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Enhancing Students' Motivation in the EFL Classroom
Through *Life is Strange*: A Digital Game-Based
Learning Scenario Proposal

Màster de Formació del Professorat de Secundària Obligatoria i Batxillerat,
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Author: Angie Alejandra Pulido Salcedo
Supervisor: Dr Gemma López Sánchez
Universitat de Barcelona

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Abstract

This research study introduces a learning scenario integrating the video game *Life is Strange* (DontNod, 2015) into the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. It explores the viability and practicality of incorporating digital game-based instruction into English language learning and investigates its impact on student motivation and engagement. The development and partial implementation of the learning scenario in the 4th of ESO classroom are guided by design principles that align with language learning objectives and follow the task-based supported language teaching (TSLT) methodology. Results indicate that the integration of the video game in the instruction generates a substantial learning experience. Students exhibit increased motivation and engagement, actively participating in the tasks. In conclusion, incorporating the video game *Life is Strange* into instruction effectively fosters student motivation in English language learning. Further research is needed to explore long-term effects, but video games in education promise to enhance student motivation and create engaging learning experiences.

Keywords: digital game-based learning, *Life is Strange*, EFL, learning scenario, motivation

Resum

Aquest estudi de recerca presenta una situació d'aprenentatge que integra el videojoc *Life is Strange* (DontNod, 2015) a l'aula d'anglès com a llengua estrangera. L'objectiu és explorar la viabilitat per incorporar l'ensenyament basat en jocs digitals en l'aprenentatge de la llengua anglesa i investigar el seu impacte en la motivació dels estudiants. El desenvolupament i la implementació parcial de l'escenari d'aprenentatge a l'aula de 4t d'ESO es guien per uns principis de disseny que s'alineen amb els objectius d'aprenentatge, tot i seguint la metodologia TSLT (*task-based language teaching*). Els resultats indiquen que la integració del videojoc a la classe genera una experiència d'aprenentatge substancial. Els estudiants mostren una major motivació i compromís, participant activament en les activitats d'aprenentatge. En conclusió, la incorporació del videojoc *Life is Strange* a l'aula fomenta de manera efectiva la motivació dels estudiants en l'aprenentatge de la llengua anglesa. Es necessiten més investigacions per explorar els efectes a llarg termini, però l'ús de videojocs a l'educació és prometedor per millorar la motivació dels estudiants i crear experiències d'aprenentatge atractives.

Paraules Clau: aprenentatge basat en jocs digitals, *Life is Strange*, anglès com a llengua estrangera, situació d'aprenentatge, motivació

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0. Introduction

The use of video games in education has a long history, dating back to the 1970s when educational games like *The Lemonade Stand* and *The Oregon Trail*, emerged (Renaud & Wagoner, 2011). While initially designed for entertainment, educators soon recognized their potential for educational purposes. Over time, video games have evolved, becoming more sophisticated and immersive, finding their way into various academic disciplines.

In recent years, research has focused on exploring the effectiveness of video games as instructional tools in language learning, particularly in the field of second language acquisition. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory has influenced the integration of video games in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. According to sociocultural approaches, language acquisition relies heavily on social interactions and the integration of language within social contexts (Atkinson, 2002), in this line through video games, educators can create immersive environments that expose learners to authentic language use within social interactions and cultural norms.

Furthermore, Long's (1996) interactional hypothesis highlights the importance of interactive exchanges and meaningful communication in language acquisition. From this perspective, video games offer opportunities for learners to engage in dynamic and immersive interactions with other players and non-playable characters, fostering language development and negotiating meaning.

Given the positive impact of video games on learning outcomes, the continuous research conducted over the years consistently supports their potential in enhancing language learning and fostering communicative competence (Van Eck, 2006). However, to effectively harness the benefits of video games in language learning classrooms, it is

crucial to align their design, use, and evaluation with research in language development and instructional practices.

This dissertation aims to explore the viability and practicality of integrating the video game *Life is Strange* (DontNod, 2015) into the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom, specifically focusing on the effects on student motivation and engagement. Accordingly, the research is conducted through the design and partial implementation of a learning scenario that incorporates the video game within the main tasks of the task-supported language teaching (TSLT) methodology.

The content comprises five primary sections. The initial section focuses on the framework that supports teaching through video games and delves into its impact on cultural awareness and gender perspectives. The second part introduces a proposed learning scenario, providing details about the specific context it is designed for and exploring the video game. Following that, the results and conclusions are discussed.

The results of this study contribute to the growing body of research on video games in education and inform educators about their effectiveness in enhancing student motivation and engagement. Furthermore, this research study highlights the need for further exploration of long-term effects and the integration of video games into other educational contexts, emphasizing the promising role of video games in creating engaging and immersive learning experiences.

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1. Digital-game Based Learning

In contemporary times, video games¹ have become an ever-present element in society, capturing the attention and fascination of people from all backgrounds. This rise in popularity is attributed to the rapid advancements in computer technology, which have taken the world of gaming into unexplored territory, offering new and exciting opportunities for learning and entertainment.

As society evolves, it is clear that computer games have become a vital and meaningful aspect of adolescents' leisure activities. Numerous studies have shed light on video games' impact on the younger generation, evidencing that they influence their cognitive development and cultural identity (Kirriemuir, 2004). These findings show the increasingly inherent nature of video games in influencing the collective cultural consciousness. Also, it is important to note that the widespread appeal of video games is not confined to any specific age group. They have transcended the boundaries of age, gender, and socioeconomic background. A growing number of individuals, involving diverse demographics, are now actively engaging in gaming as entertainment and recreation (Engelstätter & Ward, 2022). This remarkable shift indicates that video games have successfully entered society and are no longer seen as a niche hobby but instead as a universally enjoyed pastime.

Examining the impact of video games on adolescents, a report conducted by UNICEF Spain (2021) explores the extent of their popularity among young people. The study surveyed over 50,000 adolescents aged 11 to 18, hailing from 265 educational

¹ Acknowledging the broad range of interactive experiences they involve, the term 'video game' is used in this dissertation to refer to a game which is played in an audiovisual apparatus and which can be based on a story (Esposito, 2015). Throughout the study, the terms 'game', 'computer games' and 'digital games' are used interchangeably to represent the same concept.

centres in the country. The findings revealed that a significant proportion of these adolescents regularly engage in video game playing. According to the data, 58.7% of the participants reported habitual gaming, with 26.5% playing video games daily (UNICEF Spain, 2021). These statistics provide evidence of the widespread popularity and prevalence of video games among young individuals in Spain.

The influence of video games has also extended to the realm of education. Teachers and learning resource designers have begun exploring how this powerful tool can be used to support students' learning. Rather than dismissing digital games, there is a growing interest in understanding how they can be integrated into educational settings, promoting digital game-based learning (Prensky, 2001). However, it is important to acknowledge that the debate regarding the potential negative effects of video games also exists.

The adult generation often blames video games for the young's negative habits and behaviour, including violence, laziness, bad language, and poor sleeping and eating habits (Anderle & Ring, 2015). Thus, scholars from diverse fields have dedicated their efforts to formulating research questions and test hypotheses concerning the potential influence of violence in video games on young and old players (Ferguson, 2018) to understand the possible implications on aspects such as behaviour, cognition, and social interaction.

In a study by Anderson et al. (2010), the researchers examined the results of 136 studies on the effects of playing violent video games on aggression and prosocial behaviour. The studies included in the analysis involved over 130,000 participants, ranging in age from elementary school children to college students and adults. The studies varied in their methods, including both experimental studies (in which participants were randomly assigned to play violent or nonviolent video games) and

correlational studies (in which researchers measured the amount of time participants spent playing violent video games and their levels of aggression or prosocial behaviour). The results of the meta-analysis showed that exposure to violent video games was associated with increased aggressive behaviour and decreased prosocial behaviour. The effect size was moderate, meaning that the link between violent video games and aggression/ prosocial behaviour was not particularly prominent, but still statistically significant. Additionally, the analysis found that the effects of violent video games were similar across different cultures and genders and that the relationship between playing violent video games and aggression was more prominent in younger participants.

However, it is crucial to approach the findings with a critical lens. While Anderson et al. (2010) raised genuine concerns for the player's well-being and held beliefs about the influence of violent video games, their meta-analysis has faced criticism for several flaws that potentially overestimate and overinterpret the impact of video games on aggression (Ferguson, 2018). This criticism highlights the need for a cautious interpretation of the results while suggesting that the relationship between violent video games and aggression is not as straightforward as it may initially appear, prompting a re-evaluation of the complex dynamics at play.

To address the need for a more comprehensive understanding, Ferguson (2015) conducted a study focusing especially on the impact of video games on children and adolescents, analysing 101 studies. The analysis included 122 controlled effect size estimates and 136 bivariate effect sizes, each addressing different outcomes. The meta-analysis ensured the independence of these effect size estimates to guarantee the accuracy and integrity of the analysis. The findings revealed that video games, regardless of their violent content, have a minimal negative effect on children's well-

being (Ferguson, 2015). The overall results suggest that concerns about the impact of video games on young players may be overstated, emphasising the importance of caution in making statements about the research findings, considering that inconsistent results can damage the long-term credibility of the field (Hall, Day, & Hall, 2011a).

The debate on the link between violent video games and aggression remains far from reaching a consensus among researchers (Ferguson, 2018). It is important to note that video games, like other forms of media, have endured scepticism and lack of acceptance from older generations throughout history. Similar criticisms were directed at books, comics, radio, gramophones, and television, all of which have become widely accepted and integral parts of our culture (Anderle & Ring, 2015). Therefore, expanding the discourse beyond the controversy surrounding violence in video games, it is crucial to consider the broader landscape of cultural-mediated events in contemporary society (Anderle & Ring, 2015). While video games undoubtedly influence behaviours and attitudes, avoiding a singular focus on them is necessary. Factors like poverty, peer influences, depression, family violence, and gene-environment interactions are equally significant in understanding aggression (Ferguson, 2015). It is imperative to keep a balanced perspective and not let the exaggerated attention on video games distract from addressing these underlying causes effectively.

As researchers delved deeper into the topic, they uncovered a more intricate and detailed understanding of how video games impact players' well-being. The previously prevailing notion that video games are universally harmful began to be questioned and replaced with another viewpoint. Villani et al.'s (2018) study assumed a significant role in this ongoing debate, providing an alternative perspective and expanding the understanding of the potential outcomes of video game engagement. Through a meta-analysis, the study demonstrated that playing video games may not only result in

negative consequences. On the contrary, the findings revealed that video games can enhance emotional intelligence and facilitate the development of effective emotional regulation strategies (Villani et al., 2018). Regular engagement with video games offers individuals opportunities to encounter and navigate emotional stimuli that they may not typically experience in real-life situations, fostering the acquisition of adaptive emotional regulation techniques. Additionally, the identification with video game characters emerged as a pivotal factor in the enhancement of emotional skills.

Despite the debate, the potential benefits of video games in education cannot be ignored. Research on the subject has been ongoing since as early as 1978 in the United States (De Aguilera & Méndiz, 2003). These early studies explored the relationship between video games and motivation for learning, establishing a line of research that gained momentum in the 1980s and particularly in the late 1990s (De Aguilera & Méndiz, 2003). This prolonged and intensive investigation into the educational benefits of video games emphasises their significance and serves as a testament to the enduring interest and recognition of their potential impact on learning processes.

The use of video games in education can be traced back to the 1970s, coinciding with the emergence of educational games such as *The Lemonade Stand*, *The Oregon Trail* (Renaud & Wagoner 2011) and *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* (Kirriemuir, & McFarlane 2004). Even though these games were initially designed for entertainment, educators eventually adopted them for educational use in classrooms. For instance, *The Oregon Trail*, created in 1971, was employed as a tool to teach students about the westward expansion of the United States in the 19th century (Djaouti et al., 2011). Similarly, *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* was designed in 1985 to enhance specifically students' understanding of geography (Kirriemuir & McFarlane, 2004). These early educational games were simple in design, often consisting of text-based

graphics, and used as complementary tools for traditional classroom instruction. The primary purpose of its use was to engage students and provide them with an interactive learning experience.

In the 1990s, video games took a significant leap forward in development. Games such as *SimCity* and *Civilization* were developed, allowing players to simulate the management of a city or civilization. Consequently, educators gradually integrated these games into subjects like social studies, history, mathematics and science. *SimCity* was used to teach mathematical concepts such as statistics and graphing, and *Civilization* was used to teach scientific concepts such as biology, chemistry, and physics. Using these games in education demonstrated their ability to address complex concepts while engaging students. Studies have found that students who played *SimCity* better understood urban planning concepts than those who did not play the game (Van Eck, 2006). Also, conclusive findings indicated that engaging in *Civilization* gameplay improved students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Van Eck, 2006). These findings highlight the potential of video games to enhance learning in various subjects and develop skills beyond the scope of traditional classroom instruction.

As technology advances, educational games have transformed to meet specific educational needs and domains. One notable development in this field is the rise of serious games designed to focus on educational or training purposes (Djaouti et al., 2009). Unlike commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) games, primarily created for entertainment, serious games are tailored to provide immersive and interactive experiences that facilitate learning and skill development in specific areas. While COTS games may integrate educational value, serious games distinguish themselves by purposefully integrating educational content and objectives into their gameplay, aligning them more closely with educative curricula and desired learning outcomes.

This intentional design approach allows serious games to offer targeted and engaging learning experiences that go beyond the entertainment value of COTS games.

Tracing the progression of educational games from their early adoption in the 1970s and 1980s to the advancements until today, it becomes evident that video games have gained recognition as effective tools for engaging and interactive education. The continuous research conducted over the years consistently supports the positive impact of video games on learning outcomes across diverse academic disciplines.

The field of language learning, particularly second language acquisition, has acknowledged the immense potential of video games. In fact, video games have demonstrated the ability to teach students even when they only observe the gameplay without actively participating (Young et al., 2012). In contrast to other subjects that heavily rely on direct instruction, language learning is inherently social (Young et al., 2012). Therefore, successful pedagogical approaches for language learning should incorporate real-life scenarios and interactive dialogues to foster meaningful communication and engagement with the target language.

