

Can You Make It Through the Month?

An instrumental single case study of intercultural learning through the use of a video game in an upper secondary EAL classroom in Norway



Elise Brakstad

Master's Thesis in English Didactics

Department of Foreign Languages

University of Bergen May 2023

Acknowledgements

Thank you

First of all, to my supervisor Hild Elisabeth Hoff; Thank you for all your constructive and thorough feedback, and for guiding me back on the right path when I wrote myself too far into my own head.

I have to thank my best friend, evil twin and sister by choice, my forever proof-reader and study buddy, Marte, who has read almost every paper I handed in during my master studies, more than once, and spent hours on the phone with me discussing rewrites, semantics and orthographical choices in them all. Also thank you to all my friends who I probably bored senseless by talking about this master, for encouraging me and talking me up.

My family deserves a big thank you. Anders, for feeding me in busy writing periods, demanding that I take breaks, encouraging me when I was convinced that I could not finish and for leaving the house so I could write. Thank you to the family members who went out of their way to have fun with, and make sure that my daughter was not bored to death watching me constantly work. Aurora, I look forward to spending a lot more time doing fun things with you again. And of course, thank you to my eldest daughter, Marita, who took the time in her busy full-time student life, preparing to write her own master thesis, to double check my source citing. Studying at the same time as one's children has definitive benefits!

A thank you has to go to my school which facilitated for me to complete my studies while working in a full position, and for letting me conduct the research needed. Not to mention my colleagues, who helped me develop and test the lesson plan, and for all the discussions surrounding my thesis topic.

And of course, thank you to the participating students: You are the type of class that makes an English teacher wish that the subject would extend more years so it would be possible to be your teacher a bit longer.

Elise Brakstad

15th of May 2023

Abstract in Norwegian

Dette masterprosjektet undersøkte didaktiske muligheter og utfordringer ved å bruke et videospill fra internett som simulerer et liv i fattigdom i USA, *Spent* (McKinney, 2011), som et verktøy for interkulturell læring i engelsk i en studieforbedrende klasse på VG1.

Bakgrunnen for studien var at Norges nye læreplan, Kunnskapsløftet 2020, inkluderte spill som kulturelle uttrykk, på lik linje med tradisjonelle tekster, som noe elevene skulle reflektere over.

Undersøkelsen ble gjort gjennom en casestudie av 18 elever, der forskeren også hadde en lærerrolle, og resultatene ble tolket fra forskerens feltnotater, elevenes skriftlige tekster og semistrukturerte gruppeintervjuer med elevene. Datasettene ble også sammenlignet for å se om forskerens observasjoner korresponderte med elevenes selvrapportering av læringsutbytte.

Resultatene indikerer at bruk av spill generelt har mulighet til å øke den intrinsiske motivasjonen hos elevene ved å skape glede over skoleaktiviteter, og derfor muligens også læring. Elevenes selv-rapportering vektla at spillet sitt bruk av et «digitalt selv» fremmet immersjon i spillopplevelsen og var særlig effektivt for å skape en emosjonell reaksjon, noe som i forskningslitteraturen blir fremhevet som en forutsetning for utvikling av interkulturell kompetanse og som et særtrekk ved spill. Et resultat av studien som kan ha innvirkning på vurdering er at kombinasjonen av skriftlig og muntlig arbeid gav et bedre inntrykk av læringsutbyttet som ble rapportert, noe som indikerer at å gi elevene flere måter å reflektere over en aktivitet på kan være en måte for lærere å få større innblikk i den læringsmessige effekten av et undervisningsopplegg.

En didaktisk utfordring som kom til syne i alle datasettene var at spillingen av *Spent* og konteksten dette ble gjort i, ser ut til å ha skapt sterke etnosentriske syn blant elevene. Det som oftest ble mest rapportert som læringsutbytte var at Norge var et bedre land å bo i som fattig. En annen didaktisk utfordring som ble fremhevet var vanskeligheten ved å både observere og vurdere elevenes interkulturelle læring da denne består av indre prosesser som ikke lar seg determinere ved å studere elevene.

Studiens funn tyder på det å bruke spill som har et «digitalt selv» kan ha et særlig potensial når gjelder å integrere spill i en kontekst av interkulturell læring i engelskundervisningen. Likevel er videre forskning på sammenhengen mellom didaktisk bruk av spill og interkulturell læring nødvendig for å utforske mulighetene og for å motvirke de didaktiske utfordringene som gjorde seg gjeldende i denne studien.

List of figures

Figure 1: Byram’s model of intercultural competence11

List of tables

Table 1: Overview of the lessons with content.....35-36

Table 2: Type of data collected.....39

List of abbreviations

EAL- English as an additional language

FL- foreign language

LK20- The Knowledge Promotion of 2020

MCE- Ministry of Culture and Equality

MER- Ministry of Education

NDET- National Directory of Education and Training

NESH- National Research Ethics Committee

Table of contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract in Norwegian	ii
List of figures	iii
List of tables	iii
List of abbreviations	iii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Aim and scope	1
1.2 Background and rationale for the study	2
1.3 Why Spent	4
1.4 Previous research and research gap	6
1.5 Outline of the thesis	9
2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Intercultural competence	10
2.2.1 Critique of Byram's model	15
2.3. Intercultural competence in LK20	17
2.4 Interactive, digital texts in the English subject	19
2.5 Motivation	21
2.6 Games	23
2.6.1 What makes a game?	23
2.6.2 Games as a tool for learning	24
2.6.3 Games and emotion	26
2.6.4. The importance of implementing games correctly	29
3.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS	31
3.1 Introduction	31
3.2 Rationale for choice of research method	31
3.3 Participants	34
3.4 Context	35
3.5 Data collection	38

