

A close-up photograph of a person's eye, which is looking through a magnifying glass. The magnifying glass is held over the eye, and the lens is in sharp focus, showing the eye's iris and pupil. The background is blurred, showing the person's skin and eyelashes.

IFTF Foresight Essentials

Arriving at a Radically Different Future

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FLIP the FUTURE

A person is silhouetted against a vast, starry night sky. The Milky Way galaxy is visible, stretching across the frame with a color gradient from purple and blue at the top to yellow and orange at the bottom. The person stands on a dark, rocky ridge, looking up at the stars.



FORESIGHT

FLIP THE FUTURE

What's true today needn't be true forever. Futures thinking invites us to move beyond the obvious and imagine entirely new possibilities. Flipping today's facts on their heads wakes up your imagination and challenges your mental models about how things will work in the future.

IFTF Foresight Essentials Toolkit




WHY THIS TOOL?

- **Unstick** your mind about what can and cannot be different in the future.
- **Develop** mental habits that help you anticipate hard-to-predict futures.
- **Quickly engage** a group who are new to futures thinking.

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL:

- As a mental icebreaker at the start of a workshop.
- At the beginning of a futures research project.

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1. Pick a **topic**
 2. List **things that are generally true** about it today
 3. **“Flip”** your truths
 4. **Imagine a world** in which your flipped facts are now reality—and why that might be the case

1. Pick a **topic**

SHOES!

2. List “truths” that are **generally true** about **SHOES** today

- Shoes cost money
- People take their shoes off when they go to sleep

YOUR TURN:

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

On your own, write at least 2 facts or “general truths”

(One fact per small, square sticky)

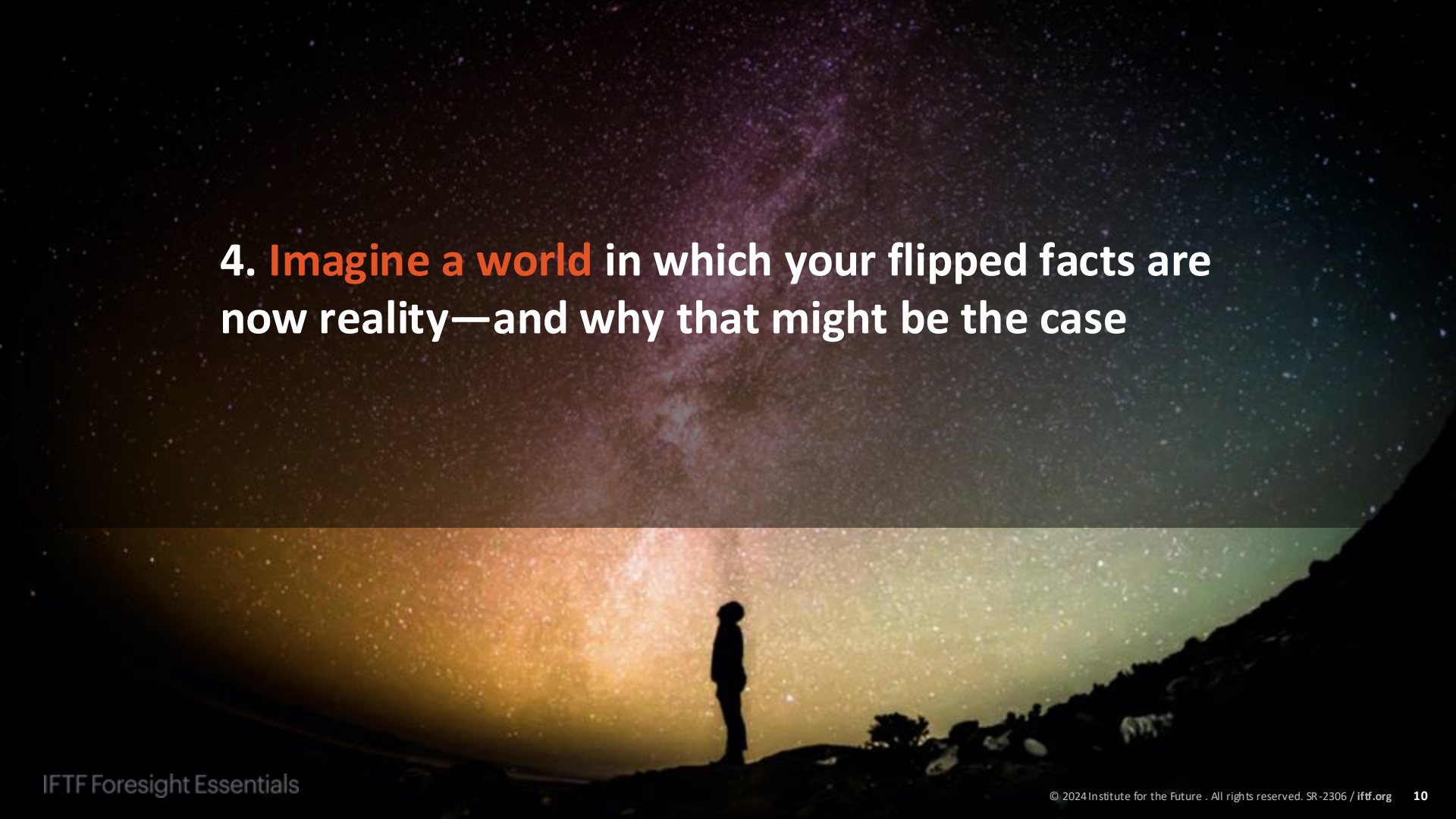
Consider concepts related to community colleges, like