In this line, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory influences the integration of video games as an instructional technique in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms (Galoyan et al., 2017). This theory highlights the critical role of social and cultural contexts in shaping language acquisition. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning is a socially mediated activity intricately connected to the cultural environment in which it occurs. Through video games, educators can create immersive environments that expose learners to authentic language use and cultural norms, providing a rich and engaging context for language acquisition. In particular, learners engage in meaningful communication with non-playable characters (NPCs) and other players while navigating diverse cultural contexts. This form of interaction involving peer support is linked to

Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development, which refers to the gap between the current abilities of learners and the potential mastery of the skills with guidance. Exposing learners to authentic language and cultural elements enhance their linguistic and cultural competence, enabling them to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the target language.

Supporting the sociocultural theory, a meta-analysis conducted by Peterson (2010) on six studies provided compelling evidence that participation in gaming and simulation can facilitate aspects of second language acquisition and the development of communicative competence. The results revealed that video games fostered linguistic growth and the development of communicative competence. When learners engage in gameplay, they have opportunities to practice and apply their language skills in authentic and dynamic contexts. They use the target language to interact with in-game characters and communicate with other players.

Further exploring the effectiveness of game-based learning in promoting language use and communication, Galoyan et al. (2017) conducted a study in an EFL classroom. The study aimed to teach business-related vocabulary while fostering collaboration, engagement, and communication in the target language. The researchers chose an online version of Monopoly as the game to facilitate the lesson plan, implementing it with a group of eight high-school students in Yerevan, Armenia. All participants were non-native English speakers with varying proficiency levels ranging from pre-intermediate to intermediate. The results revealed a positive impact of game-based learning on language use and communication. The students thoroughly enjoyed playing the game, and during gameplay, they actively engaged in discussions and negotiations in the target language (Galoyan et al., 2017). This study aligns with Vygotsky's notion of learning as

the various forms of communication used by the students during and after the game can be attributed to the sociocultural aspects of language acquisition.

Following the discourse on the effectiveness of video games in language learning, it is crucial to delve into the role of interaction because it contributes to language acquisition since it helps to produce comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982), allows negotiation of meaning (Pica, 1994) and motivates output (Swain, 1985).

Long (1983) has referred to the role of interaction in his interactional hypothesis. Building upon the theory of Krashen (1982), he addresses the importance of interaction and output in language acquisition, in addition to the requirement of comprehensible input. Long (1996) argues that second language acquisition occurs through interactive exchanges that entail the negotiation of meaning between learners and speakers of the target language. In essence, this hypothesis suggests that meaningful and interactive communication facilitates language acquisition (Long, 1996). Long's interactional hypothesis aligns with the notion that interactive gameplay provides an ideal environment for language acquisition. In this sense, video games offer opportunities for learners to engage in dynamic and immersive interactions with other players and NPCs characters, fostering meaningful communication and negotiation of meaning. These interactions within the game allow learners to practice their language skills, receive feedback, and adjust to their linguistic output.

Several studies support this concept, including a study conducted by Reinders (2011), which investigates the effects of playing a multiplayer game called Ragnarok Online on second-language interaction and the willingness of participants to communicate in the target language. The study included 10 male and 6 female fourth-year undergraduate IT students between the ages of 21 and 26 enrolled at a university in Thailand. The results reveal that when students engage in video game play, their level of

interaction increases. Reinders (2011) also concluded that teachers can choose the modality for interaction based on their educational objectives, whether they prioritize oral or written language skills.

Furthermore, Zheng's (2006) study expands on the relationship between interactive gameplay and language acquisition. The study examined how collaboration between native and non-native English speakers in the virtual world of *Quest Atlantis* (QA) facilitated language learning. Through working together to solve problems, participants in QA achieved goals and developed their language skills. The study found that various aspects of language, such as pragmatics, syntax, and discourse practices, emerged during intercultural interactions in the game. These findings align with Long's Interactional Hypothesis, suggesting that interactive language use promotes language development.

A pivotal point to address is that integrating video games and other new technologies in language learning classrooms goes beyond generating initial excitement. To effectively harness their potential, it is crucial to align their design, use, and evaluation with both research in language development and instructional practices (González-Lloret, 2017). Within this context, task-based language teaching (TBLT) emerges as a suitable instructional approach that facilitates language acquisition.

Long's Interactional Theory integrates the concept of noticing (Schmidt, 1990), where learners actively direct their attention to language features and form-meaning connections during interactive activities. Long (2014) regards TBLT as an instructional approach that provides valuable opportunities for these interactive activities in contrast to traditional instructional methods like Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP), which often lack these opportunities. TBLT emphasizes meaningful tasks that require authentic language use (Long, 2014). Tasks prompt learners to engage in interactive

communication, enabling them to notice language features, negotiate meaning, and develop their linguistic abilities in a meaningful context. Therefore, TBLT focuses on designing tasks that reflect real-world communicative uses of the language beyond the classroom (Long 2014), mirroring the interactions and activities learners are likely to encounter outside the classroom setting.

Yet, in an English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom, noticing language features during interactions becomes more challenging due to limited exposure to the target language, unlike in an immersion environment, where learners are constantly surrounded by it. This scarcity of immersion makes it difficult for EFL learners to notice subtle language features and form-meaning connections during interactions, as the linguistic environment lacks frequency and authenticity. Consequently, EFL instructors need to address this challenge by incorporating explicit instruction and targeted tasks that facilitate the noticing process.

In contrast to Long's perspective, Ellis (2017) approaches TBLT with a different perspective. Ellis recognizes the need for explicit instruction and form-focused tasks within TBLT, especially for acquiring complex or non-salient linguistic features that may remain blocked by the first language of learners. Ellis argues for a hybrid approach that combines task-based and task-supported components to address persistent linguistic challenges. Through the integration of explicit instruction and targeted practice, Ellis endeavours to develop a comprehensive TBLT framework that fosters the acquisition of both implicit and explicit knowledge. This framework incorporates authentic tasks and deliberate skill development, promoting a well-rounded language learning experience.

In line with the debates over the merits of task-based language instruction and task-supported teaching approaches, Shafipoor and Latif (2015) conducted a research project to explore the most efficient approach for English language teaching in an Iranian EFL

setting. The study involved 120 sophomore students enrolled in the English language translation course at Islamic Azad University, Shar-e-Qods branch. The first experimental group received task-based instruction, while the second experimental group received task-supported teaching approach. The results evidenced that task-supported teaching was superior to task-based teaching for EFL learners (Shafipoor & Latif 2015). These results suggest the significance of explicit language instruction and focused practice within the task-based framework, supporting Ellis's argument for a hybrid approach that combines task-based and task-supported components, especially in the framework of an EFL classroom.

Under this instructional framework, video games have gained a place in TBLT for their ability to facilitate implicit and explicit learning, aligning with both Long's (2014) and Ellis' (2017) approaches. Through an immersive and interactive environment, video games enable learners to collectively embark on quests in multiplayer online games, engaging in realistic goal-oriented tasks and interacting with other language speakers (González-Lloret, 2017). Within this context, video games not only promote implicit learning by allowing students to engage in authentic language use, observe language features, and infer form-meaning connections, but they also have the attributes to be incorporated in explicit instruction, offering targeted practice on complex linguistic aspects. This combination of implicit and explicit learning opportunities within video games enhances language acquisition, creating a comprehensive and dynamic learning experience.

In light of the evidence provided, the integration of video games in language learning, particularly in the context of second language acquisition, has demonstrated its potential as an effective instructional technique. In relation to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, video games provides immersive environments that expose

learners to authentic language use and cultural norms, fostering meaningful communication and interaction. Numerous studies have shown that video games promote linguistic growth, communicative competence, and language use through dynamic and interactive gameplay. They also support the principles of interaction and output emphasized by Long's (1983) interactional hypothesis, facilitating the negotiation of meaning and the development of language skills. The effectiveness of video games in language learning is further supported by research on collaboration, which shows that interactive gameplay fosters language acquisition and the emergence of various language aspects.

Integrating video games into Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) offers opportunities for interactive activities that promote noticing, negotiation of meaning, and authentic language use, creating a comprehensive and engaging learning experience. Explicit instruction and targeted tasks within the TBLT framework address the challenges faced in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms and enhance language learning outcomes. Finally, video games provide a powerful tool for both implicit and explicit language learning, enriching language acquisition and offering a dynamic approach to language instruction.

1.2. Effectiveness of Video Games in Education

1.2.1. Motivation and Flow

Video games have emerged as highly successful tools for learning, owing to a combination of factors that render them effective in the realm of Digital Game-Based Learning; their effectiveness, however, goes beyond their entertaining nature and is instead derived from the principles they embody and the active engagement of learners

during gameplay (Prensky, 2003). The success of video games in language learning has been attributed to several associated concepts explored in the following paragraphs.

One of the fundamental elements contributing to the success of video games in learning is the motivation they yield, seamlessly pulling players into the learning process without them even realizing it (Prensky, 2003) and engaging individuals in activities for the sheer enjoyment and personal satisfaction they bring. This motivation stems from various aspects of video games that captivate and engage learners, like providing players with exciting challenges, rewards, and a sense of accomplishment. They employ a variety of reward mechanisms that reinforce learning and motivate players to continue their efforts. These rewards can represent virtual points, badges, or unlocking new levels, characters, or abilities. The intermittent reinforcement schedule used in many games, where rewards are given unpredictably, is particularly effective in sustaining motivation. The anticipation of receiving these rewards and the satisfaction derived from obtaining them contribute to the enjoyment and engagement players experience while learning.

Engagement is another crucial aspect that contributes to the success of video games in learning. Games can captivate players' attention and maintain their focus over extended periods. The level of immersion experienced during gameplay can be so profound that individuals enter a state of flow. As described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), in a state of flow the attention is freely invested to achieve a person's goals because there is no disorder to strengthen or threat to the self to defend against. In this state, learners perform at their optimal level, fully absorbed and motivated to excel in the game. For instance, a student playing a video game may be presented with progressive levels of difficulty that align with their skill level, providing a balance between challenge and ability. The constant feedback loop in video games, where

actions have immediate consequences, keeps learners in a state of flow and motivated to improve their performance.

To effectively engage students in the learning process, it is crucial to address their fundamental psychological needs, as suggested by the self-determination theory (Ryan, & Deci 2000). Video games provide an avenue to meet these needs by offering autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Students often have the freedom to make choices and decisions that shape the end of the game. This autonomy gives students a sense of ownership over their learning experience, fostering a higher level of motivation and active engagement with the educational content. Additionally, video games often incorporate multiplayer features, enabling students to collaborate, compete, and connect with peers. This social interaction fulfils their need for relatedness and provides a supportive learning community. Furthermore, they offer progressively challenging tasks that allow students to develop and demonstrate competence. As they overcome obstacles and achieve goals within the game, students experience a sense of mastery, further fuelling their motivation to persist and excel.

Another key to the success of video games is situated learning which emphasizes the importance of authentic contexts for learning. As stated by Van Eck (2006), games are effective partly because the learning takes place within a meaningful (to the game) context. To illustrate, in the case of second language acquisition, video games can create virtual environments where learners can engage in realistic conversations, interact with native speakers, and navigate culturally relevant scenarios. Learning occurring in these immersive and contextually rich environments is more effective than learning outside those contexts, as it happens with most formal instruction (Van Eck, 2006). Video games create immersive environments that simulate real-world scenarios, allowing

students to apply the knowledge practically while enhancing motivation and relevance as students see the direct application of what they learn.

In addition to the concepts mentioned earlier, numerous other research contributes to understanding how and why games are effective learning tools. These areas encompass a wide range of theories and principles from cognitive psychology and education, including “anchored instruction, feedback, behaviourism, constructivism, and narrative psychology” (Van Eck, 2006, p.5). Anchored instruction emphasizes providing learning experiences within meaningful contexts, (Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt, 1990) while feedback plays a crucial role in guiding and improving learning outcomes. Behaviourism principles can be applied through rewards and reinforcement in games (Shute & Ventura, 2015), while constructivism highlights the active construction of knowledge through exploration and problem-solving Juniu, S. (2006). Narratives in games engage learners and create immersive experiences (Arnab et al., 2015). Considering these theories and principles helps optimize the design and implementation of digital game-based learning, leading to more engaging and effective educational experiences.

Video games are effective learning tools, offering motivation, engagement, and practical application of knowledge. They address psychological needs, create a state of flow, and benefit from various learning theories and principles.

1.2.2. Video Games and Cultural Awareness

Integrating video games into English language learning is a valuable tool that facilitates second language acquisition and promotes cultural awareness and understanding among classmates. Gee (2003) discusses this viewpoint in his book *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*. He delves into the concept of cultural models in video games, exploring how these interactive digital environments can shape players'

perspectives and challenge traditional cultural norms, considering that games reflect the culture people live in.

Gee (2003) argues that video games have a specific characteristic that differentiates them from other forms of media. That is the ability to create immersive worlds where players can assume different identities and actively participate in developing complex narratives (Gee, 2003). In his argument, Gee challenges the prevailing misconception that video games lack substantial content and demonstrates it by alluding to the diverse range of games available in the industry. He refers to games like *Roller Coaster Tycoon*, *Medal of Honor Allied Assault*, and *Civilization III*, highlighting that each offers different themes, narratives, and gameplay experiences. Using these examples, Gee also directs attention to the interactive element of gaming, which helps enhance players' sense of agency while actively involving them in shaping the game's outcome and participating in developing the narrative.

Furthermore, Gee (2003) delves into the idea that video games can reinforce or challenge players' pre-existing views. This notion extends to the cultural aspects of the games. If players already hold some perspectives or beliefs, engaging with video games that align with those views may not necessarily encourage them to reflect or reconsider their positions (Gee, 2003). Nonetheless, video games can transport players into new and unfamiliar worlds, immersing them in different cultures, values, and contexts.

Video games depicting diverse cultural settings and narratives prompt players to delve into alternative perspectives, encouraging them to question and re-evaluate their beliefs (Gee, 2003). As a result, players can develop a deeper understanding and empathy towards people with diverse backgrounds. This effect is further enhanced when players assume the roles of characters or avatars representing a different culture from their own. To illustrate, in a video game set in ancient Japan where players embody a

samurai warrior, players can immerse themselves in customs, traditions, and values of Japanese culture while engaging in storytelling that reflects historical and socio-cultural aspects of Japan. This immersive experience induces them to reflect on their beliefs, fosters empathy and broadens their perspective on diverse cultures.