3.5.1 Field notes and essays	39
3.5.2 The interviews	41
3.6 Analytical procedures	43
3.7 Ethical considerations	45
3.8 Validity and reliability	47
3.9 Possible limitations of the materials and methods	49
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	50
4.1 Introduction.....	50
4.2 Classroom observations	50
4.2.1 Classroom observations and emotions	51
4.2.2 Classroom observations and immersion.....	51
4.2.3 Classroom observations and motivation	52
4.2.4 Classroom observations and ethnocentric views	53
4.3 Essays	53
4.3.1 Essays and emotions	54
4.3.2 Essays and immersion	55
4.3.3 Essays and motivation	56
4.3.4 Essays and ethnocentric views	56
4.4 The interviews	
.....	59
4.4.1 The interviews and emotions	59
4.4.2 The interviews and immersion	61
4.4.3 The interviews and motivation	63
4.4.4 The interviews and ethnocentric views	64
4.5 Comparison of findings from the three data sets	65
5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	72
5.1 Introduction	72
5.2 Summary of the main findings	72
5.2.1 Emotional response	73
5.2.2 Immersion	74
5.2.3 Motivation	74
5.2.4 Ethnocentric views	75

5.2.5 Assessment	76
5.2.6 Pedagogical use of games	76
5.3 Didactic implications	77
5.4 Possible limitations of the thesis and suggestions for further research	79
5.5 Concluding remarks	80
REFERENCES	81
APPENDICES	87
Appendix A: Evaluation and approval from Sikt	87
Appendix B: Approval for use of personal recording device	92
Appendix C: Consent form for students	93
Appendix D: Signed consent form from the principal	97
Appendix E: Field notes from classroom observations	98
Appendix F: Essay task and evaluation criteria	102
Appendix G: The essays	104
Appendix H: Interview guide	133
Appendix I: Interview transcript	134

1. Introduction

1.1 Aim and scope

Computer and video games have, in recent years, been highlighted as pedagogic tools that should be used in the classroom. The Ministry of Culture and Equality [MCE] made a “Computer game strategy 2020-2022” (MCE, 2019), meant to “lift computer games as an independent cultural expression, art form, industry and leisure activity” (MCE, p.7, 2019 my translation). The Norwegian government’s focus on gaming in school became apparent in the new curriculum in Norway, the Knowledge Promotion of 2020 [LK20]. In LK20, the Ministry of Education [MER] have placed games, for the first time, in the competence aims in upper secondary school as something the students are meant to explore (MER, 2019). Although the new content required teachers to have a specific skill set, there was little to no focus on how the teachers, both experienced and inexperienced with gaming, should work to make use of games in the classroom or what type of games should be used. In addition, the curriculum developed by the National Directory of Education and Training [NDET] in Norway in the past, and even more in LK20 (NDET, 2017), emphasises to develop students’ intercultural competence. These features of the new curriculum came with little to no guidance on how the teachers should work to achieve said goal. The lack of information on how to work with the new features for teachers, and the apparent lack of research on games linked specifically to interculturality made it clear that this field of research needs more attention. The hope is that this thesis will provide new insights for teachers, student teachers and scholars within the field of English didactics research concerning how games may be used pedagogically to facilitate for intercultural learning. Therefore, this thesis aims to answer the primary question:

What are some of the didactic opportunities and challenges related to using the digital, interactive game Spent (McKinney, 2011) as a medium for intercultural learning in an English as an additional language classroom?

To the best of my knowledge, the connection between using games as an educational medium in a context of intercultural learning has not been researched extensively, and in an attempt to explore the issue in depth, two sub-questions were added:

1. What did the researcher’s field notes from the classroom reveal about the students’ learning process and learning outcomes?

2. How, and to what extent, did this correspond with what the students reported in essays and group interviews?

To try to answer these questions, a qualitative research method was used, more specifically an instrumental single case study. The research was conducted in an upper secondary school in Western Norway that offers both vocational and general studies, and this study is focused on 18 students in one class of general studies English where the researcher functioned in the dual role of both teacher and researcher. The data collected and analysed came from three sources within the class: the researcher's field notes of classroom observations, student essays and semi-structured group interviews with students.

1.2 Background and rationale for the study

Education plays an important part in students' lives, and apart from providing knowledge and insight, schools are meant to prepare children and youth for life as functional adults. The Education Act in Norway states that the purpose of education is to "open doors to the world and give the pupils [...] insight into and a firm foundation in history and culture", and that the education they receive should "provide insight into cultural diversity" and is meant to "promote democracy, equality and scientific thinking" (the Education Act, 1998, §1-1). This means that knowledge and understanding regarding the cultures and peoples of the world are something teachers are required by law to guide students towards. The Education Act (1998) is the foundation on which LK20 is built and NDET states that "School shall base its practice on the values in the objectives clause of the Education Act" (2017, p. 4). In other words, this mandate related to intercultural knowledge and understanding is something that should be known to teachers in the Norwegian school system and should also be reflected in the activities of the classroom. Still, despite this strong focus on interculturality in Norwegian schools, the path to promoting students' intercultural understanding is not explicitly explained and therefore up to every teacher to discover.

