

Narrative at Play: Video Games in the Literature Classroom.



Kaya de Ruiter

Master's Thesis

Radboud University Nijmegen

Masteropleiding Educatie in de Taal- en Cultuurwetenschappen: Engels

Tweejarig

June 2022

Abstract

This study aims to argue the literariness of video games through the use of a literature study and Case study. In the first chapter, this dissertation discusses what literature is and can do as well as how videogames fit in as a literary text. The second chapter is an account of the Case study. A four vwo class was taught to identify the intrinsic elements of literature (plot, theme, characters and setting) in the video game *Emily is Away*. The lessons aim to broaden the students' definition of literature and teach them to analyse a video game as a literary text by discussing the intrinsic elements of literature. In the third chapter, the use of video games in classrooms will be explored including what a teacher should consider while choosing a video game. In this research, I aim to answer the question: How can video games, as a type of literature, be used in the classroom? My hypothesis that video games can be used in literature classes similar to how novels and short stories are used in lessons was confirmed through the case study. Students were able to analyse video games, which are narrative-based, similar to how novels are analysed.

Keywords: reader experience, reader-response theory, intrinsic elements, plot, theme, character, setting, exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, protagonist, Antagonist, supporting characters, minor characters, theory of mind, mirror and windows theory, Direct Instruction model, jigsaw technique, ICAP, self-determination theory, game-based learning, gamification.

Table of contents

Introduction	3
Methodology	6
Chapter 1: Video Games as Literary Texts	10
Plot	12
Theme	13
Characters	14
Setting	16
What can literature do?	17
Why do we teach literature?	19
Video games as literary texts.	22
Chapter 2: A Case Study of Emily Is Away	26
The Game	26
Learning Objectives	27
Didactic Theory	28
The Lessons	31
Questionnaires Results:	34
Results of the writing assignments	41
Chapter 3: Video games in the classroom	43
Gamification and Game-based learning	43
What you should consider before choosing games for lessons.	46
Conclusion	52
Appendices	56
Works cited	92

Introduction

A while ago I gave a lesson to a 4 vwo class where we read a short story written by Stephen King. The moment I mentioned, with quite a lot of enthusiasm, that we were discussing literature I heard an audible sigh of disappointment. Some students even said out loud that they disliked literature and reading. Because I know that literature is not at all boring and includes some wondrous narratives I soldiered on with the lesson. To introduce the short story I asked my students if they could name any Stephen King novels. To my surprise, they replied that none of them knew who Stephen King was. Even after I mentioned examples like *The Shining* and *Pennywise*, the clown from *It*, there was not any recognition. However, when some students saw a picture of *Pennywise* I heard a few students say "Oh that is the clown from *Fortnite*". Many students play a lot of video games and invest a lot of time in them. Because students regard them as fun, they are motivated to invest a lot of time in playing video games. To awaken the students' interest in literature I wanted to use something they enjoy, video games, and teach them about literature.

Students are, to varying degrees, engaging with video game narratives as a literary form, even if they do not realise themselves that they are 'reading' and analysing these games. Teachers can make better use of video games as literary texts. Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis, theorising about multimodality in pedagogy, recognize how important video games have become in our culture and identify the expectations that players and readers hold when engaging with their narratives:

In everyday family and community life, the narratives of gaming have become an even bigger business than Hollywood over the past decade. From the most impressionable of ages, children of the Nintendo, PlayStation and Xbox generation have become inured to the idea that they can be characters in narratives, capable of determining or, at the very least, influencing the story's end. (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p.172-173)

Even though video games have become part of society they are often not discussed by teachers as a tool to teach and motivate students. I believe that not making use of a medium which has gained so much popularity and is closely related to the world of children has to be

remedied. The use of video games as a form of literature may be overlooked by teachers even though there are many similarities between video games and novels. There are many games which have elaborate narratives where the player meets different characters and has to go on quests. A plot, characters and a quest are all part of literature. During these quests, the players encounter obstacles they have to overcome similar to how a protagonist in a novel often has an objective they want to accomplish. Both in video games and literature there is an antagonist or antagonistic element which causes the obstacles for the protagonist. These obstacles are needed for the protagonist to develop and reach their goals. Developers of video games aim to create engaging and enjoyable games which often involve a narrative which explores a theme. Popular themes are; good vs evil, love and friendship and societal issues. These themes are shown through narratives, characters and even the setting. Both in novels and video games settings are important aspects that can engage the 'reader' and often influences the narrative and the characters' personalities. I would argue that settings in video games are even more important than in novels. In video games, players can see every detail and can sometimes interact with a fictional world. Therefore, these settings are often extremely detailed and perfectly relate to the narratives and themes of a game.

Because literature and video games share similar aspects I want to look at how games can be used to teach students something about literature. With my research, I want to draw attention to and advise other teachers about the fact that video games can also be seen as a form of the literary text. In this research, I aim to answer the question: How can video games, as a type of literature, be used in the classroom? Through answering sub-questions using a literary study and case study this research aims to contribute to education by giving recommendations for using video games in literature lessons. The hypothesis is that video games can be used in literature classes similar to how novels and short stories are used in lessons. Students should be able to analyse video games, which are narrative-based, similar to how novels are analysed. However, choosing a video game to analyse with a class can be more complicated because of the nature of video games. How long a game lasts, price and suitability all should be taken into consideration while creating literature lessons.

The objective of this research is to use a literature review to argue for the literariness of video games and to create a lesson series. The lesson series will be conducted in a 4 vwo class for testing and its results will be used to formulate lesson recommendations for teachers wanting to use video games in literature classes. I would consider the lesson to be successful when the

students' views on what literature is are not restricted to 'boring books that they have to read for school'. If students show that their views on literature have broadened to include other mediums and intrinsic elements of literature they will show that they have accepted that some video games can be literature. I do want to emphasise here that I do not aim to argue that every video game should be considered to be literature. The video games I will discuss in this dissertation are narrative-based games. In these games, a player experiences a narrative playing as the protagonist. These games have many similar aspects to novels which I will further discuss in the first chapter. In this dissertation, I will use the term video games to refer to narrative-based video games.

The aim of promoting the use of video games as literary texts is to connect literature more to the world of students. Discussing mediums of literature students enjoy experiencing might increase the students' motivation to learn about literature. I think that some students are more likely to connect with video games than with books. This research will be kept global so that multiple video games can be used in lessons. However, I do use a specific game in my lessons. The goal of the lessons is to teach students about what literature is and its aspects through the medium of video games. The aspects I include in the lesson plan are based on the literary study discussed in the first chapter. These aspects are the intrinsic elements discussed by Terry Eagleton in his book *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1996); plot, theme, characters and setting. These aspects are the fundamental components of literature and are often what secondary school students are taught in literature classes. These aspects and how to analyse them are further discussed in the first chapter.

Even though motivation is a reason for including video games in literature classes this research does not aim to prove that video games motivate students. Studies have previously researched the effect video games have on motivation. The educational approach of gamification is shown to increase the motivation and engagement of learners. In a study, called *Gamification and Education: A Literature Review*, which researched the increasing interest in papers concerning game-based learning and gamification the following conclusion was stated:

Analysis of the results from the literature review on gamification in formal education reported in this paper allows us, in synthesis, to confirm the following.

Gamification practices adopted to support learning processes enacted in the education and professional training sectors is a rapidly growing phenomenon.

The concepts of game-based learning and gamification (the former denoting the adoption of games for educational purposes and the latter the application of game mechanisms to educational interventions globally) remain sufficiently distinct, with interesting situations emerging in which the two practices coexist and nurture each other.

Enhancement of motivation and engagement in learning tasks (Ott & Tavella, 2009) is the main driver for adoption of gamification techniques, i.e. to make learning more attractive, captivating and, ultimately, effective. (Caponetto, Earp & Ott, 2014, p.55)

This study showed the increasing interest in game-based learning and gamification. The interest stems from the belief based on studies that these techniques increase students' motivation. Because other studies have shown that games increase motivation this research does not aim to repeat this subject.

Methodology

In order to answer the research question: How can video games, as a type of literature, be used in the classroom? I first argue for the literariness of video games. To prove video games are literary texts the definition of what literature is has to be researched. In the first chapter, *Video Games as Literary Texts*, I will use theory to demonstrate that video games can be seen and analysed as literary texts. I will do this by using theory relating to the discussion of what literature is, aspects of literary texts and aspects of narrative-based video games. Existing theory explored through a literary study will be discussed and connected to the medium of video games. Theory such as the intrinsic elements of literature, Theory of Mind and the Mirrors and Windows theory will be discussed.

In the second chapter, *Emily is Away: a Case Study*, I will present a Case Study. For this study observations and data are used to obtain a general idea of the subject as a whole. I have

chosen to include a case study because this type of research is a holistic method. In *Designing a Research Project* Piet Verschuren and Hans Doorewaard state that “The holistic quality manifests itself in the use of a qualitative, unstructured and open way of gathering data, such as the open interview, participant and non-participant observation and the interpretation of textual and audio-visual material.” (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010, p.179) The advantages of using a holistic method is that “it offers the possibility to obtain a *general* picture of the research object” (p.184) and is a qualitative rather than quantitative. Verschuren and Doorewaard also state that another advantage of case studies is “from the point of view of practice-oriented research is that the results will be accepted more readily by the people in the field than the results of a quantitative survey...” (p.185) “the methods used and the type of data following from a case study are of a more everyday nature. Therefore the results are identifiable and more easily accepted by the stakeholders..” (p.185) “Acceptance from the people in the field, i.e. the target population, is often a condition for being able to make a real contribution to the process of change.” (p.185) Because education is a field where practice and everyday nature is extremely important a case study is the best method to explore the subject of video games in the classroom.

Further evidence is gathered using two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was taken by the students before the lessons and the second questionnaire after the lessons but before the students had written their essays. The questionnaire aimed to create a baseline for the study. The first questionnaire aimed to reveal how students viewed literature. The questionnaire focussed on gathering information regarding the students' beliefs on what literature is and what they think about video games. The questionnaire also asked whether the students believed Young Adult novels and Graphic Novels were literature. These questions were included to ascertain whether the students regarded different mediums as literature other than novels.

The second questionnaire was taken by the students after the lessons but before they were instructed on the writing assignment. In this questionnaire, most of the questions were identical to the questions of the second questionnaire. This was done to show how and if the students' ideas about literature and video games as literary texts had changed. Comparing the results of both questionnaires could be evidence for this shift. In addition to these questions, students were also questioned about the video game and their impressions of the lessons. The students were asked whether they had played the video game in preparation for the lessons

and if they enjoyed the game. These questions were added to create a broad overview of the situation.

The questionnaires included open questions as well as closed questions. The answers to the open questions were coded in order to be processed and studied. The answers to the closed questions were processed and put into graphs. The results of the questionnaires, observations and conclusions gathered are discussed in the second chapter.

In this chapter, three literature lessons were given to a 4 vwo class and the results are presented. The objective of the case study is to demonstrate that video games can be used in literature classes. In these lessons, students use literary theory to analyse a video game. To prove that the objective of the case study had been met the students' ability to analyse a video game was checked with a writing assignment in which the students analysed a video game.

The lessons were designed using various educational techniques and models. The lessons' overall design was based on the Direct Instruction model. The DI model is teacher-based and its key aspects are clear explanations, establishing goals and interactions with the students. Other techniques such as the Think-Pair-Share strategy and the Jigsaw technique were used to activate the students learning. The lessons and activities were designed with the following learning objectives in mind:

- Students can define the terms plot, theme, characters, time and place relating to literature.
- Students can recognise plot, theme, characters, time and place in literature.
- Students can formulate arguments regarding the discussion of what literature is using theory.
- Students can analyse a videogame as a literary text.

These learning objectives were created using theory which is discussed in the literature review of chapter 1. Most prominently are Eagleton's intrinsic elements of literature.

During the first lesson, the students learn about plot, theme, characters and setting in literature. In the second lesson, the students had to have played a game and connect what they have learned with what they observed in the video game. The game I incorporated into the lesson is a narrative-based game. These types of games revolve around a plot and often are designed to bring about a certain emotion. *Emily Is Away* is an indie visual novel by game

developer Kyle Seeley, released free of charge in November 2015. Set in the early-to-mid 2000s, *Emily Is Away* tells the story of the protagonist's relationship with a girl, Emily, over the course of five years, from the senior year of high school to the senior year of college. The game is presented through online chat, complete with other users' profiles and interfaces. The reason I chose this game for this research is that the game has an emotional plot, is easy to play, takes 30-60 minutes to complete and is free to play.

The last chapter is; Video Games in the Classroom. In this chapter I will discuss, using literature review, the role video games can have in classrooms. Theory about motivation, but also practical challenges will be discussed. The main concern of this chapter is not to show that video games will increase motivation but to study how video games can be applied in the classroom and its challenges. In this chapter, I will reflect on the Case study and address what a teacher should consider before using video games in classes.

Chapter 1: Video Games as Literary Texts

This chapter discusses the questions ‘what is literature?’, ‘what can literature do?’, ‘why do we teach literature?’ and how video games fit in as literary texts. To discuss what literature is and argue for the literariness of video games, I conducted a literature study. In this chapter, I explore the intrinsic elements of literature (plot, theme, characters and setting) and look at what readers of literature experience. All of the views on literary analysis and theory will then be used to argue for the literariness of video games.

Over the course of many years of studying literature, the question that has come up in every course that discusses literature is; What is literature? This seems to be a question without an apparent answer. In his book *Literary Theory: An Introduction* Terry Eagleton states on the matter:

The suggestion that ‘literature’ is a highly valued kind of writing is an illuminating one. But it has one fairly devastating consequence. It means that we can drop once and for all the illusion that the category ‘literature’ is ‘objective’, in the sense of being eternally given and immutable. Anything can be literature, and anything which is regarded as unalterably and unquestionably literature - Shakespeare, for example - can cease to be literature. Any belief that the study of literature is the study of a stable, well-definable entity, as entomology is the study of insects, can be abandoned as a chimera. (Eagleton, 1996, p. 9)

Because of the subjective nature of value, literature is difficult to define. Eagleton’s definition of literature leaves room for video games as literary texts. For Eagleton, an important aspect of literature is ‘experience’. “For ‘experience’ is not only the homeland of ideology, the place where it takes root most effectively; it is also in its literary form a kind of vicarious self-fulfillment” (Eagleton, 1996, p. 23). By favouring the reader’s experience above the text Eagleton follows the reader-response theory. In *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*, Rosenblatt states that reader-response theory is based on the belief that the reader is “not seen as a separate entity, acting upon the environment, nor the environment acting on the organism, but both parts acting as a total event” (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 98) This theory puts forth that the meaning which is gleaned

from a narrative is a reflection of both the reader and the text. Readers do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by a text, rather they actively make the meaning they find in literature. Therefore, the experience of the reader is essential for the value of a literary text. This approach to defining literature is supporting the argument regarding the literariness of video games. In video games, the players' experiences are most important since the sales of video games depend on them. Therefore, reader-response theory and experience are most important for video games.

Just as the term 'literature' is an ambiguous umbrella term so is the term 'video game'. There are innumerable types of games. However, for this research, I solely look at narrative-based games as literary texts since these are better suited for literary studies. Narrative-based games are video games which are plot-driven. In these types of games, the player follows a storyline, often as the protagonist of a story. There are many different ways games can incorporate narratives, just as there are many types of narratives in novels. Video games can have closed plotlines where the player does not make any decisions or actions which will have a lasting effect on the plot. In these games, the player follows a predetermined plot through the eyes of a protagonist. These types of games have a similar storytelling method as novels have. Video games do have the addition that there are no textual descriptions of setting or characters needed since the player receives this information visually.

There are also games where the player's decisions do affect the plot in small ways such as games like *Vampyre* developed by Dontnod Entertainment. In this game, the plot relates how Jonathan Reid, a doctor who has turned into a vampire, is torn between the Hippocratic Oath and his newfound bloodthirsty nature. The player can choose to spare or take the lives of other characters in the game. While some boss battles are mandatory, most combat can be avoided, by not killing innocents. Dialogue options are used for conversation and hunting prey to feed on, which replenishes strength and levels up the lead character. In this game, the player's decisions influence the side plot and which characters you can interact with. The player's actions also influence the setting. When the player chooses to kill a certain number of innocents, there will be fewer people on the streets to talk to and more vampire hunters who engage the player in combat.

There are also games in which the player's decisions have so much effect that the entire plot depends on choices. The *Dark Pictures Anthology* is a series of horror games created by the developer Supermassive Games. Each game is a stand-alone game and therefore follows a

different plot. Each game has five protagonists and during the game, the player controls every protagonist in turns. While controlling the characters the player decides the actions and responses of that character. These decisions decide the characters' personalities and whether the characters survive or die. Because there are many different options to choose from while playing, these games have different endings. In these games, the player fully controls the narrative of the game.

I have chosen to focus on narrative-based video games because narratives are one of the fundamental components of literature. According to Terry Eagleton (1996), Intrinsic elements are the elements that made literature from within, intrinsic elements consist of Plot, Theme, Characters and Setting.

Plot

The narrative of a text is the heart and soul of a story, it is where we derive meaning from. It is through the narrative that the reader experiences a story. In *Toward a Definition of Narrative*, Marie-Laure Ryan says:

It is admittedly debatable to what extent definitions should rely on implications. For instance, "event" implies transformation and "action" involves agents; if these agents decide to take actions, they must have motivations, and they must be trying to solve problems. If agents have problems, they must experience some sort of conflict. A definition should support, even entail, statements like these, but it does not have to spell them out:

Narrative is about problem solving.

