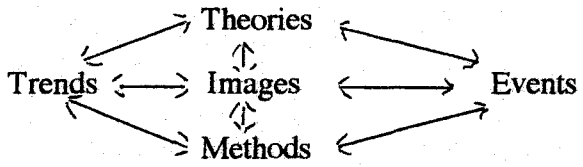
Methods in Futures Studies (Jim Dator)

1. **The basic paradigm:**



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

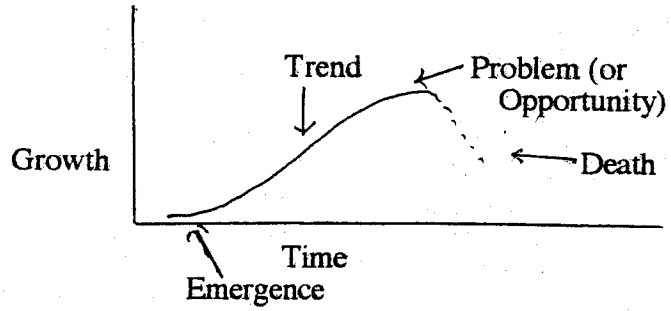
Limits to Growth:
Population, Resources, Production, Land, Pollution.

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**