



Sibel's Journey - A computer game on gender, sexuality, bodies and personal boundaries

Workshop Guidelines

Summary

- The game begins with young Sibel traveling to Berlin, to visit her best friend Sarah and her aunt Meral. To surprise Sarah, Sibel arrives a day early and meets her aunt first. She is very excited to see Sarah—not least because Sarah has a secret to reveal that she did not want to share with Sibel over the phone. But where is Sarah? Finding her friend in such a metropolis turns out to be more difficult than she thought. Also, why is Aunt Meral's new girlfriend a man? And, most importantly, what is Sarah's secret?
- It's a single player game, divided into four 20-minute consecutive episodes, each one focusing on subjects of gender, sexuality, consent and bodies.
- Right from the start, players have to make their own decisions and apply the knowledge they acquire in the course of the game.
- Following an intersectional approach, topics of sexuality education ranging from the examination of their own body to the diversity, and experiences and identities of different people, respectful relationships, feelings, choice, self-esteem, empathy, tolerance, and acceptance are introduced in a playful way.
- The game is currently available in English, German, and Turkish.
- Sibel's phone is utilized as part of the game. As she learns more, notes appear on her phone and the players can check them out to refresh their memory at any point during the game. Some other characters are also introduced through the messages on her phone.

<p>Age range / Grade range</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ages 11 and up
<p>Learning objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players will learn that sexuality influences how we view ourselves and our bodies, how we interact with each other, how we fit into the world and how we express ourselves as individuals. • They will learn about body awareness, relationships, sexual identities, intimacy, sexual health and reproduction. • Playing and discussing the game will raise awareness about people differing in their personal needs and desires, and expressing themselves in different ways. • Players will gain insight into respectful relationships, feelings, choice, self-esteem, empathy, tolerance, and acceptance. • By playing the game and discussing it, players will become aware of the complexity of a person's many facets—gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation—but also recognize human diversity across these dimensions.
<p>Curriculum connections</p>	<p>Sexuality education</p>
<p>Time allocation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned for 4 lessons: 1 episode per lesson • For every episode: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-10' for introduction / summing up the last session(s) • 15-20' playing the game • 15-20' for writing assignments and whole-class discussion: reflection / generalization • Optionally more reflection / generalization can be assigned as as homework
<p>Classroom, technical setup, tools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For each student a computer or a tablet with internet connection and headphones • A wall or board in the classroom for gathering information and whole class discussion • Printed material provided with this document