- curriculum design & delivery
- community engagement & partnerships
- student body
- faculty & staff
- financing
- physical campus



3. “Flip” your truths

- Shoes cost money -> **shoes don't cost money**
- People take their shoes off when they go to sleep -> **many people sleep with their shoes on**



4. **Imagine a world** in which your flipped facts are now reality—and why that might be the case

10 years from now, shoes don't cost money.



10 years from now, **many people sleep with their shoes on.**



The background of the slide is a vibrant, textured surface in shades of red and orange, resembling a wall being painted. In the upper left corner, the handles of several paintbrushes are visible, and in the lower center, a paintbrush is shown in the process of applying paint, creating a lighter, more textured area.

Flipping the future of COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Your turn!

- **SOLO:** Flip one truth to a provocative alternative
- **IN PAIRS:** Choose one to work on. Discuss & imagine what this new future looks like. How do you think we realistically got there?
- **Helpful brainstorming questions:**
 - What made this truth change? What happened in the external world to make this flipped truth become the new reality?
 - What is it like to live in this world? How did we get there?
 - What purpose did your truth originally serve that is no longer relevant?
 - What signals or trends are pointing towards the new truth



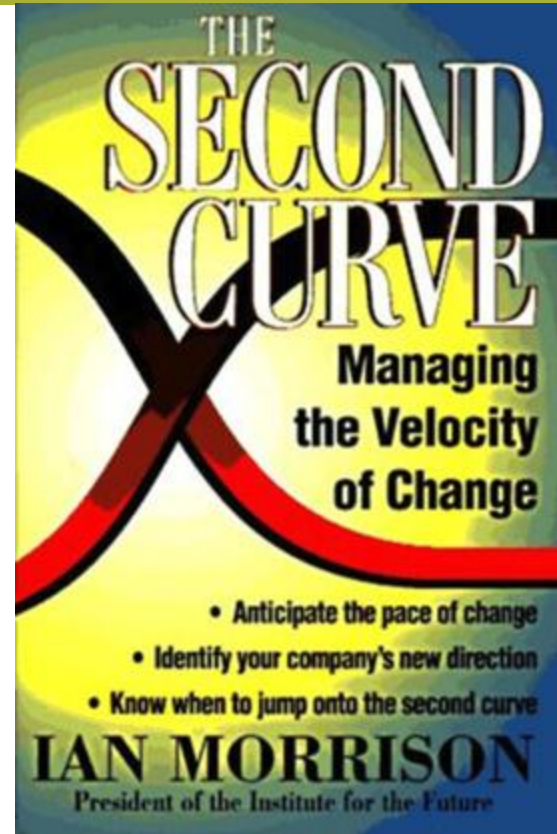
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INSIGHT

Ride Two Curves

Ian Morrison, IFTF, 1996

The Second Curve Model is a simple but powerful model in which organizations can assess their tried-and-true, “first-curve” approaches vs. more speculative “second curve” disruptive innovations.