The focus on intercultural competence was even more fortified in the new curriculum LK20. This new curriculum was gradually implemented at the start of the school year 2020 with English being one of the first subjects to get new competence aims and core elements in general studies of upper secondary year one. In addition to being a language taught at Norwegian schools, English is the international language used by many, making the English as an additional language [EAL] classroom the natural place to focus on communication, globality and interculturality, something the new curriculum also stated:

through working with the subject the pupils shall become confident users of English so that they can use English to learn, communicate and connect with others. Knowledge of and an exploratory approach to language, communication patterns, lifestyles, ways of thinking and social conditions open for new perspectives on the world and ourselves (MER, 2019, p. 2).

A new feature of LK20 was that the core elements of this new curriculum also explicitly state that what should be perceived as a text has now changed to include everything that conveys a message:

The concept of text is used in a broad sense: texts can be spoken and written, printed and digital, graphic and artistic, formal and informal, fictional and factual, contemporary and historical. The texts can contain writing, pictures, audio, drawings, graphs, numbers and other forms of expression that are combined to enhance and present a message (MER, 2019, p. 3).

For the English teacher, this means that digital, interactive texts should be incorporated into the classroom and that the traditional focus on text as a print-based medium should be reconsidered.

LK20's implementation started amid a global pandemic with many teachers still struggling to figure out a good way to teach their subject through online classes, or a hybrid of both teaching half the class in school and half the class at home at the same time. The new curriculum was meant to come with preparation tasks for the teachers to work on before its implementation in the autumn of 2020 (see NDET, 2022), but when the world closed down, teachers missed valuable preparation time on the new features of the curriculum and possible explanations on both intercultural learning and the new competence aim featuring gaming in the classroom (see NDET, 2022). To the best of my knowledge, despite the Covid restrictions being lifted, these preparatory tasks have not been resumed.

In one of the new competence aims in LK20, the students were now meant to “discuss and reflect on form, content and language features and literary devices in different cultural forms of expression from different media in the English-language world, including music, film and gaming” (MER, 2019, p. 12). This competence aim placed, for the first time, games as an obligatory part of the English classroom in Norway. Not only did this competence aim set the use of games as a form of text firmly in a Norwegian classroom setting, but games were also put in the same category as traditional literary texts; games were now meant to be analysed

and reflected on as a cultural expression in alignment with MCE and their Computer game strategy (2019). What the new curriculum did not do, however, was to state what type of games were meant with the term “gaming” in the competence aim. Many of the teachers at my school, myself included, worried about how to navigate and teach games and gaming in a way that promoted learning. Teaching regarding reflecting on and discussing literary texts was, and is, an established part of the English subject, but how should one teach, and use, what was an unfamiliar genre for many? The practical challenges of getting access to games to use came to mind, not to mention the didactic complexities of how to use games in a way that promoted learning. In an era where the choice of what games to play is vast: what makes a game appropriate for pedagogical use, and which one to choose when LK20 leaves the choice up to the teacher? In addition, NDET also states that teachers should have a strong focus on the Core Curriculum when planning lessons; “teachers [...] must regularly reflect on the connection between the teaching and training in the subjects and the overriding goals, values and principles for the teaching and training” while also seeing the competence aims “in light of the objectives clause and the other sections of the curriculum” (NDET. 2017, p. 12). This means that not only should teachers help the students reflect and discuss cultural expressions, but teachers should also do so in a manner that promotes intercultural learning. In other words, even though the competence aims are the most direct background for the planned activities during a lesson, with this link between the different parts of LK20 in mind, it is important to emphasise intercultural learning when planning a lesson and activity in the English subject.

As any activity in school, using new pedagogical tools requires preparation and knowledge on the part of the teacher. To successfully integrate games in the classroom, knowledge of *how* to do it and *why* it works is essential. The same can be said in relation to intercultural competence: Teachers need to know *what* it entails, what to look for and *how* to facilitate for intercultural learning. With this as the main idea, the lesson plan and implementation of a game as a medium for intercultural learning in the classroom became the rationale and motivation for this thesis, and *Spent* was the choice of game.

1.3 Why *Spent*

Spent was developed by McKinney for the Urban Ministries of Durham as a way to show the situation of many low-income families in the US. Since it is not made for educational purposes, it is an authentic text from another culture according to the definition by Little, D.G & Singleton, D.M (1988) that the authenticity comes from the text being

“produced for some non-pedagogical purpose” (p. 1). The fact that the game is an authentic text designed to give an insight into poverty in the US is the first and foremost reason, though only one of the reasons, why this interactive, digital game was chosen. Another reason is that it is an online game that can be accessed in a browser and there is therefore no need for extra equipment besides the PC that the students already have. That makes it easily accessible and free. This aspect made it easy to use in a school setting since Norwegian schools have strict rules that students are not supposed to spend any money on their education, a free school principle (the Education Act, 1998, § 3-1).