Gameplay

- The main component is the story, which is a linear narrative: The player accompanies Sibel as she searches for her best friend in Berlin and makes many new acquaintances along the way.
- Through the narrative, which is conveyed and driven forward in the game primarily through dialogues that Sibel has with the other characters, the player learns things about the topics that we want to convey in the game.
- The player can decide -within the narrative framework- which topics are addressed in which order by which character. The player thus actively initiates the conversations and decides in which order and at what speed they want to play them.
- The dialogues and characters are lively, with charm and humor. The sometimes challenging topics in the conversations are packaged in a simple language that is as close to life and entertaining as possible for the target group.
- Sibel, the main character of the story, is not yet very familiar with most of the topics to be communicated and always asks more questions to understand them better. She is curious, open-minded, not at a loss for words and reflects on her exchanges. The player is thus encouraged to think about these exchanges and is sensitized to the topics.
- In order to grasp the more demanding topics better, as the game progresses more in-depth information can be unlocked by players after conversations have been held, objects in the game world have been clicked on, or mini-games have been played. These appear in Sibel's smartphone as a kind of encyclopedia app, called Notes. The players can thus obtain more detailed information as needed or look up certain terms etc. again.
- Mini games are interwoven into the story, which on the one hand break up the dialogue mechanism and thus create variety, and on the other hand, impart additional knowledge or repeat or deepen knowledge already heard. These include:
 - Assignment quiz: What do the letters in LGBTIQA stand for, and what do those words mean? Incorrectly assigned terms, which also belong to the subject area, are explained en passant.
 - Gender Unicorn: Exploration of terms related to gender and sexuality with interactive sliders and explanations. The player explores dimensions such as gender identity, gender expression, sex assigned at birth and sexual attractions through the gender unicorn model. In addition to playfully trying out different combinations, the player is encouraged to become aware of their own expressions. Furthermore, characters from the game explain their own individual characteristics, thus illustrating the diversity of possibilities and at the same time showing that there is no such thing as "normal" or "abnormal".
 - Multiple choice: The meaning of consent is conveyed by means of concrete everyday situations. The player interprets the reaction of a person or weighs the gut feeling of a person against the expectations of the other person - and then chooses between two possible answers. The player's choice is then commented on to illustrate the importance of consent.
 - Assignment quiz: What do various queer flags look like? The names of certain flags are given and the player tries to find and correctly identify them in the picture. Afterwards, the meanings of the individual flags and terms are explained.
 - Memory game: Genital diversity is illustrated in a memory game.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Memory matching game: It's a variation of the classic memory game that uses picture-text pairs instead of identical picture pairs. Different contraceptive methods are named and explained in more detail. ○ Swinging doors game: The variety of body shapes is illustrated while conveying the message "Every body is a good body." ● Apart from the topic-relevant illustrations, there are mini-activities with a hidden object character that drive the story forward rather than focusing on specific learning topics. ● After each part, the game autosaves and the next time continues from that point on.
<p>Introducing the game in class</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Informing the students about learning objectives ● Introducing the topic of the upcoming episode ● Explaining the game setting ● If applicable, providing a recap of what happened in the former episodes – or letting the students recap using the evidence board
<p>Game activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exploring the environment and collecting information ● Talking to characters and learning about them ● Listening to what the characters say and paying attention ● Reviewing the gathered information on Sibel's phone ● Checking out Sibel's playlist and photos on her phone ● Playing the mini-games and replaying them on Sibel's phone
<p>Classroom activities / Reflection questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● While discussing the board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What did you find out in the game? What did you observe? ● What have you learned about the characters you talked to? ● Let's talk about the characters' troubles, desires and what they find important. ● Can you relate to them / one of them and why? ● Did you experience similar situations / feelings / troubles in your life? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do you ever hesitate to tell someone something about yourself? Why? ■ Have you ever told someone something you recently discovered about yourself and had them think it was bad? Why did they think it was bad? ■ Have you ever been not sure about whether to tell someone something about yourself, but then decided to tell them anyway? Did they think it was good? Why did it turn out to be a good idea?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How can you tell whether disclosing something about yourself to someone will be good or bad? Unfortunately, you can't always know for sure, but you can try and guess by talking about it as an idea from a movie or a book or something that happened to a friend and seeing how they react. Although it can not exactly predict how they will react when it comes to you, this method can be a good way to start a conversation. ● Writing assignments (prior to discussing, especially for students who finished the episode earlier than the others): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write down what you found out during this episode. ● Describe the characters you got to know while playing the game today. ● What questions would you ask if you were in Sibel's shoes? What would you like to learn from the characters in the episode? ● ... other tasks similar to the above listed suggestions for discussion
<p>Game solution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General tips in case you are stuck: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take a look into Sibel's chats and notes on her phone ● Try to drag cards onto the characters of the current episode ● Try to find more clues in the environment ● Click on the rainbow icons
<p>Episode summary and topics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Episode 1 – Meral's Apartment (Knut, Meral) <p>Meral picks up Sibel who just arrived in Berlin from the train station. Sibel wants to get going immediately to look for Sarah because she wants to surprise her. Besides, there is some news that Sarah only wants to tell her in person. Sibel is much too curious to stand the suspense.</p> <p>But first, there is a reunion and chat with the old family friend Knut at her aunt's place! He wears a funny shirt that says: My fat is political. Does his belly go to rallies, or what?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How does it feel to be fat, do fat people experience discrimination? ○ What is beauty? Everyone may feel beautiful, but nobody has to be beautiful. ○ What does reclaiming and self-identification mean? ○ What is closet and outing? What kinds of discrimination do queer people experience?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do the letters in LGBTIQA stand for, and what do those words mean? Incorrectly assigned terms, which also belong to the subject area, are explained en passant.
<p>Episode summary and topics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Episode 2 – At the Cafe (Alex, Ani, Ani, Lotta, Luka, Michelle, Rami) <p>The search for Sarah begins! Meral only knows that Sarah wanted to stop by Alex's café. So Sibel goes to the café, but Sarah is not there anymore. She then asks around for Alex. But hey, is Alex a man? What's going on there? Is her aunt Meral not a lesbian? And what's up with these all-gender bathrooms?</p> <p>Sibel finds out that Sarah put on some makeup and left a while ago. Where should she look for her next? Ah, there's a Pride festival in the park today!</p> ● Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gender identity: Man, woman - or something in between? ○ What do cis, trans and intersex mean? ○ What does gender expression mean? ○ What is sex assigned at birth? ○ What does it mean to be an ally? ○ Self-identification & sexual orientation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is Meral still a lesbian if Alex is a man and the two are in a relationship? ■ Are other people allowed to out Alex and reveal that he is trans? ○ All Gender Toilets: Ani explains why they are important to her. ○ Body Norms: It's actually pretty cool that there are so many different bodies in the world. It's silly to always think you have to be beautiful. This shouldn't be so important!
<p>Episode summary and topics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Episode 3 – In the subway (Lou): <p>Sibel is riding the subway, on her way to the park where a Pride festival is taking place. There she meets Lou, who is also on his way to the festival in the park. Lou uses a wheelchair and as there is no elevator at the station by the park, he has to wait for the next station after Sibel's. The two get into a conversation about accessibility and the discrimination of disabled people.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Sibel's internet-acquaintance, Tom keeps pushing her to meet him that evening by constantly sending her instant messages. But Sibel does not feel entirely</p>