In addition to Gee's insights, several studies offer different perspectives on how using video games can effectively address the concept of representation within a culturally diverse classroom. Incorporating video games in English language learning offers numerous benefits in terms of exposure to authentic language and social context. Students immersed in these games can encounter and engage with genuine language usage, including slang, idioms, and colloquial expressions (Al-Ramahi & Smadi 2015). This exposure to real-world language helps students develop an understanding of English while expanding their cultural literacy.

Aside from exposing players to authentic language, video games provide a safe platform for showcasing multicultural characters, storylines, and collaborative experiences in which players are free to interact without retaliation or judgment. During these interactions, players encounter characters from diverse backgrounds, each with their unique stories, perspectives, and experiences. This representation of multicultural narratives fosters empathy and understanding among players while increasing the pro-social behaviour (willingness to help strangers) and treatment of out-group members as if they were in-group (Shliakhovchuk & Muñoz García, 2020). Likewise, many video games promote collaboration and communication among players, facilitating cross-cultural interaction and the development of intercultural skills such as tolerance, respect, and effective communication.

Video games also provide a platform for students to enhance their critical thinking and problem-solving skills while navigating complex challenges embedded within

cultural contexts (Czauderna & Budke 2020). These games frequently incorporate cultural elements, such as historical events or artefacts integrated into the gameplay mechanics. When students immerse themselves in these challenges, they improve their cognitive abilities and develop a deeper understanding of cultural concepts and how they apply or differ from real-world situations. For instance, historical simulation games like *Civilization VI* or *Age of Empires* require strategic thinking and decision-making (Czauderna & Budke 2020) that considers cultural influences, encouraging students to consider the impact of culture on problem-solving approaches.

Also, video games offer the possibility of virtual field trips, enabling students to explore real-world locations, museums, and historical sites from a vast number of countries and, therefore, cultures (Klemm & Tuthill 2003). These virtual tours provide interactive and immersive learning experiences, allowing students to engage with cultural landmarks and gain first-hand knowledge of the diversity. Games like *Assassin's Creed: Origins the Discovery Tour* offer interactive journeys through ancient Egypt (Politopoulos et al. 2019) while allowing students to interact with virtual characters and items from that period. These virtual field trips bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world cultural experiences, promoting a cosmovision.

Integrating video games into the EFL classroom presents a theoretical framework that stresses their potential for promoting cultural awareness. Accordingly, educators can enhance the learning experience when they use video games in their instruction because they provide students with exposure to authentic language, cultural context, multicultural characters, immersive storylines, and opportunities for collaboration and communication, as well as fostering critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the chance to embark on virtual field trips. These elements contribute to students' cultural literacy, fostering empathy, respect, and a broader Perspective. As educators embrace

video games as a valuable tool, students enhance their language acquisition and develop the necessary skills to thrive in a multicultural society.

1.2.3. Video Games and Gender Perspectives

While the advantages of using video games in education are vast and varied, as aforementioned, the following paragraphs focus on the significant benefit of fostering gender perspectives when integrating video games as a complementary part of the instruction. Traditionally, gender roles have significantly shaped society, influenced language (Tripp & Munson, 2022), and determined societal norms. As stated by Forni (2020), even though video games are rarely considered by teachers and educators, some of them could be stimulating texts in promoting gender equality. Accordingly, the incorporation of video games in the EFL classroom offers a unique opportunity to challenge and broaden students' understanding of gender-related issues, promoting inclusivity and empathy

Currently, there is a lack of gender-sensitive research examining the impact of video games on the promotion of male and female models from an educational standpoint (Shaw, 2014). The existing body of literature on video games focuses mainly on investigating gender differences among players and their potential impact on in-game behaviours, gaming habits, and negative consequences (Kneer et al., 2022). On this matter, Gee (2003) notes that many prevalent cultural forms, including video games, often prioritize the portrayal of young, attractive women, frequently relegating them to secondary roles rather than featuring them as the central protagonists (Tripp & Munson, 2022). However, a positive development is emerging as more women gain visibility in the gaming field, both as players and designers (Kneer et al., 2022). With the increasing involvement of girls and women in gaming, there is a growing potential for driving positive change (Tripp & Munson, 2022) in challenging these stereotypes and

promoting greater gender inclusivity within video game content. Video games often reflect the societal context in which they are created. Just like society itself, they are subject to change and evolution. As our society progresses and undergoes shifts in attitudes, beliefs, and values, video games have the potential to mirror these transformations.

A study conducted by Engelstätter (2022) examined data on how people in the United States spend their time over a period of 18 years. The study showed important trends in the gaming population and the characteristics of the people who play games. It demonstrated that video game playing has increasingly become a mainstream activity, attracting a broader range of participants. On the one hand, the study concluded that gaming is no longer limited to specific age groups, as both young and middle-aged individuals participate in gaming activities. Also, this gaming behaviour showed diffusion based on factors such as family income, employment status, educational attainment, and ethnic group, suggesting that gaming is no longer restricted to particular social or economic segments but has become more accessible and inclusive. On the other hand, the study challenged the notion that gaming is exclusively male-dominated. It revealed a similar growth rate in gaming participation among females, indicating a more balanced and diversified representation within the gaming community.

Without a doubt, gaming is no longer a “hobby exclusively for males with a similar growth rate in gaming among females” (Engelstätter, 2022, p.11). The study provides valuable insights into the changing landscape of gaming demographics, stressing the fact that video games are increasingly appealing to a wider range of individuals. This trend breaks down traditional stereotypes and expands the inclusivity of the gaming industry. As gaming becomes more representative of the general population, it

reinforces the potential of video games to promote diverse perspectives, including gender equality, within the gaming community in broader cultural backgrounds.

In the Spanish context, the data reveals a consistent trend in terms of gender representation among video game enthusiasts. The number of players has increased from 18.1 million in 2021 to 18.2 million in 2022. This growth is reflected in the gender distribution, with men comprising 53% of the player population, while women account for 47% (UNICEF Spain, 2021). These statistics reflect a balanced participation of both genders in the gaming community. As stated before, it demonstrates that video games are becoming increasingly inclusive, attracting a diverse range of players regardless of gender. This data highlights the shifting dynamics and growing acceptance of women as active participants in the Spanish gaming scene. It signifies a positive trend towards greater gender diversity within the realm of video games, fostering an environment that encourages and welcomes the engagement of both men and women.

Additionally, video games can challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes by presenting diverse and complex characters. In a study conducted by Shaw (2012), gaming was found to be a space where individuals, particularly those who feel marginalized in other aspects of their lives, could explore and express their identities. The research emphasized that gaming is not solely a form of entertainment but also a means for players to delve into their identity. Participants in the study described gaming as a platform where they could experiment with gender, sexuality, and race in ways that were often not feasible in their offline lives. Players found liberation in video games by either embodying characters that mirrored their own identities or creating unique characters that represented their aspirations. This allowed them to freely perform and experience different identities, unrestricted by the limitations of their real-world situations.

The findings of the study suggest that gaming can serve as a powerful tool for self-exploration and expression, fostering greater acceptance and understanding of diverse identities and experiences. They have the potential to foster gender equality and inclusivity by offering a safe and inclusive environment where individuals can actively engage with and question societal norms. As more girls and women actively participate in gaming, their presence and influence within the industry can bring about positive changes in the representation and portrayal of women, ultimately leading to a more balanced and equitable gaming landscape.

In addition to the insights provided by Engelstätter (2022) and Shaw (2012), there are several other ways in which incorporating video games in the EFL classroom can promote gender perspectives. One significant aspect is the portrayal of diverse and empowering female characters in video games. Research has shown that exposure to strong female characters in video games can positively impact gender perceptions and challenge traditional stereotypes (Forni, 2020). In this matter, video games can help counteract the prevailing narrative of women as passive or marginalized figures as well as men as strong and dominant, allowing different forms of representation. To illustrate, in *Horizon Zero Dawn*, the video game's narrative presents a balanced representation of femininity and masculinity, defying traditional gender stereotypes. Characters within the game, including the protagonist Aloy, challenge social expectations by exhibiting qualities and behaviours that break away from stereotypical norms. This portrayal of diverse and anti-stereotyped characters reflects a society where non-traditional gender roles are accepted as a natural part of their world (Forni, 2020). Exploring such video games allows students to develop empathy, respect, and appreciation for diverse perspectives.

2. Learning Scenario

2.1. School Context

This learning scenario has been implemented in a 4th of ESO class at the Escolàpies Sant Martí School. This educational centre belongs to a network of private schools under the Escolàpies Foundation. The school presents a wide range of educational offerings, including preschool education with two groups for each level (P1, P2, P3); primary education with two groups for each level (1-6); secondary education with two groups for each level (1-4); high school with one group for each level (1-2).

The school is located in El Camp de l'Arpa del Clot neighbourhood, an area covering 74.20 hectares. According to the Municipal Data Office (2022), the population of this neighbourhood in the year 2021 was 38,838, with 21.5% of residents being of foreign origin, notably from Italy, China, and Venezuela. The same report indicates that 36.5% of this population has completed compulsory education, 27.3% have finished high school or pursued vocational studies, and 33.5% have completed university or higher education. Of the total infrastructure in the neighbourhood, 9.0% is dedicated to educational purposes (including one library), and 2.2% is used for sports. The registered unemployment rate for the same year is 1,546, the lowest figure recorded since 2015.

Within this context, Escolàpies Sant Martí attracts students primarily from a Catalan background but also embraces many immigrant students. The school community includes students with diverse needs, including those with special educational needs (NEE, in Catalan) and students with high educative support needs (NEAE, in Catalan) and participants in the *Pla de Xoc* project, an initiative to reduce educational segregation by promoting equal opportunities for all students. Students from various backgrounds and abilities are deliberately distributed equally among the classrooms to ensure

inclusivity and linguistic normalization. While many students are bilingual and fluent in Catalan and Spanish, this last tends to be the predominant language in their interactions.

This learning scenario is designed according to various projects developed by the school, including digital and linguistic. In this first, the use of various technological resources like projectors, digital whiteboards, learning software, etc., is promoted. Secondary and high school students use their own iPad and have access to digital platforms such as Pedagogical Blogs (divided by subjects), which serve as learning journals and facilitate access to the topics studied. The objectives of this project are diverse: first, it aims to improve the students' academic performance by stimulating their motivation for learning. Second, it aims to transform information into knowledge by facilitating access and creating a record of the topics covered. Third, it intends to develop skills regarding the use of technology, as this is essential for positive engagement in the current society and prospects in the job market. Lastly, it aims to promote the responsible use of these technologies as a fundamental competence to develop other skills within the classroom.

The linguistic project aims to generate confidence and security in each student to progress in foreign language proficiency. The school recognizes the importance of languages as an essential competence for success in 21st-century society. For this reason, both secondary and high school students participate in stays in England during the school year. They can also join in available Cambridge exam sessions throughout the year. Specifically, secondary school students receive a total of 4 hours of English language instruction, 3 hours within the subject itself and 1 hour in another subject with the collaboration of auxiliary conversation teachers who are native speakers. Additionally, French is introduced as a second foreign language in all ESO courses. As

for high school students, they receive 3 hours of English language instruction with the collaboration of auxiliary conversation teachers too.

In addition, the design of the learning scenario considered other approaches that the school incorporates into its methodology. One such method is service learning (ApS, in Spanish), which combines learning and community service in a cohesive project. This methodology allows students to address exact needs within the community, aiming to make a positive impact and contribute to its improvement. Following its educational goals, the approach focuses on combining social responsibility with knowledge acquisition and skills development. Through this service-learning approach, the school expects students to acquire academic knowledge while developing essential life skills and cultivating empathy and compassion towards others. Also, via active participation in practical projects that address community needs, students gain valuable experiences in collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking, thereby emphasizing the importance of these skills.

Another approach is cooperative learning. Escolàpies Sant Martí follows the AC/CA program (Cooperate to Learn, Learn to Cooperate) the University of Vic developed. This program emphasizes teamwork and mutual support among students. The classrooms are specifically designed to facilitate this cooperative learning approach, creating an environment where students work together in small groups, supporting and learning from one another. This structure diverges from traditional individualistic or competitive learning methods commonly found in educational institutions. The physical layout of the classrooms and the arrangement of furniture encourage collaboration and interaction among students. This approach aims to foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment where every student is valued and actively contributes to their own learning as well as to the learning of others.

2.2. Challenges and Needs

In light of the context of the school, characterized by its diverse student population and commitment to inclusive education, it is imperative to consider the implementation of a well-designed learning scenario that effectively addresses the specific needs of Escolàpies Sant Martí. These needs have been identified through an observation phase during practicum I, where careful attention was given to understanding the challenges and requirements of the students.

During the observation, the first identified need was motivation. Frequently, students did not find the proposed activities motivating and displayed signs of disinterest, disrupting the classroom atmosphere. Their interest increased when they engaged with dynamic tools that allowed them to approach the theoretical content of the class from a different perspective than simply focusing on exercise development. Specifically, in the English class, students explored the topics presented in the *Dynamic 4* textbook from Oxford University Press. Worksheets were used to practice, ensuring students' comprehensive understanding of grammatical aspects. The learning model used in this context followed the presentation, practice, and production (PPP) approach. As Long (2014) explains, this approach consists of student exposure to simplified dialogues and reading passages written using a limited vocabulary and seeded with the structure(s) of the day, the intensive practice of the structure(s) via drills and written exercises, followed by gradually freer practice.

Observations during classes indicated that this model did not stimulate active participation and student motivation. In response to this, the teacher incorporated alternating instruction methods that integrated dynamic, meaningful activities and the use of technological tools. To address this need, the design of the learning scenario focuses on two main aspects: shifting from the PPP methodology to Task-Based

Language Teaching (TBLT) and incorporating video games as motivating tools for task completion.

As mentioned earlier, the school recognizes the importance of technology in the current society and its influence on the job market. Precisely, the school's digital project aims to train students in the use of digital tools to thrive in a society that develops hand in hand with technology. The design of the learning scenario seeks to align with this framework, addressing the need to educate students in digital competence. The inclusion of video games perfectly fits the objectives of the project because they allow students to develop digital, cognitive, and social skills in a fun and practical way. Their use allows students to familiarize themselves with digital technologies and enhance their problem-solving abilities. Video games can be adapted to address different areas of knowledge, making them a versatile and flexible learning tool. It is worth noting that the project's goals go beyond simply acquiring digital skills. It focuses specifically on their appropriate and relevant use. Therefore, incorporating video games in the classroom also responds to the need to educate students about the responsible and critical use of the tool, particularly on how they approach its content.