This game is designed to increase the understanding of the situation families living on minimum wage are in through playing a game that puts the player into the situation and therefore might have the outcome of creating a stronger emotional response. This is in accordance with what Isbister (2017) states about the impact games can have; “games can actually play a powerful role in creating empathy and other strong, positive emotional experiences” (p. 3), supporting the theories discussed in section 2.6.3 that games can evoke feelings that other mediums fail to do in the same way. At the beginning of the game, the player is given 1000 dollars and is told to try and make it through 30 days. The first thing the player must do is to choose where to work, if they need insurance and what plan to choose, and where to live. All these choices will affect the gameplay, meaning players can play the game multiple times and get a different outcome each time. The game ends when the player either runs out of money or makes it to the end of the month with money to spare. A round of the game is also achievable in a session in school since it takes about 15-30 minutes to complete. The time aspect of the game is both an advantage and a downside. It is easy to complete in one lesson and therefore practical for classroom use, but this short time in gameplay can also be too short to create the type of flow and engagement discussed in section 2.6.3. Still, since the game is made up of a challenge to overcome an obstacle, the state of flow when one loses the sense of time and place and only focuses on the activity (see Isbister, 2017), might be present if the students play more than once to complete the goal. When playing the interactive game *Spent*, students are faced with several choices like whether they should go to the doctor if they are ill, if they can afford to help a sick relative, if they can prioritise their child over work and so on. The questions are designed to show what life can be like in a low-income family and concern work, health, education and basic family needs (see Centre for Systems Solutions, 2018). The questions also function to further the experience of putting the player into the life of a person in this type of situation since the player must make

the challenging choices. This aspect of a “digital self” has the potential of making the game suitable for use as a pedagogical tool that has the potential to elicit the feelings of sympathy and empathy that Bredella (2006) conditions as important when facilitating for the development of intercultural competence. *Spent* presents scenarios and decision-making situations that require critical thinking and promote empathy, which are also essential for aspects of intercultural learning. This emotional influence will be discussed in more detail in section 2.6.3.

1.4 Previous research and research gap

Gaming in school is a phenomenon that has interested researchers since the development of the first consoles decades ago. Among the more famous names are Gee (see for example Gee 2004, 2007, 2008 and 2014) and Van Eck, (see for example Van Eck 2006 and 2009), who have contributed greatly to the literature on games as a learning tool in a school setting. Despite the vast number of hits that a Google Scholar search will produce, in a Norwegian setting, there are not many results when it comes to the use of games in the EAL classrooms. Even with LK20’s demand for gaming being firmly placed in the EAL upper secondary classroom, it does not seem like many have researched the topic in the context of EAL education in Norway, especially not the use of a game as a medium to promote intercultural learning.

There is, however, some previous research that is relevant to the present thesis. Brevik & Hellekjær (2017), investigated reading comprehension strategy use in English as a second language acquisition among 10 331 Norwegian students at the age of 16. From the national sample, 463 stood out and were labelled “outliers” (Brevik & Hellekjær, 2017) because these students surprisingly had better reading comprehension in English than in their native tongue. In addition, these students were among the lowest-scoring in Norwegian, and highest-scoring in English. Based on this result, some of the students were studied further, and the reason for their differences in proficiency seemed to be tied to their thought of English being a useful language and motivation for the use of English, in their extramural activities, their activities outside of school (Brevik & Hellekjær, 2017). Among these extramural activities, gaming was emphasised as the most time-consuming among the outliers, who reported that they spent more than three hours every day gaming and using English. This study emphasises need for the students to feel that English is a necessary language, and they also seem to connect gaming as an extramural activity to motivation for learning the language, although more research is needed (Brevik & Hellekjær, 2017). These results are interesting for the present

thesis since they emphasise the link between motivation, gaming and language learning. This link will be discussed further in section 2.5.

Molnes and Hamm both finished their master theses in 2019, and both focused on the use of games in the upper secondary EAL classroom in general studies. These are somewhat the same circumstances as this thesis, however, they both focused on the game *Gone Home*, and even more importantly, their studies were conducted during a curriculum that is no longer in use. Still, their results are, to some extent, relevant to the present thesis. Molnes (2019) did his master's thesis research on how playing games in EAL-classroom might potentially be connected to the promotion of *Bildung*, a concept that has a close connection to intercultural competence. Both involve changes within a person and these changes are somewhat brought forward by feelings of empathy and sympathy and require openness towards *the other*, a concept that will be discussed in section 2.2. His findings were that the students respond to gaming as something enjoyable and that playing through a "digital self" increases the feeling of sympathy and empathy therefore potentially games are a tool for both *Bildung* and intercultural competence in EAL classrooms (Molnes, 2019). Hamm (2019) focused her study on how games could be used as a form of literature in the EAL classroom, and how the students themselves reported that they had learnt from the experience of using a game, to learn about literary devices. Her results also indicate that the students found the experience of playing a game in English class enjoyable and that their learning outcome increased through the experience of using a digital, interactive text.

Aaberg (2020) conducted his study in an upper secondary school in Norway and also focused on if the educational use of the videogame *Gone Home* worked as a motivational factor for the students' EAL learning in general studies. Similarly to Hamm's findings, Aaberg's (2020) results seem to indicate that playing interactive video games in school has the potential to increase the student's motivation for the English subject. In addition, he also researched the participating students' reports on their EAL learning after playing video games at school with results indicating that games might affect the student's learning outcomes positively, however, the students needed to see the relevance of the game to their learning to be positive towards gaming in school (Aaberg, 2020). This highlights some of the challenges with using games in a classroom setting, namely that the teachers need comprehensive knowledge on how to use games in a way that promotes learning. Unlike Molnes (2019) and Hamm (2019), Aaberg (2020) focused his study towards LK20, the same as the present thesis. Even though his premise is somewhat similar to the research that is the basis for this thesis,

with regards to LK20 and students' self-reporting on learning outcomes, he does not cover the concept of intercultural competence, and his study is focused on the self-reporting of the students' feelings on second language acquisition through the use of a game.