Narrative is about conflict.

Narrative is about interpersonal relations.

Narrative is about human experience.

Narrative is about the temporality of existence. (Ryan, 2007, p.24)

Narratives are typically about change. Oftentimes these changes are caused by human actions and therefore cause and effect are important parts of narratives. Narratives typically begin

with a lack or disruption and through the actions of characters a problem or conflict is either solved or there is no closure. Within the narrative is the plot. The plot is the series of events that make up a story, including the order in which they occur and how they relate to each other. Following Gustav Freytag's theory, the five elements of a plot are; exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution.

Exposition is the story's opening/beginning, in which the characters, setting, and background information are introduced so that the reader may comprehend and follow the plot. The rising action is the phase of the tale where the conflict takes place. The main characters usually experience two types of conflicts: internal and external problems. The climax occurs when the main character is confronted with the most difficult situation. Most of the action or new revelations happen during the climax. The climax is often what the main characters work towards and it usually includes the resolution of the main character's difficulties and struggles throughout the plot. When the story's tension eases, it's called falling action. During the falling action, the consequences or results of the climax come to the foreground. The texts' tensions can then be resolved in the resolution. A plot does not have to be told chronologically. Authors use flashbacks to provide information on events that occurred before the current plot point. It allows for the story to start in the middle of the action but later fills in the gaps to ensure that the viewer understands everything that transpired before the present plot begins (the backstory). External flashbacks recollect events that occurred before the story (external flashbacks) and internal flashbacks recount events that occurred throughout the plot (internal flashbacks).

In a text, there are often multiple storylines. Subplots run parallel to the main plot and support the plot. Subplots can enrich and create a more complex narrative. It can also enrich certain characters by providing them with a backstory or by giving them a voice. A subplot can also reveal new information about a protagonist. How the protagonist interacts with supporting characters in a subplot can shed light on their personality traits and flaws, making them more vulnerable and three-dimensional.

Theme

The basic idea of a literary text is the theme. Rather than being outright told by the narrator/author, a theme is gradually introduced into the story. The theme of a text can be conveyed using characters, setting, dialogue, plot or a combination of all of these aspects. A

theme is the text's overall concept; it's also the message the author wishes to convey in their work. Popular themes include love, good vs. evil, dystopias, humanity vs. technology, and so on. Menachem Brinker wrote in the chapter Theme and Interpretation in the book *Thematics: New Approaches* it is important to realise that a theme cannot be too specific. "The theme is understood as potentially uniting different texts." (Brinker, 1995, p.33) A theme is used to group different texts together that share a similar theme. Brinker defines a theme as; "A theme is, therefore, the principle (or locus) of a possible grouping of texts. It is one principle among many since we often group together texts considered to have a common theme, which are importantly and significantly different in many other respects."(Brinker, 1995, p. 33)

Texts often have side plots, and different relationships between characters and it can therefore be difficult to extract the theme from a text. A text can also have multiple themes. Even though a text may share a theme with another text they can be completely different from one another. For example, two novels that share the theme; 'of power and corruption' are George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and Suzanne Collins's series *The Hunger Games*. *Animal Farm* is an allegorical story about a group of animals who rise up against their human masters with increasingly sinister results. In *The Hunger Games*, a totalitarian government uses its power to mistreat, manipulate and even murder its citizens. In both novels, the misuse of power is intrinsically important for the stories. The stories are, however, very different from one another. While *Animal Farm* is a critique of the corruption of socialist ideals, *The Hunger Games* is also about survival and love. Texts are often complex and can have multiple themes which distinguish them from other similar texts. According to the reader-response theory a reader contributes to the meaning of a text and different readers can therefore identify different main themes in a text. Determining the main theme of a text can therefore be complicated.

Characters

There are different types of characters the protagonist and the antagonist being the most important. Secondary characters such as supporting characters and minor characters are less important for the plot. Most stories revolve around a single Protagonist who is pursuing a certain goal, and the plot is driven by their actions. The story begins with an exposition phase to clearly illustrate the protagonist's motive and the goal that they are pursuing. Although the

protagonist has allies, which are often supportive characters, their goal is primarily achieved via their own actions. An Antagonist obstructs the protagonist's pursuit of their goal, and the story progresses with a succession of hurdles that the protagonist must overcome in order to achieve their goal. The protagonist frequently (but not always) succeeds in achieving their goal. Julie Porteous and Alan Lindsay state in their article *Protagonist vs Antagonist* *PROVANT: Narrative Generation as Counter Planning*:

On their own, the actions of the protagonist in pursuit of their goal does not make an interesting narrative. For example, Bordwell notes that “the classical Hollywood film presents individuals who struggle to ... attain specific goals. In the course of this struggle the character enters into conflict with others ...” [3] (pg 157) and McKee observes that “... meaningful change in the life situation of a character is ... achieved through conflict” [14] (pg 34). Consequently the structure of the “classical Hollywood” narrative is as follows: begin with initial exposition of the protagonist goal and the antagonist motivation; proceed with the protagonist's attainment of their goal blocked by antagonist interference, so the narrative consists of a series of chains of antagonist interference followed by protagonist actions to recover from the interference; these chains of obstruction/interference and recovery usually (but not necessarily) lead to the protagonist achieving their goal.” (Porteous & Lindsay, 2019, p.1070-1071)

In texts, it is the obstacles created by an antagonist that makes a story interesting to read. It is the overcoming of obstacles that causes the protagonist to develop. Therefore, an antagonist is needed in a story for the development of the plot and other characters. Often a protagonist fulfils the role of a hero and the antagonist is the villain. However, the opposite can be true. In the novel *American Psycho*, written by Bret Easton Ellis, the protagonist is Patrick Bateman a serial killer with no remorse. In this novel, it is the protagonist who is the villain of the story.

The antagonist can be a person or a group of people, however, it can also be an inanimate force. These antagonistic forces are often seen in post-apocalyptic or survival stories where it is the setting which causes the obstacles for the protagonist. Another antagonistic force can be intrinsic forces. Intrinsic forces are the protagonist's shortcomings or internal struggles

that keep them from achieving their goals. These intrinsic forces can be personality flaws or some sort of physical disadvantage. In these types of stories, the antagonistic forces come from within the protagonist. The protagonist has to overcome or accept these obstacles within themselves to achieve their goals. Intrinsic forces are often not the only antagonist in a story. Often, a character has to grapple with an internal issue and combat an external force at the same time. For example, in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* the protagonist Elizabeth Bennet has to overcome her prejudice toward Mr Darcy. Likewise, Mr Darcy battles his own intrinsic forces of pride. Meanwhile, other antagonistic forces such as characters as Lady de Bourgh, and George Wickham and comments on their social standings try to keep the couple apart.

Secondary characters are characters other than the protagonist and antagonist. These types of characters can often be defined as either supporting or minor characters. Secondary characters have little or no effect on the plot. Minor characters can make a brief appearance, sometimes they appear only once. These characters can still move the story forward but often make a minor impact. These characters do not have elaborate backstories and have no complicated personalities. Supporting characters exist to illuminate the protagonist, and through their subplots, affect the main character's decisions. Without supporting characters, the main characters often cannot achieve their goals. These characters do influence the plot and can develop because of what they experience.

Secondary characters are important since they add depth and interest to the world of the protagonist. These characters can have a significant role in stories without being integral to the plot. Supporting characters can be the protagonist or antagonist of their own subplot. Secondary characters can reveal more about the protagonist or antagonist and can cause obstacles or be a helping hand.

Setting

In his book, *Mastering English Literature*, Richard Gill (1995) stated that setting covers the places and time the characters appear, the social context of characters, the particular locations of events, and the atmosphere. Settings are therefore more than just the backdrop for a story. The setting of a text can be instrumental for the development of characters, the theme and the

plot of a text. The setting of a book can function as the antagonistic force which causes the narrative and characters to develop. In a wide range of stories – westerns, journey stories, nature adventure stories, detective stories, war stories, prison stories, Gothic romance, dystopian stories, sci-fi and so forth – setting provides the groundwork for the action. Often it is the setting which creates obstacles for the characters or even forms the personalities and beliefs of the characters. For example, in Margaret Atwood’s novel, *The Handmaid’s Tale* the novel’s antagonist is the regime of the Republic of Gilead. The state denies Offred’s personhood, treating her instead as a “national resource”. The law determines what Offred must do, whom she must sleep with, where she must live, whom she can talk to and even what she must wear. It is the social context which shapes the character's ideas and personalities and acts as the obstacle in the novel. Besides the social context, the environment can also act as an antagonistic force. Destructive natural forces such as earthquakes or storms can function as an obstacle for the protagonist. The surroundings of a character can be the obstacle a character has to overcome. For example, in Andy Weir’s *The Martian* the astronaut Mark Watney battles for survival in the unforgiving environment of Mars. The setting of a place can be the most important part of a text since it can influence any of the other intrinsic elements of a text.

What can literature do?

Instead of asking ‘what is literature?’ we need to ask the question ‘what can literature do?’. Even though the definition of literature is difficult to define there are ideas about what literature should be able to do.

In Marc Angenot’s article *What Can Literature Do? From Literary Sociocriticism to a Critique of Social Discourse*, translated by Robert Barsky, he states:

It is because literary texts, in the current sense of the term, have the potential to be “others,” elsewhere, excessive, as regards what is said elsewhere, that they touch the aesthetic domain, and it is because, moreover, they have the role of regurgitating, illustrating, relaying what is already there, that they emerge from the domain of social reproduction. (Angenot & Barsky, 2004, p.229)

In his article Angenot states that literature is a reflection of society. Literature is a medium through which an author or reader can critique or view certain aspects of society. When literature relays or reflects a society's values a reader can extract meaning or ideas from a text relating to their own lives. Literature can make readers think about society by illustrating what is already there. Another text which confirms literature's ability to help the reader understand their world better is *Why literature? The Value of Literary Reading and What it Means for Teaching*. written by Cristina Vischer Bruns, it states:

A common attempt to justify literature's place as an academic subject is to list skills widely recognized as necessary in today's world that can be developed through reading and writing about texts - skills of interpretation, problem solving, oral and written communication, evidence-based argument, and the ubiquitous critical thinking. While making sense of a literary text even outside of school indeed requires important abilities like making inferences or drawing conclusions, other kinds of texts do as well, so this justification does little to ensure literature's place either in schools or in society. More promising is another common claim: that learning to read literature helps us to read the world around us. (Vischer Bruns, 2011, p.11)

A theory which explains why readers of literature improve their understanding of the world is the Mirrors and Windows theory introduced by Rudine Sims Bishop. In the article *Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Doors* Bishop states that the world looks different depending on who and where you are. Texts that reflect readers' own identities, experiences and motivations are texts that act as mirrors. Texts that provide insight into the identities, experiences and motivations of others act as windows. Readers who come into contact with both kinds of texts develop a more nuanced perception of the world around them. Bishop concludes the article with the words; "When there are enough books available that can act as both mirrors and windows for all our children, they will see that we can celebrate both our differences and our similarities, because together they are what make us all human." (Bishop, 1990, p.2) Reading texts that mirror can be sources of self-affirmation and self-awareness. While reading texts that provide a window into another culture or society can broaden a reader's understanding of multiple cultures. Viewing a text as a window allows readers to explore the experiences of

others, building empathy and understanding while examining diversity in social, cultural, political and historical contexts.

Another aspect of what literature can do is that it can develop the readers' ability to empathise. This concept is often referred to as the Theory of Mind. Lisa Zunshine compares Theory of Mind (ToM) in *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (2006) to the ability to read minds. Both are terms that describe the ability to explain other people's behaviour based on their thoughts, beliefs, feelings and desires. People's ability to understand other people is the ability to empathise. Empathy is one of the most important qualities to have for people. Every day people act and react to situations. Our actions are often influenced by the state of mind of ourselves and others. We construct and navigate the world based on the state of mind we encounter in our surroundings. When you can understand others better, your actions might be well suited for the situation. In other words, empathy can help a person react better to a situation. Zunshine says about Theory of Mind and literature:

our ToM makes literature as we know it possible—to argue that the attribution of mental states to literary characters is crucially mediated by the workings of our metarepresentational ability. Fictional narratives, from *Beowulf* to *Pride and Prejudice*, rely on, manipulate, and titillate our tendency to keep track of who thought, wanted, and felt what and when. (Zunshine, 2006, p.5)

When people read literature it is our Theory of Mind which helps us process and make sense of what it is we read. It is our ability to empathise with fictional characters which makes a novel great and improves our understanding of the world. Literature is often an intriguing web of characters' actions and reactions based on their state of minds which a reader navigates by empathising with them.

Why do we teach literature?

In secondary schools, students start to learn about literature. In the Netherlands ideas about what secondary students should learn and why are collected and published on the website curriculum.nu. On the subject of literature, it states; "Creative forms of language include all

texts that use narrative techniques. These may include games, films, stories, stage and song texts, poetry, (picture) novels, and literature."¹ In Dutch secondary schools literature that can be used in the classrooms includes multiple mediums other than novels. The most important aspect is that these texts use narrative techniques. Curriculum.nu also provides reasons for why texts should be studied:

The use of creative texts in learning a new language and culture promotes the development of creative ability. Moreover, by experiencing stories, thoughts and feelings in the target language and telling or expressing them themselves, students get out of the comfort zone of their first language. Students are invited to think about issues in original texts that originated in another culture. Reflection on the other and the other culture helps students to reflect on their own culture as well as develop respect and tolerance for the other. This contributes to their personality formation and socialisation.²

The reasons for using literature that has narratives seem to coincide with Theory of Mind and the Mirror and Window Theory. Children need to come in contact with others in order to shape their personhood and worldview. Because children spend most of their time with their families children often have experiences which relate to their parents and closest friends. It then depends on the views and beliefs of families what a child experiences. However, schools can expand a student's worldview through pedagogical interruptions. Interruptions are moments where children have encounters with Others. These interruptions are needed because children must encounter a wide variety of worldviews for them to shape their own worldviews. In *Learning from Levinas* (2003), Gert Biesta talks about learning from others. When we say 'this person has really taught me something', Biesta explains that what we

¹ "Creatieve vormen van taal omvatten alle teksten waarin gebruik wordt gemaakt van verhalende technieken. Hierbij kan gedacht worden aan games, films, verhalen, toneel- en liedteksten, poëzie, (beeld)romans en literatuur." <https://www.curriculum.nu/voorstellen/engels-mvt/verantwoording-engels-mvt/>

² "De inzet van creatieve teksten bij het leren van een nieuwe taal en cultuur bevordert de ontwikkeling van het creatief vermogen. Door verhalen, gedachten en gevoelens in de doeltaal te beleven en zelf te vertellen of te uiten, komen leerlingen bovendien uit de comfortzone van hun eerste taal. Leerlingen worden uitgenodigd om na te denken over vraagstukken in originele teksten die ontstaan zijn in een andere cultuur. Reflectie op de ander en de andere cultuur helpt leerlingen ook op hun eigen cultuur te reflecteren en respect en tolerantie te ontwikkelen voor de ander in die context. Dit draagt bij aan hun persoonsvorming en socialisatie." <https://www.curriculum.nu/voorstellen/engels-mvt/verantwoording-engels-mvt/>

imply is that we have been altered unexpectedly by this transcendent encounter, and it is a revelation. This theory of interruptions in my eye closely relates to the theory of Mirrors and Windows. Mirrors are needed as a reflection of your own culture and help you build your identity. A window offers you a view into someone else's experience. When students experience the stories of others through literature their own views or beliefs may be interrupted. Therefore, discussing literature in class can be a great way to broaden the worldviews of students. When you can use literature as a window and show students that others' beliefs and opinions can be different from their own and everything is not just black and white, they become well-rounded adults.

Frank Hakemulder, Olivia Fialho and P. Matthijs Bal researched learning from literature. They found "reliable evidence that reading literature stimulates Theory of Mind, empathy, and even prosocial behaviour." (Hakemulder, Fialho, Bal, 2016, p. 34) I believe that literature providing Mirrors and Windows are the reasons that literature interrupts and is shown to stimulate empathy and Theory of Mind. Theory of Mind, as previously discussed, is the ability to attribute mental states to ourselves and others. These mental states can be beliefs, intents, desires, emotions and knowledge. "Having a theory of mind allows us to understand that others have unique beliefs and desires that are different from our own, enabling us to engage in daily social interaction as we interpret the mental states and infer the behaviours of those around us." (Premack & Woodruff, 1978) Humans need Theory of Mind to understand one another and interact with each other. When discussing literature in lessons narrative is often an important topic. Narratives are created by circumstances and the actions and reactions of characters. The actions of characters are determined by their state of mind. When we read literature we experience how characters with different personalities or different background stories react to situations. As readers, we learn from these experiences and can use them in real-life situations.

In the chapter *Why Teach Literature?* written by Richard Beach, Deborah Appleman, Bob Fecho and Rob Simon it is stated that: "One way to invite students to engage with a text involves explaining characters' actions- formulating reasons or motives having to do with characters' beliefs, traits, and goals, as well as the larger social and cultural meanings of those actions." (Beach et al., 2016, p.11) Thus, focusing on characters' beliefs and traits not only stimulates Theory of Mind but also engages students. Students seem to be motivated by learning more about the motives of others. As humans, we learn from a young age to look at

the behaviour and actions of others in order to learn how to fit in. Literature can function as a Mirror and Window for students who are still trying to learn who they are and how to view the world.

