



Future Thinkers Lab

Where curious students learn to ask better questions, think critically, and solve real-world problems.

Instructor: Yvonne Wu

Day/Time: Tuesdays from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm

Who: 7th-12th graders

Dates: 8 weeks starting on 22nd of Sept

Cost per student: \$250; sibling \$175

In today's world, students can ask AI tools a question and receive an answer within seconds. However, the same AI tool can provide very different responses depending on the quality of the questions and the way they are framed. The real advantage belongs to students who know how to ask strong questions, think clearly, evaluate evidence, and explain their ideas with confidence.

Future Thinkers Lab is a discussion-based enrichment class for curious students who love asking “Why?” “How?” and “What if?” Through guided discussions and research-based activities, students will explore how scientists, innovators, and engineers approach interesting real-world questions and problems.

Rather than simply learning facts, students will practice how to investigate a question: What do we already know? What information do we need? What evidence would convince us? Could something else explain what we are seeing? How could we test our idea?

What Students Will Learn

Throughout the course, students will develop practical and lifelong skills, including:

- Asking meaningful and insightful questions
- Thinking critically and analytically
- Evaluating evidence and identifying bias
- Forming hypotheses and recognizing variables
- Understanding cause and effect
- Identifying patterns and possible confounding factors
- Developing creative solutions to real-world problems
- Explaining their thought process clearly and confidently
- Listening to different perspectives and responding respectfully
- Collaborating with peers through guided discussion
- Building the foundations of scientific research and logical reasoning



These skills support success across STEM subjects, writing, reading comprehension, debate, project-based learning, and future academic work.

How the Class Works

Each week, students will explore a new real-world research question, such as:

- Can plants rock out? Does the beat of different music genres help plants grow taller and stronger?
- Real or virtual friends: Are online friends as meaningful as the ones you spend time with in person? How do we know if an online friend is really who they say they are?
- Do people learn better from mistakes or successes?
- Do people remember information better from paper or screens?
- Are first impressions usually accurate?

Students will be introduced to important research concepts and mindsets used by scientists, innovators, and engineers. They will then work together to develop a mini research proposal based on the weekly question.

They will discuss what they want to investigate, how they might study it, what evidence they would need, what factors could affect the results, and what challenges or limitations they may face.

Class Format

This is a discussion-based class with no lab work required. Students will work with peers and the instructor to build research and critical thinking skills while also strengthening communication, collaboration, and confidence.

Bring your curiosity and join us at **Future Thinkers Lab**, where big questions lead to powerful discussions, creative ideas, and stronger thinking skills.

Teacher bio – Yvonne Wu

Yvonne is a clinical researcher, educator, and parent who is passionate about helping curious kids become independent thinkers. She completed her MPH/PhD, followed by postdoctoral research at UC Berkeley before moving to the East Coast. Her teaching encourages students to think critically, stay curious, and develop a deeper love of learning, skills that support academic success and personal growth well beyond the classroom.