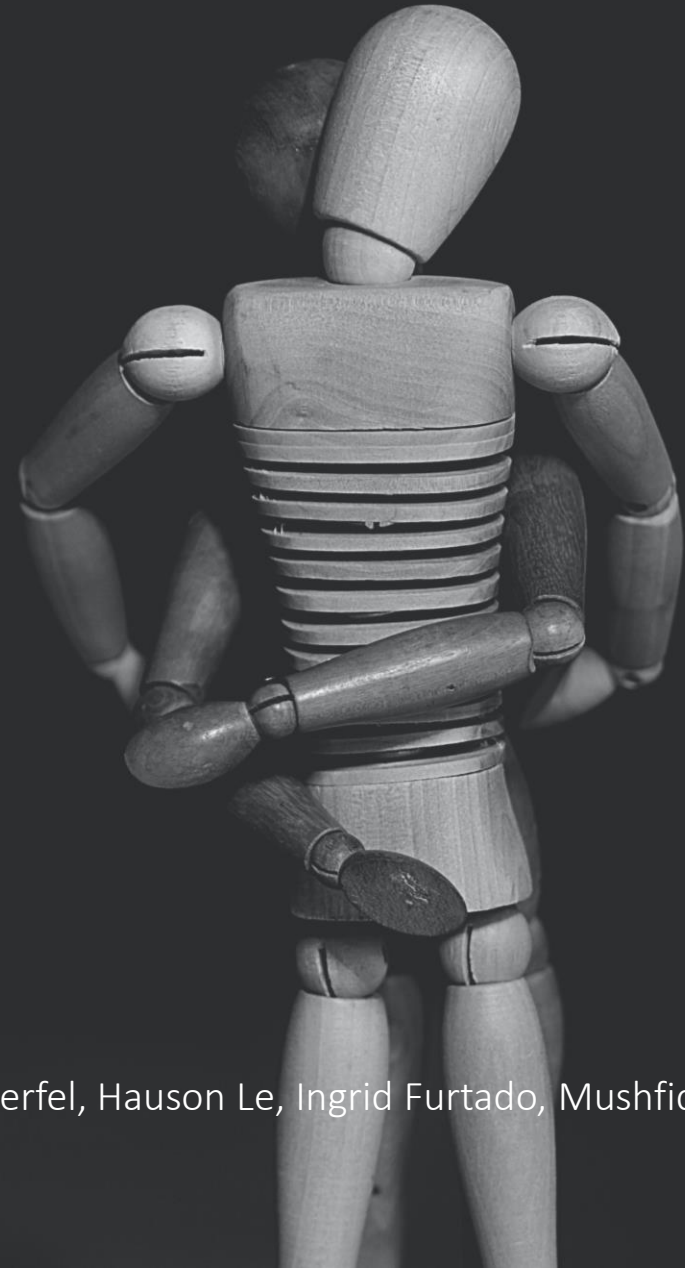


Future of Sex & Intimacy 2052

AN EXPERIENTIAL FUTURES EXHIBIT

Presented at University of Houston
Spring Gathering Weekend – April 2022

Researched and Designed by MSc in Foresight Students: David Geye, Elizabeth Herfel, Hauson Le, Ingrid Furtado, Mushfiqa Jamaluddin





The What

Imagining a future where sexual shame has been eradicated and exploring its implications for sex education in US high schools

What We Did:

The future of sex and intimacy explores a world in which shame has been eradicated – specifically shame associated with sex, intimacy, and relationships. This experiential future transports participants to Clear River High School’s Social Emotional Xcellence (S.E.X) curriculum in the year 2052.

The team crafted an experiential scenario set at a Parent’s Open House evening at the school. Parents were invited to preview the completely re-designed high school sex education curriculum that was to be launched in the coming semester. The curriculum explored a variety of provocative topics including shameless pleasures, sexual identity, human-to-human and human-to-robot relationships, kinks and preferences, and consent.

Parents had the opportunity to explore and learn to model behaviors grounded in personal integrity and values as it relates to sex and intimacy in order to extend the classroom into the home, creating a fully integrated learning environment.

Future Artifacts Generated:

1. Syllabus
2. Consent Form
3. Principal’s Announcement
4. Weekly Exercises
5. Participant Personas
6. Classroom PSA Posters



The Why

To invite participants into thoughtful engagement with sources of emotional discomfort as a means for questioning the rules and norms we take as given

The future of sex is a crucial topic to explore, not only because it is innate and natural for all living beings, but because it holds a unique complexity for humans, often shrouded in embarrassment, shame, and immorality. The taboo nature of sex in the Western world creates a barrier to open communication and exploration of our desires and fears, preventing us from achieving a deeper understanding of our own sexuality.

The purpose of our project was to leverage the power of experiential futures to explore the sources of shame, by experimenting and learning to embrace sexual mindfulness as a parallel to navigating emotional obstacles in change-making efforts.