In addition to this, Mark Pike found that students want to relate literature to something in their lives. In order for students to enjoy or take interest in literature, it has to be relevant to them. He wrote in *The canon in the classroom: Students' experiences of texts from other times*: "Students in this study only seemed to be keen to engage with history and literary biography when a transaction of sufficient quality existed in the present to sustain movement into the past. Indeed, this initial personal transaction had to provide the motivation for further exploration. (Pike, 2003, p. 366)" Students find meaning in literature by relating it to their own lives. The students' need to relate to a text seems to lend credence to the idea that students are motivated by developing their Theory of Mind. Discussing literature and narratives is therefore most important for the development of students.

Video games as literary texts.

In this chapter, I discussed how literature consists of the intrinsic elements of plot, theme, characters and setting. Literature can invite readers to think about the world, both their own as well as those of others. Literature can help develop a reader's empathy and Theory of Mind through exploring characters' actions and words. All of these aspects are also what teachers think is important to teach to their students. In the last part of this chapter, I want to show that many narrative-based video games possess all of the traits literature does and should therefore be considered literary texts.

One of the earliest researchers who first looked at video games as literature is Espen Aarseth. In his book *Cybertext: perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (1997) Aarseth introduced the term Ergodic literature. Ergodic literature are dynamic texts with which the reader must perform specific actions to generate a literary sequence. The narratives of video games come into existence when they are played and thus contain player-generated narratives. The reader, therefore, has an important function in creating and understanding a narrative. This perspective has close relations to the reader-response theory. In, both theories a reader's interpretation, and in ergodic literature; actions, are crucial for the narrative. In his book,

Aarseth wants to construct “a model of textual communication that will accommodate any type of text” (Aarseth, 1997, p.18). By expanding “the scope of literary studies to include phenomena that today are perceived as outside of, or marginalized by, the field of literature” (p.18). His model is based on the desire to redefine what can be considered literature in the first place. Aarseth’s model is based on four dimensions found in video games and illustrates their variance. These four dimensions are World, Objects, Agents and Events. I would argue that Aarseth’s dimensions are closely related to the intrinsic elements of literature. In the World of video games, we encounter the place, time and cultural aspects of an imaginary world. All of these aspects belong to the setting of literature. Objects are things you may encounter or interact with in video games. Often these are not the main focus of literature analysis except when they are intrinsic to a character or plot (for example Excalibur for King Arthur or the murder weapon in a detective). In video games, objects may have a larger role than in most novels, such as weapons with which you can fight or notes which give the player information. However, I would argue that these objects then become intrinsic to the player-generated narrative. The third dimension is Agents which looks at the depth of characters. In video games, there can be well-developed characters that have emotions and complex personalities, as well as characters without any personality (bots). In literary theory protagonists, antagonists and minor characters are often also characterised using these distinctions. Minor characters are often flat characters that have no or very little personality, while protagonists and antagonists often have complex personalities which influence their decisions and actions, thus influencing the plot. The last of Aarseth’s dimensions is Events, which looks at the events which form a plot. Narrative analysis of literature is often considered most important when discussing literature. However, when analysing a video game’s narrative there are other aspects to consider since video games are ergodic texts. Some video games are fully plotted in which the player’s actions do not influence the game while other games have a less restricted plot. Aarseth’s model seems to analyse aspects of texts that are similar to Terry Eagleton’s intrinsic elements, except perhaps for Objects. So when analysing a video game as a literary text the same aspects could be analysed as were you to analyse a novel.

Ever since, Aarseth there have been some studies which look at video games as literary texts such as *Reading videogame as (authorless) literature*, Richard Berger and Julian McDougall. In *Reading videogame as (authorless) literature* (2013), they studied the video game L.A. Noire as literature. The study was concerned with students' and teachers' understandings and

assumptions of literature. Both groups were interviewed multiple times during the study. The conclusion of this study was:

Returning to our original research questions, it is clear – for the students at least – that *L.A. Noire* does function as a (digitally transformed) novel, in relation to other texts, across a flattened hierarchy. It contains the utterance of literature, resonating in different media. The students seemed comfortable with this dynamic dialogism in which ‘reading’ is never centred on one text. Literary studies are generally concerned with ‘closed off’ or finished texts, and the perception that videogames are ‘unfinished’ was more of a problem for the teachers. (Berger & McDougall, 2013, p. 148).

They concluded that the students had no problems recognizing the videogame as literature, but that teachers had more problems with it. The ‘unfinished’ nature of video games is intrinsic to ergodic texts. However, I believe that the ‘unfinished’ aspect of the narrative should not pose a problem in teaching literature. In postmodernism, there are often texts that are ‘unfinished’. In *Nostalgic Postmodernism: The Victorian Tradition and the Contemporary British Novel* (2021), by Christian Gutleben, it states:

In Barthes’s famous taxonomy, this is a ‘writerly’ text which does not provide a fixed and closed diegesis nor some ultimate message, it is an open and unfinished text where the reader can endlessly play the game of meanings. (Gutleben, 2021, p. 119)

Postmodernism is a literary movement that renounces absolute meaning and instead emphasises play, fragmentation, metafiction, and intertextuality. Texts do not have to be ‘closed’ in order to be considered literature. In Berger and McDougall’s study, there was a contradiction in the teacher’s view that video games are not literature and their ability “to articulate a series of intertextual and comparative judgements about the game, a novel and a play without the need for a separate critical discourse for each.” (Berger & McDougall, 2013, p.147) Berger and McDougall have a theory which explains the dissonance between the teacher's opinion and abilities to analyse the video game:

This could be partly explained by some teachers needing to ‘perform’ their ‘front-region’ (Goffman, 1990) of being an educator, whereas the

students were more comfortable in their engagement outside the classroom. If this is merely a generational gap, and what we are seeing here is just the way in which young people use media today, then this will surely change. (Berger & McDougall, 2013, p.148)

Erving Goffman uses the term 'front-region' to describe how people behave differently when people know that other people are watching. This behaviour reflects internalised norms and behaviour set by the surroundings and the 'role' the person plays. The teacher seemed to be less comfortable with video games than the students were. Predetermined views on literature and taking the teacher out of their comfort zone could contribute to their unwillingness to view video games as literature.

In video games, you often play as the hero of the story. Throughout playing the game you often follow a storyline. Many video games have a narrative in which the player is sucked into a new world in which they can experience different emotions and have new experiences. Because most games are experienced through the perspective of the protagonist, players can experience a story through the eyes of another. This experience can enhance the feeling of connection between a character and the 'reader'. The player can 'become' the protagonist because the player controls the protagonist. In games where the player can make decisions that influence the plot or virtual world, the connection between the player and the protagonist can become even stronger. In these video games, it is the player's actions and decisions that have consequences. In novels, a reader can empathise with a character's decisions but is not asked to make a decision. Readers follow the path a character takes and eventually learn where the character's decisions bring them. In video games the player has to actively think about their actions and therefore the consequences can be more meaningful in games. In video games, the player does more than empathise with characters they almost have to become the character. Stimulating the development of Theory of Mind is therefore an inherent element of video games.

Chapter 2: A Case Study of *Emily Is Away*

If video games can be analysed as literary texts then they could also serve as a teaching tool in literature classes. I wanted to test how my students would respond to analysing a video game instead of a short novel. During conversations with my students, I often noticed that many of them were less than enthusiastic when literature was mentioned. With this series of lessons, I wanted to see if students would be more motivated to participate in literature classes when the subject would be video games.

In this chapter, I will present a series of literature lessons which were conducted with a 4 vwo class and the results. During the first lesson, the students learned about characters, plot, theme, time and place in literature. The second lesson was devoted to analysing a videogame they played using the previously learned theory. The students had to connect what they had learned with what they observed while playing the videogame. The game I incorporated into the lessons is a narrative-based game. These types of games revolve around a plot and often are designed to bring about a certain emotion. Before and after the lessons, the students filled in a questionnaire asking about their ideas on literature and video game. The students were also questioned about their impression of the lessons. After the lessons, the students were also given an assignment in which they had to do a close reading on a video game of their own choosing. This chapter will discuss the results of the case study.

The Game

During the lessons, the game that was played and discussed is *Emily Is Away*. *Emily Is Away* is an independent video game visual novel by game developer Kyle Seeley, released for free in November 2015. Set in the early-to-mid 2000s, *Emily Is Away* tells the story of the protagonist's relationship with a girl, Emily, over the course of five years, from the senior year of high school to the senior year of college. The game is presented through online chat, complete with other users' profiles and interfaces. The reason to choose this game for this research is that the game has an emotional plot, is easy to play, takes 30-60 minutes to complete and is free of charge. You play the game by choosing dialogue options which will influence the conversation you have with Emily. In the game, there are many optional dialogues to choose from. Because of this students will experience different conversations but ultimately have the same ending. There is no 'good' ending in the game, where you get

together with Emily. The creator of the game, Kyle Seeley, said in an interview for dualshockers.com, a website which publishes news articles regarding the videogame industry:

Looking back on it now I think its popularity is due to the one-two punch of nostalgia mixed with a relatable story. Immediately the game is interesting because it looks like an old school messaging client. It has 00's pop culture references and is nostalgic for anyone that grew up in that time. I think that's what drew most people in initially, and then the game delivers this very universal story about growing up and growing apart from someone.³

The theme of growing up and growing apart is made absolutely apparent by the inevitability of the ending. Emily in the game is 'the one that got away'. Whichever choice you make in the game is ultimately irrelevant to the ending of the game. In the game, the player experiences an emotional story about the friendship and love between two young adults.

Learning Objectives

The goal of the lessons is to teach students about what literature is and its aspects through the medium of video games. The lessons aim to broaden the student's definitions of what literature is. For the literature lessons, I chose to focus on the intrinsic elements of literature which are often taught in Secondary schools' literature classes. The four subjects of the lessons are characters, plot, theme and setting. These subjects are often considered the basics of literature. Within these subjects, I have chosen to focus on specific theoretical terms. For the characters I want the students to learn about different types of characters and what the roles of these characters are within narratives. The protagonist, antagonist and minor- & supporting characters are types of characters which often appear in literary texts. For the plot, the students have to know the five elements of a plot; exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution. Students also have to know that there are themes and how to recognise them. Lastly, there is the setting which includes time and place but can also include historical and cultural aspects within a novel. The learning objectives for the lessons were as follows:

³ <https://www.dualshockers.com/emily-is-away-too-interview-pc-kyle-seeley/>

- Students can define the terms plot, theme, characters, time and place relating to literature.
- Students can recognise plot, theme, characters, time and place in literature.
- Students can formulate arguments regarding the discussion of what literature is using theory.
- Students can analyse a videogame as a literary text.

Didactic Theory

In the lessons, students will learn about literary terms and will be taught to recognise and apply them to literary works. These lessons will be modelled after the Direct Instruction Model. The Direct Instruction model adheres to a certain form: Introduction, Development, Guided Practice, Closure, Independent Practice and Evaluation. (Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, Tarver, 2010) The DI model is teacher-based and its key aspects are clear explanations, establishing goals and interactions with the students. During the Introduction the teacher introduces the subject in an engaging way for the students. During this stage, the students' prior knowledge can be activated and ascertained. During the Development stage, teachers will give the students any definitions, formulas, or information needed. This may include lecturing to provide students with the knowledge they need. During the Guided Practice, students have the opportunity to complete a task using the new information on their own with help through for example step-by-step directions, and oral directions where the entire class participates together. The Closure stage is when the teacher gives feedback after and during the Guided practice. The teacher offers feedback to the group or individual students, so they can understand how to properly complete the task and eventually complete it without any support. Next during the Independent practice, the students have the space and time to practice what they have learned without any help or support. The teacher can still provide feedback and corrections to help students stay on track towards mastering the content or skill set. The last stage is the Evaluation where the teacher assesses the students to ensure the group can move on to the next step and content area. Assessment can take many forms, such as a handout, quiz, written assignment, or project.

During the Guided Practice stage, the students have to analyse the video game *Emily Is Away* using the theory that they learned during the Development stage. I chose to implement the

Jigsaw technique, introduced by Elliot Aronson in the book, *The Jigsaw Classroom* (1978). The Jigsaw technique is a cooperative learning technique where students form groups in which each member focuses on a different aspect of the material. Each member then forms an 'expert group' with members of different groups who also researched their subject. After the 'expert groups' discussed their subject the members of the original groups reconvene and share all of the information they have learned.

I chose to implement this technique because of the various advantages cooperative learning techniques have. Jigsaw is said to be able to increase students' learning since "a) it is less threatening for many students, b) it increases the amount of student participation in the classroom, c) it reduces the need for competitiveness and d) it reduces the teacher's dominance in the classroom" (Longman Dictionary, 1998, p. 124). Since the full participation of all the students is a high priority I chose to use a technique where all of the students were required to actively participate in the subject. Since every student is responsible for a specific subject, every student is a piece of the jigsaw puzzle and every student's contribution is important.

According to Chi and Wylie's (2014) ICAP model, in a passive activity, learners receive information but do not otherwise openly engage with the learning material. Activities are defined as active if they require active movement, such as underlining or copying selected text passages. Constructive activities go beyond active activities because they require students to synthesize their own ideas and generate a new result, such as a concept map. Finally, interactive activity is one in which students engage in a substantive exchange of ideas that leads to a new level of understanding. Beginning with passive, each subsequent category is accompanied by an increased level of activity, with the greatest amount of learning gain predicted to come from the more engaging activities. In my lessons, I aimed to activate the students to increase their learning efficiency. The Jigsaw technique is an interactive activity in which all of the students participate by sharing their observations and ideas.

Another advantage of the Jigsaw technique is that the students will have some time to think about and discuss the subjects without the pressure of immediately sharing information in front of the entire class and teacher. I also anticipated that not every student would have played the game due to various reasons, just as I have observed not every student reads the

required books for literature classes. During the discussions, these students can still actively participate by working together with students who did play the videogame.

For my lesson, I implemented an adapted version of the Jigsaw technique. Because of time restraints, I opted to immediately form the 'expert groups' and then form new groups where there would be at least one 'expert' on every subject. All of the students had in a previous lesson learned about all of the theories and each student had to have played the game. Therefore, the first step of individually researching the subject seemed unnecessary for this lesson. To do a concept check and discern whether the students achieved the learning objectives the students participate in a class discussion. Since every student has had the opportunity to learn about all of the subjects through the Jigsaw technique every student should be able to participate in the discussion. During class, the theory is discussed in class (concept check) and misconceptions can be corrected by the teacher. The student's ability to apply the learned theory to a literary text will also be checked with a writing assignment. The students will analyse a video game and write a 300 - 500 word essay on their findings. The students will also be asked to write in their conclusion if their chosen text should be considered literature. By completing the assignment the students will show if the learning objectives have been met.

In order for students to actively pay attention and learn something from literature, they need to be motivated. A way to increase motivation is by giving students a feeling of self-determination. Edward L. Deci's and Richard M. Ryans' self-determination theory (2000) says there are three main intrinsic needs and when they are all satisfied a person is in a head place where they can develop themselves and function optimally. The three main needs are autonomy, competence and relatedness. Autonomy can be satisfied by giving students choices. Therefore, the students will make a writing assignment in the form of an essay. The students have to write an essay in which they analyse a video game. The students are free to choose any video game they want to analyse. This will give the students a degree of autonomy and can also give them a sense of competence and relatedness. Students will most probably choose games they know and have played giving them the feeling of being competent in knowing the game. The assignment will surely relate to the students' own interests since they are free to choose. The students will have two weeks to write the essay in which they will have to use the learned theory and analyse a video game. This task is also a

check of understanding and will show whether the learning objectives were met by the students.

The Lessons

Before, the lessons start the students filled in a questionnaire which focussed on their views on what literature is. The lesson series was created using the Direct Instruction model. The lesson series began with an Introduction where I set the stage for learning. During the Development, the students learn about what they have to pay attention to when reading literary texts. During the Guided Practice, students practise with the theory. The students played the videogame *Emily Is Away*, and through assignments and class discussions the students had to apply the theory they learned to the videogame. For the stage of Independent Practice, the students wrote a small essay in which they analysed a videogame of choice using the theory, this essay also functions as an Evaluation. After the lessons, the students filled in another questionnaire which focussed on whether the students' perception of literature had changed and the role of video games in literature lessons.

Lesson 1:

The first lesson started with the students filling in the questionnaire. Because the questions were about what literature is and asked about different mediums I used this topic to introduce the subject. During the introduction, I discussed the ongoing discussion about what literature is by giving them a description of the term 'literature' from the Oxford Dictionary. The description is as follows; "pieces of writing that are valued as works of art, especially novels, plays and poems (in contrast to technical books and newspapers, magazines, etc.)" The students had to think about and discuss in pairs what was confusing, unclear or difficult about the description. I chose to incorporate the Think-Pair-Share strategy because it is a teaching strategy thought to increase in-class participation, especially with shy students. After thinking for themselves, students talk to their seatmates to exchange their ideas and finally share their ideas in class. During the lesson, I found that this strategy worked well for this class. The students identified the expected elements which were confusing or unclear. Multiple students found that the part 'valued as works of art' was unclear. Students that this statement depended on an individual's opinion and it also brought into question what art is. Another

student noted that the description felt old-fashioned to him. He noted that there was little room for more modern mediums. Because I expected the students to find fault with the description the follow-up question was ‘What makes a text valuable?’ The same Think-Pair-Share strategy was used for this question. I expected the students to give answers which included that; it has a message, it makes you think and it triggers emotions. The students mentioned all of these aspects and more. The students said that the characters had to be well written, there had to be a moral and the reader should be able to empathise with the characters. Their answers were written down on the slide and using their characteristics I introduced different mediums that had some or all of the characteristics of a valuable story. I gave examples for films, graphic novels and lastly a videogame. The goal of this part of the lesson was to make the students think about whether different mediums could also be considered literary texts, based on their own thoughts about what makes a text valuable. After this introduction, the lesson proceeded to the Development stage. During this stage, I gave a lecture about the fundamental components of literature. I solely used video games as examples in order to explain the theory. Because I know that not all of the students in my class like or play video games I chose to mostly use Nintendo’s Mario games as an example. These video games are universally known by many people and could therefore be a recognisable example. Many students needed to know the game because they were also asked to identify the protagonist, antagonist and supporting characters in the game after they were given an explanation about those theoretical terms. During my explanation, I asked students questions regarding the theory in order to check if the students understood the theory and to identify any possible misconceptions. The students’ participation was good and there were not any clear misconceptions. After the Development stage, the students were given the instruction for the task for the Guided practice. The students were instructed to install the videogame *Emily Is Away* and play the game at home. The students had one week to play the game. During playing the game the students were instructed to pay attention to the literary aspects discussed during the lesson. During the last minutes of the class, I could help the students find and download the game in preparation for the second lesson.

