



WEB JAM #60: FUTURES LITERACY

WITH

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26 MAY 2021

17:00 – 18:00 (CET)

11:00 – 12:00 (US EDT)



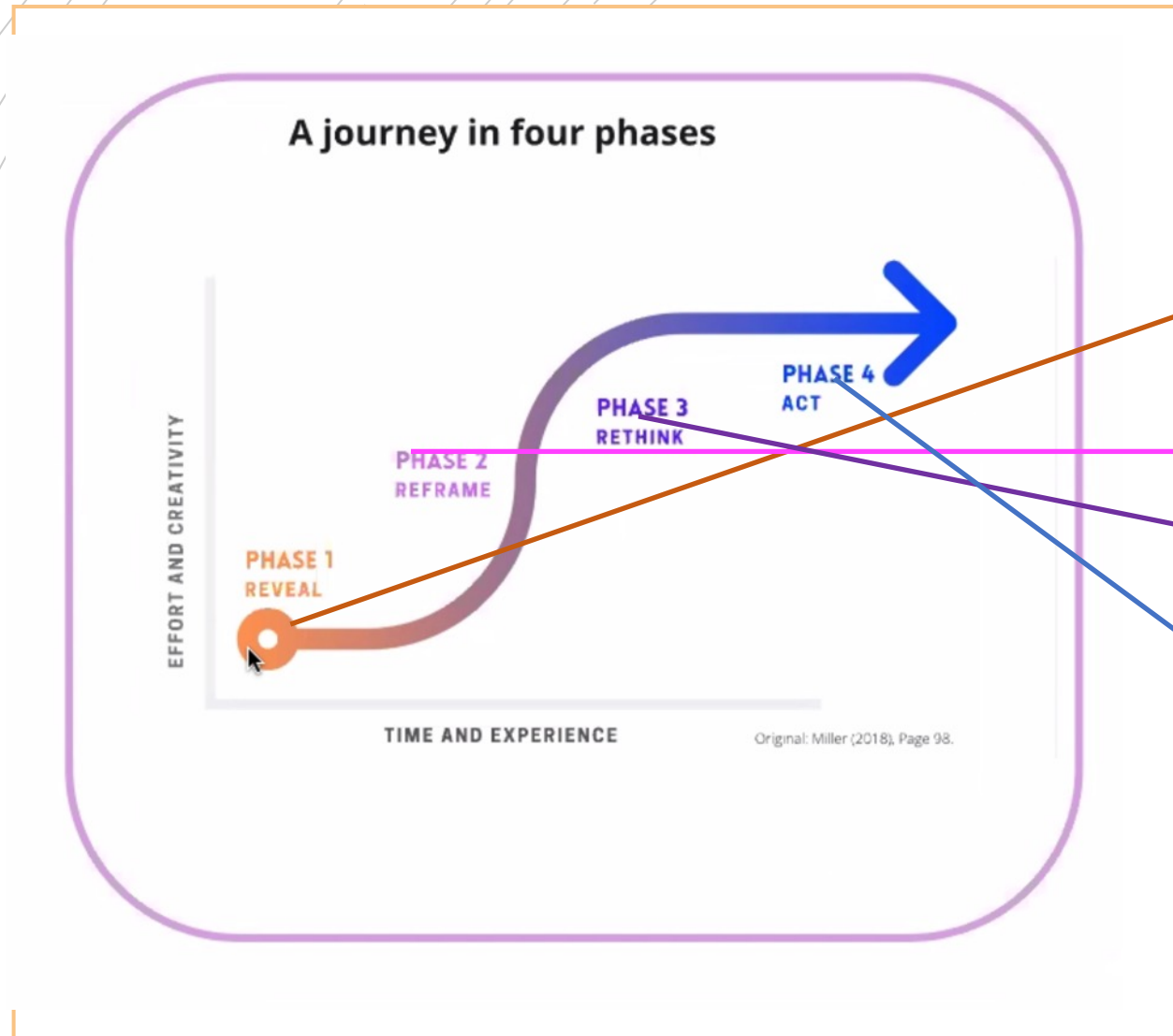
What to expect during this jam ?