This project is a provocation for reflection, to challenge deeply-rooted yet often unexamined beliefs and opinions, and a call for us all to lean into, rather than away from, the edges of our discomfort.



The How

Overview of research methods and the iterative process required to arrive at the final experience design

Research Method and Process

The team experimented with a number of design research methods and frameworks to explore the topic of Sex and Intimacy, including:

- Systematic Inventive Thinking
- Deliteralization / Deterritorialization
- Transition Design process
- Sci-Fi Prototyping
- Systems Prototyping
- Thoughtless Futures
- Gift from the Future
- Ethnographic Experiential Futures
- Embodiment and role playing
- Experiential Futures Ladder

As evidenced, this was an iterative process that unfolded over the course of a semester. Each method opened up and enriched the team's thinking around and understanding of the topic in generative ways, and ultimately contributed to the shaping of the final experience.

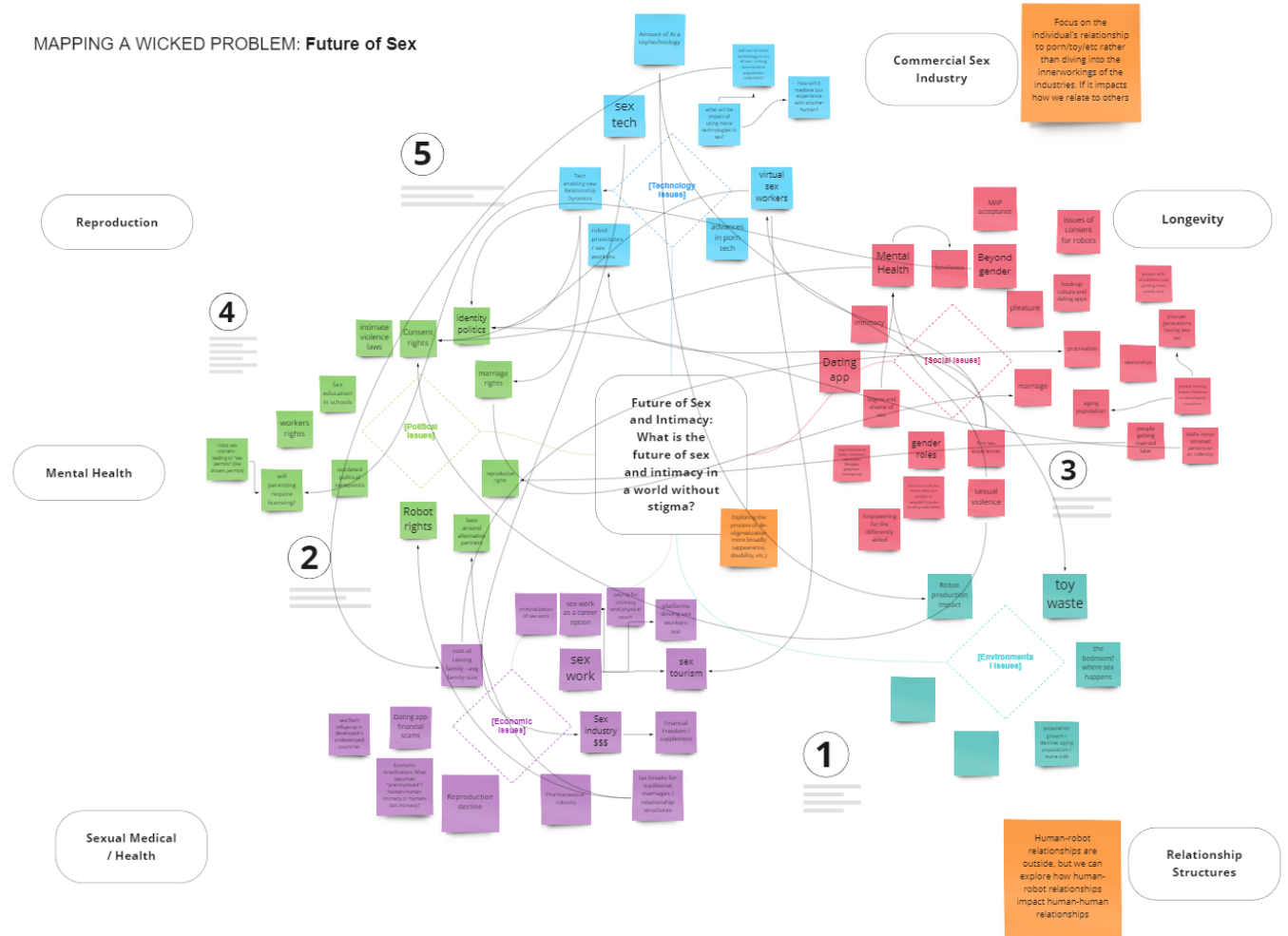
Three of the above mentioned methods and frameworks played key roles in the final design of the experience:

- **Transition Design**
- **Ethnographic Experiential Futures**
- **Sci-Fi Prototyping**

Transition Design

Mapping the landscape generated thought provoking questions as the starting point for deeper exploration and clarified motivations for each individual team member, and identifying the core themes of collective interest

MAPPING A WICKED PROBLEM: Future of Sex



Ethnographic Experiential Futures

Part of the EXF process involved interviews that helped the team:

- Understand the impacts our relationship to sex has across life
- Understand the role of sex education and family in shame
- Draw out implications of a world without shame
- Identify curriculum content

Working through this process enabled a more vivid, realistic, and consistent world to be built.