Apart from accepting the importance of technology, the school embraces collaborative learning as a fundamental approach to education. This learning scenario aims to utilize various tools and design activities that facilitate the formation of groups to address the need for strengthening teamwork skills. Cooperative gameplay or multiplayer modes in certain games encourage students to work together, communicate effectively, and collaborate towards achieving common objectives. Even if this type of video game is not used in the sequence, group development activities can revolve around discussing and sharing the gaming experience. Considering the cooperative learning approach already employed at Escolàpies Sant Martí, the integration of video

games can complement and further enhance the collaborative skills of the students, allowing them to learn from each other and develop social bonds within the classroom.

Another need that the learning scenario seeks to address is ensuring the representation and inclusion of all students within a context characterized by diversity in cultural backgrounds and skill sets. The student population in Escolàpies Sant Martí is characterized by its rich cultural backgrounds and diverse perspectives. Therefore, it is crucial to establish an inclusive learning environment that values and acknowledges every student, ensuring their representation and sense of worth. Implementing a teaching sequence based on video games can contribute significantly to this goal since they can transcend cultural boundaries and provide immersive experiences that resonate with students from various backgrounds. Videogames often feature diverse characters, settings, and narratives that reflect the multicultural world people live in. The promotion of representation fosters a sense of belonging and cultural pride among students, thereby cultivating a classroom atmosphere that is more inclusive and respectful.

Furthermore, video games offer a variety of modes of interaction that cater to different learning styles. Some students are visual learners who benefit from the vibrant graphics and visual storytelling in games, while others are auditory learners who engage with the game's audio cues and dialogues. They often require physical actions and movements, appealing to kinaesthetic learners who prefer a hands-on approach to learning. Including multiple modes of interaction in video games ensures that students with diverse learning preferences can actively participate and derive educational benefits from the learning experience.

2.3. Behind the Design

In response to the observed lack of motivation in the classroom, the teacher designs a learning scenario to awaken the interest of the students and foster a positive attitude towards learning.

The first aspect to consider for designing the learning scenario is selecting the topic that aims to approach. In this case, the theme of emotional well-being is chosen to present a relevant situation that students can find in their daily lives. Emotional well-being encompasses a range of factors, including self-awareness, self-regulation, resilience, and the ability to navigate and cope with emotions effectively. Incorporating this topic into the learning scenario allows educators to acknowledge and validate the emotional experiences of students, creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Also, when students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to understand and manage their emotions, they are better prepared to face the challenges they encounter both inside and outside the classroom. Emotional well-being empowers students to develop a positive mindset, enhance their self-esteem, and cultivate healthy relationships, all essential for their personal and academic growth.

When designing the learning scenario, the methodology employed is another pivotal aspect to take into account. The teacher chooses to implement the TSLT (task-supported language teaching) methodology. Initially, Long's (2014) approach to TBLT (task-based language teaching) was taken into consideration. However, it was later changed to accommodate the requirement of providing explicit instruction in the target language following the established guidelines. The TSLT methodology enables using technological resources, such as video games, to create an interactive and engaging learning environment that aligns with the interests of the students.

Next, it is essential to determine the tools used to carry out the activities. In this line, the teacher chooses the narrative- adventure game called *Life is Strange* as the main tool to interact with during the development of the learning scenario. Initially, other video games such as *Gris* and *Journey* were considered. However, the fact that these games are payable presents a disadvantage when attempting to implement commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) games in the classroom. Nevertheless, the availability of the first chapter of *Life is Strange* for free on the Play Store made it a more compelling choice. This accessibility addresses the cost concern and also ensures easy access for students.

Life is Strange explores the theme of emotions and seamlessly integrates the target language. Its immersive narrative and focus on moral decisions make it an appealing and meaningful experience for the students. After thorough analysis, the teacher determines that the video game is suitable for the students, offering them a virtual environment to explore various emotional situations and practice using the English language in a contextualized manner.

To design the activities around the video game, the teacher followed two guidelines provided by Van Eck (2006) in his article 'Digital Game-Based Learning It's Not Just the Digital Natives Who Are Restless'. According to Van Eck (2006), analysing the game content is crucial to assess its coverage and identify the areas it addresses and those it does not. After evaluating the game *Life is Strange* the teacher decided it was suitable for exploring emotional well-being and meeting the language objectives. The game proved beneficial for enhancing reading and listening skills; however, it did not incorporate elements of writing or speaking. Therefore, these particular aspects were not encompassed within the game.

Likewise, it is necessary to determine what to do with the content that the game does not cover. Van Eck (2006) suggests that rather than simply providing additional reading

or handouts with the missing or accurate information, the teacher should design activities that are logical extensions of the game world. In this way, the additional activities are designed to integrate oral discourse and writing activities that involve the world presented by *Life is Strange*. To illustrate, identifying the emotions experienced by the characters, rearranging images extracted from the game to recreate the story, or writing an alternative ending for the first chapter. Therefore, the activities are designed to motivate students to actively participate in discussions and reflections on emotions and ethical dilemmas presented in the game, using English as their means of communication.

2.4. The Video Game

2.4.1 Why Choose Narrative-driven Games for the Classroom?

Narrative-driven games have gained significant popularity in the gaming industry. These interactive digital experiences prioritize storytelling, character development, and immersive narratives that comprises all aspects of the story and setting of the game, such as plot, characters and their attributes, events, and dialogues (Bizzocchi & Tanenbaum, 2012). What sets these games apart from noninteractive media is their heightened focus on social interactions and the relationships between players and their avatars (Elson et al., 2014). In a narrative-driven game, players assume the role of a protagonist and engage in decision-making processes that shape the end of the story. This form of gameplay offers a unique and engaging medium for educational purposes in the classroom.

These games provide an ideal environment for fostering critical thinking skills. As players navigate complex narratives, they encounter challenges and dilemmas that require thoughtful decision-making. These games often present multiple branching

paths and consequences, needing careful analysis and evaluation of different options. Students must consider cause-and-effect relationships, anticipate outcomes, and make informed choices based on available information. This process encourages the development of critical thinking skills, such as logical reasoning, problem-solving, and strategic planning (Cicchino, 2015).

Also, these games frequently incorporate puzzles and riddles, requiring players to use deductive reasoning and analytical thinking to progress. For instance, in *Life is Strange: Chrysalis*, players encounter a pivotal moment where the protagonist, Max Caulfield, discovers she can rewind time. As Max explores her high school environment, she witnesses a confrontation between a fellow student, Nathan, and her friend, Chloe. The situation escalates, and Max must make a critical decision on how to intervene. Players are faced with the dilemma of choosing between two options: intervening directly to defuse the situation or using Max's time-rewinding power to gather information before taking action. Each choice carries its own consequences, affecting the relationship dynamics between characters and influencing the unfolding narrative.

They also have a unique capacity to foster empathy and perspective-taking skills among students. These games provide opportunities to explore diverse perspectives and understand the motivations of different individuals when players immerse themselves in character-driven narratives. When students take on the role of a protagonist, they are exposed to a wide range of situations that may lie outside their personal experiences or comfort zones.

Games that are narrative-driven offer a platform for students to develop and express their creative skills. As players progress through the story, they often have opportunities to shape the narrative through their choices and actions. This interactive aspect empowers students to become active participants in the storytelling process, fostering

their creativity and imagination. Engaging in these creative endeavours enables students to explore storytelling and character development, honing their creative and narrative abilities. Besides, they provide tools for creating custom content and levels. To illustrate, games like *Minecraft* or *LittleBigPlanet* offer creative modes that enable players to design their own worlds, stories, and characters.

In addition to fostering creativity, narrative-driven games also help to improve learners' written and oral communication skills. These games require players to engage in dialogue, write journals or letters, and communicate with non-playable characters. Through dialogue exchanges and written interactions in the game, students can practice constructing coherent sentences, expressing their opinions, and interacting in meaningful conversations.

All in all, narrative-driven games offer a unique and immersive experience that sets them apart from noninteractive media like films and television. While narrative alone is often responsible for generating meaningful experiences in noninteractive media, digital games incorporate additional layers of mechanics and social interaction to drive users' engagement and shape their overall experience (Elson et al., 2014). They offer numerous educational benefits that make them valuable tools for classroom implementation, including enhancing critical thinking and fostering empathy.

2.4.2. *Life is Strange*

Life is Strange, developed by Dontnod Entertainment, is a highly acclaimed narrative-driven video game that immerses players in a captivating and emotional storytelling experience. When it was released in 2015, the game quickly gained recognition for its unique time manipulation mechanics, thought-provoking themes, and well-developed characters. This episodic adventure game is set in the fictional town of Arcadia Bay, Oregon.

Players assume the role of Maxine ‘Max’ Caulfield, a high school student with the extraordinary ability to rewind time. Max discovers her time manipulation powers when she saves her childhood friend Chloe Price from a tragic event. As the game progresses, Max and Chloe unravel the mysteries of Arcadia Bay, delving into dark secrets, navigating complex relationships, and facing the consequences of their choices. Max Caulfield, the game's protagonist, is an introverted photography enthusiast who returns to her hometown to attend Blackwell Academy. Players witness Max's personal growth as she grapples with her powers and the weight of her decisions throughout the game. Chloe Price, Max's rebellious and impulsive best friend, plays a central character in the game. The complex bond between Max and Chloe is explored, and players' choices can strengthen or strain their relationship.

The game is structured into five episodes, each providing a chapter-like experience that unfolds the overarching narrative. In the first episode, *Chrysalis*, players take on the role of Max Caulfield. She discovers her time manipulation powers and reconnects with her childhood friend Chloe Price. Together, they set on a journey to uncover the secrets of the town of Arcadia Bay.

The second episode, *Out of Time*, explores deeper into Max's time-manipulating abilities as she navigates through the consequences of her actions. Players face moral dilemmas and the consequences of altering the course of events, leading to impactful outcomes.

In the third episode, *Chaos Theory*, the story takes a darker turn as Max and Chloe's investigation unravels the hidden truths of Arcadia Bay. The consequences of their actions become evident, and the narrative intensifies with gripping revelations.

The fourth episode, *Dark Room*, delves into the darkest depths of Arcadia Bay's secrets. Max and Chloe's investigation leads them to uncover a sinister plot, testing their resilience and challenging their friendship.

Lastly, the fifth episode, *Polarized*, brings the narrative to its climactic conclusion. Max faces her most difficult choices and confronts the consequences of her time-altering powers, ultimately determining the fate of Arcadia Bay.

Life is Strange received widespread critical acclaim for its narrative depth, well-rounded characters, and innovative gameplay mechanics. The game garnered numerous awards, including the BAFTA Games Award for Best Story. It was highly praised for its emotionally charged storytelling, which tackled themes of friendship, identity, and the consequences of choice. Its impact extends beyond critical success, the game left a lasting impression on the gaming industry, redefining the potential of narrative-driven gaming experiences. Its focus on character development, player agency, and emotional engagement resonated with players, leading to a dedicated fanbase. *Life is Strange* demonstrated that video games can address mature and thought-provoking themes, blurring the lines between gaming and other storytelling mediums. Additionally, the game popularized the episodic release format, with players eagerly anticipating each episode to continue the narrative journey. Its success inspired other developers to explore similar narrative-driven experiences, resulting in a resurgence of interest in interactive storytelling within the gaming community.

1.4.3. Chrysalis

The first chapter of *Life is Strange*, titled *Chrysalis*, sets the stage for the captivating narrative that unfolds in the game. Players are introduced to Maxine Caulfield, a shy and introspective high school student passionate about photography. The chapter begins

with Max waking up from a nightmare and finding herself in the familiar surroundings of her hometown, Arcadia Bay.

As players guide Max through the hallways of Blackwell Academy, her prestigious art school, they are introduced to various characters who will play significant roles in her journey. Her internal monologue provides insights into her thoughts, fears, and observations about her surroundings. The detailed environments of the school and its inhabitants help establish the immersive atmosphere of the game.

During her exploration, Max witnesses a confrontation between Chloe Price, her childhood friend, and Nathan Prescott, a wealthy and troubled student. This encounter foreshadows the tension and conflicts that will arise throughout the chapter. Max then heads to her photography class taught by the renowned Mark Jefferson, where she learns about the theme of 'capturing the everyday heroism' in her work.

As Max exits the classroom and enters the restroom to collect herself from an overwhelming feeling, she overhears a heated argument between Chloe and another student, Victoria Chase. Moments later, Max witnesses a traumatic event: a student named Kate Marsh is harassed and humiliated by a group of bullies. Deeply affected by the incident, Max discovers her extraordinary ability to rewind time and instinctively uses it to intervene and save Kate from further harm.

Next, Max and Chloe are brought back together, reigniting their bond and strengthening their connection. Together, they explore the grounds of Blackwell Academy, reminiscing about their shared memories and discussing the changes that have occurred since Max's departure. The evolving dynamics of their friendship serve as a central theme in the chapter, allowing players to shape their relationship through dialogue choices and actions.

Throughout *Chrysalis*, players engage in conversations with various characters, uncovering clues and unravelling the mysteries surrounding Arcadia Bay. They encounter Warren Graham, a classmate who harbours a feeling towards Max. Additionally, Max meets Victoria Chase, a popular and influential student who often belittles others, providing opportunities for players to assert themselves and challenge her behaviour.

As the chapter progresses, players witness the struggles of Max with her newfound powers and the moral dilemmas they present. Players are confronted with choices that have consequences, including decisions about intervening in conflicts, interacting with classmates, and exploring the limits of their abilities.

This chapter concludes with Max having a vivid vision of a massive tornado approaching Arcadia Bay. This unsettling revelation hints at the larger mysteries and impending dangers that will shape the subsequent chapters.