Lesson 2:

The second lesson took place one week after the first lesson, thus the students had a week to play the video game. During the second lesson, the videogame was discussed and the students

had to apply the theory they learned in the first lesson to analyse the videogame *Emily Is Away*. To activate their knowledge for this lesson, I asked the students what they remembered about the previous lesson and we briefly discussed the theory of the last lesson. After this discussion, the students were instructed to form 'expert groups' according to the Jigsaw technique. Because multiple students told me that they were not able to play the game due to various reasons. I expressly instructed that the groups had to have a person who had played the game. The class was quickly divided into six expert groups. There were three subjects they could choose from; plot and theme, characters and setting. There were two expert groups per subject. Groups A and B discussed the characters, groups C and D discussed the plot and theme and groups E and F discussed the setting. Each group member received a work form regarding their group's chosen subject. The work forms had nine questions relating to their chosen subject whose purpose was to activate the students' thought processes and bring about discussions. After ten minutes the students had to form new groups which included one member of each group. This would result in there being two experts for each subject in one group. This process went a bit slow and could have gone more quickly if I had created the groups by giving each member in the expert groups a number and had said that the students had to group up with the corresponding numbers. The new groups had again ten minutes to share what they had discussed in the expert groups. While the groups were discussing the subjects I listened in with some of the groups and answered questions. During this time I noticed that the students were all actively talking about the subjects and students had some good discussions such as whether Emily is the antagonist of the story. This is an interesting element to discuss because Emily creates some obstacles for the player to overcome. Still, it is mostly the surrounding circumstances, such as being apart and the passing of time, that have an antagonistic effect. By overhearing these discussions it indicated to me that these students understood what an antagonist's role is in a story and they showed an ability to apply this to the literary text. I also had a conversation with a student in which we discussed the theme of the videogame. After this discussion, the student commented that the conversation made her realise that there was a deeper meaning within the story which she had not picked up on while playing the game. After the students discussed the video game in groups they shared their findings in a class discussion. The students noted that their decisions influenced what happened in the game. In the class discussion, the students were able to identify the protagonist, antagonist and minor- and supporting characters. We discussed the five elements of the plot and students could give descriptions of what these elements were and how they could be seen in the story. The students were able to give arguments for their answers. Which

indicated that the students had understood the theory and were mostly able to apply the theory to the videogame. Due to a lack of time, we were not able to discuss the setting and I had to use a third lesson to give the instructions for the writing assignment and had the students fill in the questionnaire. Because I know that my students will be very enthusiastically talking about the assignment, I decided to first give them the Questionnaire to fill in and secondly give them the instructions for the writing assignment. The students could also use the remainder of the lesson to start on their essays.

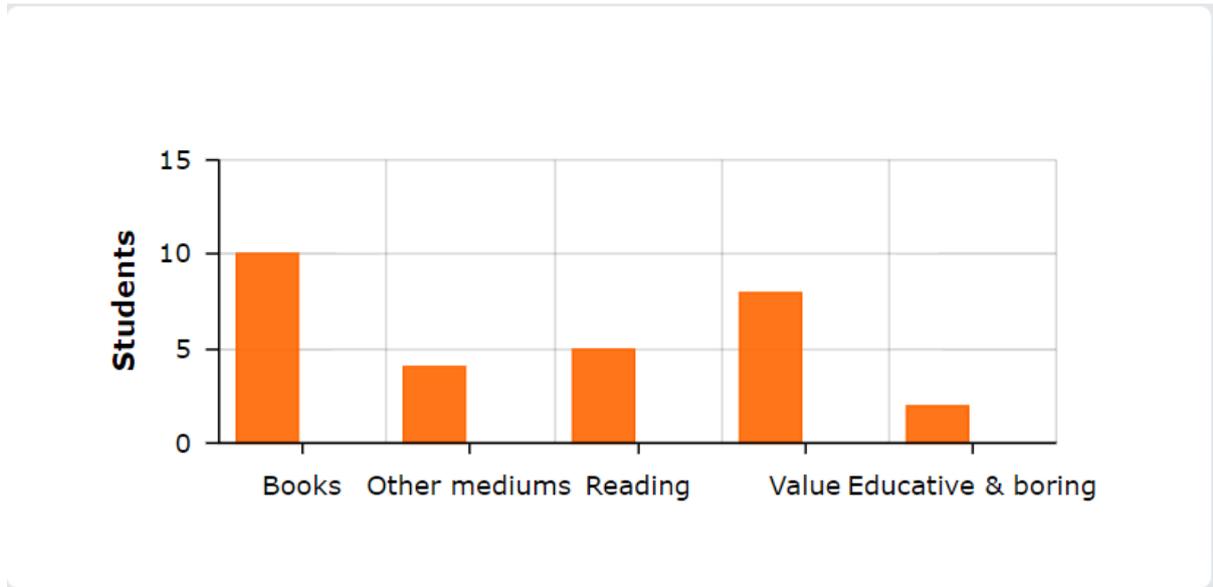
Questionnaires Results:

Questionnaire 1

To create a baseline for the students' ideas about literature and video game the students filled in a questionnaire. Before the lessons started, the students filled in a questionnaire. The questionnaire aimed to create a baseline for the study. The questionnaire focussed on gathering information regarding the students' beliefs on what literature is and what they think about video games. The questionnaire also asked whether the students believed Young Adult novels and Graphic Novels were literature. These questions were included in order to ascertain whether the students regarded different mediums as literature other than novels. The questionnaire was anonymously filled in by 24 students. I wanted to poll the students on their ideas about Literature without defining literature too much. By questioning the students before the lesson biases may come to the foreground.

The answers of the students were categorised into five groups. There were students who answered that literature was 'books'. Some of these students added that these books had to add some kind of value to a person's life. Other students mentioned more mediums than just books. The other mediums that were mentioned were films, art and music. A few students simple answered with reading and two students said literature was educative but boring. One student copied a definition of literature from the internet. Since this answer was not a student's definition of literature this answer was not included in the chart.

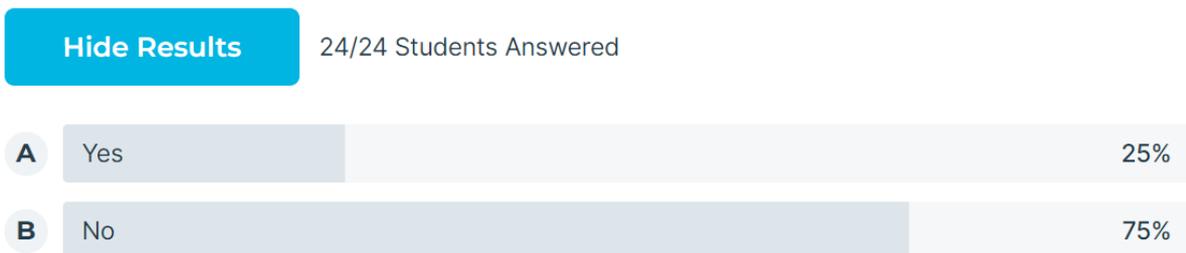
How would you define literature?:



The results showed that out of the fourteen students who mentioned a medium only four students mentioned another medium than books. 8 out of 24 students said that literature had to add value to a person's life in some sort of manner.

When asked about other mediums 92% of the students said that Young Adult novels were literature and 44% of students said that comic books could be considered literature. But only 25% of the students said that video games were literature. The students' answers indicated that they were more willing to accept other types of books as literature than video games.

7. In your opinion, are videogames literature?

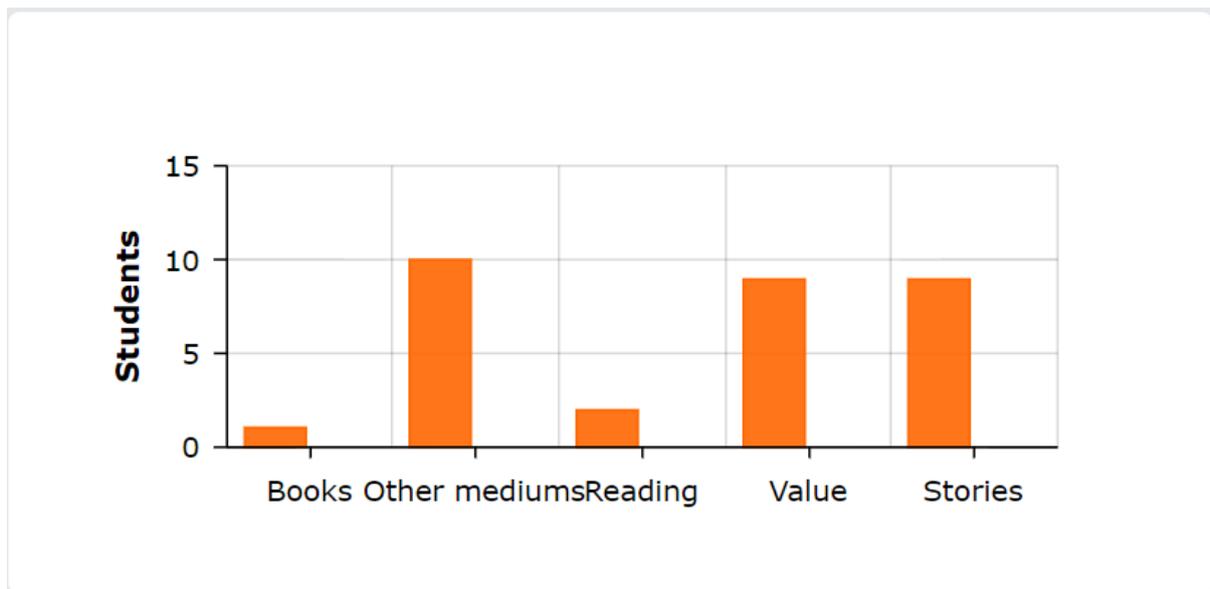


When asked the question 'Should video games be included in literature classes.' 36% of the students answered 'yes', 16% were not sure and answered 'maybe', but 48% of the students believed that video games should not be included in literature classes. 25% of the students who said that video games should not be included in literature classes also said that they do not like to play video games.

Questionnaire 2

To check whether the lessons had any influence on the students' perception of what literature was the students had to fill in a second questionnaire after the series of lessons. The questionnaire was filled in by 23 students after the series of lessons had taken place. In this questionnaire, the students had to again describe how they would define literature. The answers of the students were again categorised into five groups. However, this time there were no students who described literature as 'educative but boring'. There was an increase of students who used the term 'stories' or the 'telling of stories' instead of mentioning books. Two students copied a definition of literature from the internet. Since this answer was not a student's definition of literature this answer was not included in the chart.

How would you define literature?:



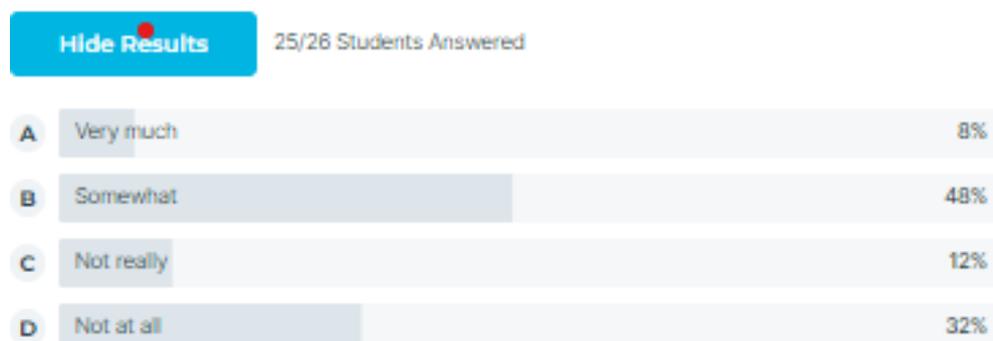
After the lessons, there was just one student who described literature as books. Ten students mentioned other mediums and there was more variation, 50% of these students specifically mentioned games as one of the mediums. Nine students mentioned that literature had to add value and one of those specifically mentioned that literature had to have characters, plot and emotion. Nine students did not mention any medium but said that they defined literature as stories.

The students were also asked ‘Has your opinion about what literature is changed, and why?’ 39% of the students said that their opinions had changed indicating that their view of what literature was had been broadened. 61% said that it had not changed but 28.5% of those students said they had previously believed that literature is more than just books.

52% of the students said that they did not play the game. They gave various reasons for not playing the game such as not being able to download the game and not having the time to play the game. 46% of these students also indicated that they did not like to play video games or had different priorities.

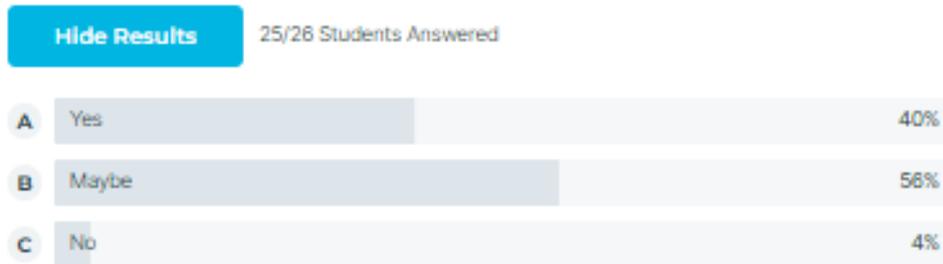
When asked if looking at the game helped the students to understand the literary theory better? 56% said that it did in various degrees while 44% said that it did not help them understand the theory better. 62% said that the game helped them to understand how literature can take multiple forms and 39% said that it did not.

7. Did *Emily Is Away* help you understand the literary theory better?



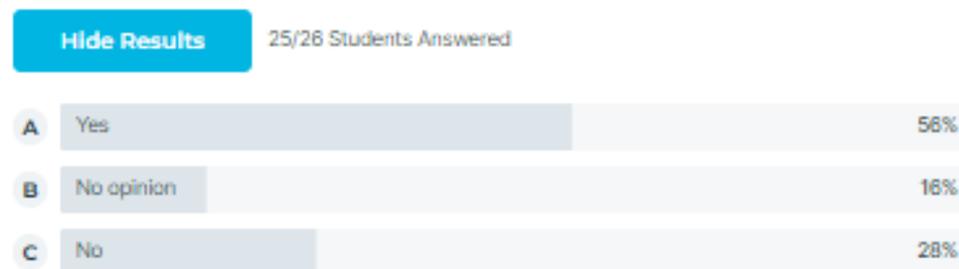
When asked the question ‘In your opinion, could video games be considered as literature?’ 40% of the students did consider video games as literature after the lessons, while 56% of the students were less sure and answered ‘maybe’ 4% of the students disagreed and did not regard any videogame as literature.

9. In your opinion, could videogames be considered as literature?



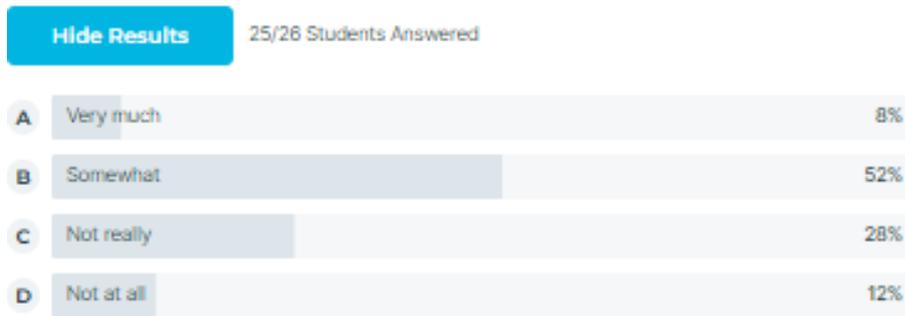
56% of the students said that video games should be included in literature classes. Another question which was slightly different indicated that 44% of the students said that they would very much like to see more video games in literature lessons while 19% heartily disagreed. The differences between these questions might not have been obvious to the students.

10. Should videogames be included in literature classes?



60% of the students indicated in various degrees that they liked the lessons while 40% disliked the lessons. Many students indicated that they disliked the game *Emily Is Away* this could be a reason for 40% of students who disliked the lessons. Many students suggested that the lessons would have been better if the students could have played a different game. The dislike of the game could also have some influence on the questions ‘In your opinion, could video games be considered as literature?’ and ‘Should video games be included in literature classes?’.