“

If you de-dramatize it [sex], analyze the situation, strip down to facts, it's much easier to manage. Remaining open-minded and conversational with your kids is the best way. I think the family unit is the most important. Let your kids know that "if you're doing any kind of sexual activity, you can talk to me about it "

Dr. Tara, March 2022

"Our world is reinforcing anxious and avoidant attachment styles. Defining what is a healthy sexuality may depend on: Good self-esteem, confidence, knowing what you want and how you want to please your partner, communicating, what forces are we seeing to facilitate more human connection"

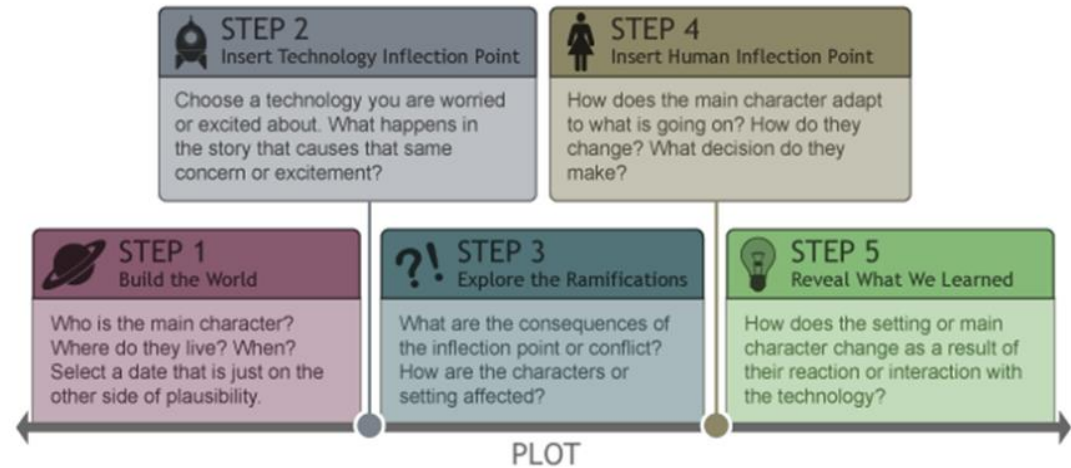
Laura Schlehuber, March 2022

”

Sci-Fi Prototyping

Generated the format of a HS sex ed class, which evolved from an imagining into what the future of the sex talk might be

DESIGNING THE FUTURE IN 5 EASY STEPS

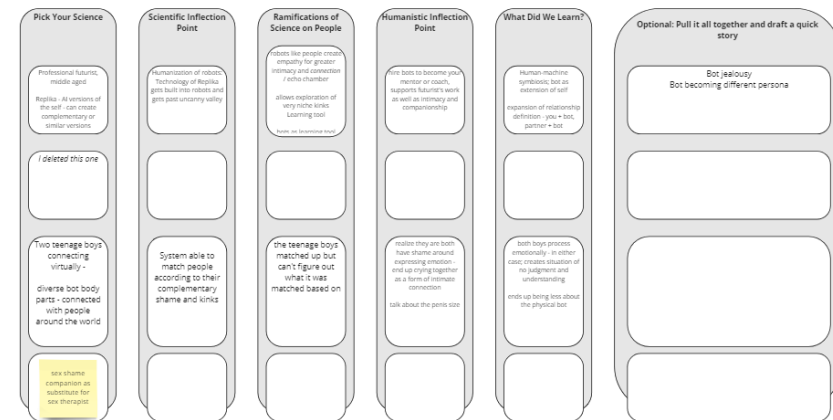


Round 2

Sci Fi Prototyping Using Tech from SG Project

Use one of the technologies you've discussed in your spring gathering experiential project or imagine a technology that might exist in that future and build a prototype for it. If you have time, iterate through the process using multiple technologies from that future.

maybe check out the Companion App
BOB has been a life changer S/S rec



SG Artifact Ideas:
1. Future of Sex Talk
2. Platform / community + physical augmentation, wearing shame on your sleeve, antennae
- Create personas around top 5 shames across all signs of people
- "Acceptable" shames and "unacceptable" shames
gender-bury/teach, pedophilia, incest, teen kink

how to surface shame

sex talk as an intervention point

shame systems manifest as an intervention point

what happens in the community if they shame you

Experience
Snapshot

Flow of Experience

The experiential futures scorecard served as a guide to designing a successful experiential encounter with the future

- Permission** Participants sign consent form to enter the experience
- Immediacy** Participants are engaged with the experience via candles, chocolates, and flowers. Followed by a second wave with partner engagement
- Medium** A parent teacher conference kicking off with a principal announcement
- Keying on Change** After worldbuilding, participants were engaged with each other in curriculum to model for their children
- Reflection** Participants are taken out of the experience to reflect on action.