- ✓ What is Futures Literacy (FL) ?
- ✓ Why is it important ?
- ✓ The process of a FL Lab
- ✓ Benefits of FL including & some theory

What is Futures Literacy (FL) and why is it important ?

- ✓ Usually people struggle when they have to think about the longer term future.
- ✓ They tend to **look at the future as seen from the past and the present** (even in scenario planning or trendwatching for ex). In other words, they think in closed systems, **their futures are already colonized** which limits their ability for real novelty & deep innovation.
- ✓ FL's aim is **not** to predict the future, but to **decolonize the future** and **make room for emergence via imagination & creativity** and multiply the possibilities to **see and act on the present with more clarity thereby making better sense of the present, as seen from different futures.**
- ✓ **Anticipatory assumptions, worldviews, myths & metaphors** play an important role in that process.
- ✓ FL is practiced mainly through **FL labs** around a **specific & carefully chosen question about the longer term future of something.**
- ✓ FL is considered as an **essential skill for the 21st century** by UNESCO.

4 phases of a Futures Literacy Lab



Discuss expected and preferred futures

Discuss the alternative future thrown in by the facilitators

Discuss the underlying assumptions and the new questions that arose

Design projects and prototypes in the present as a result of the insights and inspiration gained (thereby making sense of the future right now).

The 4 phases of a FL lab in practice

And the question for the jam is...

What is the future of design in 2040 ?

Expected (probable) futures of design in 2040 (Phase 1: Reveal)

1 // Individual writing

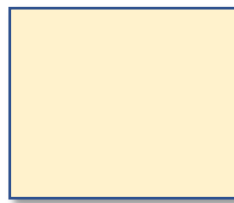
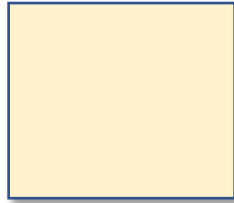
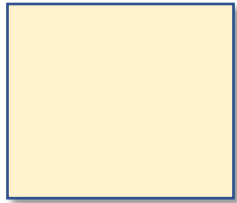
Put on post-it notes what you have seen in the time travel to 2040 on the probable futures of design.

2 // Discussion

Share your insights within your group and discuss them. Cluster, analyse and complete them.

3 // Selection

Together, select 4 – 6 post-its that you want to integrate in the collective harvesting.



Preferred future of design in 2040 (Phase 1: Reveal)

1 // Put your preferred future of design in 2040 on post-its, or better, visualize them with images.



Make your assumptions visible (Phase 1: Reveal)

1 // Individual writing

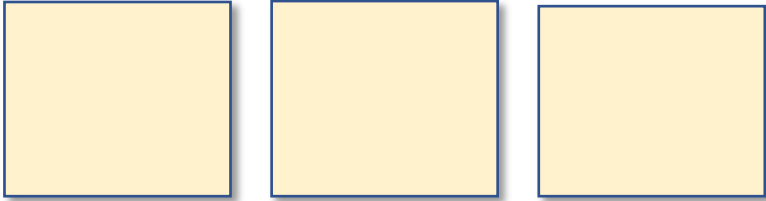
Which assumptions about the future of design have become visible to you during this process ? Yours and those of others. Put them individually on post-its.

2 // Read and cluster assumptions

Look at each other's assumptions and cluster them

3 // Discussion

We discuss them together.



Litany: The official description of the problem. Externalized reality. Often disconnected to other perspectives. Usually a repeated newspaper headline.

Systemic causes: Often short-term analysis, either single or multivariable. Historical variables are explored. Policy reports.

Worldview/Discourse: Discerning deeper assumptions behind the problem. Important to understand the issues from multiple worldviews. Critical thinking.

Myth/Metaphor: Deep stories, unconscious dimension of the problem. Inner transformation is required here. Solutions emerge from new narratives.

