**Methods in Futures Studies** (Jim Dator)

1. **The basic paradigm:**

   ![](image)

2. **Four categories of futures methods:**
   
   A. Using experience and/or knowledge of history to anticipate the future (*Insight*)
      
      (The most common method).
   
   B. Forecasting the future from the present and/or past (*Flashlight*)
      
      (The most common futures method).
   
   C. Incasting from the future (*Lighthouse*)
      
      (A way we stress. Is it possible?)
   
   D. Designing/inventing/creating the future
      
      (Our special emphasis).

3. **Three components of the future:**
   
   A. Same as past/present (what are these?)
      
      (Knowledge of history, and/or personal experience, is all you need).
   
   B. Deriving from the trends of the present/past
      
      (What trends? What shape? Cycles?)
   
   C. Utterly new
      
      (How could there be anything "utterly new", never before experienced?)

4. **Forecasting assuming continuity of past and/or present:** *Trend analysis*

   What are the relevant variables? How to operationalize and measure them?
   
   Linear extrapolation (bivariate); Nonlinear extrapolation; cycles (Kondratieff; Dewey; 1920s again?); Exponential growth; S-curves; Step functions; Envelop curves; multi-variate extrapolation (How interrelate different variables? [Lag, lead, equivalence])

5. **Forecasting assuming discontinuity from the present, but similarity with the past, or the present elsewhere:** *Analogy*

   Problem in knowing what really happened in the past; isomorphism of past & future; "development"; "improbable futures" (Kaufman, p. 120); science fiction; cross-cultural research; primate and/or other biological research; evolutionary theory.

6. **In-casting from the future**

   A. *Deductive forecasting* (from the *Four Futures*, etc)
   
   B. *Qualitative Evaluations*:
      
      Commissions, public (or expert) opinion polls; AD groups; brainstorming; Delbecq; De Bono's colored hats (white, green, blue, yellow, red, black); Delphi and cross-impact; futures wheels (Burke's Connections)
   
   C. *Games/models/simulations*
      
      Mental/verbal
      
      Written
      
      Mathematical

      Structure (Units [variables] and boundaries); levels (physical quantities); rates (use of those quantities); flows (from what to what units); auxiliary variables; time delays
Limits to Growth:
Population, Resources, Production, Land, Pollution.

Experiential
Visual
AV
Tactile, Olofactory, etc.

D. Scenarios
Using timelines; "The oceans died in 19XX...."; Looking Backward; Pieces of a fruit cake; Choice and Consequences; Parliamentary Debates

E. Emerging Issues Analysis

7. Designing the Future
Normative futures; value-based futures.
Inventing the future rather than passively forecasting it.
Considering alternative futures and envisioning a preferred future;
Devising strategies, tactics, and actions leading towards the preferred future.
All of this on a continual, iterative, routine basis.

8. Decolonizing the Future
Futures Research Centers ← → Decision-Makers
Anticipatory Democracy