A Critical Point

Agency and consent were of top of mind for the team throughout the design process, as both are essential aspects of sexual health and wellness. Creating a space of psychological and physical safety, and designing with a trauma-sensitive lens was a priority.

At every stage in the experience, participants were in choice about how they engaged with the experience. Beginning with consent forms, participants self-selected their persona, decided the extent to which they embodied their persona, and had multiple options of classroom exercises to choose from, ranging from modest, to playful, to quite provocative.

Permissioning

Participants signed a consent form prior to entering the classroom, designed as a slow initiation into the future context they were about to enter.



Immediacy and Medium

Participants had the option to enter as a generic “parent” participant or to select one of eleven different personas to embody, thereby immersing themselves more deeply into the world. They stepped into an actual UH campus classroom; a lucky coincidence that strengthened the “believability” of the experience.



Future Artifact: Personas

[Click here for access to all personas.](#)



Future Artifact: Classroom Setting

[Click here for access short clip of teacher in action.](#)



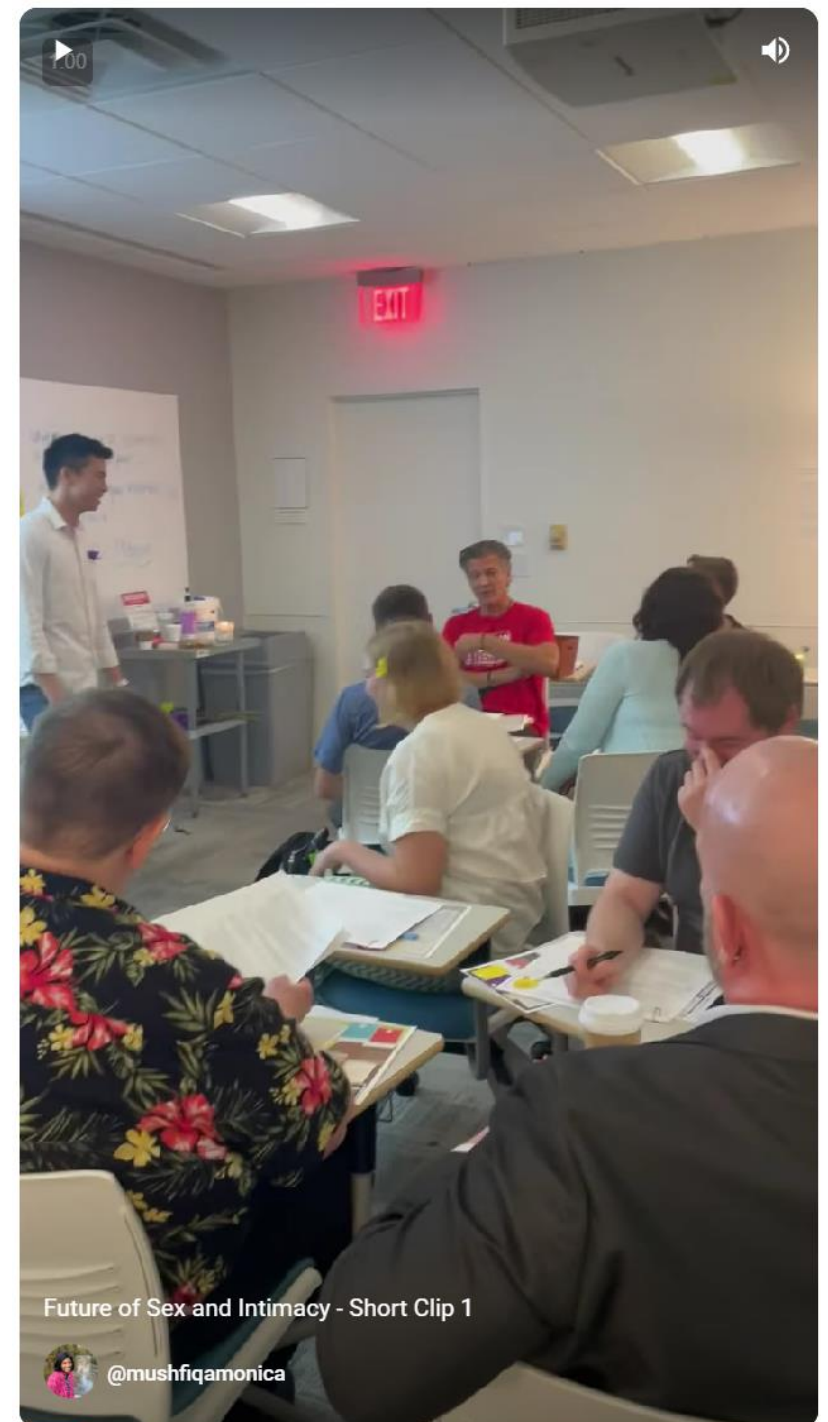
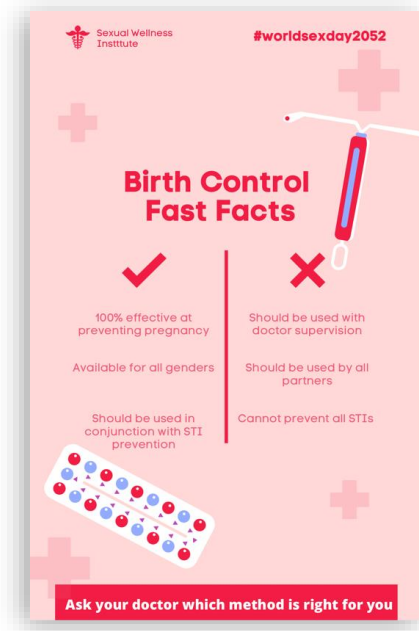
Future of Sex and Intimacy - Short Clip 2