An alternative future for design (Phase 2: Reframe)

1 // Improvise a story around this alternative future

Discuss freely & openly

In the year 2040, designers as we know them no longer exist. All design activities will be done by Artificial Intelligence, and the only influence that (some) humans will have on it is the programming of the algorithms by which AI will constantly learn to improve its design capabilities.

Also, we will have learned the language of plants & animals and have conversations with them, and the design AI will include the thoughts and expectations from those into the algorithms .



and designing...

Together with

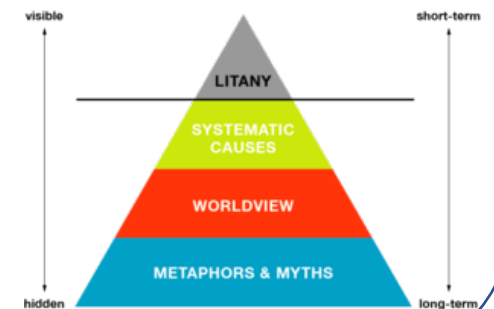
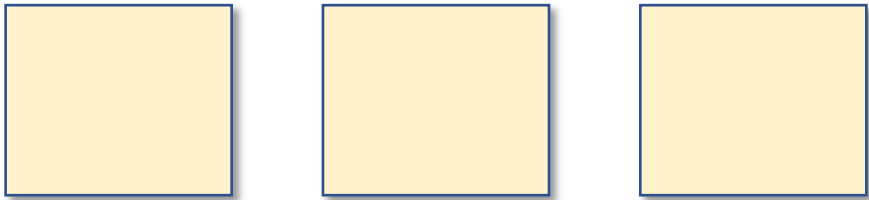


Alternative future of design in 2040 (Phase 2: Reframe)

What does this future look like ?

What exactly happens in this future of design ? How will that design impact humanity ? What will be the headlines in the news concerning that future ? Who will decide about rules and frameworks concerning AI based design ? What are the undelying values and patterns ? Which slogans best summarize the spirit of design ?

Tips: Don't discuss whether this future is probale or preferred, just fill it with details. Play with your imagination & creativity and put your thoughts on post-its.



Ask strong new questions (Phase 3 & 4: Rethink & Act):

Answer is not yet known,
Can trigger even better questions,

Question is relevant to you,
Putting it into words can be complicated and the right words might be missing.

Make your assumptions visible

1 // Individual questions

Which new questions to you want to put on the futures map ?
Put your questions on post-its.

2 // Create a shared map

Are there questions that are linked ?
Cluster those linked questions.
Does this generate more new questions ?

3 // Act

What concrete actions do you see emerge out of these questions ?
Put the action on the orange post-its and move them to the corresponding question.

Question

Question

Question

Action

Action

Action

Benefits & theory of FL

The benefits of Futures Literacy





Theory of anticipatory systems

We make assumptions about the future all the time.

Mostly, we are not consciously aware of where those assumptions come from

The added value of FL: **Anticipation for Emergence** vs. Anticipation for the Future

Discipline of Anticipation (DoA) (Anticipatory Systems (AS))				Epistemological (Knowledge Creation Processes (KCP))	
	System	Purpose	Type	General- Scalable (GS) (statistics, common denominators, universals, repetition)	Specific – Unique (SU) (novelty, ephemerality, spontaneity, improvisation, difference)
O n t o l o g i c a l	Conscious Closed	Anticipation for-the-Future (AfF)	AS 1 Preparation & AS 2 Planning 	AA1	AA2
	Conscious semi- closed/ open	Anticipation for-the-Future (AfF)		AA3	AA4
		Anticipation for- emergence (AfE)	AS 3 Novelty (Not-doing)	AA5	AA6
	Non-Conscious Anticipation			Anticipatory Assumptions in biology, physics, mathematics, sociology, etc.	

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Figure 1.1 A framework for describing and researching Futures Literacy

Source: Transforming the Future – Anticipation in the 21st Century, Riel Miller



That's it.

Happy to discuss the magic of FL 😊.

You can join me by email

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connect with me on LinkedIn

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