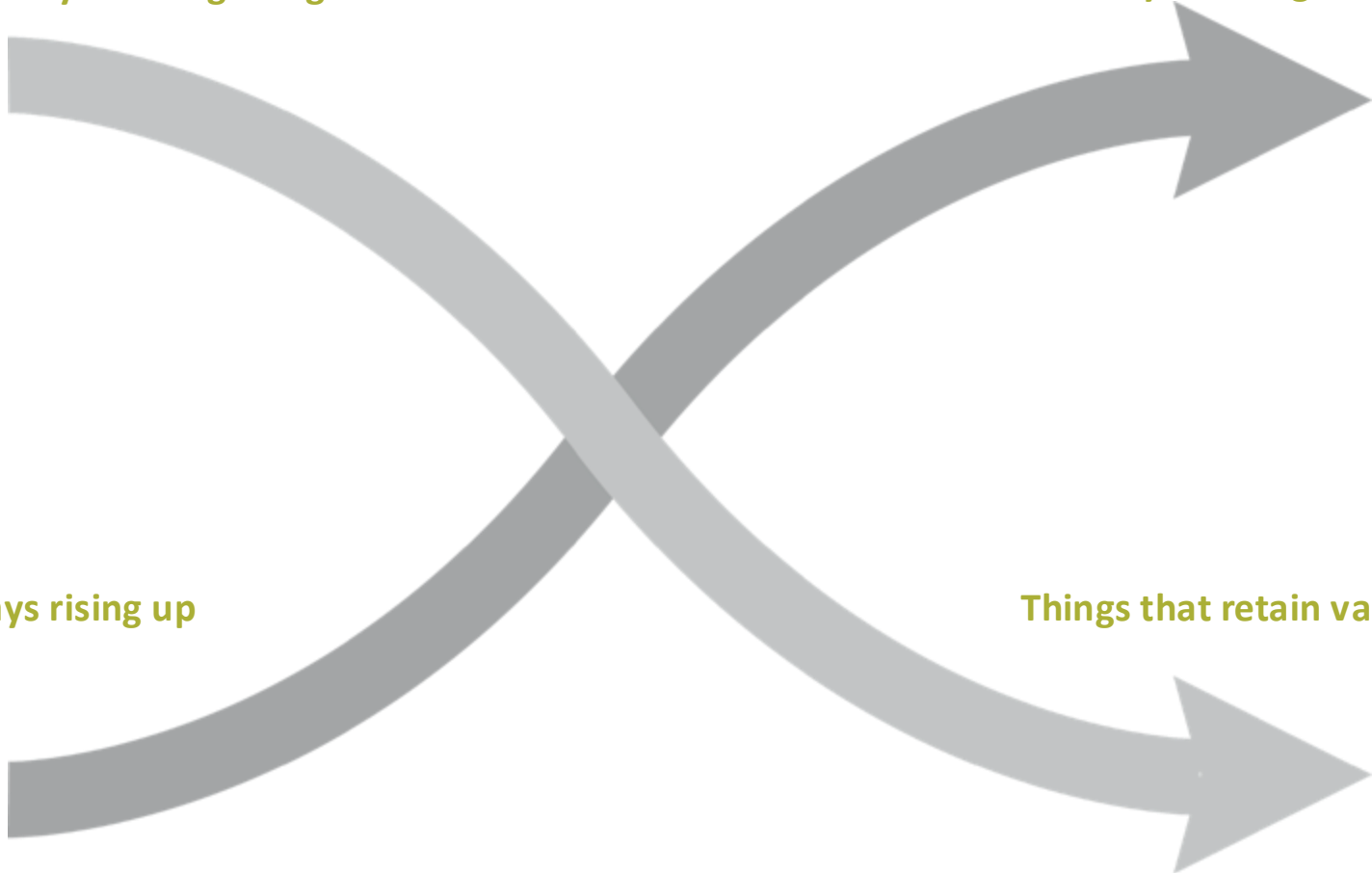


Today's way of doing things

Tomorrow's way of doing things

New ways rising up

Things that retain value





RIDE TWO CURVES

TOPIC: _____

FROM Try to summarize the shift in a “from-to” phrase

TODAY'S WAY OF DOING THINGS

TOMORROW'S WAY OF DOING THINGS

Top of the 1st curve:
fill in the ways you or your stakeholders/partners are currently working that might have to change

Top of the 2nd curve:
fill in how you or your stakeholders'/partners' activities/work might look different 5-10 years from now

Bottom of the 2nd curve:
fill in the signals or drivers that suggest new ways of doing things

Bottom of the 1st curve:
fill in the current assets that can be leveraged for continued value

TODAY'S SIGNALS AND DRIVERS

RESIDUAL ASSETS

IMPLICATIONS

As the second curve takes root, what are implications for your system? For adjacent or peripheral systems that touch yours?

STRATEGIES

Articulate strategies that you can use to successfully navigate the first curve in view of the ascendance of the second curve.



RIDE TWO CURVES

TOPIC: Future of the car

FROM Car as a product
TODAY'S WAY OF DOING THINGS

TO Mobility as a service
TOMORROW'S WAY OF DOING THINGS

FIRST
SECOND CURVE

People drive their own vehicles

Car designed for single human driver

Driver's attention focused solely on road

Cars become sites for wider range of activities

On-demand access to automated vehicles

Driver: ride-sharing turns car access into on-demand service

Signal: Honda announces first urban autonomous taxis for Tokyo, to launch in 2026

Vehicles will still need to be engineered/ designed/ manufactured

People will still need to trust vehicles