The first episode introduces players to a diverse cast of characters that enhance and enrich the narrative experience. Each character brings a unique personality, appearance, and backstory, contributing to the immersive storytelling of the game. Maxine, also known as Max, Caulfield, is a character whose artistic nature is reflected in her appearance, often opting for casual and comfortable attire. She is frequently seen with her camera, which serves as a constant companion. As players progress through the episode, they have the opportunity to witness Max's personal growth, her capacity for empathy, and the internal conflicts she grapples with.

Chloe Price, Max's childhood friend, is a pivotal character in Max's journey. With her dyed blue hair and punk-inspired style, Chloe embodies rebellion and individuality. Her troubled past, strained relationships, and impulsive nature contribute to the emotional depth of the narrative. As players explore the complexities of Max and

Chloe's friendship, they witness the ups and downs of their relationship and the impact of their choices on their bond.

Nathan Prescott is a determined character. He is a wealthy and troubled student at Blackwell Academy. His appearance reflects his privileged background, often seen in fashionable clothing that exudes a sense of entitlement. Players encounter Nathan in tense situations throughout the narrative, particularly during a confrontation with Chloe Price.

Warren Graham, a smart classmate of Max, represents a friendly and supportive presence in her life. His slightly disorganised appearance, glasses, and enthusiasm for science and technology make him endearing to players. His passion for scientific pursuits is evident in his conversations and interactions, often sharing fascinating facts and discussing various scientific concepts.

Victoria Chase, a popular and influential student at Blackwell Academy, adds a dynamic element to the episode. With her stylish appearance and desire for social dominance, Victoria exudes confidence and privilege. Interacting with Victoria allows players to challenge her behaviour and assert the personality and values of Max.

Kate Marsh, a timid and vulnerable student, becomes the target of bullying. Her modest and conservative appearance reflects her reserved nature. The storyline of Kate delves into sensitive themes, such as cyberbullying and personal struggles, providing players with opportunities to support and protect her. Choices regarding her well-being affect her character development and the overall narrative.

2.5. Learning Scenario Proposal

Situació d'aprenentatge

Títol	Life is Strange: A Journey Through Emotions
Curs (Nivell educatiu)	SS of 4 th of ESO
Àrea / Matèria / Àmbit	Llengua Estrangera

Table 1. The topic for the learning scenario

DESCRIPCIÓ (Context + Repte)

Per què aquesta situació d'aprenentatge? Està relacionada amb alguna altra? Quin és el context? Quin repte planteja?

'Life is Strange: A Journey Through Emotions' is a learning scenario aimed to be implemented in a 4th of ESO Foreign Language class (English subject). This teaching sequence is aligned with the emotional intelligence program of the school which aims to work on self-awareness and empathy to help students recognize their own emotions and those of others. It is also integral to the school's digital project, which seeks to leverage technology to enhance students' learning experiences.

Addressing emotional well-being has become increasingly important in today's society. The fast pace of life, constant stress, and pressures of contemporary society can take a toll on individuals and lead to negative outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and burnout. It is crucial to recognize that emotional well-being does not refer only to the presence of pleasant emotions, but also to the presence of unpleasant ones and the ability to manage both effectively. In the educational context, research has demonstrated that addressing emotions can positively impact students' academic performance and overall wellness (Pekrun et al., 2017). When students feel emotionally supported and equipped with the tools to manage their emotions, they are more likely to feel motivated, engaged, and successful in their learning process. To achieve these goals, it is important to provide students with opportunities to explore their emotions in a safe and supportive environment. This is where video games can play a valuable role since games such as 'Life is Strange' can provide opportunities for students to interact with characters and situations that closely mirror their real-life experiences and emotions, helping to develop a sense of emotional awareness. As stated by Villani et al (2018), video games have legitimate applications in understanding and influencing emotional regulation. In this sense, this teaching sequence aims to address emotional well-being by providing students with opportunities to explore through the video game 'Life is Strange.'



Figure 1. Max and Chloe [Image]. (n.d). Retrived from <https://www.destructoid.com/dontnod-entertainment-opens-new-studio-in-montreal/>

Table 2. Description

COMPETÈNCIES ESPECÍFIQUES

Amb la realització d'aquesta situació d'aprenentatge s'afavoreix l'assoliment de les competències específiques següents:

Competències específiques	Àrea o matèria
CE3: Produir textos orals i multimodals amb coherència, claredat i registre adequats, atenent les convencions pròpies dels diferents gèneres discursius, i participar en interaccions orals variades, amb autonomia, per expressar idees, sentiments i conceptes, construir coneixement i establir vincles personals.	Llengua Estrangera
CE5: Produir textos escrits i multimodals amb adequació, coherència i cohesió, aplicant estratègies elementals de planificació, redacció, revisió, correcció i edició, amb regulació dels iguals i autoregulació progressivament autònoma, i atenent les convencions pròpies del gènere discursiu triat, per construir coneixement i donar resposta de manera informada, eficaç i creativa a demandes comunicatives concretes.	Llengua Estrangera
CE9: Ampliar i usar els repertoris lingüístics personals entre diferents llengües, reflexionant de manera crítica sobre el seu funcionament i prenent consciència de les estratègies i coneixements propis, per millorar la resposta a necessitats comunicatives concretes.	Llengua Estrangera

Table 3. Basic competences

TRACTAMENT DE LES COMPETÈNCIES TRANSVERSALS

Competència personal, social i d'aprendre a aprendre:

CPSAA1. Regula i expressa les seves emocions enfortint l'optimisme, la resiliència, l'autoeficàcia i la recerca de propòsit i motivació cap a l'aprenentatge per gestionar els reptes i canvis i harmonitzar-los amb els seus propis objectius.

CPSAA2. Coneix els riscos per a la salut relacionats amb factors socials, per consolidar hàbits de vida saludable en el terreny físic i mental.

CPSAA3. Comprèn proactivament les perspectives i les experiències dels altres i les incorpora al seu aprenentatge per participar en el treball en grup distribuint i acceptant tasques i responsabilitats de manera equitativa i emprant estratègies cooperatives.

CPSAA4. Fa autoavaluacions sobre el seu procés d'aprenentatge, buscant fonts fiables per validar, sustentar i contrastar la informació i per obtenir conclusions rellevants.

Competència digital:

CD2. Gestiona i utilitza el seu propi entorn personal digital d'aprenentatge permanent per construir nou coneixement i crear continguts digitals, mitjançant estratègies de tractament de la informació i l'ús de diferents eines digitals, seleccionant i configurant la més adequada en funció de la tasca i de les seves necessitats en cada ocasió.

Competència ciutadana:

CC3. Comprèn i analitza problemes ètics fonamentals i d'actualitat, considerant críticament els valors propis i aliens, i desenvolupant els seus propis judicis per afrontar la controvèrsia moral amb actitud dialogant, argumentativa, respectuosa i oposada a qualsevol tipus de discriminació o violència —incloent-hi la violència masclista, LGTBI-fòbica, racista o capacitista— o fonamentalisme ideològic.

Table 4. Transversal competences

OBJECTIUS D'APRENENTATGE Què volem que aprengui l'alumnat i per a què? CAPACITAT + SABER + FINALITAT		CRITERIS D'AVUACIÓ Com sabem que ho han après? ACCIÓ + SABER + CONTEXT	
1	Experimenta amb el vídeo joc <i>Life is Strange</i> per la posterior elaboració d'una narració (CE5)	1	Aplicar coneixements i estratègies per planificar, produir, revisar i cooperar en l'elaboració de una narració de manera cohesionada i adequada a les intencions comunicatives, les característiques contextualls, els aspectes socioculturals i la tipologia textual, usant els recursos físics o digitals més adequats en funció de la tasca i de les necessitats de l'audiència o el destinatari del text. (CA3)
		2	Redactar i difondre una narració, respectant la propietat intel·lectual i evitant el plagi.
2	Identificar les emocions per dissenyar una peça artística tot i argument sobre el procés (CE3)	3	Aplicar coneixements i estratègies per a planificar, produir, revisar i cooperar en l'elaboració de , usant els recursos físics o digitals més adequats en funció de la tasca i de les necessitats de l'audiència o del lector potencial a qui s'adreça el text. (CA2)
3	Dissenya una peça artística sobre les emocions, reflexionant sobre el seu contingut per exposar en una exhibició els passadissos de l'escola. (CE3)	4	Expressar oralment idees i apreciacions relacionades amb les emocions, per tal de descriure i informar, en diferents suports, utilitzant recursos verbals i no verbals, així com estratègies de planificació, control, compensació i cooperació. (CA1)
3	Reflexionar sobre l'adequada utilització dels enllaçadors de temps i el temps passat per l'elaboració cooperativa d'una narració inspirada en el vídeo joc <i>Life is Strange</i> . (CE9)	5	Comparar i argumentar les similituds i diferències entre diferents llengües reflexionant de manera progressivament autònoma sobre el seu funcionament. (CA1)

Table 5. Learning objectives and assessment criteria

SABERS

Amb la realització d'aquesta situació d'aprenentatge es tractaran els sabers següents:

	Saber	Àrea o matèria
	<i>Comunicació (CE3, CE5) Aplicació d'estratègies de producció, comprensió i anàlisi crítica de textos orals, escrits i multimodals de diferents àmbits amb atenció conjunta als aspectes següents</i>	
1	Gèneres discursius: anàlisi, argumentació i ús de models contextuais i gèneres discursius d'ús comú en la comprensió, producció i coproducció de textos orals, escrits i multimodals, breus i senzills, literaris i no literaris.	Llengua Estrangera
2	Processos: Aplicació d'estratègies d'ús comú per a la planificació, execució, control i reparació de la comprensió, la producció i la coproducció de textos orals i multimodals, com ara reformular, comparar i contrastar, resumir, col·laborar, debatre, resoldre problemes i gestionar situacions compromeses, en situacions comunicatives informals, semi formals, no formals i formals.	Llengua Estrangera
3	Processos: Anàlisi, argumentació i ús de funcions comunicatives d'ús comú adequades a l'àmbit i al context comunicatiu: expressar emocions i narració d'esdeveniments passats.	Llengua Estrangera
4	Utilització d'eines digitals d'ús comú per a la comprensió, producció i coproducció oral, escrita i multimodal; i plataformes virtuals d'interacció i col·laboració educativa (aules virtuals, eines digitals col·laboratives...) per a l'aprenentatge i el desenvolupament de projectes amb estudiants de la llengua estrangera.	Llengua Estrangera
	<i>Reflexió sobre la llengua (CE9)</i>	
1	Ús d'estructures morfosintàctiques i de lèxic adequat, tot reflexionant sobre els processos comunicatius implicats, amb la utilització del metallenguatge específic.	Llengua Estrangera

Table 6. Sabers

DESENVOLUPAMENT DE LA SITUACIÓ D'APRENENTATGE

Quines són les principals estratègies metodològiques que es preveuen utilitzar? Quins tipus d'agrupament realitzarem? Quins són els principals materials i recursos que necessitarem?, etc.

This teaching sequence focuses on promoting emotional well-being in students through a variety of activities that incorporate video games, art, mindfulness, and storytelling. The activities are designed to encourage students to explore their emotions and develop strategies for managing them. The lesson plan follows the Task-Supported Language Teaching approach (Ellis, 2017) which emphasizes the use of meaningful tasks that require learners to use target language forms, rather than just practising isolated structures (Long, 2014). This approach ensures that students are engaged and motivated, while also learning language in a relevant and meaningful context.

The sequence starts with an introduction to the importance of emotional well-being. Students participate in brainstorming and discussion activities that encourage them to share their points of view while negotiating meaning. This works as a foundation for the rest of the lesson, which includes analysing emotions and coping strategies in the video game, mindfulness exercises, writing a story using past tenses and time linkers, and creating artwork inspired by emotional themes.

Throughout the lesson, students work individually, in pairs, and in groups to promote different learning styles and encourage collaboration (Zone of Proximal Development). The use of art and storytelling helps students to express and process their emotions creatively and engagingly, while mindfulness exercises help them to acknowledge coping strategies for managing unpleasant emotions. By the end of the lesson, students are expected to have gained a better understanding of emotional well-being and have explored strategies for managing their emotions effectively. They also have the opportunity to show their artwork in a corridor exhibition, which helps to promote a positive and supportive classroom environment that values emotional expression.

As for the materials, the teacher will need art supplies such as paper, pencils, glue, scissors, markers, paints, and brushes. Students will need a tablet or a computer and headphones.