12. Did you enjoy the lessons?

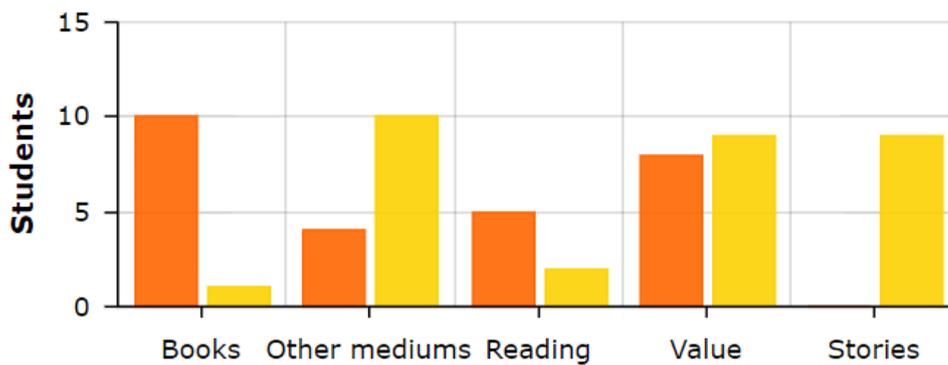


Conclusion

When comparing the questionnaires the most important questions were ‘How would you define literature?’, ‘In your opinion, could video games be considered as literature?’ and ‘Should video games be included in literature classes?’. These questions indicate whether the students' views on what literature is and the role of video games within literature had changed. In the charts below the orange bar are the results of the first questionnaire and the yellow bar shows the results of the second questionnaire which was filled in after the series of lessons.

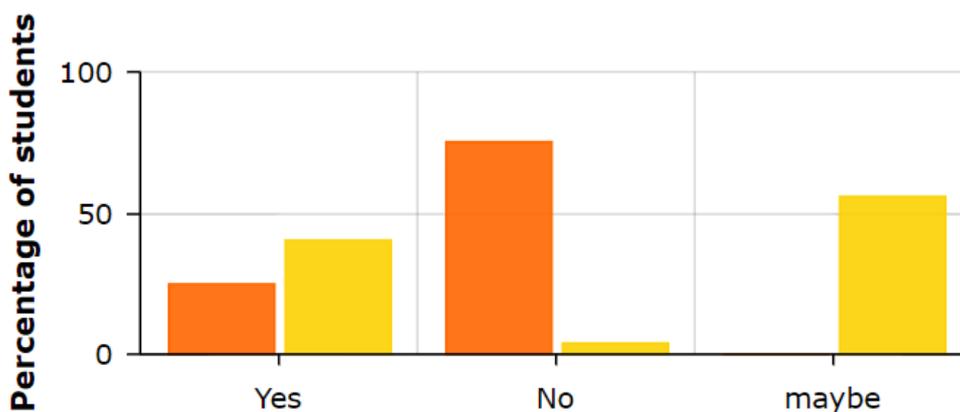
When looking at the students' definition of literature there is a large difference noticeable regarding the mediums. Where there were ten students who said that literature was ‘books’ there was only one student who gave this answer after the lessons. Students who mentioned different mediums in the second questionnaire were almost doubled with respect to the first questionnaire. Ten students emphasised the importance of stories instead of a medium after the lessons. This data seems to suggest that most of the students did regard mediums other than books as literary texts after the lessons.

How would you define literature?:



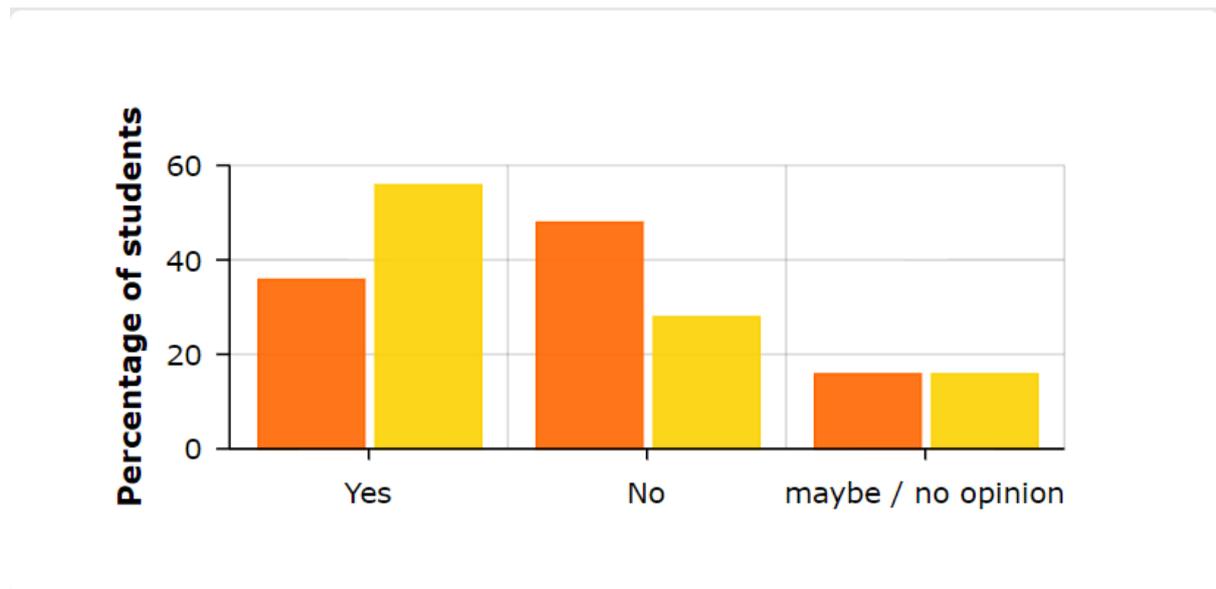
For the question 'In your opinion, could video games be considered as literature?' I made a mistake in which the students had an option to choose 'maybe' in the second questionnaire which there was not in the first questionnaire. Therefore, the results of this question are difficult to compare. It is however noticeable that there were significantly fewer people who answered 'no' to the question after the lessons. It could be that these students had not wanted to answer 'no' but also did not want to answer 'yes' before the lessons. There is however an increase of 15% of students who considered video games as literature. This indicates that there were students whose ideas about video games as literary texts, were changed after the lessons.

In your opinion, could video games be considered as literature?:



The results of the question ‘Should video games be included in literature classes?’ did show that 20% of the students were more willing to accept video games in literature classes. This meant that there were 20% fewer students who said that video games should not be included in literature classes. The percentage of people who said maybe or did not have an opinion stayed the same.

Should video games be included in literature classes?:



Overall the results do show that most of the students’ ideas about what literature is were changed by the lessons. The lessons seemed to have broadened the students' ideas on literature and which forms it can have. At least 40% of the students consider video games to be literature after the lessons and 56% said that video games should be included in literature classes. There were students who do not think that video games should be considered literature and therefore also should not be taught in literature lessons. Many students disliked the videogame and suggested that other games could improve the lessons.

Results of the writing assignments

Because the writing assignments were written after the questionnaires were taken the students' responses to the questionnaire were not influenced by the assignment. The students

were instructed to use the theory that they had learned in class to analyse a video game of their own choosing and write in the conclusion whether they thought that their chosen game was literature.

Almost all of the students were able to correctly use the terms and theory in their essays. The students were able to label characters as protagonists and antagonists and were able to describe the settings. Finding and describing themes seemed to be more difficult. This is not unexpected since literature often can have multiple themes and what is the most important theme may be subjective. The students had the most difficulties with Gustav Freitag's 5 elements of plots. I do not think that most of the games lacked these elements but rather that some of the students did not fully understand what every element entailed. Some students seemed to mistake the conflict, which is set in the exposition stage, for the climax. However, except for a few misunderstandings, the students were able to mostly correctly analyse the plots using Freitag's model.

In the conclusion, students were instructed to write whether they believed their video game is literature. Twenty-six students wrote an essay of which eighteen (69.2%) said that their video game was literature. Two (7.7%) of the students did not say anything about the literariness of their games while six (23.1%) said their game was not literature. However, not one of these students said that video games as a medium are not literature. Most of these students specifically write that video games could be literature but that their chosen game was not. Reasons given by the students for the video games not being literature were that their games did not have a message, were not gripping or emotional enough or had flat and uninteresting characters. One of the students who said their video game was not literature had actually does believe his chosen game was literature, but the term literature had to be redefined. In his conclusion he said; "Let's move on to the final question: Can It Takes Two be regarded as literature? My answer? No. It's quite a tough question, however. The official definition of literature according to the Oxford Dictionary is: "pieces of writing that are valued as works of art, especially novels, plays and poems (in contrast to technical books and newspapers, magazines, etc.)". You can definitely call It Takes Two a piece of art. It brings up emotions and is made with incredible care and attention to detail. It's not a piece of writing though.

But if It Takes Two isn't literature, then what is it, you may ask. Well, to be honest, I don't know. Video games don't really fit in the current definition of literature, a definition which I

think is quite outdated. In our current world, I think our definition of literature should be broadened, so other forms of modern art can also fit in.

So, to conclude, as of now, I wouldn't consider *It Takes Two* as literature. Hopefully I will be able to in the future!"

None of the students who said that their video game was not literature seemed to believe that therefore video games could not be literary texts. Their conclusions seemed to indicate that their answers were restricted to their chosen video games.

Chapter 3: Video games in the classroom

In this chapter, I will discuss the role video games can have in classrooms. Theory about motivation, but also practical challenges will be discussed. My main concern is not to show that video games will increase motivation but to explain why and how video games can be applied in the classroom and their challenges. In this chapter, I will reflect on the case study and its results.

Gamification and Game-based learning

Game-based learning and gamification have become increasingly popular in education and notions such as described in Hyacinth Gaudart's article *Games as Teaching Tools for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* seem to have mostly changed. Gaudart stated:

The task is not always easy, however. The more senior teachers in the school may discourage the younger teachers from trying more innovative techniques. Many still feel that if the learners are laughing and having fun, they could not be learning very much. Others feel that textbooks and workbooks are there to be used. (Gaudart, 1999, p.289)

Gaudart's observation that many teachers feel that fun negates learning seems to have shifted to fun motivates students to learn.

Over the last few decades, video games have gained traction with people worldwide. There are few children who have never played a video game whether it is on a computer or their phones. Children have grown up using technology and are therefore perfectly adapted to using technology. Recently, I asked my second years students to write down who their best friends were and what they did when they got together. All of the twenty-eight students said that they play video games together with their friends. Therefore, it is not inconceivable that humanity's use of and ideas about video games are shifting. Game-based learning and Gamification are terms that are products of this shift. Game-based learning is an educational technique with which games are used in classes. Karl Kapp defines gamification as “using game-based mechanics, aesthetics and game thinking to engage people, motivate action, promote learning, and solve problems.” (Kapp, 2012) These game-based mechanics do not have to be video games. Tasks which have elements of games (rewards, competition, challenges, teammates etc.) are considered gamification. These can include games which you can play without using technology. Gamification and game-based learning are educational approaches and techniques that increase the motivation and engagement of learners.

An important aspect of learning is motivation. The term motivation is widely known and used in education. Many educational techniques aim to increase students' motivation. Edward L. Deci's and Richard M. Ryans' self-determination theory (2000) specifies that especially intrinsic motivation is important for learning. Intrinsic motivation is the motivation that comes from the person who is learning themselves. They may want to truly learn something or even think learning something is fun. Joseph Lowman said about motivation:

Although intrinsic motivation is generally more desirable, it is not sufficient to suggest that college instructors strive to encourage intrinsic satisfactions and discourage extrinsic rewards. Empirical research on these kinds of influences indicates that they are related to each other and to learning in complex ways. For example, it is never the case of whether intrinsic or extrinsic motivation is operating but of how strong each is in a given situation. Some students may be highly impelled to learn for intrinsic reasons but still enjoy the challenge of meeting an external demand by taking an exam or submitting a paper for criticism. Other students may dread beginning a paper, care primarily about the grade they receive, but still find the reading and

writing pleasurable once they begin and become caught up in the creative process. (Lowman, 1990, p.137)

Both, intrinsic and external motivation, is needed to motivate a student to learn.

Motivating students is often given as the reason for using video games in classrooms. However, it is not just motivation that is seen as an advantage of using games in education. In *Play as you learn: gamification as a technique for motivating learners* (2013), Ian Glover, explored some game elements that have positive implications for education. In games, the player's actions are aimed at achieving a certain goal while overcoming obstacles. Similarly, in education, there are learning objectives that you work towards while completing learning activities. In games, the players' progress is tracked because the next steps and moves are based on their results. In education, tracking the students' progress is essential to achieve the learning objectives. Similar to video games a student's learning path is determined by the achieved levels of knowledge and skills. Elements that are intrinsic to video games are also intrinsic to learning.

Ever since using video games in classrooms as an educational tool has become more accepted. There are games which have been specifically made for learning purposes such as ESL games⁴, learn English Kids⁵, Blooket⁶ and Duolingo⁷ These games often focus on the learning of a language as an objective. In these games, the player is challenged to complete tasks with which they come in contact with words, translations, sentence structure and grammar. These types of games can be played in private spheres but can also be used as teaching methods in classes. The focus of educational games being on the development of a second language is often shared in studies.

There are quite a few articles which advocate using video games in the classroom. However, many of these articles focus on how games can help students learn a language. Gaudart stated:

⁴ <https://www.eslgamesplus.com/>

⁵ <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/fun-games>

⁶ <https://www.blooket.com/>

⁷ <https://www.duolingo.com/>

However, objectively, there is one major advantage to using games in language teaching, and that is the opportunity for practice. Teacher-centered classrooms do not allow learners the time necessary for practicing their foreign language structures. Games allow learners to fully use the language that they have learned, participating in the communicative process throughout the game. With practice comes progress, with progress comes motivation, and with motivation comes more learning.” (Gaudart, 1999, p. 290)

It is the use of a second language while playing a game which interests these scholars. Therefore most of these articles are about games through which students can learn words or games that are specifically designed to teach. These games are often not the games students will play in their free time. There is often a clear difference between games designed for learning purposes and games designed for entertainment and commercial purposes. To teach literature video games which are specifically designed for learning purposes often do not lend themselves to literary analysis. The objective of these types of games is to teach a language focussing on vocabulary and grammar. While narrative-based video games are created for the purpose of entertainment. Narrative-based video games have more in common with literature than those created for learning video games do.

What you should consider before choosing games for lessons.

When a teacher wants to make use of video games in literature classes some aspects should be taken into account when choosing a game. Some of these considerations also apply to novels however some are intrinsic to video games. When choosing a game you should consider; platform, duration, cost and genre.

The first thing you will have to consider is that there are different kinds of platforms video games can be played on such as computers, game consoles and even phones. Not every game can be played on every platform. Some developers design their games so that they can only be played on a specific platform. For example, games developed by Nintendo can often only be played on the Nintendo Switch. So if you were to choose one of *The Legend of Zelda* games and would want the students to play the game, every student would have to have access to a Nintendo Switch. Therefore, video games that can be played on multiple

platforms or at least computers are a safer choice. Most, if not all students, have access to computers in the Netherlands.

Many narrative-based video games have been developed over the years. These types of games are in high demand on the market. Established developers such as Ubisoft, Nintendo, Rockstar Games, CD Projekt Red, Guerilla Games have created popular games which contain intricate plots and interesting characters. Video games which have been produced by established developers often have well-developed and thought-provoking narratives and can be used to analyse with students. However, many narrative-based games take multiple hours to complete. The duration of a game has to be taken into account when choosing a video game. Some games such as CD Projekt Red's *The Witcher: 3* take roughly fifty hours to complete the main story. Guerilla Games' *Horizon Zero Dawn* takes about thirty hours to complete. These rather large amounts of hours are quite common for narrative-based games. According to the article *What Happened to Linear Games? And Are They Due a Resurgence?* published on the video game review website gameskinny.com:

Today, a large proportion of video games are large-scale, open-world giants with a huge amount of content and massive time sinks for our limited daily hours. A lot of games releasing can average roughly around 30-40 hours of playtime minimum to witness and complete the majority of their content, and some can frequently eclipse 80-100 hours. While this may seem initially fantastic -- and for many people, it really is -- for others like myself, it's starting to take a real toll on my enjoyment and satisfaction from playing, despite offering exceptional value for the price.⁸

Recently, open-world video games which take more than thirty hours to complete have become widely popular. These games often take so many hours to complete because they often offer subplots in the form of side-quests. These games create well-developed worlds full of backstories (lore), introduce multiple characters and have narratives which follow a thought-out theme. These games have all of the intrinsic elements of literature and are therefore excellent texts to analyse. However, the problem is that these games take too long to play. As a teacher, you cannot ask your students to read a novel which takes over thirty

⁸ <https://www.gameskinny.com/in1ca/what-happened-to-linear-games-and-are-they-due-a-resurgence>

hours to complete. Likewise, a teacher cannot instruct their students to play a video game for those amount of hours. There are still games being developed which have shorter durations and contain the intrinsic elements of literature.

Another option is to look at games developed between 2007 and 2013. The article *What Happened to Linear Games? And Are They Due a Resurgence?* States that:

The years between 2007-2013 saw the linear, roughly 8-12 hour video game reach its established peak. Coming fresh off of the heels of the goliath which was *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare*, the PS3 and Xbox 360 era saw the release of an incredible roster of tight, compact, and relatively short video game experiences.

There are narrative-based games that do not take much longer than reading a novel such as the *Uncharted* games (8 hours), *Ori and the Blind Forrest* (8 hours), *Heavy Rain* (12 hours), *Man of Medan* (5 hours), *A way out* (6 hours) and so forth. When you choose to let your class play a video game the duration of the game must be considered. Similar to when reading a novel students should be given ample time to ‘read’ the text.