@mushfiqamonica

Sensory & Semiotic Vectors

The “Parents” were welcomed in with options of warm tea, chocolate, and flowers to generate a sense of safety and comfort. They also had time to explore the classroom posters, which further hinted at the state of this future.

[Click here for access to short clip of experience in play.](#)



Future Artifact: PSA Posters

CLEAR RIVER HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS

PARENT PREVIEW NIGHT



INTRODUCING
SEX, INTIMACY
AND SOCIETY

Integrate
Social Em
Excellenc

JOIN US
SATURDAY

7 pm in t
commu

For more info about the
curriculum, visit
www.shamefreesociety.org
or contact Mr. Le

Keep House STI Free!

Get Vaccinated

Vaccination is the best way to prevent sexually transmitted infections. Vaccines are available for many of the most harmful STIs, including HIV. Make sure you are up to date on your vaccines before becoming sexually active.

Keep Toys Clean

Robot partners and toys need protection too! Remember to clean and disinfect every time!

Get tested

In addition to annual tests, you should test after a possible exposure.

Talk to your doctor

If you test positive or start noticing symptoms, talk to your doctor right away. Catching an infection early allows for more effective treatment.

In Partnership with Houston Public Health Department (HPHD) Center for Disease Control (CDC)



Bi



100% effective
preventing