Table 7. Learning scenario overview

ACTIVITATS D'APRENTATGE I D'AVUACIÓ

	Descripció de l'activitat d'aprenentatge i d'avaluació	Temporització
Activitats inicials <i>Què en sabem?</i>	<p><u>What do we know about emotional well-being?</u></p> <p>-The teacher displays an image from the movie Inside Out with a message that reads, "Emotions are an essential and natural aspect of being human" (Appendix A), highlighting the importance of emotions and setting the stage for the upcoming discussions.</p> <p>-A brainstorming activity is conducted to encourage students to share their thoughts and ideas about Emotional well-being. Students share their perspectives on the topic, and the teacher records their responses on a whiteboard to create a mind map. This visual representation of the discussion serves as a guide for the conversation and helps to identify important areas related to mental health.</p> <p>-Next, students are provided with a list of emotions, each associated with a specific colour. The students are then asked to paint a heart using the colour corresponding to the emotions they have chosen. The instructions and an example are provided (Appendix B). They are free to create groups or work individually. The completed hearts will be shown in a corridor exhibition scheduled for the end of the sessions.</p>	1 hour

<p>Activitats de desenvolupament <i>Aprenem nous sabers</i></p>	<p>1. <u>identifying Emotions in Life is Strange (scaffolding vocabulary)</u></p> <p>-The session begins with the teacher informing students that they will be playing a video game, 'Life is Strange' in some of the following sessions to explore the topic of emotional well-being. The teacher plays the trailer of the game (Appendix B) and leads a class discussion about initial observations and thoughts.</p> <p>-The teacher gives Instructions for playing the first part of episode 1 (30 min) (Appendix C), emphasizing the importance of paying attention to the characters' behaviour and the vocabulary used related to emotions (Appendix D). Students play the first part of the game.</p> <p>-After playing the game, students work in pairs to conduct a character analysis using <i>Padlet</i> (Appendix E) to share their contributions. For the analysis, they identify and describe the personality traits and specific emotions portrayed by one character. The teacher circulates around the room to provide support and guidance as needed.</p> <p>-The session ends with the teacher informing students about the final project, which is to create a corridor exhibition about Emotional well-being. The exhibition will feature students' artwork on the topic and aims to provide a platform for students to express themselves creatively and raise awareness about the diversity of emotions and the importance of self-care. The teacher encourages students to use the character analysis activity as a starting point for their upcoming artwork.</p>	<p>2 hours</p>
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<p>Activitats de desenvolupament <i>Aprenem nous sabers</i></p>	<p>2. <u>Finding Calm in Chaos: Exploring emotional processing with "Life is Strange" (scaffolding Art)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The session begins with a mindfulness exercise led by the teacher to introduce the concept of emotional processing or coping strategies. The exercise involves taking a few minutes to focus on breathing and being present at the moment. After the exercise, the teacher leads a brainstorming session about uncomfortable emotions and the coping strategies students know to manage them. Students share their ideas in pairs and then with the whole group. -After the brainstorming session, students play the second part of episode 1 of the game (30 min) (Appendix C) ‘Life is Strange’. -In pairs, students analyse the emotions and coping strategies depicted in different parts of the game, including the current and previous parts. They may also suggest alternative ways in which the characters could have dealt with their emotions in specific situations. They share their ideas using the same collaborative wall used in session 1 (Appendix E). The teacher circulates around the room to provide support and guidance as needed. The session ends with a brief class discussion about the emotions and coping strategies identified in the game. -Time is also dedicated to reviewing past tenses and time linkers (Appendix D) 	<p>2 hour</p>
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<p>Activitats de desenvolupament <i>Aprenem nous sabers</i></p>	<p>3. <u>What do you need to write a story?</u></p> <p>-The session begins with the teacher providing explicit instruction on past tenses, including a review of past simple and continuous, and introducing past perfect, as well as time linkers to write a story (Appendix D). The teacher provides examples based on the game.</p> <p>-After the instruction, the third part of the game ‘Life is Strange’ is played (Appendix C). This allows students to see how the concepts learned in the theoretical instruction are used in the game, and how stories can be developed using past tenses and time linkers.</p> <p>-For the next session, several images from the game are given to the students (Appendix C). The images are not in order, and the students are asked to work in groups of four to organize them in the correct order. The first group to finish will recount the events, and if they make a mistake, another group can continue until all events are correctly identified. This activity helps students practice sequencing events and understanding the importance of chronological order in storytelling. Theoretical aspects of the target language are reviewed if need it.</p> <p>-Finally, the teacher introduces a forum in <i>NowComment</i> (Appendix E) where students can ask questions related to the theoretical instruction on past tenses and time linkers for writing a story. Other students can answer the questions, and the teacher can also provide feedback and support. This activity encourages collaboration and peer learning, as well as provides a platform for students to clarify their doubts and reinforce their understanding.</p>	<p>2 hours</p>
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<p>Activitats d'estructuració <i>Què hem après?</i></p>	<p>4. <u>Creative expression for emotional processing</u></p> <p>-In this session, the teacher introduces the idea of using creative expression as a tool for emotional processing, specifically in the context of emotional well-being. The teacher then introduces some examples from the video game (Appendix A) that showcase the use of art to deal with emotions.</p> <p>-The art form of the day is drawing, and students are given time to create their own art inspired by emotional themes in the game. They are encouraged to express their own emotions and thoughts through their artwork. Additionally, they are asked to reflect on their chosen emotion and develop a coping strategy or technique that can help them effectively manage and address those emotions. Instructions and one example are provided (Appendix C) <i>[Self-assessment]</i> (Appendix F).</p> <p>-After the art is completed, students share and discuss their work with the class, explaining the meaning behind their creations and how it relates to the game or their own experiences. <i>[Teacher's assessments]</i> (Appendix F)</p>	<p>2 hours</p>
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<p>Activitats d'estructuració <i>Què hem après?</i></p>	<p>5. <u>Writing an ending for the first chapter of 'Life is Strange'</u></p> <p>-The teacher provides an example of what students are asked to do. In turns, students read out loud an alternative ending to have a better understanding of the task (Appendix C).</p> <p>-After this, students are divided into groups of four, and each group is given time to brainstorm and come up with ideas for their alternative ending. The teacher provides some guidelines for the task, such as making sure that the ending is consistent with the plot and characters in the game (Appendix C).</p> <p>-Once the groups have their ideas, they start working on writing the ending. The teacher will be available to provide feedback and guidance as needed. Students may use their notes from previous sessions on storytelling and past tenses to craft a compelling and coherent narrative.</p> <p>-Students read their alternative endings and publish them on the collaborative wall in <i>Padlet</i> (appendix). <i>[teacher's assessment]</i> (Appendix f). Students vote for their favourite ending in the collaborative wall (appendix) <i>[peer assessment]</i>.</p> <p>-The last part of the game is played to reveal the original ending (Appendix C).</p>	<p>2 hours</p>
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Activitats d'aplicació <i>Apliquem el que hem après</i>	<p>6. <u>Collage exhibition</u></p> <p>In groups of four, students work on creating a collage exhibition of their artworks from the previous sessions (1 and 4). The purpose of the exhibition is to showcase their understanding and interpretation of emotional themes. The teacher provides the necessary materials for creating the collages, such as glue, scissors, magazines, and coloured paper.</p> <p>Once the collages are completed, the teacher instructs the students on how to properly display them in the school corridors. The students will work together to arrange the collages in a visually appealing and cohesive manner, with attention to details such as spacing, colour coordination, and overall design.</p>	1 hour
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Table 8. Sequence of activities

BREU DESCRIPCIÓ DE COM S'ABORDEN ELS VECTORS EN AQUESTA SITUACIÓ D'APRENENTATGE

This teaching sequence addresses the **universal** theme of **emotional well-being**, which is relevant to **all individuals** regardless of their gender, age, cultural background, or any other demographic factors. The use of a video game as a teaching tool not only provides a **relatable** and engaging context for students to explore the topic but also challenges conventional stereotypes about video games and their audience. Additionally, the teaching sequence promotes **collaborative** work and incorporates a range of activities and assessment tasks that **adapts** to different learning styles and abilities, making it accessible to a diverse range of students.

Table 9. Els vectors

MESURES I SUPORTS UNIVERSALS

- Students are the centre of learning. The selected topic is modern and relevant to their daily experiences. Activities are competency-based, and it is expected that students will be engaged and motivated to push their learning forward.
- The teacher is highly motivated as well and personally involved in helping students acquire meaningful knowledge and skills.
- Learning can be personalized. This lesson plan has been designed under the guidelines of Universal Design for Learning so that students decide how they want to deliver their tasks.
- This lesson plan is packed with task-supported activities in which students work in pairs and groups. This dynamic enhances their social and communicative skills and helps them learn from each other to reach a common objective while negotiating meaning.
- The objectives are clear, and students know what is expected from them. The teacher included some competitive tasks; however, cooperative learning is given priority.
- Assessment as learning is an integral part of the lesson plan. Their knowledge is tested constantly to make sure it is well established before building on it. Assessment of learning takes place in the end: students receive individual feedback on their performance, including their strong points and areas for improvement.

Table 10. Universal measures and supports

MESURES I SUPORTS ADDICIONALS O INTENSIVS

Quines mesures o suports addicionals o intensius es proposen per a cadascun dels alumnes següents:

Alumne	Mesura i suport adicional o intensiu
NESE: Students with ADHD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Provide clear and concise instructions at the beginning of each session. Students will be given a checklist to complete.-Allow for movement breaks, especially for activities that take longer than 15 minutes, e.g. video games, artwork, writing the end of the story, etc. These breaks can include having the student take a quick walk around the classroom or stretch.-Using visual aids to present complex concepts. E.g. the mind map for the discussion activity.-Providing positive reinforcement to keep them motivated. <p>(Mulligan, 2001).</p>

Table 11. Additional measures and supports

3. Implementation

Only two of the twelve sessions that were originally scheduled, lasting two hours apiece, were actually carried out due to time restrictions. Despite this restriction, using video games as part of a gamification approach had a significant impact. Even with the constrained time, the two sessions gave students worthwhile chances to engage in gameplay activities, take part in group discussions, and profit from this cutting-edge methodology.

3.1. Review of the Outcomes

Throughout the sessions, it became apparent that the students enjoyed playing video games and demonstrated being highly engaged. They actively participated in the gameplay activities, eagerly immersing themselves in the virtual worlds presented by the games. This positive response highlighted their enjoyment and indicated that introducing video games as a gamification strategy captured their interest and attention.

An additional positive outcome of incorporating video games into the classroom was the considerable improvement in the overall classroom atmosphere. Introducing an interactive and enjoyable element revitalized the learning environment, injecting a sense of excitement and positivity. The students' enthusiasm for the video games created an atmosphere that fostered collaboration, teamwork, and mutual support. The shared experience of playing video games together enhanced their sense of friendship and contributed to a more vibrant and cohesive classroom community.

Furthermore, integrating video games as a gamification strategy influenced student participation in group discussions. The immersive and interactive nature of the games served as a powerful catalyst for stimulating conversation and promoting active engagement. The students' experiences within the game worlds provided tangible and

relatable examples to draw upon, facilitating more in-depth and meaningful discussions. They were enthusiastic about sharing their thoughts and ideas, often relating them directly to their personal gameplay experiences.

For instance, during a class discussion on emotions, one student referenced the impact of Max's moral choices on her general well-being, contemplating the consequences of altering events using time manipulation. Another student drew parallels between the emotional struggles faced by the characters and their personal experiences, promoting an understanding of complex emotions and empathy towards others. These discussions allowed students to explore the intricacies of human emotions, enabling open conversations within the classroom.

Importantly, the students' desire for more video game activities in future classes reflects the lasting impact of this gamification strategy. The positive experience and enjoyment from playing the games fuelled their enthusiasm and anticipation for future gaming sessions.

Overall, implementing video games as a gamification strategy yielded positive outcomes for the classroom environment and student engagement. The students thoroughly enjoyed playing the games, actively participating and demonstrating high levels of engagement. The introduction of video games created a more dynamic and positive learning climate, fostering collaboration and companionship among the students. Besides, the integration of video games facilitated more lively and meaningful group discussions, with students eagerly sharing their thoughts and drawing connections to their gameplay experiences. Their expressed desire for more video game activities in the future further emphasizes the potential of video games as a gamification strategy to sustain student interest and motivation in the long term.

As support for these findings, a survey was conducted to evaluate the motivation levels of students, specifically towards the sessions that incorporated the video game. Out of the 46 students who participated in the survey, the results indicated that a significant majority of them felt motivated by the video game component of the gamification strategy. Only 5 students reported a lack of motivation about the video game, suggesting that most participants found the integration of the game to be an effective motivational tool. Supporting the notion that incorporating video games as part of the gamification approach can positively impact motivation.

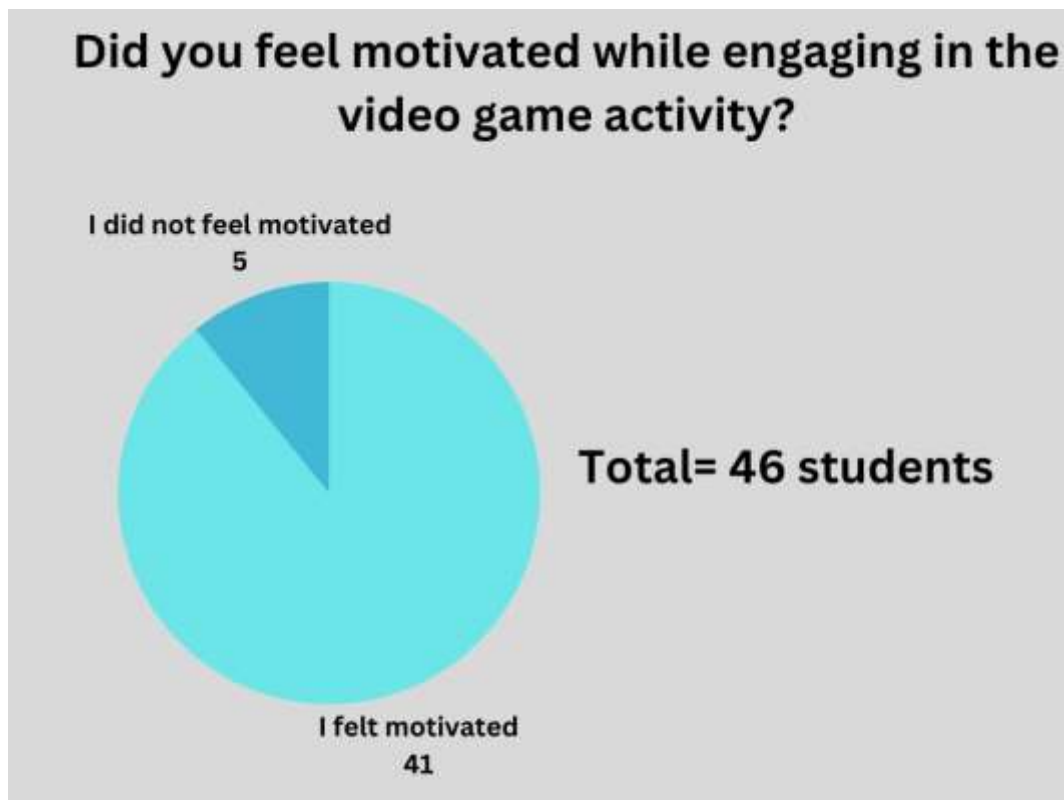


Figure 2. Circular graph illustrating student's motivation toward the activities involving playing the video game

3.2. Reflection Upon the Outcomes

Throughout the first session, students responded positively and enthusiastically to the activities. When the teacher presented the image from the movie 'Inside Out', the students were curious and engaged. They showed genuine interest in the topic of emotional well-being. During the brainstorming activity, students actively participated by sharing their thoughts and ideas. They raised their hands, contributing their unique perspectives and personal experiences. The classroom was filled with energy as the students showed their interest in the topic. When the heart-painting activity was introduced, students were excited. They chose their colours and painted their hearts. The classroom became a creative space as the students expressed their emotions through art. Some worked together, discussing their chosen emotions, while others worked independently, focusing on their artwork.