Another consideration which should be taken into account is the costs of video games. Many of the games developed by large companies which take over thirty hours to complete cost around sixty euros to purchase. These costs are often considered too high for schools and students. The costs for narrative-based games can range from zero to about sixty euros. Many developers lower the costs of games that have been out on the market for a while. Often video games which take one to six hours to play cost less than twenty euros. An option is to choose one of these types of games.

When choosing a video game it is important to look at the content and genre of games. Similar to novels games have a wide variety of genres and not every text is suitable for a classroom. When discussing a game with a class it is crucial to play the game yourself before teaching it. There are narrative-based games that include violence, murder and foul language. Another aspect to consider is which aspects of literature you want to discuss with your class. For example, I aimed to teach my students about the intrinsic elements of literature and therefore chose a video game which had a plot, theme, characters and setting. When choosing a video game the aspects of literature you want to discuss have to be present in the game.

When choosing a video game a teacher has to consider which games are suitable for their classes similar to when a teacher decides which novel to discuss.

Reflection on the Case study

The objective of the lessons was to broaden the students' perception of literature to include other mediums than books. By making them think about the definition of literature and what makes literature valuable I wanted to activate their critical thinking. The students' ideas of what makes literature valuable did coincide with the theory discussed in chapter 1. The students said that the characters had to be well written, there had to be a moral or lesson and the reader should be able to empathise with the characters. The last two answers relate to Theory of Mind and the Mirrors and Windows theory. The students perceive literature as texts through which they can learn about morals, and thus learn life lessons. These life lessons can relate to how students view the world and other people around them. Also, the ability to empathise and relate to characters was deemed valuable by the students. Students want to increase their Theory of Mind and learn more about themselves and their world (Mirror) by learning more about others (Window) and the world. Because I expected the students to give these answers I could use their own ideas about what is valuable to apply to other examples of mediums than books. During the classes, the responses of the students seemed to indicate to me that some students were more open to accepting other mediums than others. It was especially the students whom I know to be very interested in video games who seemed to be more open. This could be related to motivation but could also be because these students had more experiences with video games which have more complicated narratives and characters than you often see in novels. These arguments are not based on results but are educated guesses.

The students participated very well in class however when given the assignment to play the video game *Emily Is Away* 52% of the students did not play the game. The big consensus of the students was that they disliked the game *Emily Is Away*. The students said that they found it to be boring, and too slow. Some students disliked that there was a lot of text and that you were not able to do a lot. One student even commented that they did not think *Emily Is Away* should be considered a game. I was quite disappointed that so many students disliked the game because I also believe that the dislike influenced the students (changed) perception of

literature. This belief stems from the dissonance between the results of the second questionnaire and the conclusions written in the essays.

As discussed previously, choosing the right game to include in a lesson is difficult and depends on many variables. I was aware that *Emily Is Away* would probably never be the favourite game of my students and it also is not the most perfect example of literature. Even though the game is not the best example of literature it did have many aspects of literature and was appropriate to teach. Other advantages of the game were its availability, that it was costless and its shortness. Because I anticipated that not every student would like the game, I had designed a writing assignment in which they could analyse a video game of their own choosing. Many students have played video games in the past which will probably be more suitable for literary analysis. However, as a teacher, it is impossible to ask students to play a video game which takes over sixty hours to complete. I intended to use the students' knowledge of a game they had previously enjoyed playing as a way to counteract most of the obstacles a teacher encounters when choosing a game. Most of the students seemed to have few problems choosing a game. However, as a teacher, you have to consider that not every student plays and knows video games. As a possible solution to this problem, I added to the assignment that students could use walkthroughs and summaries to learn about a video game. I noticed that the few students who did not often play games were quickly helped by their classmates.

Because some of the students had indicated in the questionnaire that they did not consider video games to be literature I expected there to be more students saying their game was not literature. I noticed that there were students who seemed to have changed their minds on this topic because of the writing assignment. For example, one student wrote:

In short, it's a really good game and I usually don't think games are literature. But this game absolutely is an exception because it's almost like a film with the different themes. And I think literature should be something which teaches you something about life and this game definitely does that.

another student concluded their essay with:

When I heard about literature in video games at first I thought it was more like a joke. But the more you start comparing games to literature, the more similarities you can find. That way I came to my conclusion that the game Call of Duty can certainly be seen as literature. It has a clear storyline and you can find different characteristics of literature in it. So I consider it as literature.

These responses indicate that for some of the students their view on what literature is has broadened by analysing a game using literary theory.

When I will teach these lessons again I would choose to use another video game. Most of the students disliked the game and this could have interfered with the learning objectives of the lessons. While it is difficult to find a video game that meets all of my requirements perhaps in the future solutions can be found. One of the larger problems for me was that the game had to be free of charge since I did not have a budget. In the future schools can assign a small budget to the purchase of games similar to the budgets for novels. There are games which would be more suitable for analysis, and which I believe students would enjoy more, such as *Undertale* which cost less than ten euros. Another option is to play a game in class together with the students however I do believe that this would negate certain elements intrinsic to video games. I would classify, students watching a video game being played more as watching a film rather than playing a game. I believe the development of Theory of Mind is more prominent when students have to make decisions for their characters. Therefore, while playing a video game together in class can be a solution for cutting budget costs I would rather have the students play their own games. The results of the essays in which the students were free to choose any game were very positive. Giving the students autonomy to choose their own games can also be a solution to the difficult problem of choosing a game. Making use of the students' previous experiences with video games can be used to avoid the complications of choosing a suitable game for the students to play.

The observations and results of the lesson series demonstrate that video games can be used in literature lessons similarly to how novels are used. Focussing on literary elements that are present in video games can help students analyse a game they have played. The students' opinions on what literature is seemed to be changed and broadened as a result of the lessons.

Conclusion

This dissertation aimed to demonstrate that video games should be considered literary texts that can be used by teachers in literature classes. Through previously conducted studies and personal experience with video games and literature a hypothesis for the research question ‘How can video games, as a type of literature, be used in the classroom?’ was formulated as follows; My hypothesis is that video games can be used in literature classes similar to how novels and short stories are used in lessons. Students should be able to analyse video games, which are narrative-based, similar to how novels are analysed. To answer the research question literature review and a case study were used. Sub-questions were discussed in order to research how video games can be used as literary texts in classes. The first and most important argument for this research was to prove that narrative-based video games should be considered to be literature. Sub-questions such as ‘What is literature?’, ‘What can literature do?’ and ‘Why do we teach literature?’ were discussed using a literature review.

The question ‘what is literature?’, has been the topic of scholarly discussions for many decades, spanning even centuries. In the first chapter, I included the ideas of Terry Eagleton because these aligned with my own views on literature. Eagleton stated that the definition of literature is difficult to determine since every scholar and every reader has different interpretations. I tend to agree that which texts should be called literature is subjective. Eagleton states that plot, theme, characters and setting are intrinsic elements of literature. In the first chapter, these elements and their connection to literature were explored.

However, a text has to also be engaging and valuable on a societal and psychological level. In answering the sub-questions ‘what can literature do?’ and ‘why do we teach literature?’ literature’s ability to enhance a person on psychological levels was explored. Literature has shown to be able to be used to increase people’s understanding of themselves and the world. The Mirrors and Windows theory says that literature can function as a reflection of one’s society or self (mirror) but also as a window through which you learn about others and other cultures. Learning from literature is not only restricted to the Mirrors and Windows theory. Reading and analysing literature can develop a person’s Theory of Mind. Humans use Theory of Mind to interpret situations, discussions and act accordingly. For students, it is important to develop Theory of Mind and learn more about others and the world.

In the case study, I used theories and views discussed in the first chapter to create a lesson series. The observations and results of the lesson series demonstrate that video games can be used in literature lessons similarly to how novels are used. Focussing on literary elements that are present in video games can help students analyse a game they have played. The students' opinions on what literature is seemed to be changed and broadened as a result of the lessons.

Even though I was disappointed by the students' dislike of the game I do believe the objectives of the case study were achieved. In the introduction, I stated that:

I would consider the lesson to be successful when the students' views on what literature is are not restricted to 'boring books that they have to read for school'. If students showed that their views on literature have broadened to include other mediums and intrinsic elements of literature they will show that they have accepted that some video games can be literature.

Through analysing the results of the questionnaires and especially the writing assignment I have come to the conclusion that the lessons were successful in that students have broadened their ideas on what literature is. The results of the first questionnaire showed that most students defined literature as books. Some had added that these texts had to be valuable in a way. Two students even said that literature is boring. The results of the second questionnaire indicated that the students' views on literature had changed. There was an increase of students who used the term 'stories' or the 'telling of stories' instead of mentioning books. Students who mentioned different mediums in the second questionnaire were almost doubled concerning the first questionnaire. Ten students emphasised the importance of stories instead of a medium after the lessons. This data seems to suggest that most of the students did regard mediums other than books as literary texts after the lessons.

The results of the writing assignments validated these conclusions. Almost all of the students said that the video game they analysed was literature. Of the students who did not regard their games as literature, no one said that video games could not be literary texts. Their conclusions indicated that the opinion of the non-literariness of the games was restricted to their chosen video games. In my opinion, it was a combination of the lessons and the writing assignment which changed the students' views on literature. However, I do believe that the

writing assignment was particularly important for this case study. Giving the students autonomy to choose their own games helped motivate (self-determination theory) and was a solution to the difficult problem of choosing a game. Making use of the students' previous experiences with video games is important when teaching this subject.

The structure of the lessons and the learning activities that were used seemed to be enjoyed by the students. In the questionnaire, a few students specifically mentioned that they enjoyed working in groups. Other than the enjoyment of the students I also believe that the activities were effective. Students could form their ideas using a sounding board by working with others. The jigsaw technique was also able to let the students who had not played the game participate. Considering that 52% of the students had not played the game the Jigsaw was a good technique to use. By discussing the questions on the work forms the students could learn from each other.

In the last chapter, I wanted to discuss how and why video games are used in classrooms. In the third chapter, I reflected on the case study and what teachers should consider before choosing a video game. For choosing a video game I encountered several obstacles that had to be overcome. The most difficult obstacles were that many narrative-based video games are too expensive and take too long to play. Finding the right game to use can be complicated but is not impossible. There are many online lists of games you can consult. Google searches such as 'free or inexpensive narrative-based games' or 'short narrative-based games' can be extremely helpful while deciding on a game. I have also learned that students know a lot about video games and there is no shame in asking them for advice once in a while.

Game-based learning and gamification are said to increase student motivation. Motivation is important in education since it is needed for students to actively pay attention and thus learn. Because most of the students disliked *Emily Is Away* I believe the students were not motivated to play the game and therefore were less likely to participate and truly ponder what literature is.

With this dissertation, I aimed to demonstrate the literariness of video games and how to effectively use them as such in lessons. For teachers who would like to discuss video games, I recommend that you take the time to properly design the lessons and chose a game. To design these lessons the learning objectives have to be clear. I wanted the students to learn terms

relating to literature and be able to apply them to a video game. Another objective was to broaden the students' views on literature. However, you can also choose to focus more on developing students' Theory of Mind or broadening their worldview using the Mirrors and Windows theory. In the discussions topics such as actions and their consequences and character development and analysis would be appropriate to discuss. Just as with literature classes on novels and short stories the texts have to suit the learning objectives and learning activities.

Something I would recommend is to have an assignment or activity in which students have the autonomy to discuss a game of their choice. Most students have experience and perhaps more knowledge of video games than most teachers do. I advocate for using a student's knowledge. Not only is it a way to circumvent some of the obstacles of choosing a video game, such as cost and duration, but it will also most probably motivate students. Letting students combine new knowledge with prior knowledge can give the students a feeling of competence (self-determination theory).

Even though finding a suitable video game for the lessons might be difficult I do think that practising something together with the students before letting them analyse a text by themselves can be helpful. By practising together a teacher can detect misconceptions the students might have.

As appendices, I have included all the materials used in the case study. With a few alterations, needed to match the video game which is played by the students, these materials could be used to teach a class on analysing video games using literary theory.

This research is rather limited since it was conducted in just one class. Therefore, the results cannot be considered to be a representation of how all students will react. Even, among the small number of participants, there were some conflicting thoughts on the literariness of video games. If this subject were to be further researched the scale on which it was done should be increased. The results of one case study are difficult to apply to a broader population. Another, suggestion for further research is to use a game which resonates better with students than *Emily Is Away* did. The students' dislike of the game influenced their willingness to play the game and could also have prevented some of the students to change their ideas about literature. Other aspects of literature which we have touched on in this dissertation could be studied more in-depth. In the lessons, the students and I had little time to

discuss the actions and their consequences which were presented in the game. These topics are useful to discuss when you want to develop the students' Theory of Mind.

Comparable to using movies, television or novels in the classroom, video games can be used to teach literature. Cultural and intellectual interests from outside the normal classroom can and should be included in education. The connection between teacher and student changes to one of symbiotic cooperation as video games are adopted as a new form of literary texts. Students can learn about the wondrous world of literature from teachers while teachers can learn from the experiences of students. This way, literature can come to life in classrooms. It is due time to take our students' literary experiences and move them from their phones and screens at home to the classroom. By doing this, we will increase the educational value for the student, the teacher, and our institutions as a whole.

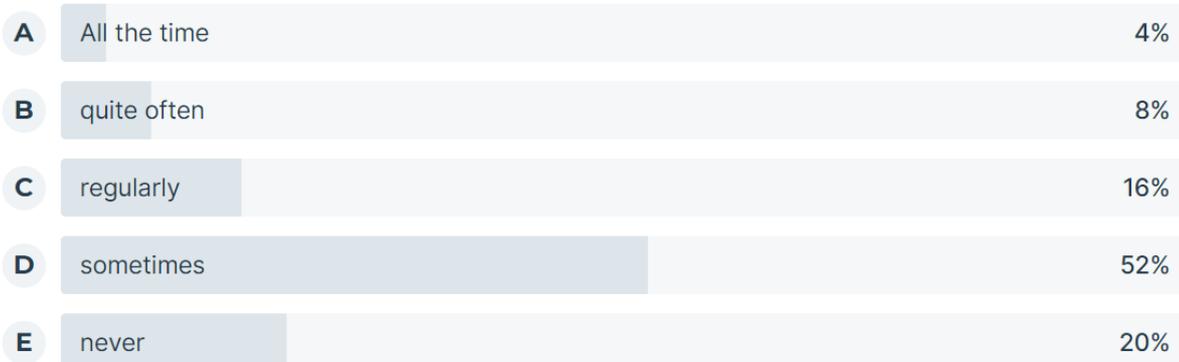
Appendices

Questionnaires

1. How often do you read books?

Hide Results

24/24 Students Answered



2. How would you define literature?

Hide Answers

Show Names

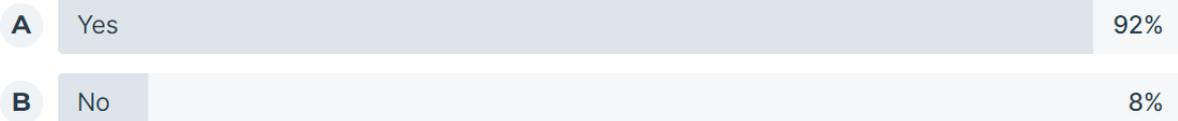
24/24 Students Answered

boeken, kunst
boeken met historische waarde
Uhm... that is quite a hard question Maybe something like books that are iconic and classic for the culture and are good. The ones you have to read for English
Boeken, die belangrijke en mooie verhalen vertellen.
boeken en films
Algemene aanduiding voor alle mondeling (orale literatuur) of schriftelijk overgeleverde teksten die men op uiteenlopende gronden van andere teksten onderscheidt vanwege hun veronderstelde specifieke, meestal kunstzinnige karakter.
het lezen van teksten. En alles wat daarmee te maken heeft.
leerzaam maar saai omdat het lang duurd
goede boeken die je kennis, cultuurkennis en taalkennis verbeteren.
goede boeken met een duidelijke betekenis die je kennis vergroten/verbeteren
leerzaam maar het is saai omdat het voor school moet.
We'll written books? idk
Als boeken zoals romans
The art of writing and reading
het is een vorm van verrijking van verbeelding en kennis
books
boeken, films, muziek die iets zeggen over het leven
Boeken die een goede betekenis hebben of die over belangrijke dingen in het leven gaan
reading
reading
as stories told in different ways, like film or books
Literature is art in the form of words
reading
reading

