



# Futures Thinking

---

Yentl Croese & Tanja de Bie



Universiteit  
Leiden



Leiden Learning  
& Innovation Centre

# Hello!

## We're Leiden Learning & Innovation Centre (LLInC)

---

We support quality education at Leiden University.

Our creative and knowledgeable team of learning and innovation consultants, media and policy experts, provides the University with educational training, expertise and digital solutions.



# Programme

## 01 **Back to the future**

What is the future of the past?

## 02 **Cone of possibilities**

What will the future look like?

## 03 **Backcasting**

What can we do to realize this future?

## 04 **Wrap up**

What is next?



01

---

# Back to the future

What is the future of the past? And what is the past of the future?



# Advice from the Future

---

Imagine yourself in 10 years from now, in the same place, doing the same thing.

Take on the role of a good ancestor and give your descendent advice, for example on:

- What to pay attention to today
- What to start doing today
- What are your expectations for today



# Imagine the Future

---

**Sci-Fi**, a literary genre dating back to the 19th century, imagining the future, has influenced the way we think about the future.

Not only has it expanded our way of thinking.

It has expanded how we **visualize** the future.

It has normalized how we **think** about the future.

It has **created** the future.



# Drones



# Flying cars





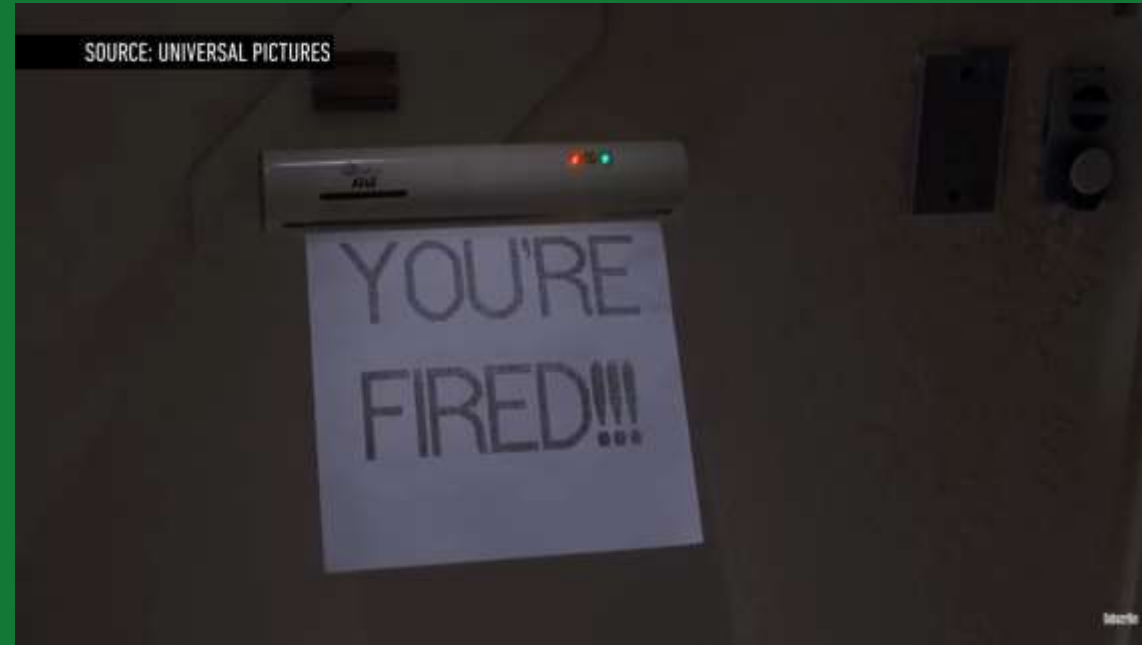
# Hoverboard



# Self-lacing shoes



# Fax machines



# And many more...

- Flatscreen TV's
- Videocalls
- Biometric identification
- Wearable technology
- Tablets
- Voice-activated tech
- Etc.



Universal Pictures



# Why?

---

- Episodic Future Thinking
- Fosters Resilience
- Stretches the imagination (out-of-the-box thinking)
- Opportunity detecting and challenges assumptions
- Use your skills and expertise
- Proactive vs reactive
- Act to steer towards a *preferred* future

Based on McGonigal, J. (2023) & Conway, M. (2016)



# Process Steps Of Futures Thinking



## Potential Methods

- Desk search
- Signals
- Drivers
- 100 things
- Stump a Futurist

## Potential Methods

- Impact quadrant
- Scenarios
- Future Wheel

## Potential Methods

- Four Emotions
- Positive and Shadow Imagination
- Artifact
- Journaling
- Meet your future self
- Future Simulation