	<p>comfortable with the thought of meeting Tom in the evening. Sibel asks Lou for advice and Lou encourages Sibel to do only what she really feels comfortable with.</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is it like to use public transportation with a wheelchair? ○ What does consent mean? ○ How can I be in relationships with others and stay true to myself? ○ What are boundaries and how are they related to feelings?
<p>Episode summary and topics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Episode 4 – At the festival in the park (Lou, Jule, Sarah, Leila, Mira) <p>Sibel arrives at the park, but phew, it's packed! How will she find Sarah here? She discovers Lou's booth and plays some games they offer and talks to Jule, who also runs a booth. Oh, and there's a photo board where people pin cool pictures of themselves and their placards. Wait, isn't that Sibel's and Sarah's friendship bracelet in the picture? Sibel now knows which placard to look for, that makes things easier!</p> <p>Finally she finds Sarah! Yay! And she finds out the big secret Sarah did not want to tell on the phone: She is with someone, and not just someone, she has a girlfriend, Leila! She is also there, at the booth of her BIPoC theater group. How cool, Sibel is over the moon! And Leila has such a cute dog!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The variety of genitalia ○ Safer sex ○ Coming out and family/friends ○ Interconnectedness of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender
<p>Classroom activities / Reflection questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Topic-related discussion questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gender Q's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do you think about growing up to be a woman or a man? Why or why not? ● How did you know your answer to the first question? ● What are the three things that come to mind when you think about being feminine? What are the three things that come to mind when you think about being masculine? ● Circle the words from the list you made for question 3 that define you the most. Are more of them feminine or masculine? Are they equally distributed between the two or not much of either?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If you were to, anonymously, let someone read all of your answers here, do you think they would expect you to identify as a man or a woman or in some other way? Is that the way you identify? Does it matter if people's expectations are in line with how you identify? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Attraction Q's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When you close your eyes and think of lying in bed next to someone without touching, but talking about nothing and everything, what does the person next to you look like? ● While you're paging through a magazine, who do you find the most beautiful? ● If you close your eyes and imagine yourself dancing with someone, how would you describe that person? ● When you imagine kissing somebody, what kind of person do you imagine kissing? <p>Your answers to these questions do not, of course, mean that you have to sexually identify one way or another. Someone can dream about people of their own gender, but only be interested in actual, waking relationships with people of the opposite gender. Someone can have an orientation that is more bisexual, but identify as pansexual. Furthermore, it's possible that you may feel one way, but decide to tell people something else, for a whole host of reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Body Q's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is an activity that you really, really like? How do you use your body to do it? ● What is the one thing you could do today to take care of your body?
Troubleshooting	In case the game freezes, refreshing the web browser will help.

Materials to be printed for classroom discussions:

- Dialogue cards that are used in the game can be printed and discussed amongst students. We have added some of the cards that didn't make it in the final cut of the game, but could still be interesting talking points for the classroom.
- You may also use short bio and Gender Unicorn cards of all the characters in the game.