Available for

Should be
conjunctiva
preve



Ask your doctor which method is right for you



Heartbroken? You're Not Alone

Let's talk about it

Relationship support group
Tuesdays 3rd period
Room 202A

Sign up on the
student health portal

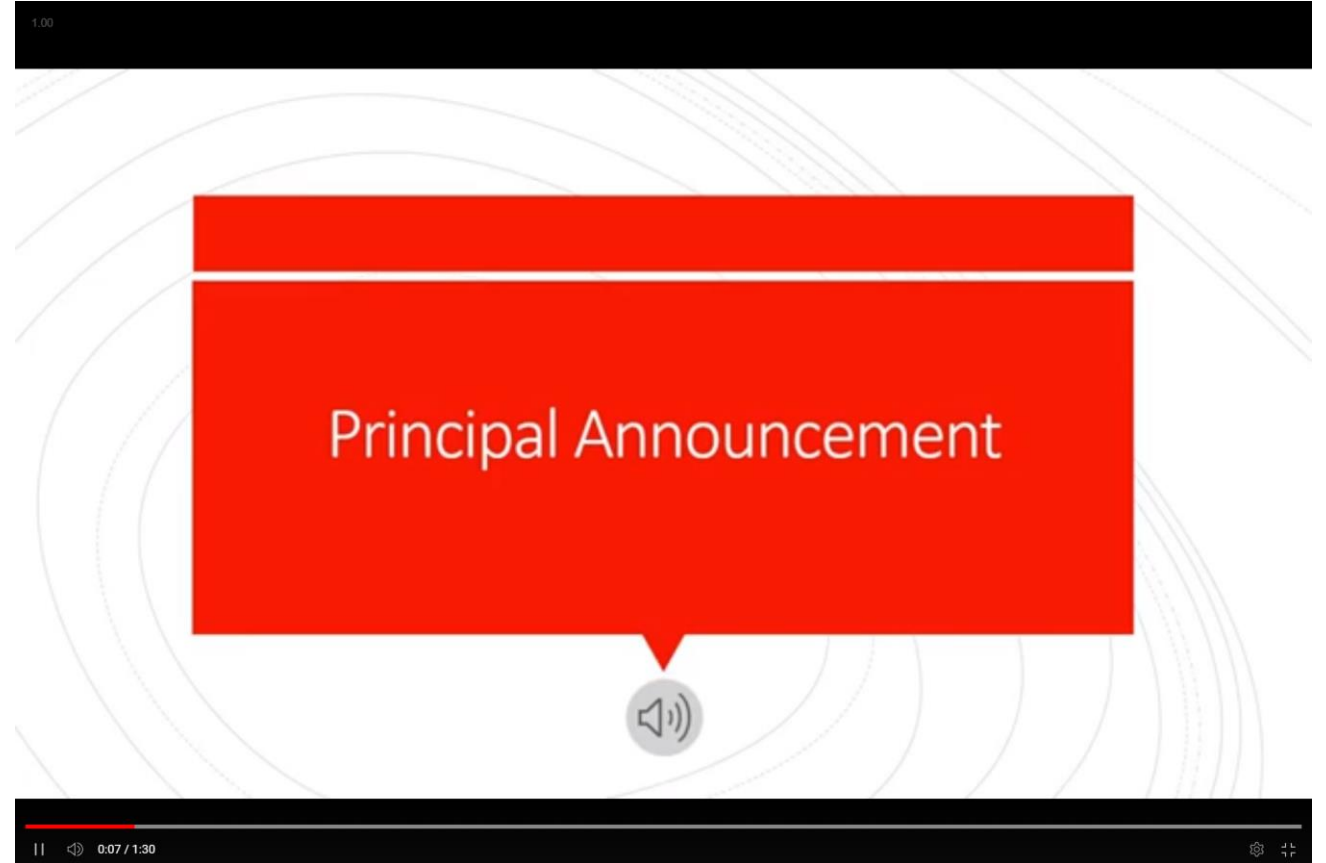


[Click here for access to all classroom posters.](#)

Internal Consistency

Once everyone was seated, the principal delivered their announcement to set the context of 2052 and more specifically, the purpose of the gathering.

[Click here for access to announcement recording.](#)

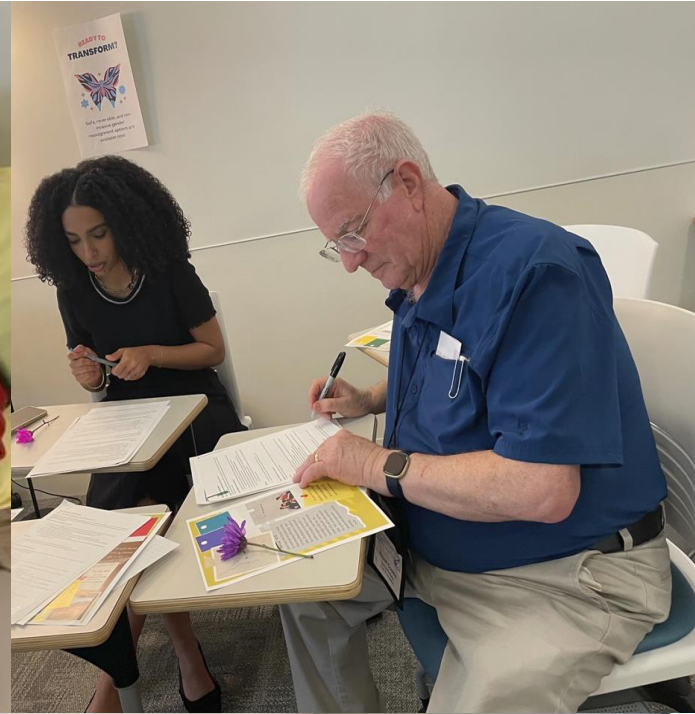


Future Artifact: Classroom Announcement

Keying on Change

Judy's presence as a fixture of the classroom was perhaps the most conspicuous manifestation of change, which drove participant immersion in the 2052 atmosphere and set the tone for the discussion topics and exercises.

In this future, Judy was a school AI assistant. As a non-human staff, she could serve the role of an admin secretary but also the role of a hands-on sex-educator.



Future Artifact: Syllabus + Weekly Exercises

[Click here for access to full syllabus, weekly lessons, and script.](#)

Clear River High School Independent School District

Syllabus - Sex, Intimacy and Society Class -2052-2053

Age Group: 13-17yo

Parent's Signature Confirming Review of this Syllabus:

Student's Name:

Age:

Sexual Identity:

Teacher:

Period:

For more information, contact: shamefree@sexeducationdepartment.gov



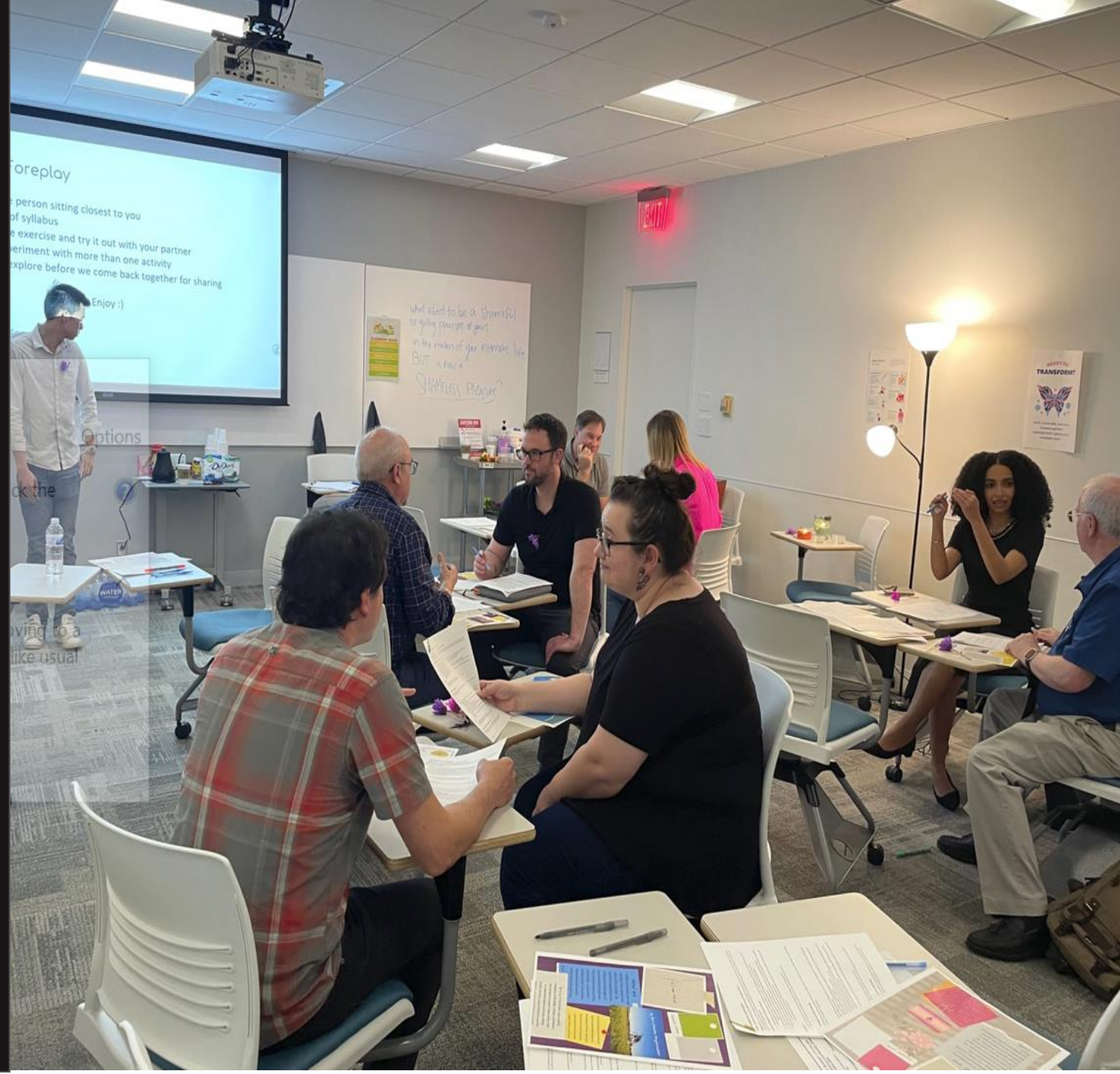
Welcome to Sex, Intimacy and Society Class. Our goal is to dive into the topic of sexuality and explore the sources of shame so we can make sure we don't return there as a society. We will experiment together and learn to embrace sexual mindfulness in order to become healthier and more pleasure-filled adults - emotionally, mentally, and physically. Please see below the syllabus for this semester.

Curriculum Overview:

Week	Topic
Week 1	Lecture: History of Sexuality, Shame, and Taboos in the US
Week 2	Discussion: Let's Get Consensual
Week 3	Inner Compass: Discovering Core Values and their Applications
Week 4	Exploration: Vulnerability, Trust, and Respect
Week 5	Exploration: Guilt, Shame, and Embarrassment
Week 6	Lecture: Body Empowerment, Hormonal Changes, and Self Love
Week 7	Exploration: Authentically Relating with Your Bot-Partner
Week 8	Discussion: What is Virginity? A Continuum of Experience
Week 9	Safer Sex: Choosing Your Risks Wisely
Week 10	Embodiment: Kinks, Toys, and Preferences
Week 11	Visualization: Future Sex and Relationships
Week 12	Embodiment: Mindful Intimacy
Week 13	Bonus: Feminine and Masculine Archetypes

Audience Reception & Action

After the activities, participants shared their feedback, suggestions and impressions on the experience and personal takeaways.



Feedback

Participant Feedback

Spring Gathering – In Person Experience – April 2022

What did you enjoy about the experience? What insight or learning are you taking away?



“We were transported”

“Pushing the limits in a comfortably uncomfortable way”

“The personas enhanced the experience”

“The personas enhanced the experience”

“The awkwardness is the point: effective experiential immersion”

“It was well prepared and improve interaction consistent.”