3. In your opinion, are Young Adult novels literature?

Hide Results

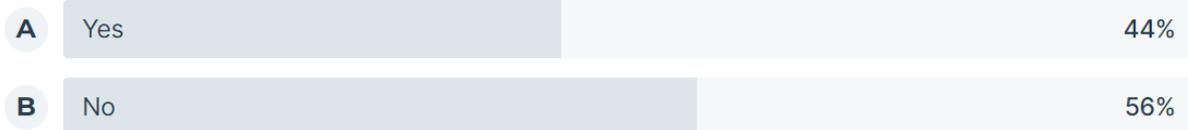
24/24 Students Answered



4. In your opinion, are comic books literature?

Hide Results

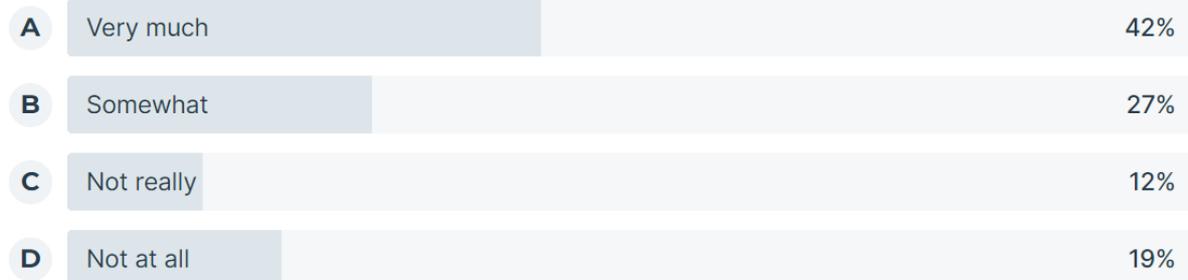
24/24 Students Answered



5. Do you like to play videogames?

Hide Results

24/24 Students Answered



6. Which kind of videogames do you play?

Hide Answers

Show Names

24/24 Students Answered

-
/
sometimes with my brother minecraft and i want to play genshin impact and on my phone i also sometimes play games
Mario Kart with friends
mario kart
multiplayer
Most first person shooters.
shooters
spelletjes op je telefoon die je kan spelen zonder wifi wanneer mn 4G op is
ik speel geen videogames
none :)
Nintendo exclusives and indie
Fifa, Rainbow six siege
survival games
fifa
fps adventure racing
formule 1 forza horizon fortnite
mobile supercell games, multiplayer games on the playstation, story games, like spiderman, or sandboxgames such as planetcoaster
Fifa, Forza or Fortnite
fortnite
hay day
fortnite
hayday :)
primarily racing games

7. In your opinion, are videogames literature?

Hide Results

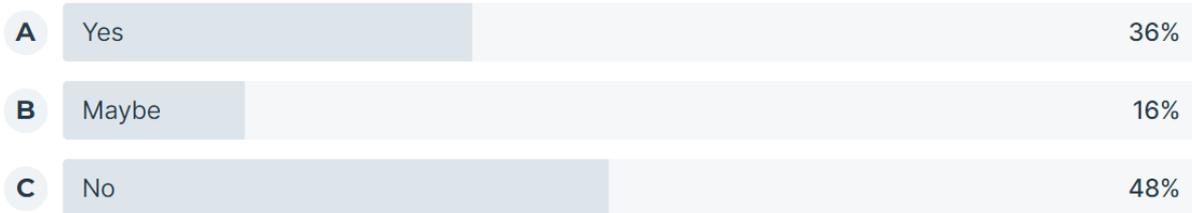
24/24 Students Answered

A	Yes	25%
B	No	75%

8. Should videogames be included in literature classes?

Hide Results

24/24 Students Answered



Questionnaire 2: Exit ticket

1. How would you define literature?

Hide Answers

Show Names

25/26 Students Answered

I would define literature as things that are art. something that triggers your emotion and makes you think about. You can discuss in which ways this phenomenon can occur: mostly through books and poetry, but in some ways also films and maybe videogames

het is een het vertellen van een verhaal

A piece of art in written form

een boek of een film waarin je iets leert over het leven of nieuwe interesses krijgt

Literatuur, ook letterkunde, schone letteren of kortweg letteren, is de verzamelde schriftelijke neerslag van een land of van een periode, voor zover het geschriften betreft die hun waarde ontleen aan veronderstelde vormschoonheid of emotioneel effect.

wanneer het emoties opwekt en je triggert

works with value

Written art, something with a story and a moral, doesn't have to be a book.

something that is based on something that is written(like a script

Algemene aanduiding voor alle mondeling of schriftelijk overgeleverde teksten die men op uiteenlopende gronden van andere teksten onderscheidt vanwege hun veronderstelde specifieke, meestal kunstzinnige karakter.

kunst in de vorm van boeken, toneel en films. het verteld een verhaal en is goed opgezet

het is een verhaal met een plot, karakters en emotie

het is een verhaal met emotie en

Boeken, films en alles waar je een wijze les uit kan trekken of iets met emoties

als het je aan t denken zet. kan boeken zijn maar ook games en films

stories that are good written

boeken, films, kunst, games

boeken, films, etc

the art of writing and storytelling

als een verhaal die op een manier wordt overgebracht

boeken, films, games, kunst

books

boeken, films, games

reading

lezen

2. Has your opinion about what literature is changed, and why?

Hide Answers

Show Names

25/26 Students Answered

Yeah, I think a little bit. It was quite a vague (vaag idk) subject and I think I now know a better definition for it and it isn't just books and writing.
No not really, I still think that everything that has a story and can effect you emotionally is literature.
not really to be honest. I get the idea of video games being literature, but i still feel like video games aren't really literature
nee niet echt ik denk dat het gewoon het zelfde is
nee omdat ik dat nogsteeds vindt
Yes, I now know literature can be much more than only books. It can also be a video game or movie.
nee want ik denk er het zelfde over ik vind ganes echt geen literatuur behalve als het bv over de tweede wereld oorlog gaat en het verhaal verteld en niet dat je moet schieten
yes, it can be more than books
yes it has become larger because I feel like a lot of things are able to go onder the name of literature
niet echt
niet echt. Wist het nooit zeker of wat ik dacht een beetje klopte. Nu is het heel duidelijk wat literatuur is.
Ik ben breder gaan kijken naar literatuur. Ik heb gezien dat het moeilijk is om te bepalen wat nou echt literatuur is en wat niet
games, kunnen ook onder literatuur vallen, daar dacht ik eerst niet aan
No
no, i was not in the lesson
Nee ik dacht al dat het zo iets was.
nee, zelfde
no maybe a little bit
yes it's more than books it's also movies and games
wel, eerst dacht ik geen games
nee
ja, games zijn ook literatuur
niet echt
not really
nee

3. Have you played the game *Emily Is Away*?

Hide Results

25/26 Students Answered

A	Yes	28%
B	Partially	20%
C	No	52%

4. Why didn't you play the game? (leave blank if you played it)

Hide Answers

Show Names

25/26 Students Answered

I watched a playthrough on youtube, but it was quite late and i didn't have enough time to play it myself. I think the most people had other things to do and then this wasn't so important.

Because it was to much time, and the must important part it wasn't fun

I forgot about it because I was very busy with other school stuff and a part of my weekend was also dedicated to watching the songfestival :)

omdat ik, en dit klinkt heel stom, hier geen tijd voor heb gehad. we hebben een po in moeten leveren, SE. en we hadden meerdere toetsen die eraan kwamen. verder heb ik nog werk en sport en verjaardagen. mijn week zat vol. en als je dan gaat kijken naar prioriteiten stond dit voor mij niet bovenaan.

-

-

-

-

gespeeld

-

ik had heel veel toetsen en verslagen om die week in te leveren

I had wikipedia, and it wasnt a game it was a animated comic

Ik had geen tijd ervoor. En ik vind gamen niet leuk

-

-

Blank

omdat steam het niet doet

omdat het downloaden niet lukte

het lukte niet, hij wilde niet downloeden

omdat ik veen tijd had

idk

omdat ik er geen tijd voor had

because I didn't have time for it

lukte niet met downloaden

blank

5. Did you enjoy playing the game?

Hide Results

25/26 Students Answered

A	Very much	0%
B	Somewhat	24%
C	Not really	20%
D	Not at all	20%
E	I didn't play it	36%

6. What did you like / dislike about the game?

Hide Answers

Show Names

25/26 Students Answered

I thought it was funny and also that you played it for english. It was somewhat a bit old and you didn't really play. But it has also a deeper meaning behind the game and that's cool

I haven't played it, but I liked that your decisions can influence the outcome of the game.

I disliked the fact that it was all text and that the ending was a bit of an anti-climax I liked that you could choose your responses though

I like the story, dislike the holl game how it is set up.

ik heb het niet gespeeld

omdat het een andere kijk geeft op een gebeurtenis

het was best wel saai

it was to slow and the ending was kind of boring

it's was to slow and the ending was kind of a shame

i liked the story line, but i didnt have much time so i had to do it really fast so i didnt completely understand everything

het was leuk dat je gewoon een gesprek kon voeren maar uiteindelijk wel een beetje lang

it was kind of boring

ik heb de game niet gespeeld

Dat je steeds andere dingen kreeg

ik ben het niet gespeeld

Het maakte niet uit wat voor keuzes je maakte want je krijgt altijd hetzelfde einde.

-

het is een saaie game en je doet niks einde blijft het zelfde en ouderwets voor een game.

i didnt play

?

t was best wel saai en er zat voor mijn gevoel echt geen moraal of hoofdpersoon in

-

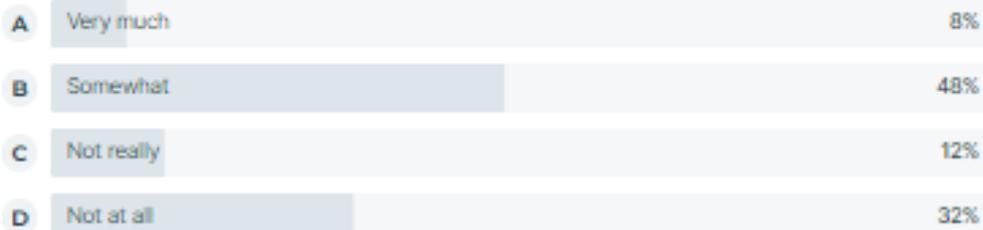
x

/

7. Did *Emily Is Away* help you understand the literary theory better?

Hide Results

25/26 Students Answered



8. Did looking at *Emily Is Away* as a work of literature help you understand how literature can take multiple forms?

Hide Results

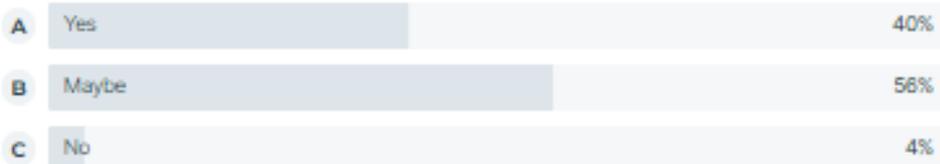
25/26 Students Answered



9. In your opinion, could videogames be considered as literature?

Hide Results

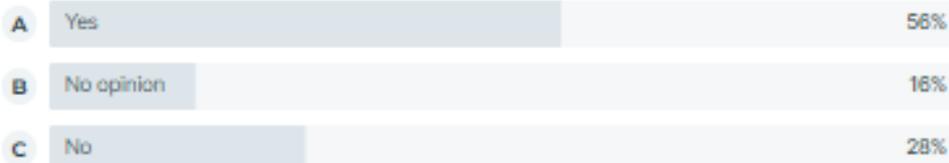
25/26 Students Answered



10. Should videogames be included in literature classes?

Hide Results

25/26 Students Answered



11. Would you like to see more video games in literature lessons?

Hide Results

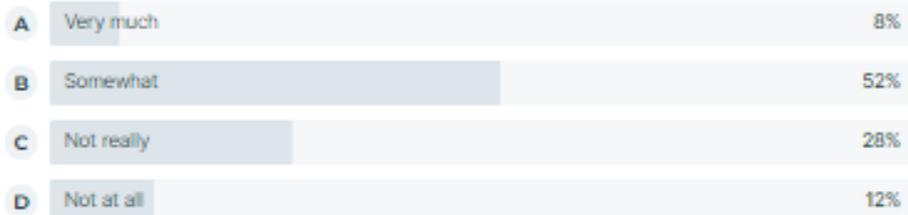
25/26 Students Answered



12. Did you enjoy the lessons?

Hide Results

25/26 Students Answered



13. Do you have any remarks or tips and tops for the lesson?

Hide Answers

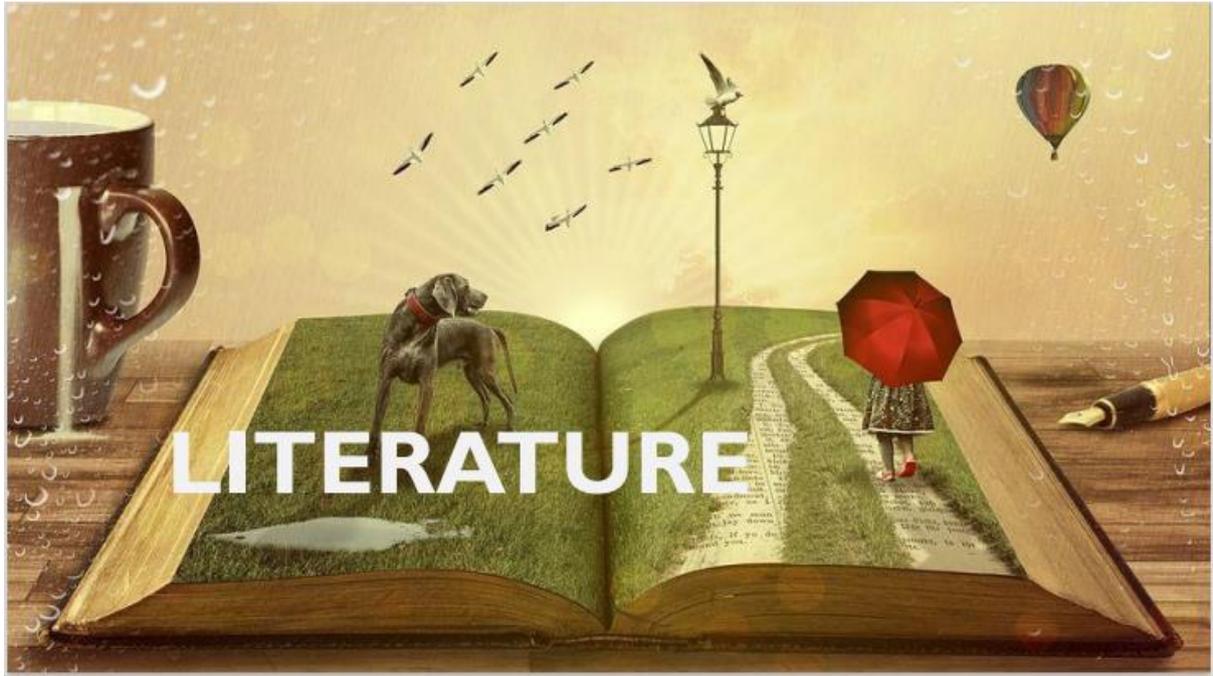
Show Names

25/26 Students Answered

-
Volgende keer een iets moderner spel, zodat de leerlingen sneller geneigd zijn het spel te spelen. En het spel was een beetje saai
Nope
no, i didnt attend the first lesson where literature was explained so i dont know any tips, but i liked when we worked in groups about emily is away
No i don't have any.
no
leuk om in groepjes te bespreken, maar het zou leuker zijn als je zelf de groepjes mag vormen gedurende de hele les
een les over videogames is zeker niet slecht. Ik denk juist leuk voor de mensen die het graag doen. Maar ik vind meerdere lessen wel te veel. Volgens mij vonden best veel mensen het wel een beetje saai. Maar wel een top dat we het er wel over hebben gehad.
nee
Een leuker spel uitkiezen of mensen zelf een spel laten kiezen, want anders zullen mensen het niet interessant vinden en niet hun best doen.
top is een leuk idee
leuk om in groepjes te bespreken
nee
een iets interessantere game maar voor de rest was het best wel goed
het duurt best lang om de game thuis te downloaden en dan ook nog te spelen. ik heb liever andere soort lessen. het bespreken in groepjes was wel leuk.
no

-
.
misschien in de les het spel spelen ipv van erbuiten. volgens mij hadden maar een aantal mensen het gespeeld
no
misschien een ander soort spel kiezen dat mensen leuker zouden vinden?
no
leuk idee, uitvoering iets minder
ander spel

Powerpoint lesson 1



SOCRATIVE

- Go to Google type in: socrative
- Student login
- Room name: 4VBE



WHAT IS LITERATURE?

Oxford Dictionary:

pieces of writing that are valued as works of art, especially novels, plays and poems (in contrast to technical books and newspapers, magazines, etc.)

What is confusing, unclear or difficult about this statement?

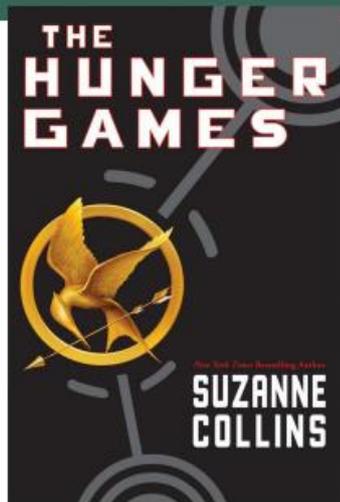
- Think about it, then discuss in pairs for **two** minutes. Then share with the class.
- What makes a text valuable?

WHAT MAKES A STORY VALUABLE?

- Think, Pair, Share. 3 min.
- Goede personages
- Emoties
- Inleven
- moraal
- It has a message.
- It makes you think.
- It triggers emotions.

BOOKS

FILMS



Persepolis
Marjane
Satrap

Autobiography:
Iran after the
Islamic revolution
of the 70s.



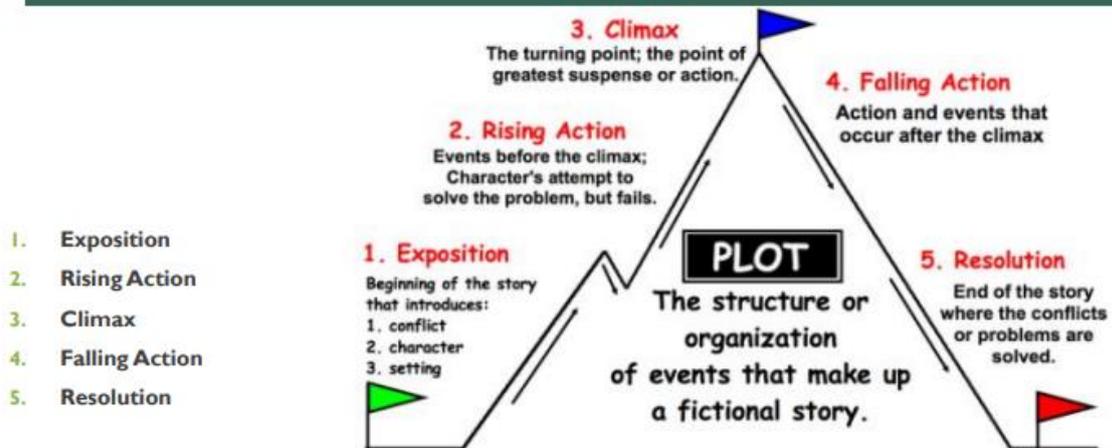


THE FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENTS OF LITERATURE?

