

Teaching ideas for Me + My Futures

Resources developed by Dr. Janine Delahunty and Anne F. J. Hellwig (2021)

This resource has been developed for use by educators, counsellors, community/youth workers, as well as parents, carers, other family members, friends, mentors and so on. It should be used in conjunction with *Me + My Futures* Reflective Tool which aims to prompt constructive conversations around identifying personally meaningful hoped-for aims for the future and how to achieve them.

The *Me + My Futures* Reflective Tool was developed from research with people across age groups from regional, rural or remote Australia who were either at university or nearing the end of secondary school. All had given much thought about what they aspired to be or do in the future and were working towards these aims in highly individualised and diverse ways, within support networks that were predominantly family, community, peers and staff.



This is a guide. It is not prescriptive but provides ideas for extending reflective activities to foster and promote conversations about aims and ideas for the future and taking action to 'get there'.

This resource can be used in different contexts and adapted to suit whatever your role is in supporting others conceptualise and plan their futures. Despite the distinctly regional, rural and remote flavour, thinking about one's future and making plans, taking actions to move towards that future is for everyone and anyone.

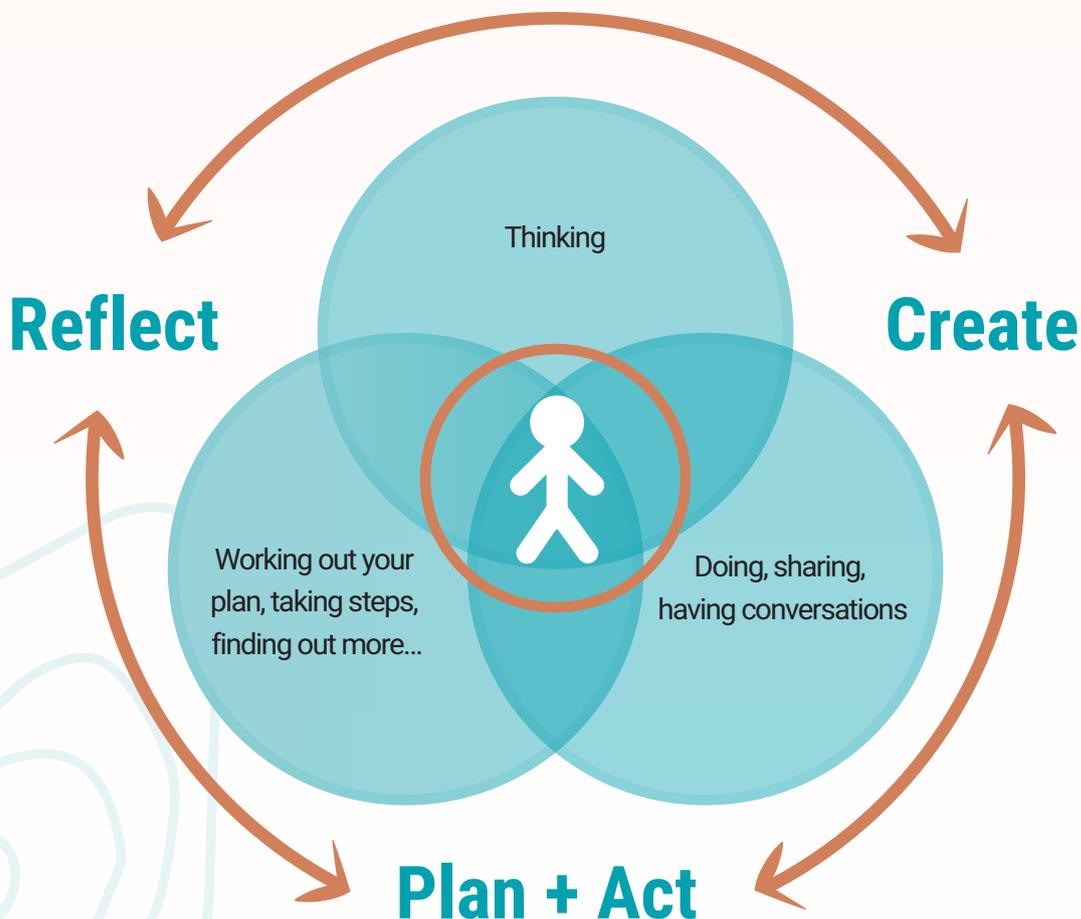
If university is identified as a possible future option, you may want to complement this resource with the advice tool *Within a Cooee!*, featuring regional, rural and remote people's voices on many aspects of the lived university experience, including encouragement, tips and suggestions.