## Potential Methods

- History of the Future
- Action plan



# Process Steps Of Futures Thinking



**Scanning Environment  
(past and present)**

## Potential Methods

- Desk search
- Signals
- Drivers
- **100 things**
- Stump a Futurist

Exploration of  
Future Options

## Potential Methods

- Impact quadrant
- Scenarios
- Future Wheel

Immersion &  
Creation

## Potential Methods

- Four Emotions
- Positive and Shadow Imagination
- Artifact
- Journaling
- Meet your future self
- Future Simulation

Backcasting &  
Strategic Action

## Potential Methods

- **Future 8s**
- History of the Future
- Action plan





# Now it is your turn

*Lets play a few games to find our preferred futures*



02

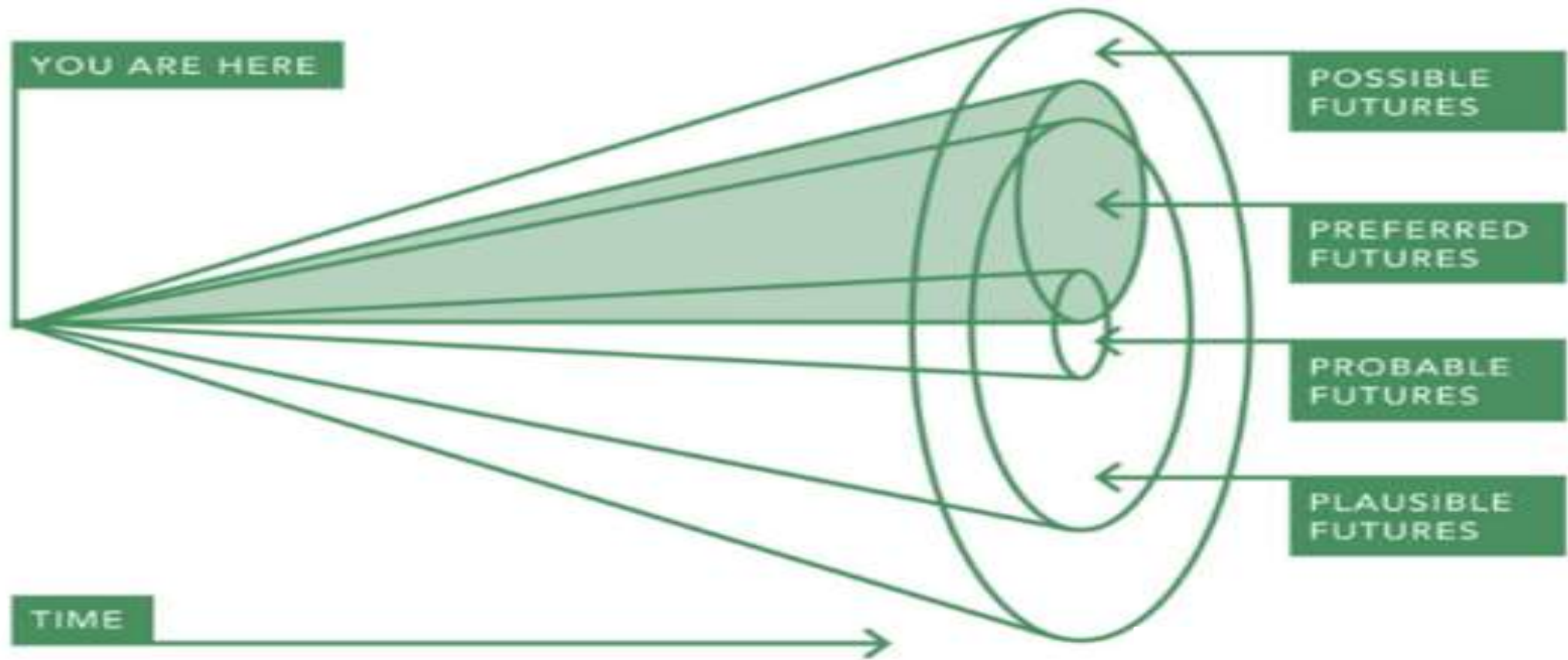
---

# Cone of possibilities

What will the future look like?



# THE CONE OF POSSIBILITIES



Source: Joseph Voros, "A Generic Foresight Process Framework," 2003



**Singularity**  
UNIVERSITY

01

---

# 100 ways

100 ways anything can be different in the future



# How does it work?



## step 1

Write one statement per post-it that you think is true about technology in education. Try to keep it as simple and obvious as possible.

Example: "Digital tools are used to enhance learning".



## step 2

Rewrite the fact, so that *ten years from now the opposite is true*. Plot the post-it on the Cone of Possibilities.