Throughout the session, students remained engaged and willing to share their contributions. They listened attentively to their classmates' stories and experiences, showing empathy. As the hearts started to fill the classroom, the students were satisfied with their creations and curious about their classmates'. They openly talked about their artwork, sharing the emotions it represented and the personal significance behind it. The collaborative spirit extended beyond the art activity, as students actively listened to each other's viewpoints, deepening their understanding of emotional well-being as a collective effort. Students' behaviour throughout the session was characterized by curiosity and a genuine willingness to explore and express their emotions. They actively participated in discussions, shared personal stories, and embraced the opportunity to engage in creative activities. The positive and collaborative atmosphere created a sense of belonging and empathy among the students, fostering a deeper understanding of emotional well-being.

The second session began with the teacher introducing the video game, *Life is Strange*, to the students. The teacher shared the trailer, sparking curiosity and setting the stage for further exploration. It was interesting to learn that some students had already played the game before it. The teacher advised them to take a different narrative path than the one they had previously taken. With this strategy, the teacher planned to offer students a novel and distinctive gameplay experience while showcasing the many different ways the game can be enjoyed and explored. The class discussed their initial observations and thoughts, encouraging active participation and critical thinking.

Next, the teacher provided clear instructions for playing the first part of episode one of the game. Emphasizing the importance of paying attention to the characters' behaviour. Students were given 30 minutes to play the game, immersing themselves in the storyline and interacting with the characters. Upon completing the gameplay, students were paired up to conduct a character analysis using Padlet, a collaborative online platform. The teacher encouraged students to share their contributions and insights, fostering teamwork and collective learning. The teacher moved around the room, providing support and guidance as needed, ensuring that students stayed on track.

Positive outcomes emerged from the session. The use of the video game as a teaching tool sparked the interest and enthusiasm of the students. They immersed themselves in the gameplay, actively observing and analysing the characters' behaviour. The interactive nature of the game allowed students to experience emotions, fostering empathy and emotional understanding. The Padlet activity, enhanced collaboration and critical thinking skills, as students shared their analyses and engaged in discussions.

However, it is important to acknowledge areas for improvement. Some students faced difficulties in comprehending some of the vocabulary used in the game. To effectively overcome this challenge, it is highly recommended that the teacher

implements strategies to support these students and enhance their learning experience. One viable solution would be for the teacher to consider providing a comprehensive glossary alongside the game. This glossary serves as a valuable resource, offering clear definitions and explanations for the potentially challenging terms encountered throughout the gameplay.

Implementing a session using the video game *Life is Strange* to explore emotional well-being revealed both positive outcomes and areas for improvement. The engagement and enthusiasm of students during gameplay, as well as the collaborative character analysis, were notable strengths. However, providing additional support for vocabulary comprehension, allocating more time for analysis, and addressing potential challenges could be further developed

3.3. Continuity for Proposal in the Centre

Incorporating video games as part of the teaching approach has shown significant success within this instructional unit and should be continued in future lessons. Video games can be carefully selected to align with the curriculum objectives and offer an engaging and interactive learning experience. Moreover, the accessibility of various video game platforms allows for easy integration into the classroom setting. However, it is important to monitor and evaluate the impact of video games on learning outcomes over an extended period. This would provide insights into whether students' motivation and progress are sustained over months. Nonetheless, based on the favourable response from students, it is recommended to continue utilizing video games as an educational tool, as they have demonstrated the potential to enhance student engagement and learning.

4. Conclusions

The study has proposed a comprehensive learning scenario that incorporates the video game *Life is Strange* into the EFL classroom. The development and partial implementation of this scenario has revealed its viability and practicality within an educational setting. Through the meticulous design of game-based activities that align with the objectives of language learning of the school, the scenario has exhibited its capacity to generate an engaging and substantial learning experience, immersing students in a meaningful manner.

The use of video games as a teaching tool has been found to significantly increase student motivation and engagement. The inherent challenge and enjoyment associated with video games serve as powerful incentives for students to actively participate in language learning activities. This intensified motivation leads to increased effort and dedication, resulting in improved performance outcomes.

Furthermore, the research has highlighted the importance of considering individual differences and providing tailored support to address challenges that students may face during game-based learning. Strategies like providing glossaries, conducting vocabulary reviews, and fostering a supportive classroom environment have been identified as key elements for ensuring the success of game-based learning initiatives.

While this dissertation has made significant contributions to the understanding and implementation of game-based learning in the EFL classroom, it is essential to acknowledge that further research is warranted. Future studies could explore the long-term effects of game-based learning on language proficiency and academic performance, as well as investigate the potential benefits of specific game genres or mechanics for different language skills.

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6. Appendices

Appendix A: Introducing topics

-Image from the movie 'Inside Out', a film that delves into the emotional journey of a young girl named Riley through the personified emotions within her mind.

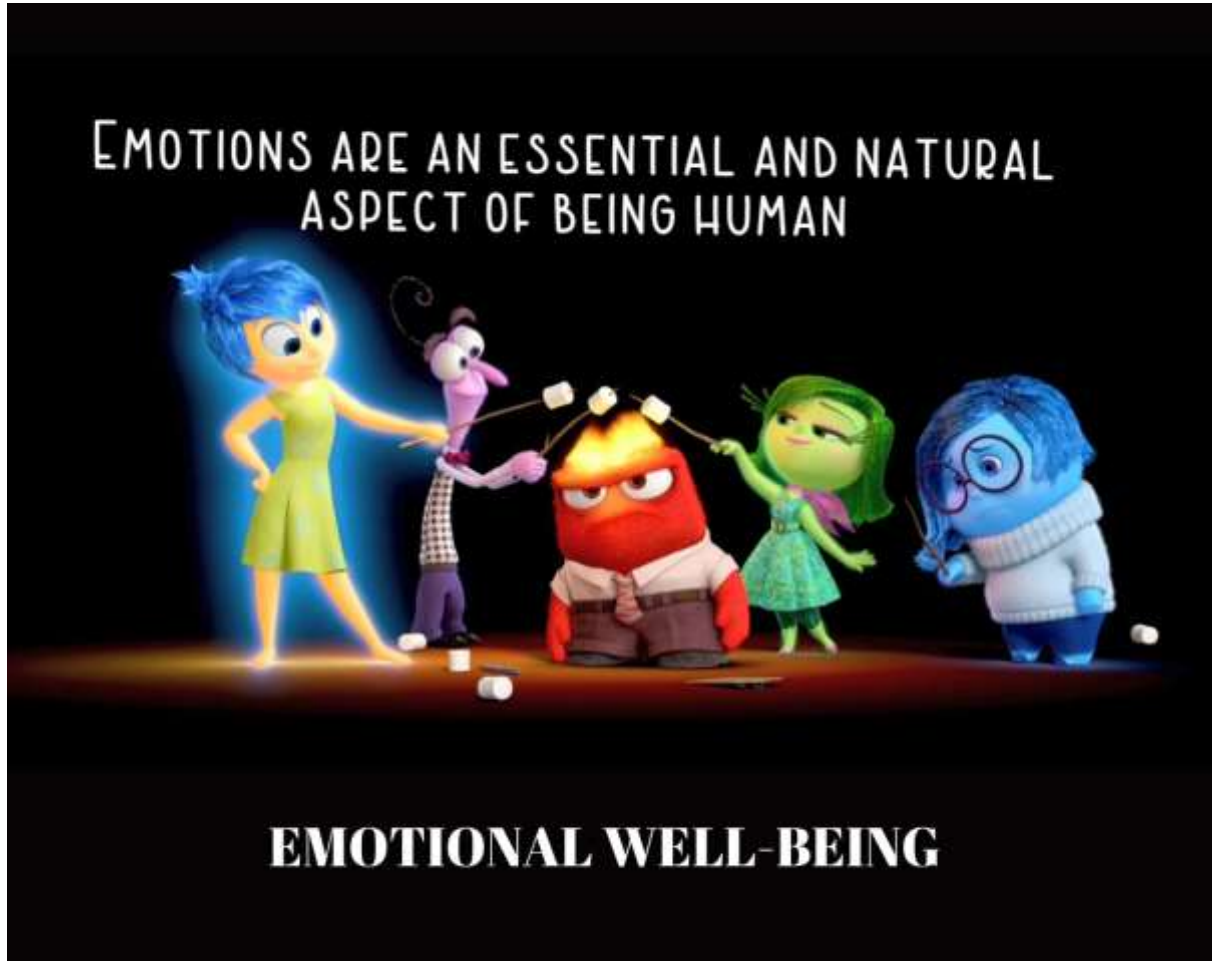


Figure 3. Introducing the theme of emotional well-being

-Introduction to Creative Expression

Introduction to Creative Expression

Exploring Creative Expression for Emotional Well-being: Examples from *Life is Strange*

Daniel



Max



Figure 4. Introducing creative expression for emotional well-being

Appendix B: Videos

-Link to the trailer



Figure 5 Trailer Life is Strange extracted from YouTube

Appendix C: Instructions for the activities

-Instructions for the activity 'My heart feels...'

Instructions for 'My heart feels...' activity

- Think about your own experiences and feelings, and choose the emotions that you personally identify with from the list provided by the teacher. You are also free to come up with another emotion.
- Sketch a heart and paint it using the colour that represents your chosen emotions.
- Your completed artwork will be displayed in a corridor exhibition in a future session.

TEMPLATE

MY HEART FEELS...



Joyful	Offended
Angry	Worried
Afraid	Satisfied
Excited	Serene
Nervous	Hopeful
Sad	Resentful
Tired	Empathetic
Guilty	Distressed
Lonely	Amazed
Grateful	Calm

EXAMPLE

MY HEART FEELS...



Joyful
Afraid
Calm
Sad
Grateful
Lonely
Excited

Figure 6. Activity 'My heart feels...'

-Instructions for the activity 'Playing the game'