Benefits of reflection and creativity

- ✓ Reflection can enhance self-awareness with the potential to change behaviour and attitudes: John Dewey famously said *“We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience”*
- ✓ The physical experience of creating (or doing) something takes reflection a little further – this can lead to deeper reflective thinking and conversations
- ✓ In your role, you can help guide and support conversations about how hopes and ideas for the future can be incrementally planned for and worked towards, which is an important part of the process
- ✓ It also should be remembered that plans are not necessarily ‘set in stone’ (something which the pandemic has shown us), so the ability to regularly reflect and readjust is also an important part of the process which should be emphasised, as the following image shows:

Me + My Futures Reflective cycle





Basic steps

- ✓ Students/clients access the *Me + My Futures* Reflective Tool to help guide thinking about their own futures
- ✓ You provide guidance in activities/tools for students/clients to further develop creative expressions of their ideas that are personally meaningful
- ✓ Discussions and activities that follow build towards practical steps that can be (realistically) taken which move towards identified goals

Purpose of the prompt questions in the Me + My Futures Reflective Tool:

- ✓ To draw out biggest visions for life, and deeply held values that are meaningful to the individual
- ✓ To encourage looking back to experiences, examples, observations of who / what to emulate (or who / what to avoid)
- ✓ To foster thinking on how to align their values to goals and aims for the future
- ✓ To plan for how they can achieve their goals (today, tomorrow, next month, year ...)
- ✓ To anticipate potential/existing barriers – things that get in the way of achieving goals
- ✓ To consider ways to overcome potential/existing barriers

What are the prompt questions based upon?

- ✓ Possible selves' theory, which refers to how people conceive themselves in the future and take meaningful action towards these goals (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Motivation to achieve what is hoped-for is demonstrated through actions taken or behaviours (as distinct from merely fantasy or dreams).
- ✓ Other influences were Brené Brown's [work](#) on [wholehearted living](#) and a [podcast](#) that mentioned four questions for reflection
- ✓ Interview and survey questions in the [Fellowship research](#) were effective in eliciting students' conceptions of self in the future. Feedback from some of the school students surveyed indicated that questions helped them in reflection and in furthering their thinking.
- ✓ A strengths based approach: people from RRR areas have many strengths, qualities and skills that are transferrable to other contexts, including higher education study among others. Paying attention to and acknowledging these is important.



Ideas for getting creative with Me + My Futures

Here are a few suggestions for putting together reflections; but these are only limited by your own imagination. Ask your students/clients to:

- ✓ Write down all of your thoughts and ideas. This could be as a story, dot points, mindmap, or as [visual notetaking](#)
- ✓ Find an image, photo, or word that represents your ideas. Ask questions about it such as: Why did you choose it? How does it represent you/your ideas for the future?
- ✓ Draw or paint, sing or put music to your ideas
- ✓ Make a short video or digital story, (see [Digital Story Tellers](#) or [Shifts in Space and Self](#)), and share it amongst close others, or go broader (e.g. ABC Heywire for regional rural and remote Australians aged [16-22](#) or Trailblazers for [18-28](#) year olds). 'Stitch' your digital story to someone else's to build on a shared experience.
- ✓ Go to a favourite place, or sit outside amongst nature and be inspired to think about your aims and 'getting there' by what is around you
- ✓ Do an interview-style video with a friend and then swap, or do it 'podcast' style
- ✓ Talk to someone you trust and look up to, about your dreams, ideas and hopes, your concerns, for the future and how to get there
- ✓ Interview a role model, or someone you look up to. Ask them the questions that you are wondering about yourself
- ✓ Write yourself a postcard from you in the future
- ✓ Play the snakes and ladders game based on questions to ask yourself to help you imagine some possible futures ([see here](#))
- ✓ This quick [personality quiz](#) is a fun way to find jobs you may never have considered before.
- ✓ Scroll through some of the job insights on Youtube for a taste of what different careers are like in the day-to-day, what skills are valued and how to start working towards getting a job in that field. Type the name of a career into the search bar, or if you're not sure yet, here's some to get you started:

Primary school teacher

Journalist

Pharmacist

**Senior Simulation
Engineer**

Structural Engineer

Spine Surgeon

Registered Nurse - ICU

Architect

Astrophysicist

Lecturer (Finance)

Accountant

Wildlife biologist

Veterinarian

Conductor

Marine biologist

Dentist