Example: "No digital tools are used."  
Or "Digital tools are only used under specific conditions."



## Optional Step 3

Look for clues. Evidence of change that would make your idea more **plausible**.

Example: Ban on cellphones in high schools in the Netherlands.

03

---

# Backcasting

What can we do to realize this future?



# Backcasting

---

What are we going to do?

- Think of the preferred future
- Create different ways how to get to this future.
- There are 2 phases to each round (in groups):
  - Phase 1: build 1 min, 2 min explanation
  - Phase 2: build 2 min in duo's, 2 min explanation
- Keep STEEP in mind! Social, Technical, Economical, Environmental, Political



But first we'll do a warmup!

---



04

# Wrap up

---





# Be aware of your blind spot!

---

Future Shock – Alvin Toffler

Generative AI – Academic world

Back to the Future

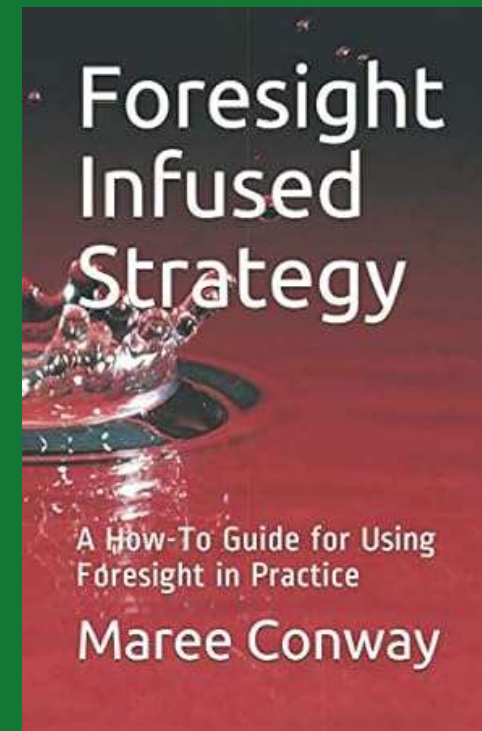
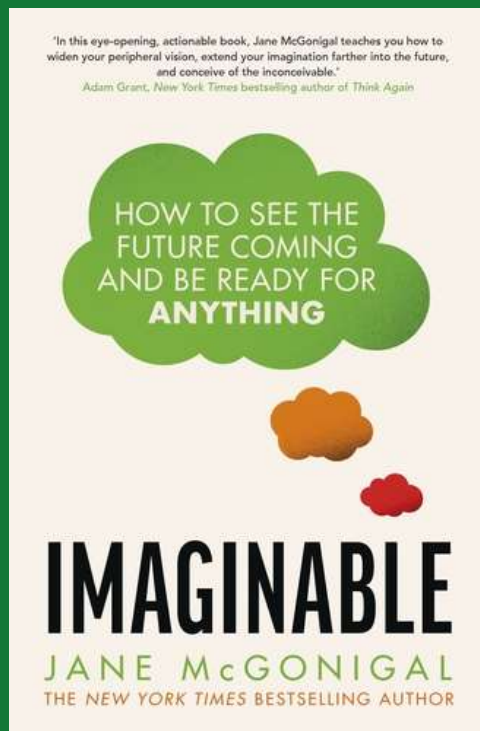


This workshop is based on:

Imaginable - Jane McGonigal (2022)

Coursera's Futures Thinking specialization - Institute for the Future (2019)

Foresight Infused Strategy – Maree Conway (2016)



# Reference list images

Hoverboard Lexus, retrieved from: <https://cdn.wccftech.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/hoverboardlexus.jpg>

Hoverboard, retrieved from: <https://www.facefull-news.com/wp-content/uploads/Avantages-dun-hoverboard.jpg>

Nike self-lacing shoes, retrieved from: <https://i0.wp.com/danielswanick.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Nike-creates-self-lacing-shoes-back-to-the-future.jpg?fit=1120%2C630&ssl=1>

Nike Adapt BB, retrieved from: <https://www.nike.com/nl/en/a/nike-adapt-bb-release-info>

Flying car from KleinVision, retrieved from: <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2024/apr/25/flying-car-makes-worlds-first-flight-with-passenge/>

Flying car, retrieved from: <https://www.economist.com/china/2024/06/06/its-a-bird-its-a-planeits-a-chinese-flying-car>

Walking pets drone, retrieved from:  
<https://tse4.mm.bing.net/th?id=OIP.lwdEN9v63R6CZiKcYMpOjgHaEK&pid=Api>



# What do you take away?





# Thank you!

[hello@linc.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:hello@linc.leidenuniv.nl)

