabling them to regulate their feelings.

7. Follow up and check-in

Encourage students to reflect on the impact of the experience on themselves as well as the group. Provide individual or group follow-up and inquire about the well-being of students. Offer the opportunity for further discussion or support if needed. If you believe that the emotional intensity or well-being of the students exceeds your expertise, do not hesitate to seek advice from a student advisor, mental health professional or the appropriate support services provided by your institution.





Breathing exercises

These are suggestions for six breathing exercises that help to let go of thoughts and create space for creativity and imagination. Select one that you deem most fitting for the situation and ideally, make it your own. In the session, you can follow the script by reading it out loud.

General instructions

Take a comfortable seat, sitting upright with both feet on the floor and your hands resting on your thighs. Then, if you feel comfortable to do so, close your eyes. Otherwise, focus your eyes on your hands.

Become aware of your body, and notice how you breathe. Unlike the mind, the body can only exist in this time and in this place alone. To be in the moment, we concentrate on our body and the breath. If your mind wanders off, try to gently guide it back to your body and your breath. This is normal. Breathing always helps: Extending your exhale calms down the nervous system. What follows is an exercise to let go of accumulated thoughts and concerns and connect with our bodies and breath.





1. Body Scan

The Body Scan helps to be in the present moment and release from overthinking, by mentioning specific body parts to shift the awareness to.

Script:

Let's begin with some gentle breathing:

- *Inhale deeply through your nostrils for a count of four. 1, 2, 3, 4.*
- *Exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of six. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.*

Repeat this breathing pattern for a few cycles, allowing your mind to settle and your body to relax.

- *Where do you feel your body touching something? Do you feel your feet touching the floor? Bring your attention to your feet. Notice any sensations or tension. Breathe in deeply again, and as you exhale, imagine any tension melting away, leaving your feet relaxed and comfortable.*
- *Move your awareness up your legs and to your hips. Notice any sensations. Inhale deeply, and as you exhale, let your hips and legs become heavy and relaxed.*
- *Shift your focus to your lower and upper back. Notice any tension or discomfort. As you breathe out, visualise releasing any tightness, allowing your back to relax.*
- *Bring your attention to your belly and chest. Feel the rise and fall of your breath. Inhale deeply, and as you exhale, imagine your chest and abdomen becoming calm and at ease.*
- *Move your awareness down your arms, to your hands, all the way down to your fingertips. Notice any sensations or tension. Breathe in deeply. As you exhale, let your arms and hands become heavy and relaxed.*
- *Shift your focus to your neck and shoulders. Inhale deeply. As you exhale, feel your shoulders dropping and relaxing, letting go of any tightness.*
- *Finally, bring your attention to your head. Notice any sensations or tension. As you exhale, imagine releasing any tension from your forehead, eyes and jaw.*

Take a few moments to breathe deeply, feeling the sense of relaxation and calmness throughout your entire body. Then, return to your regular breath and gently open your eyes again.





2. Box Breathing

Box Breathing, or Square Breathing boosts concentration and creates a sense of calmness. It's effective for opening up mental space for creativity by following a structured breathing pattern. By focusing on the timing of the breath, this technique brings attention to the present moment, allowing the mind to clear and open up to creativity.

Script:

Close your eyes gently and take a moment to settle in. Let your body relax and your mind become present.

With your eyes closed, imagine in front of you a square with four equal sides. This will help us breathe and hold our breath for the count of four seconds, breathing and holding our breath, while we trace one corner of the box to the next in our minds, all the way around the box.

Taking strong, deep breaths, we are going to inhale through our nostrils for four seconds, then hold the breath for four, exhale through the nostrils for four seconds, and hold the breath for four seconds again. We repeat this a couple of times.

- *Inhale 1, 2, 3, 4*
- *Hold 1, 2, 3, 4*
- *Exhale 1, 2, 3, 4*
- *Hold 1, 2, 3, 4*

Repeat about 10 times, guiding the movement around the box. At some point, you may instruct to continue without your guidance.

Then, return to your regular breath and gently open your eyes again.





3. 4-7-8 Breathing Technique

The 4-7-8 Breathing Technique reduces stress and calms the mind. By focusing on the length of the breath, this technique brings the attention to the present moment, allowing the mind to clear and open up to creativity.

Script:

Close your eyes gently and take a moment to settle in. Let your body relax and your mind become present.

- *Slowly inhale through your nostrils for a count of four. 1, 2, 3, 4.*
- *Hold: Hold your breath gently for a count of seven. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.*
- *Exhale slowly and fully through your mouth for a count of eight. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.*

Repeat this cycle for about eight rounds.

Then, return to your regular breath and gently open your eyes again.





4. Ocean Breath

Ocean Breath, or Ujjayi Pranayama, involves creating a gentle ocean-like sound in the throat, and boosts relaxation and concentration. This exercise soothes the mind and fosters a meditative state, ideal for creative exploration.

Script:

Sit comfortably with your spine straight and eyes closed. Take a moment to settle in and relax your body.

Focus on the soothing sound of your breath, like the ocean's waves. Allow this sound to bring you peace and clarity.