“The use of the personas make it engaging and a possibility to hear other perspectives”

“Preparation through senses was joyful (flowers + chocolate)”

“Relaxed delivery/presentation.”

“The focus on reflection of shame as a positive is psychologically healthy.”

“It was engaging. Shame was a good topic. Sex talk should be normalized”



Participant Feedback

Spring Gathering – In Person
Experience – April 2022

What did you enjoy about the
experience? What insight or
learning are you taking away?



"I enjoyed the experiential space to explore a topic that is sensitive to communicate present or future."

"Great job transporting us!"

*"A learning point with this experience **was the chance to see a nuance the future of sex ed** will be."*

"It was experiential. Different."

"An insight: Openness to uncomfortable discussions without shame. Clever presentation"

"Atmosphere created in the room was calming which helped people talk about an uncomfortable topic. Personas was a great idea."

*"Eliminating Shame was an interesting concept of **something to contemplate further!** Great Job!"*

"Presentation of a (very) different perspective. Need to pay more attention to this topic in the real world to help, in real schools."

*"I was able to be in experience. **Fidelity with details**, incorporation"*

"It was fun to go through and experience together as "parents" rather than more individually based"



Participant Feedback

APF Conference – Virtual
Experience – July 2022

What did you enjoy about the
experience? What insight or
learning are you taking away?

“

“Don’t let this discussion die. It is imperative to spread this discussion and talk about sex. It was a very good experience.”

*“Talking about sex is uncomfortable but the way the experience was posed was **very open minded**”*

*“What do you intend to do with the project? **I hope you can keep doing workshops to spread this discussion. Maybe to real stakeholders?**”*

”

Participant Feedback

Spring Gathering – In Person
Experience – April 2022

What is an opportunity for
improvement in this experiential
future?

“

*More exploration about what would have been shamed
for the personas.*

*Making it longer and more engaging with other would
be great – The time was too short*

More time to explore the great posters in the room!

”

Design Futurists' Feedback

Spring Gathering – In Person
Experience – April 2022

Feedback from professional
design futurists, Adam Cowart
and Kelly Kornet-Weber

[Click here for access to complete feedback.](#)

“

*This one was interesting because there was an immediacy, and a sort of settling into the experience, followed by a secondary wave of discovery when it came to engaging with a partner. **This was well designed in that the flow of information was regulated.***

***Perfect harmony** of medium and message.*

*Perhaps the strongest sign systems was the representation of the sex doll, which was NOT the central focus. **The mundaness of it was perfect in terms of evoking change** and difference from the present.*

*Further to the previous point, **the worldbuilding was really well done.** The curriculum, the background of the school, etc. Both mundane while also being very different from the present.*

*Implications were clear but also, interestingly, very subjective. Feedback from some folks was almost a shoulder shrug, while others were deeply concerned and resistant to the changes in this world and its implications. This **speaks to a certain richness in details** and even the gamification aspects of this piece.*

”

Discussion & Future Impact

Team Discussion and Reflection

David Geye, Elizabeth Herfel,
Hauson Le, Ingrid Furtado
and Mushfiqa Jamaluddin



This experiential futures workshop was generative and provoked new thoughts regarding to sex and intimacy for both the team and participants. The iterative process of exploring the topic space, experimenting with multiple methods and frameworks in an open-ended process, and arriving at the final form through a combination of rigorous research and trusting our creative intuitions pushed each of us to the edges of our comfort zone at various points in the semester. We are walking away having collectively gained a deeper appreciation for the need for more experiential approaches in futures and having grown our own capacities as futurists.

Many participants mentioned that this experience can be applicable to current stakeholders in helping them to formulate, re-organize and anticipate emerging changes regarding sex and intimacy within our society. We agree that this experience could be a powerful experience to bring to real school stakeholders and policy makers and has the potential to translate very clearly into action in the near future.

Future Modifications: From a content perspective, the main areas of feedback from participants were the desire for more time to explore the classroom and future artifacts, and to engage more deeply with the exercises. The concept of *consent* was perceived as too-complex of a topic to discuss when it came to robots and AI, which may warrant more time and space to dive into adequately. Meanwhile, *virginity* was viewed as an obsolete topic for 2052.

Limitations: Constraints for this project included working virtually to create the experience, not having the opportunity to test out the physical space before the exhibit and limited time within which to host the experience.



Beyond Spring Gathering

The team was invited to present this project at APF's *Exploring Next* in June 2022.

The team adapted the experience for a virtual setting and a global audience. The conversation around sexual shame was expanded through participation of a diverse, global audience, with attendees dialing in from Turkey, the Philippines and Australia.

We hope to continue evolving this experience and engaging more people in this important conversation.

Exploring Next



Exploring Next



ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL FUTURISTS

Speaker Spotlight
Ingrid Furtado
Monica Jamaluddin
David Gey
Elizabeth Herfel
Day 4: Session 2
Stream 2: Explorer
The Future of Sex & Intimacy

