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November 2022

Future thinking: between what we know and what we expect to happen

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Citation of this paper:

Morales Valiente, Claudia, "Future thinking: between what we know and what we expect to happen" (2022). *Inspiring Minds – A Digital Collection of Western's Graduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity*. 299.

<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/inspiringminds/299>

I study future event thinking: the ability to project the self forward in time to pre-experience an event. Future event thinking is relevant for behaviour regulation and involves gathering information to anticipate future events. It also involves placing these events in a coherent autobiographical context to be perceived as likely occurrences. Since our futures are individual phenomena, I take a tailored approach to assess how people simulate future events, what details they use in the description, and the phenomenological experience. Thus far, my findings show that likely events are experienced as sensorily real and with a lot of details, but only if associated knowledge is available. If events are unknown but likely to happen, people can still simulate them, but in broad ways. These results may be of interest for the understanding of mental health issues associated with unfamiliar future-prolonged situations such as culture shock, immigration, or the COVID pandemic.