- *Inhale slowly through your nostrils, slightly constricting the back of your throat to create a soft ocean-like sound. Imagine waves, gently rolling in. 1, 2, 3, 4.*
- *Exhale slowly through your nostrils, maintaining the ocean sound, imagining the waves receding. 1, 2, 3, 4.*

Continue for several minutes.

When you're ready, let your breath return to normal. Gently open your eyes again.





5. 5-5-5 Breathing

The 5-5-5 Breathing exercise creates mental space and calmness. By focusing on equal timing, this exercise helps alleviate stress and encourages a more open and creative mind.

Script:

Sit comfortably with your spine straight and eyes closed. Take a moment to settle in and relax your body.

- *Inhale deeply through your nostrils for five seconds. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.*
- *Hold the breath gently for five seconds. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.*
- *Exhale slowly through your mouth for five seconds. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.*

Notice the sense of calm that begins to fill your mind and body. Allow this calmness to create space for creativity and inspiration. Let your thoughts drift away, focusing on the gentle flow of your breath.

Continue this pattern for 5 minutes, allowing yourself to sink deeper into relaxation with each cycle.

Then, return to your regular breath and gently open your eyes again.





6. Mindful Breathing with Visualisation

This exercise combines deep breathing with visualisation, enhancing imagination and inspiration.

Script:

Allow yourself to become present in this moment. This exercise encourages a free flow of ideas and mental clarity with each breath.

Let's start:

- *Take a deep inhale through your nostrils, imagining fresh energy and ideas flowing into your mind. Picture this breath as a stream of inspiration and choose a color for this wave of breath. 1, 2, 3, 4.*
- *Release the breath slowly through your mouth and visualise any stress or creative blocks leaving your body. 1, 2, 3, 4.*

Continue this breathing and visualisation for 5 minutes.

Let this practice guide you to new insights and possibilities. Allow your imagination to wander freely with each breath. Visualise different creative ideas taking shape in your mind.

Then, return to your regular breath and gently open your eyes again.



Freewriting

Freewriting is a form of stream-of-consciousness writing. It involves setting a timer — often ranging from 5 to 20 minutes — and writing without stopping until the time is up. The technique was popularised by Peter Elbow in his book *Writing Without Teachers* (1998) and has since become an important tool to writers, academics and professionals seeking to enhance creative thinking.

Instruct the students:

- We will be writing for 7 minutes – I will set a timer for exactly 7 minutes.
- This time is just for you. Simply begin writing and don't stop until the timer rings. Remember, there is no right or wrong way to do this – the only rule is to keep writing about whatever comes up after hearing the story.
- If you do feel like you are getting stuck, keep your pen moving, and let your thoughts flow without judgment. If you find yourself pausing, just write the first word that comes to mind and see where it takes you. It may also help to repeat some of the reflective questions that were in the story.





Visualising the Future Script

Find a comfortable position. Close your eyes gently, and inhale deeply. Hold for a moment. Then, slowly exhale, letting go of any tension or distractions.

Picture yourself stepping into the future that you've envisioned — a world shaped by the ideas you have written down.

As you continue to breathe deeply, imagine the following:

- Visualise the physical world around you. How has it transformed? Are there any changes in the environment, technology and society? Consider the positive developments that have occurred. Are there new solutions that have been implemented?
- Look at the people around you. Observe the individuals who inhabit this future world. What are they like? Notice their behaviors, attitudes and interactions. Are they more collaborative, compassionate, creative? How have these people contributed to the changes in society?
- What does it feel like? Tap into the emotions and sensations that you feel, living in this future. Is it a place of peace, innovation, justice and sustainability? What does that feel like? Feel the atmosphere and notice any emotions it evokes within you. Are you feeling hopeful, excited, calm or another emotion?

You are living that future right now. But how was this future reached?

- Reflect on the journey from the present time all the way to your envisioned future. What steps have been taken to reach this point? Consider the pathways that have led to this transformation. What strategies were employed to bring about change?
- As you continue to envision this future, think about the actions and developments needed to turn your vision into reality, starting today. Reflect on these guiding questions:
 - What would we need to develop? Identify the key elements, skills or ideas that must be nurtured to move closer to your vision. Are there innovations or programmes that need to be implemented? What role do individuals, communities and institutions play in accomplishing this?
 - What would we need to lose? Consider the obstacles, mindsets or practices that must be left behind to achieve your envisioned future. Are





there outdated systems or beliefs that need to be challenged and changed? How can society collectively work to overcome these barriers?

- What actions can you take? Imagine yourself as an active participant in creating this future. What personal actions or commitments can you make today to contribute to this vision? Reflect on how your choices and efforts can align with the broader goals you have imagined.

As we come to the end of this visualisation, begin to bring your attention back to the present moment. With your eyes still closed, take a few deep breaths and slowly start to move your fingers and toes. When you feel ready, gently open your eyes and return to the room.

Now, take a moment to complete your long-term vision by incorporating any thoughts, images or insights that came to mind during the exercise.



V. References

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