Another thesis that focuses on games in education is by Bjørklund (2022). He recently conducted a study in which he examined the use of games in the EAL classroom from the teachers' perspective, more precisely their attitudes towards using games as a pedagogical tool. Even though the study was based on data drawn from a lower secondary setting, his results are relevant for the present thesis since they highlight the challenges that many teachers feel they are not trained in the use of games in school and do not know how to implement them. In addition, his study emphasises that practical and economic challenges are difficult for teachers even if they are willing to use games in their classrooms (Bjørklund, 2022).

Even though there do not seem to be any studies that connect intercultural competence and games, there are studies that connect intercultural competence through the use of texts in the form of movies. Vogel (2022) did her study on using the film *Gran Torino* to promote intercultural understanding in an upper secondary vocational class in Norway, and her results indicate that the use of these types of texts has the potential to increase students' understanding of other cultures and therefore *the other* through working with reflective tasks that promote the student's ability to look inwards. One important aspect is that this increased understanding occurs if the tasks and teaching material are designed in a manner that promotes critical thinking, something that again highlights the importance of teachers having comprehensive knowledge of how to make use of a pedagogical tool.

Nygaard (2014), Helgesen (2017) and Stautland (2020) all conducted research on whether and how intercultural understanding is promoted through the tasks and literary texts in EAL textbooks. This means that their studies are focused on facilitating intercultural competence, but they focus primarily on the didactic potential of tasks related to script-based texts, not through a digital media. In addition, all three of these studies are linked to the previous curriculum, and Nygaard (2014) and Stautland (2020) did their studies with regard to a course called International English that students in upper secondary, general studies, before LK20, could choose in year two, meaning that the contextual basis of their studies differs from the present study. Still, their results point to the fact that the English subject is an important arena for the development of intercultural competence, something that LK20 emphasise to a greater extent than ever.

Despite gaming in school and intercultural competence being two well-known highly researched educational areas, and the strong connection between the two being conditioned by LK20, there is not, to the best of my knowledge, previous empirical research that connects intercultural learning with the use of games in a general study EAL-classroom of upper secondary in Norway. Since LK20 has implemented the use of games as a cultural expression to be reflected on, the link to intercultural learning is clear. However, there is a need for further research on the potential and practical role these interactive, digital games can have when it comes to facilitating for intercultural learning in the Norwegian EAL classroom.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

Chapter two is the theoretical background; its purpose is to provide a theoretical framework for the present study: A presentation of what intercultural competence entails will be followed by showing the presence of a focus on globality and interculturality in LK20 and then digital, interactive texts and their role in the English subject. In the following section, the focus will turn to games, their characteristics and how to use them didactically in the classroom. A presentation of the methodology will make up the third chapter. In this chapter, the rationale for the research method is shown before presenting the participants of the study. The different data collected and the reason for the choice of data material will be introduced, followed by the analytical procedures used in the study. A discussion of the ethics one needs to consider when conducting research in a school setting makes the next section of the chapter. This section will be followed by an examination of the validity and reliability of the study and end with a discussion of possible limitations of the materials collected and methods used. In the fourth chapter, there will be a presentation of the research results in the different data sets and a comparison of said results. The final chapter will give a summary of the main findings, before presenting didactic implications for the EAL classroom. Next, there will be a presentation of possible limitations of the thesis and suggestions for further research, and the final section will give concluding remarks.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Introduction

This chapter's aim is to provide the relevant theoretical background to discuss the empirical findings of this study. As stated in the introduction, LK20 has a strong focus on intercultural competence as something to aim for. In order to facilitate the development of students' intercultural competence, it is important to understand what the term entails. Therefore, this chapter will start by discussing how intercultural competence has been theorised as an educational concept, both historically and today, before showing how intercultural competence is present in LK20. Digital texts are also clearly emphasised in LK20 as a pedagogical medium to use, so the next part of this chapter will focus on interactive, digital texts, how these types of texts might help motivate students to learn, and how interactive texts might be linked to intercultural learning. The next section deals with games; how this thesis defines games, and what elements need to be present for a game to be successful in engaging the player, before moving on to what makes games a pedagogical tool suitable for learning. The importance of emotions and how games have the potential of creating an emotional response in the player will be presented and linked to intercultural learning, and the last section will deal with the importance of implementing games in the classroom in a way that promotes learning.

2.2. Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence is a concept that is not easily defined, but as the name suggests, it concerns contact between cultures. It also involves creating the competence to develop and manoeuvring the following relationships that hopefully arise when meeting cultures that differ from one's own. For years, intercultural competence has been a focal point in the EAL classroom, since "learning a FL [foreign language] entails encountering and interacting with otherness on a personal level" (Hoff, 2014, p. 509), and therefore facilitating for encounters between individuals from different cultures.