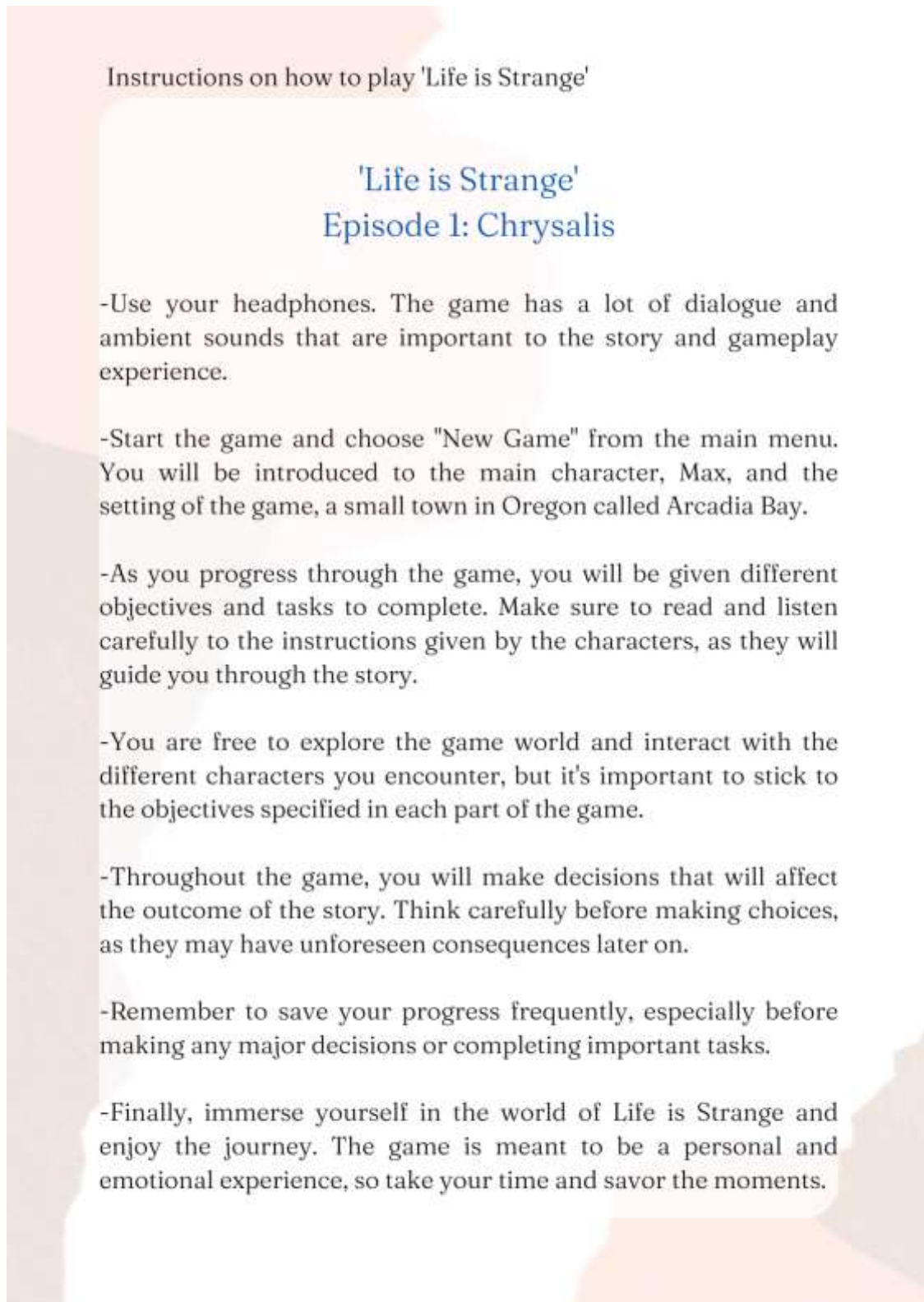


Figure 7 Playing the video game

-Parts of the game

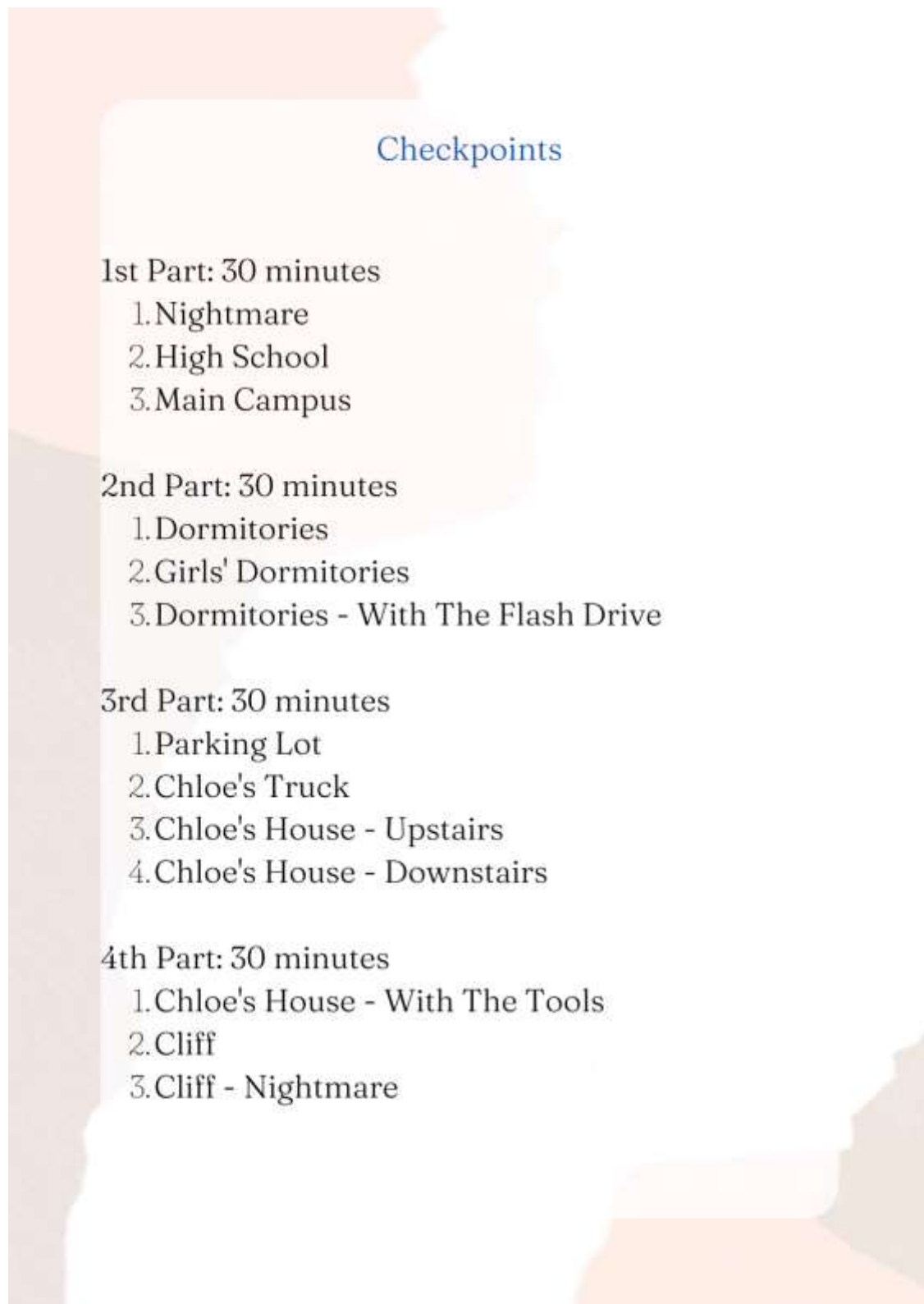





Figure 8. Parts of the video game


-Activity 'Organise the images in the correct order


Cutouts in the correct order I


- 


I'm trapped in a storm? How did I get here? ...and where is there?
- 

Louis Daguerre was a French painter who created "daguerreotypes" a process that gave
- 

Good. Nobody can see my meltdown. Except for me.
- 

Don't EVER tell me what to do. I'm so SICK of people trying to control me!
- 

He's about that poor girl.
- 

That did not happen! ...it couldn't have!
- 


You look like a stressed out. Are you sure?
- 

Figure 9 Cut-outs I for the activity 'reorganise the story'

Cutouts in the correct order II



Figure 10. Cut-outs II for the activity 'reorganise the story'

-Activity 'Artwork'

Instructions for 'Artwork' activity

- Take a moment to reflect on your emotions and thoughts. Consider the emotional themes presented in the video game or draw inspiration from your personal experiences (heart painted in class).
- Choose an emotion that resonates with you and that you would like to explore through your artwork.
- Time to paint!
- After completing your artwork, take a moment to reflect on the chosen emotion. Think about strategies or techniques that can help you cope with and manage that emotion effectively.
- Write down your coping strategy or technique somewhere around your artwork.

Remember, this activity is about expressing yourself creatively, reflecting on your emotions, and developing coping strategies. Embrace the process and allow your artwork to be a personal representation of your emotional journey. Enjoy the experience!



Figure 11. Instructions for the activity 'artwork'

-Activity 'Writing a story'

Instructions on writing an ending for the first chapter
of *'Life is Strange'*

- Form groups of three to four students
- Brainstorm ideas for an alternative ending for the game while considering the plot, characters, and their emotions.
- Ensure that your alternative ending is consistent with the game's world and characters.
- Write the alternative ending, using past tenses and the time linkers studied in previous sessions to create a coherent narrative.
- Seek feedback and guidance from your teacher during the writing process.
- Structure your ending with a clear beginning, middle, and resolution to engage the audience and provide a satisfying conclusion.
- Prepare to present and share your alternative ending with the class, considering visual aids to enhance your presentation.

Enjoy the process of exploring new possibilities!

Figure 12. Instructions for the activity 'writing a story'

Alternative Ending Example

Unbreakable Bonds

In Chloe's bedroom, Max and Chloe **found** a moment of peace. They **talked** about their past adventures and how their friendship **had endured**. As they **reminisced**, a thought **crossed** Max's mind.

Suddenly, Max **had** an idea. She **pulled out** a photo from her bag, a picture of them smiling together. With determination, Max **said**, "I wish we could go back to that moment."

Then, time **stopped**. Max and Chloe **were** back in the photograph, **surrounded** by happiness. They **looked** at each other, realizing that their bond was unbreakable.

From that day on, Max and Chloe **faced** challenges together. They **supported** each other through thick and thin, never forgetting the magic of their friendship.

Finally, with the power of the past behind them, Max and Chloe knew that their journey **had just begun**. They **embraced** the future, knowing that their shared memories would guide them every step of the way

Figure 13. Example for the activity 'writing a story'

Appendix D: Handouts for Explicit Instruction

-Vocabulary: adjectives for emotions

Hand-out 1 - Vocabulary

Emotions Vocabulary and Adjectives












	Emotion	Adjectives
	Happy	Joyful, Blissful, Elated
	Sad	Gloomy, Tearful, Blue
	Angry	Furious, Enraged, Mad
	Fearful	Terrified, Scared
	Excited	Thrilled, Enthusiastic, Vibrant
	Calm	Serene, Tranquil, Placid
	Nervous	Worried, Uneasy, Tense
	Frustrated	Discouraged, Exasperated
	Confused	Disoriented, Uncertain, Puzzled
	Surprised	Astounded, Amazed, Bewildered
	Guilty	Remorseful, Regretful

Figure 14. Target vocabulary: emotions

Hand-out 2 - Narrative Tenses to Write the Story

Past Tenses



Past Simple	Past Continuous
-Past completed action -Past habits or states	-Actions in progress at a certain time in the past
subject + verb in past tense	subject + "was/were" + verb+ing
She danced all night.	I was walking to the store when it started raining.

Past Perfect Simple	Past Perfect Continuous
-Indicates an action that was completed before another past action.	-Describes an action that had been ongoing before another past action
subject + "had" + past participle	subject + "had been" + verb+ing
He had finished his homework before he went to bed.	She had been waiting for over an hour when he finally arrived.

Figure 15. Past tenses for explicit instruction

Handout 3: Writing a Story- Time Linkers

What are Time Linkers?

Time linkers are words or phrases that indicate **the sequence of events** in a story. They establish a clear relationship between different moments in time, ensuring a smooth transition for the reader.

Commonly Used Time Linkers: Example of Using Time Linkers:

First, second, third...
Next, then, afterwards...
Meanwhile, simultaneously...
In the past, previously...
Presently, currently, now...
In the future, subsequently...
Eventually, finally, in conclusion...

"**First** the storm passed, **then** the sun emerged from behind the clouds. **Meanwhile**, John was diligently working on his novel. **Eventually**, he completed the last chapter and felt a sense of accomplishment."

To effectively use time linkers, position them **at the beginning** of sentences or paragraphs. This helps establish the chronological order of events and maintain coherence in your storytelling. To avoid repetition and make your writing more engaging, try to **vary the time linkers** you use throughout the story.



Figure 16. Time linkers for explicit instruction

Appendix E: Interactive Resources

-Collaborative wall in Padlet

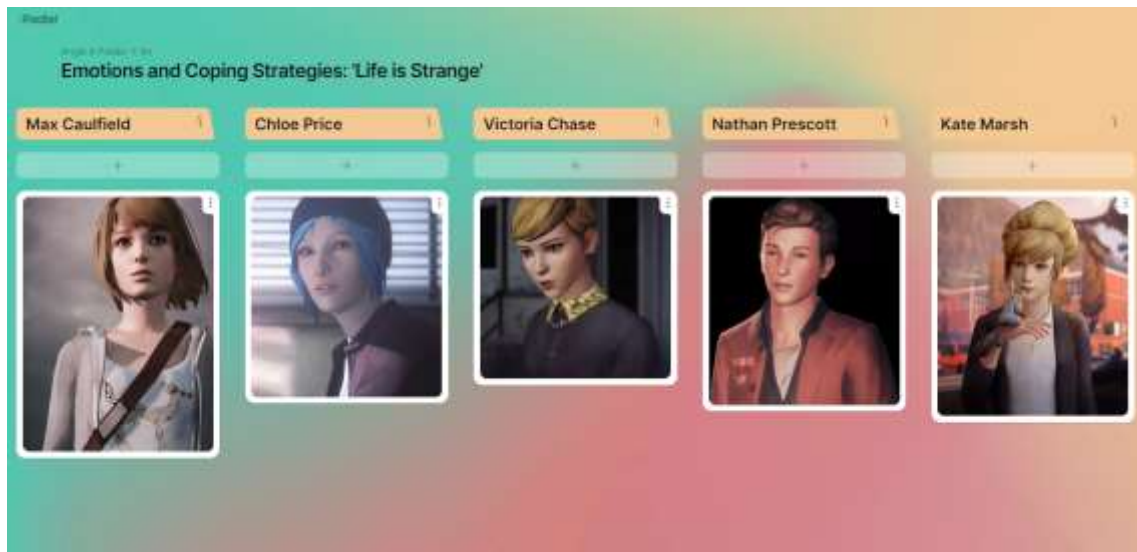


Figure 17. Collaborative wall for describing the characters of the game

-Forum

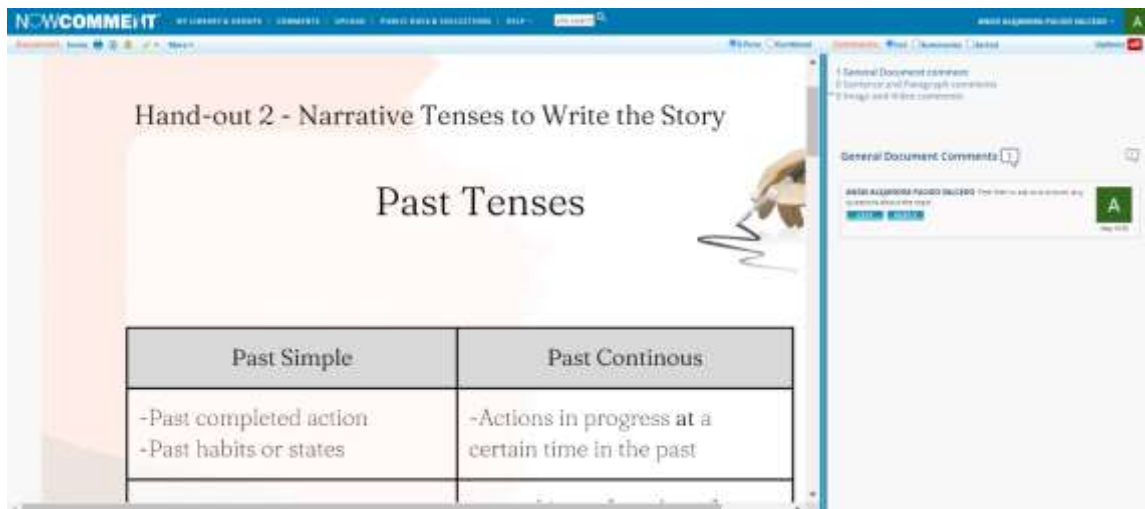


Figure 18. Forum to share questions and comments

APPENDIX F: Rubrics

Rubric 1: Self-Assessment - Art Work			
CRITERIA		YES	NO
Did I choose an emotion that resonated with me and that I wanted to explore?			
Did I reflect on the chosen emotion and develop a coping strategy?			
Did I write down a clear and actionable coping strategy?			
Did I actively participate in the class discussion by sharing my artwork and explanation?			
Did I listen attentively and show support to my peers during their sharing?			
Did I engage in the activity with a positive attitude?			

Figure 19. Rubric 1: self-assessment artwork

Rubric 2: Teacher's Assessment - Artwork discussion

CRITERIA	YES	NO
Actively contributed to the class discussion.		
Shared insights and reflections on the artwork and emotions.		
Provided constructive feedback and support to peers.		
Demonstrated active listening and respect for others' perspectives.		
Encouraged a positive and inclusive discussion environment.		

COMMENTS:

Figure 20. Rubric 2: teacher's assessment artwork discussion

Rubric 3: Teacher's Assessment - Story

CRITERIA	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Well-developed
CONTENT	Lack of coherence and consistency with the plot and characters.,	Demonstrate overall coherence and consistency with the plot and characters.	Exhibit exceptional coherence, consistency with the plot and characters.
TEAM WORK	Limited or ineffective collaboration within the group, with minimal contribution and participation from all members.	Adequate collaboration within the group, with shared contributions and effective communication among members.	Active engagement, share responsibilities, and effective communication among members.
LANGUAGE	Numerous grammar and language proficiency errors impede comprehension and affect the overall readability.	Some grammar and language proficiency errors are present but do not significantly hinder understanding.	Virtually no grammar or language proficiency errors, showcasing excellent writing skills.

Figure 21. Rubric 3: teacher's assessment story