TODAY'S SIGNIFIERS

RESIDUAL ASSETS

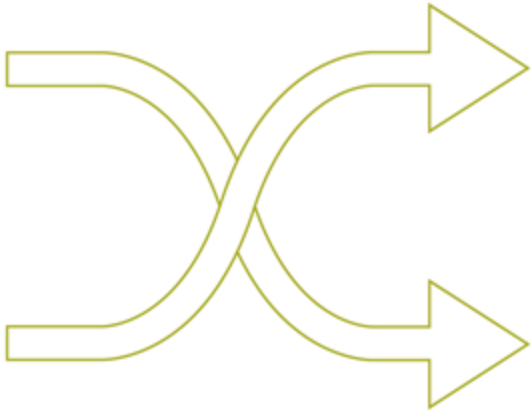
IMPLICATIONS

- Fragmented regulatory environments
- New staffing and recruiting needs

STRATEGIES

- Redefine safety standards
- Provide unique and exclusive services or experiences
- New concepts for vehicle shape and interior

Your Turn!



- As a table: identify a futures topic you want to explore, perhaps the future of community colleges
- Start by identifying a From-To Shift: one way of doing things today that is on the decline, and one new way of doing things that is on the rise
- Describe what is happening now on top of the 1st curve
- Put signals of change on bottom of the 2nd curve
- Describe how things might look different 10 years from now at top of second curve
- Note residual assets on bottom of second curve
- Add any strategies that come to mind in the right column



Knowing when to jump

- Change starts at the margins of an industry or society and slowly establishes a foundation for growth. (signals)
- Hits a point where change appears to burst on the scene out of nowhere and the curve ascends steeply, usually undermining the incumbent trends and stakeholders. (inflection point)
- Leap too soon, and you don't have a strong following. Leap too late, and someone has already beaten you to the rewards.

Charting New Paths to the Future in the California Community Colleges



DOING WHAT MATTERS™
FOR JOBS AND THE ECONOMY



INSTITUTE FOR THE FUTURE

Ways to work with IFTF

- Conduct or sponsor research
- Host a custom training or event
- Attend an open enrollment training
- Join our free webinars
- Sign up for our mailing list
- And more!



iftf.org/AFIT2024