In the field of English as an additional language didactics, the concept of *the other* is important when examining intercultural competence. *The other* is an individual that differs culturally from *the self* in some way, and it is in meetings between these that people are able to see and understand themselves, others and the world: "Living and thinking [...], are, respectively, shy of or beyond the Self. Only with [...] desire assume the characters of otherness and subjectivity that constitute a Self. Conversely, the Self overflows itself in

feelings of belonging to a community or to an idea. In this sense, the self is a "between-two," a transition" (Ricoeur, 1986, p. 107). *The self* is our individuality, while *the other* is the people we encounter and live in this world with. The interaction between *the self* and *the other* and their otherness is a vital part of being a human: "Man is this plural and collective unity in which the unity of destination and the difference of destinies are to be understood through each other" (Ricoeur, 1986, p. 138). When *the self* meets *the other*, intercultural encounters occur, and through these meetings, humans understand both themselves and *the other*, if willing to interact.

When discussing cultural interactions, one influential name in this context is Michael Byram. His research on, and model of, what needs to be present to develop intercultural communicative competence has made him a renowned name with regard to this concept and what it entails. According to Byram, being an "intercultural speaker" (2008, p. 59) involves having intercultural competence (see Byram, 2008) and intercultural competence involves "skills, knowledge and attitudes other than those which are primarily linguistic" (Byram, 1997, p. 49). This means that being an intercultural speaker involves being interculturally competent. Byram's well-known model emphasises the different aspects of learning that need to be present for the person to develop intercultural communicative competence, and therefore intercultural competence. When conducting research aimed partially to investigate what the students themselves report on learning outcomes, Byram's model is a useful tool since it provides observable aspects to be studied.

His model is made up of five different aspects that when applied together, form successful intercultural communication:

	Skills interpret and relate (savoir comprendre)	
Knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal (savoir être)	Education political education critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager)	Attitudes relativising self valuing other (savoir être)
	Skills discover and/or interact (savoir apprendre/faire)	

Figure 1: Byram's model of intercultural competence (adapted from Byram, 1997, p. 34)

This model emphasises that being and behaving interculturally involve attitudes, knowledge, skills and education (Byram, 1997, pp. 34-38). More precisely attitudes concern the developing of “curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own (*savoir être*)” (Byram, 2008, p. 69), meaning that ideally, students should be willing to change their attitudes toward different cultures, including the ones themselves are a part of, based on intercultural interaction, while hopefully avoiding cultural stereotypes. In addition, this aspect involves a willingness to be open to new perspectives and engage in intercultural meetings showing respect and empathy. Consequently, this aspect will be a focus in the present thesis as the goal of the lesson plan and playing *Spent* is to hopefully, through knowledge, skill and education, have an impact on the students’ attitudes, as the willingness to change one’s attitudes is an important part of intercultural learning.

The aspect of knowledge concerns knowledge “of social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor’s country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction (*savoirs*)” (Byram, 2008, p. 69). Knowledge in this context is how interactions between social groups and individuals are conducted and interpreted within different cultures and it involves having the knowledge to manoeuvre the different social conventions. In the present thesis, the aspect concerning social conventions in Byram’s (1997) model is not as relevant as the students are not participating in intercultural encounters in a manner that needs knowledge of social conventions. Still, knowledge in this context also includes knowledge of “institutions, and perceptions of them, which impinge on daily life within one's own and one's interlocutor's country and which conduct and influence relationships between them” (Byram, 1997, p. 51) which is important when the lesson plan involves knowledge on societal issues such as poverty and the institutions involved in said issue.

The skills of the model are divided into two. The first part is having the “ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one’s own (*savoir comprendre*)” (Byram, 2008, p. 69), and involves understanding values, norms and behaviours of different cultures and also their impact on intercultural encounters. The second part involves the “ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*)” (Byram, 2008, p. 69), and entails insight into the different cultures. It is also concerned with the different ways people from different cultures communicate, and about applying the strategies

said insight gives depending on the cultures involved in the interaction. The focus on manoeuvring attitudes, knowledge and skills involved in *savoir faire* means that this aspect is not as relevant for the present thesis as the focus of the study is not on communication with individuals from different cultures. Still, the ability to acquire new knowledge about cultures is highly relevant as the lesson plan involves gaining new knowledge on the American Dream and the value of working hard to achieve one's goal as a national historical ethos of the US.

The final aspect of Byram's (1997) model is education and involves "an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries (*savoirs'engager*)" (Byram, 2008, p. 69). In this entails taking a more distant, critical stance on different cultures, including one's own. Byram strongly asserts that "being intercultural is an activity" (2008, p. 69), and that the different aspects in this model need to be a part of the person's inner growth in order to build intercultural competence. He also stresses that developing intercultural competence "requires a willingness to suspend those deeper values, at least temporarily, in order to be able to understand and empathise with the values of others that are incompatible with one's own" (Byram, 2008, p. 69) and that "to act interculturally is to bring into relationship two cultures" (Byram, 2008, p. 68). One of the suggested routes to take when trying to promote intercultural competence is the "possibility of introducing children to the culture of a new social group [...] contrasting with their own" (Byram, 2008, p. 70), and when doing that making sure that one makes it possible that the students' "experience of the world is extended, as it is constantly in schooling, but with a different set of beliefs, values and behaviours implicit in the new world they encounter" (Byram, 2008, p. 70). He also stresses that the appropriate route to take for a teacher is to facilitate so that the students are exposed to ways of life that are different from their own and hopefully help them develop an understanding of *the other*. The teacher's job in this is to teach the students "the ability to see how different cultures relate to each other- in terms of similarities and differences- and to mediate between them" (Byram, 2008, p. 68). When conducting a lesson plan concerning issues in American society, this aspect of education becomes important. The students need to be able to see the structure of American society in light of American values and contrast them with the values of their own culture in order to "suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own" (Byram, 2008, p. 69). The teacher's job in this context is to guide them towards this knowledge of the cultures in question.