Stories often have these fundamental components:

Plot, Theme, Characters and Setting (Time and Place).

PLOT



PLOT

1. **Exposition:** Italian plumber in a world full of green pipes.
Conflict: A Princess is stolen by a big monster.
2. **Rising Action:** Plumber tries to save her but there are many obstacles in the way.
3. **Climax:** Plumber fights the kidnapper and wins.
4. **Falling Action:** The plumber walks to the princess and she thanks him for saving her.
5. **Resolution:** The Princess is saved.

THEME

- A literary theme is **the main idea or underlying meaning of a story**. Themes are conveyed via plot, characters and other story elements such as setting. They can often convey a message for the 'reader'.



CHARACTERS

- **Protagonist**

Main character who is most closely followed by the audience.

Makes key decisions that affect the plot and is often opposed by the antagonist.

- **Antagonist**

The antagonist will provide obstacles and complications and create conflicts that test the protagonist.

Often the protagonist is the Hero, and the Antagonist is the villain.

CHARACTERS

- **Minor character**

A **minor character** does not change the plot and isn't seen much in the story.

- **Supporting character**

A **supporting character** is more important for the plot or protagonist and appears or is mentioned in the story enough to be more than just a minor character.

CHARACTERS

- Mario, Bowser, Princess Peach.

- Protagonist (Hero): Mario
- Antagonist: Bowser
- Supporting character or minor character: Princess Peach



SETTING (TIME & PLACE)

A **setting** is the time and location within a narrative.

The setting is often described at the beginning of a story.

Setting can also include the societal context of the story world.

Elements of setting may include **culture, historical period, geography.**

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

FALLOUT 4
POST APOCALYPTIC

GAME IS SET IN THE YEAR
2287, IN AMERICA.
210 YEARS AFTER 'THE

A WAR BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES AND
CHINA OVER NATURAL
RESOURCES THAT
ENDED IN A NUCLEAR
HOLOCAUST IN 2077.



SPEEL EMILY IS AWAY

- Installeer **STEAM**
- Zoek: **Emily is Away**
- Instaleer het spel
- Speel het spel vóór **donderdag 19 Mei**.

Tijdens het spelen let op de besproken theorie:

Characters: protagonist, antagonist, minor & supporting characters.

Theme: What is the story about?

Narrative: plot, which events further the plot?

Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution

Setting: Where & when, is this important for the story?



Powerpoint Lesson 2



WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT LAST LESSON?

Plot

- Exposition
- Rising action
- Climax
- Falling action
- Resolution

- Theme

Characters

- protagonist
- antagonist
- minor- & supporting characters

Setting

- Time
- Place

EXPERT GROUPS: ROUND 1

6 groups of 4

2 groups (**A & B**) will look at the **characters**

2 groups (**C & D**) will look at the **plot & theme**

2 groups (**E & F**) will look at **setting**

You have 10 minutes.

EXPERT GROUPS: ROUND 2

Form new groups & share the information you discussed with your expert group.

Each group should include 1 person of groups **ACEBDF**.

You have 10 minutes.

After the 10 minutes we will discuss in class what you discovered. Everyone can be asked about any topic.

WHAT DID YOU DISCUSS?

What did you notice while discussing *Emily Is Away*?

Who were the characters, and what was their role in the story?

What was the plot, and how was it constructed?

What was the theme and how did you see it?

When and where did it take place and how did it influence the plot and characters?

Did you enjoy playing the game?

SOCRATIVE

- Go to Google type in: socrative
- Student login
- Room name: 4VBE



WRITING ASSIGNMENT: ESSAY

Writing Assignment

Write an essay in English on a videogame of your choosing. Analyse a video game, using the theory from class; **characters (protagonist, antagonist, minor- or supporting character), plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution), theme and setting (time and place)**. Your essay should be **300 - 500 words**. Make sure to write an **introduction, the main body and a conclusion**. Based on the theory, explain in the conclusion if your chosen videogame should be considered literature.

If you do not play video games and do not know what to choose you can also choose to watch a playthrough or read gameplays on the internet.

Your essay is due on **Friday 3th June**. You will get a grade for this assignment.

WRITING TIPS

- ☐ choose a video game which has a plot
- ☐ choose something you like!
- ☐ Have a good title which is fun but informative.
- ☐ Write an introduction:
 - ☐ Start with a catchy opening to awaken the readers interest.
 - ☐ in the introduction clearly say what your video game is about.
- ☐ Main body:
 - ☐ here you analyse the videogame using the theory. Try to include everything you learned and link it to one another. For example: What do the characters do which is important for the plot. Is the setting important for the plot or characters?
- ☐ Conclusion:
 - ☐ conclude your findings.
 - ☐ Do you think your videogame should be considered as literature. Give arguments.

Workforms for Jigsaw

Werkblad: Characters.

1. Describe in your own words what a protagonist is.

2. Is there a protagonist in *Emily Is Away*, and who is it? Explain why.

3. Describe in your own words what an antagonist is.

4. Is there an antagonist in *Emily Is Away*, and who is it? Explain why.

5. Describe in your own words what minor characters and supporting characters are. Explain the difference.

6. Are there minor- or supporting characters in *Emily Is Away*?

7. How do the minor characters influence the plot?

8. How does the player influence the plot?

9. How does Emily influence the plot?

Werkblad: Plot.

1. What happens during the 5 stages of a plot? (Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution)

2. Is there an Exposition stage, and what happens there?

3. Is there a Rising Action stage, and what happens there?

4. Is there a Climax stage, and what happens there?

5. Is there a Falling Action stage, and what happens there?

6. Is there a Resolution stage, and what happens there?

7. What important events influence the plot?

8. What is the theme of *Emily Is Away* and how can you see the theme in the story?

9. Do the actions of the characters influence the plot? Give examples.

Werkblad: Setting.

1. When does the story take place?

2. Where does the story take place?

3. Are there events the 'reader' does not encounter directly, what happens in these moments?

4. How is the reader made aware of these events?

5. How does the setting influence the characters?

6. How does the setting influence the plot?

7. How does the setting influence the theme?

8. How did the players decisions to go to certain places influence the game?

9. What role did the passing of time have for the plot?

Writing Assignment

Write an essay in English on a video game of your choosing. Analyse a video game, using the theory from class; **characters (protagonist, antagonist, minor- or supporting character), plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution), theme and setting (time and place)**. Your essay should be **300 - 500 words**. Make sure to write an **introduction, the main body and a conclusion**. Based on the theory, explain in the conclusion if your chosen videogame should be considered literature.

If you do not play video games and do not know what to choose you can also choose to watch a playthrough or read gameplays on the internet.

Your essay is due on **Friday 3th June**. You will get a grade for this assignment.

Your grade will be based on:

Toetsmatrijs

Leerdoelen	Toetstermen	beoordelen (%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can define the terms plot, theme, characters, time and place relating to literature. Students can recognise plot, theme, characters, time and place in literature. 	Students can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify a protagonist, antagonist & minor- & supporting characters in a videogame. (8%) Identify the stages (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution) in a videogame. (8%) describe the setting. (8%) describe the theme and give arguments for it. (4%) 	28 % 7 punten
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can formulate arguments regarding the discussion of what literature is using theory. 	Students can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> give arguments for whether they think their chosen videogame is literature, using the theory. (4%) Students analyse a text using arguments. (12%) 	16 % 4 punten
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can analyse a 	Students can:	

videogame as a literary text in an essay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introduce their subject, write a correct main body which fits their level, write a good conclusion. (8%) - give the essay a good structure, which adheres to the assignment. (12%) - formulate good sentences & use appropriate vocabulair.. (16%) - use grammar correctly. (12%) - use spelling correctly. (8%) 	<p>56 %</p> <p>14 punten</p>
---	--	------------------------------

Beoordelingsformulier

Verhaalanalyse: characters

0 punten De geschreven tekst bevat geen analyse van de characters.

1 punt De geschreven tekst bevat geen of foutief gebruik van de theoretische termen over characters.

2 punten De geschreven tekst bevat enkele theoretische termen over characters die goed gebruikt worden.

3 punten De geschreven tekst bevat alle theoretische termen over characters die goed gebruikt worden. De leerling gebruikt argumenten om hun analyse te onderbouwen.

Verhaalanalyse: plot

0 punten De geschreven tekst bevat geen analyse van het plot.

1 punt De geschreven tekst bevat geen of foutief gebruik van de theoretische termen over plot.

2 punten De geschreven tekst bevat enkele theoretische termen over plot die goed gebruikt worden.

3 punten De geschreven tekst bevat alle theoretische termen over plot die goed gebruikt worden. De leerling gebruikt argumenten om hun analyse te onderbouwen.

Verhaalanalyse: Thema

0 punten De geschreven tekst bevat geen thema.

1 punt De geschreven tekst bevat een thema of is niet/slecht onderbouwd.

2 punten De geschreven tekst bevat een thema en die is onderbouwd.

Verhaalanalyse: Setting

0 punt De geschreven tekst bevat geen beschrijving van de setting.

1 punt De geschreven tekst bevat een minimale beschrijving van de setting. (plaats/tijd)

2 punten De geschreven tekst bevat uitgebreidere beschrijving van de setting. (voorbeelden)

3 punten De geschreven tekst bevat een beschrijving van de setting en het belang hiervan is gekoppeld aan plot, characters of thema.

Opbouw

0 punten De geschreven tekst mist een inleiding / main body / conclusie.

1 punt De geschreven tekst is voorzien van een inleiding, main body & conclusie.

2 punten De geschreven tekst is voorzien van een inleiding, main body & conclusie. Deze zijn uitzonderlijk goed geschreven en bevatten argumenten gebaseerd op de theorie.

Specifiek: De geschreven tekst bevat een introductie waarin het onderwerp wordt geïntroduceerd. Deze introductie is uitzonderlijk goed geschreven met een pakkende opening.

De geschreven tekst bevat een introductie waarin het onderwerp wordt geanalyseerd. Deze main body is uitzonderlijk goed geschreven met goede onderbouwing.

De geschreven tekst bevat een conclusie waarin de leerling verteld of ze hun gekozen videogame als literatuur zouden classificeren. Deze conclusie is uitzonderlijk goed geschreven met en bevat argumenten gebaseerd op de theorie.

Adequaatheid/begrijpelijkheid

0 punten De geschreven tekst is niet herkenbaar als uitwerking van de opdracht.

1 punt De geschreven tekst is slechts met zeer veel moeite herkenbaar als uitwerking van de opdracht. 2 punten De geschreven tekst is acceptabel en herkenbaar als uitwerking van de opdracht.

3 punten De geschreven tekst is volledig adequaat en is een uitstekende uitwerking van de opdracht.

Wanneer de leerling hier een 0 scoort kunnen er verder geen punten meer voor gegeven worden.

Specifiek: De leerling heeft een introductie, main body en conclusie geschreven. Waarin een video game wordt geanalyseerd.

Grammaticale correctheid

1 punten De geschreven tekst bevat veel grammaticale fouten.

2 punten De geschreven tekst bevat enkele grammaticale fouten.

3 punten De geschreven tekst bevat nauwelijks of geen grammaticale fouten.

Spelling

1 punten De geschreven tekst bevat veel spelfouten.

2 punten De geschreven tekst bevat nauwelijks of geen spelfouten.

Samenhang

1 punt Er is nauwelijks of geen samenhang/verband in de tekst te herkennen en/of er zijn nauwelijks signaal- en/of verbindingswoorden gebruikt om die samenhang te bewerkstelligen en/of het gebruik is inadequaat.

2 punt Er is een duidelijk(e) samenhang/verband in de tekst te herkennen en/of er zijn op adequate wijze signaal- en/of verbindingswoorden gebruikt om die samenhang te bewerkstelligen.

Woordgebruik

1 punt Het woordgebruik is niet adequaat/sluit niet aan bij het onderwerp van de opdracht.

2 punten Het woordgebruik is adequaat/sluit goed aan bij het onderwerp van de opdracht.

Cesuur:

De leerling kan in totaal 25 punten behalen. Voor de normering wordt gebruik gemaakt van een lineaire normering waarbij $\frac{2}{3}$ van de punten behaald moeten worden voor een 5,5. Deze cesuur is vastgesteld door de sectie.

Works cited

- Aarseth, E.J. (1997). *Cybertexts: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. London: John Hopkins University Press.
- Angenot, M. & Barsky, R.F. (2004). What Can Literature Do? From Literary Sociocriticism to a Critique of Social Discourse. *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 17(2), 217-231.
- Aronson, E. (1978). *The Jigsaw Classroom*. SAGE Publications.
- Beach, R., Appleman, D., Fecho, B., & Simon, R. (2016). *Teaching Literature to Adolescents*. (3 ed.) . New York: Routledge.
- Berger, R., McDougall, J. (2013). Reading videogame as (authorless) literature. *Literacy*, 47, 142-149.
- Biesta, G. (2003). Learning from Levinas. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 22, 61–8.
- Bishop, R. (1990). Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*. 6(3), Ohio State University.
- Brinker, M. (1995). Theme and Interpretation. In Bremond, C., Landy, J. & Pavel, T. (Eds.) *Thematics: New Approaches*, 33- 44. SUNY Press.
- Caponetto, I., Earp, J. & Ott, M. (2014). Gamification and Education: A Literature Review. In *ECGBL2014-8th European Conference on Games Based Learning: ECGBL2014*. Ed. Carsten Busch. Academic Conferences and Publishing International. 50-57.
- Carnine, Douglas W. & Silbert, Jerry & Kame'enui, Edward & Tarver, Sara. (2010). *Direct Instruction Reading*, (5th Ed.).
- Chi, M. T., Wylie, R. (2014). The ICAP framework: Linking cognitive engagement to active learning outcomes. *Educational Psychologist*, 49(4), 219–243.
- Cope, Bill and Mary Kalantzis. (2009). 'Multiliteracies': New Literacies, New Learning. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 4, 164-195.
- Eagleton, Terry. (1996). *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Minneapolis, The University of Minnesota Press.
- Freytag, Gustav. (1863). *Freytag's Technique of the Drama: An Exposition of Dramatic Composition and Art*. Scott, Foresman. Princeton University.
- Gaudart, H. (1999). Games as Teaching Tools for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. *Simulation & Gaming*, 30(3), 283–291.

- Gill, R. (1995). *Mastering English Literature*. New York: Palgrave.
- Glover, I. (2013). Play as you learn: gamification as a technique for motivating learners. *World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia and Telecommunications*. AACE.
- Goffman, E. (1990). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: Penguin Books.
- Gutleben, C. (2021). *The Victorian Tradition and the Contemporary British Novel*. Postmodern Studies. BRILL.
- Hakemulder, F., Fialho, O., & Bal, M. (2016). Learning from Literature. Empirical Research on Readers in Schools and at the Workplace. In M. Burke, O. Fialho & S. Zyngier (Eds.), *Scientific Approaches to Literature in Learning Environments*, 19-38. Amsterdam: John Benjamin.
- Kapp, K. M. (2012). *The gamification of learning and instruction: game-based methods and strategies for training and education*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics. (1998). Longman Group UK Limited.
- Lowman, J. (1990). Promoting Motivation and Learning, *College Teaching*, 38(4), 136-139.
- Pike, Mark. (2003). The canon in the classroom: Students' experiences of texts from other times, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 35, 355-370.
- Porteous, J., & Lindsay, A. (2019). Protagonist vs antagonist provant: Narrative generation as counter planning. In *Proceedings of the 18th International Conference on Autonomous Agents and MultiAgent Systems*, 1069-1077.
- Premack, D., & Woodruff, G. (1978). Does the chimpanzee have a theory of mind?. *Behavioral and brain sciences*, 1(4), 515-526.
- Rosenblatt, L.M. (1978). *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Ryan, Marie-Laure. (2007). Toward a Definition of Narrative. In *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, edited by David Herman, 22-35. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ryan, R. M. & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*. 55(1), 68–78.

Verschuren, P. & Doorewaard, H. (2010). *Designing a Research Project*. (2nd ed.). The Hague: Eleven International Publishing.

Vischer Bruns, C. (2011). *Why literature? The Value of Literary Reading and What it Means for Teaching*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Zunshine, L. (2006). *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.

Websites cited

Fischer, T. (2017). Emily Is Away Too Interview -- Solo Developer Discusses Recapturing Original's Charm. Retrieved from <https://www.dualshockers.com/emily-is-away-too-interview-pc-kyle-seeley/>

Miles T. (2018). What Happened to Linear Games? And Are They Due a Resurgence?. Retrieved from <https://www.gameskinny.com/in1ca/what-happened-to-linear-games-and-are-they-due-a-resurgence>

Toelichting op het voorstel Engels / MVT (inclusief bronnenlijst). (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.curriculum.nu/voorstellen/engels-mvt/verantwoording-engels-mvt/>