Another scholar who supports Byram in his views that it is important to immerse oneself in the worldviews of *the other* to fully gain the different aspects involved in intercultural competence is Bredella (2006). He states that “If we put ourselves into the position of others and see the world through their eyes, we might change our attitude towards them” (p. 74). This means that the EAL classroom in Norway, with the subject’s focus on globality and interculturality, is one of the most important arenas for students to encounter different cultures. Bredella stresses that, in order for the teacher to facilitate the development of intercultural competence, they need to let the students process the emotions classroom activities bring forth, and that empathy and sympathy are some of the teacher’s most important tools: “Empathy implies that we bracket our beliefs and values in order to see the world from the other’s perspective” (p. 73) and that sympathy is important because it makes sure that “our own beliefs and values come into play” (pp. 73-74). He further states that “a connection between empathy and sympathy [...] is important for intercultural understanding” (p. 74). This does not mean that the students automatically will become interculturally competent if teachers expose them to classroom settings that evoke empathy and sympathy, and Bredella conditions that the inner processes that bring change within oneself need to be present: “Intercultural competence is not a mere technique but an educational process which changes ourselves and makes us less self-centred and more thoughtful” (pp. 77-78). This means that intercultural competence is not something that can be activated through one simple classroom experience, but rather a change within that is somewhat hard to measure. It also means that this is an ongoing process that needs constant attention in the classroom and will not necessarily end with a visible result since it involves “The ability to ‘decentre’ in order to examine one’s own culture from another point” (Hoff, 2014, p. 514) something that cannot easily be instrumentally taught.

The ELA classroom is an important arena for facilitating the development of intercultural competence, as learning a foreign language “goes beyond developing linguistic skills; it also entails being socialised into foreign cultures” (Hoff, 2014, p. 509). Therefore, foreign language education has the possibility to “challenge learners to open up and negotiate with other perspectives, interpretations and world views” (Hoff, 2014, p. 509). When attempting to promote intercultural competence in a classroom setting the teacher needs to incorporate many different types of teaching materials. Games have now made their way into upper secondary classrooms and are recognised as a form of literature by the current English subject curriculum (see, MER, 2019). Working with interactive texts gives teachers more

opportunities to find different cultural expressions to use. In this context, Fenner (2001) highlights the cultural aspect of working with texts in the classroom because encountering culture through texts is dependent on communication to promote understanding:

Only by entering into communication with the other, is it possible to understand the other as well as oneself. In foreign language learning the reading of literature must be seen as a double process. Entering into a communication process with the literary text is also entering into a dialogic process with the foreign culture, where not only the text and the culture in question are interpreted, but where the individual learner's self is developed through temporal dialogue and interpretation. Personal engagement on the learner's side is vital in this process (Fenner, 2001, p. 22).

In other words, simply introducing the students to a text and expecting it to facilitate for an intercultural experience will not work. The students have to be an active part in the act of reading. In the context of playing *Spent*, this means that the students should relate the experience of playing to pre-knowledge achieved through the surrounding lesson plan to promote understanding. Again, emphasising that a thought-out lesson plan that integrates the activities surrounding the text work, like exploring a digital, interactive cultural expression such as *Spent*, has the potential to promote intercultural learning by engaging the students in their reading experience. Hoff (2020a) also emphasises the use of texts as a means for facilitating intercultural competence, and that exposing students to text and letting them work with them is only one of the many steps involved: “the challenge for the English teacher is to help learners establish a meaningful and negotiating dialogue with a wide range of cultural expressions” (p. 84), supporting the conclusion made by Byram and Bredella and further stressing that this is an important aspect of the teacher's work in the classroom and that the teacher should continuously work on facilitation of intercultural competence.

2.2.1. Critique of Byram's model

In recent years Byram has been criticised for some of the aspects of his model. His model was created in a world very different world than the current one. The expanding global community on the Internet, migration between countries and technological advancements have made the interaction between cultures easily accessible. One of the critiques of Byram's model (1997) concerns its emphasis on "national identity" at the expense of other aspects of individuals' cultural identity. According to Hoff (2020b), “it has been claimed that Byram's (1997) model is tied to a rather static and simplified notion of national culture” (p. 58)

because of his tendency “to associate culture with the word “country” in the description of savoirs and objectives. The “culture” of a particular individual tends to be referred to in the singular, and associated with a particular “perspective,” also in the singular” (Hoff, 2020b, p. 58). This leaves little to no room for the diversity reflected in today’s world and gives the impression that people within a nation act as a single group with the same beliefs. The model does acknowledge the fact that there are sub-cultures within a nation and that society is changing when it comes to multiculturalism (see Hoff, 2020b), still, it has been pointed out that several researchers have criticised that the model does not “adequately encompass the complexities which govern 21st century intercultural communication” (Hoff, 2020, p. 57). Another aspect of Byram’s model that has been criticised is his focus on creating a “harmonious fusion of worldviews” (Hoff, 2014, p. 511). The aspect of *savoir être* reflects a view that *the other’s* culture should be met with open-mindedness and absolute tolerance to be able to communicate across cultures (see Byram, 1997). One should be open to meetings with *the other*, but absolute harmony is not always the best way to go. Sometimes, having different opinions and worldviews in a discussion can result in “meaningful communicative situations in which the participants are deeply engaged, thus contributing to a higher level of honesty and involvement” (Hoff, 2014, p. 514), and promote intercultural competence through understanding each other in disagreement. This aspect of disagreement is also promoted in the New Curriculum:

The ability to understand what others think, feel and experience is the basis for empathy and friendship between pupils. Dialogue is crucial in social learning, and the school must teach the value and importance of a listening dialogue to deal with opposition. When interacting with their pupils, the teachers must promote communication and collaboration that will give the pupils the confidence and courage to express their own opinions and to point out issues on the behalf of others. To learn to listen to others and also argue for one's own views will give the pupils the platform for dealing with disagreements and conflicts, and for seeking solutions together (NDET, 2017, p. 11).

This means that the new Core Curriculum states opposing views as something the students should experience, and the teachers’ job is to help them navigate these differences with help from the pedagogical tools available. In this lies the aspect of understanding *the other’s* culture, and that this understanding does not necessarily mean agreement.

Despite the critique, Byram's (1997) model remains one of the most influential models on how to take part in successful intercultural interactions. It is also useful for the present study since it gives reference points to be investigated and compared with regard to the students' self-reporting, their essays and the researchers' field notes. Byram himself has addressed the critique (see Byram, 2021) and has given a new updated model where the different savoirs are intertwined to emphasise that the model does not "depend on a concept of neutral communication of information across cultural barriers, but rather on a rich definition of communication as interaction, and on an educational philosophy of critical engagement with otherness and critical reflection on self" (Byram, 2021, p. 194), stressing that this model is to be seen in an educational setting and that there are different stages of achieved success in intercultural communication. Though his new model takes into account some of the critiques aimed at the original model, the updated version covers more than the present thesis sought to investigate, and therefore the original model was used.

2.3. Intercultural competence in LK20

In LK20, the English subject has a prominent role when facilitating for cultural knowledge and communication: "English is an important subject when it comes to cultural understanding [...] The subject shall give the pupils the foundation for communicating with others, both locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background. English shall help the pupils to develop an intercultural understanding of different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns." (MER, 2019, p. 2). The suggested approach to facilitate for this intercultural understanding, and hopefully competence, is through working with texts:

Working with texts in English helps to develop the pupils' knowledge and experience of linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as their insight into ways of living, ways of thinking [...] By reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing different types of texts in English, the pupils shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society. Thus the pupils will develop intercultural competence enabling them to deal with different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns (MER, 2019, p. 3).

People meet texts every day, and through the Internet, the world has gained more ways to explore digital competence, both in private and in a school setting. This ever-expanding aspect of the online world gives the English teacher new choices on how to use these endless

digital and interactive resources: “Digitisation introduces fundamental changes to the *text culture* of the subject of English” (Ørevik, 2020, p. 169 emphasis in original). If used correctly, the Internet and all its features can give the English teacher different, innovative and creative resources to work in the classroom giving our students experience with the interactive pedagogical tools available. An example of this new text type is the game *Spent*. The player decides the actions of the game by making different choices, giving the player an interactive experience into a cultural expression.

Another feature of LK20 is that it focuses on interdisciplinary topics meant to stimulate the students’ engagement in social issues in need of focus and improvement: Democracy and citizenship, health and life skills and sustainable development (MER, 2019). The English subject has focus points regarding democracy and citizenship, as well as health and life skills (MER, 2019). These interdisciplinary topics have different meanings in each subject and the topic of democracy and citizenship in the English subject should be a guide to “helping the pupils to develop their understanding of the fact that the way they view the world is culture dependent” (MER, 2019, p. 3) and to further the understanding so that it “can open for new ways to interpret the world, and promote curiosity and engagement and help to prevent prejudices” (MER, 2019, p. 3). Working with texts under the heading of the interdisciplinary topic of democracy and citizenship is being focused on as a gateway to hopefully facilitate for intercultural competence. This means that promoting the development of intercultural competence is an important aspect in the core elements of the new English subject and that the use of *Spent*, as a text, is tied to both the competence aim and the Core Curriculum’s focus on intercultural learning.

The strong focus on the English subject having an important role in the student’s development towards intercultural competence means that this is an important feature that every English teacher should aim to implement in the classroom. Still, there is no in-depth explanation of what this intercultural competence is or how to work in the classroom to facilitate for it. Another aspect that is not explained is how to determine if your students are interculturally competent, besides it being emphasised in the general guidelines for setting the summative grade at the end of the year. To obtain the grade 2, the students should demonstrate “some intercultural competence in oral and/ or written texts by explaining and reflecting on in a simple way about linguistic and cultural diversity, social relations, and English cultural expressions” (my translation NDET, 2020). To earn the grade 4, the student should display “wide intercultural competence” and “reflect independently”, while the grade 6 calls for the

student to express “wide intercultural competence” and “explain, see connections and reflect critically” (my translation NDET, 2020). The guidelines also stress that due to the competence aims opening up for different approaches and content in different classrooms, these criteria should serve as support for providing the summative assessment at the end of the year, making the competence aims the main basis for the end-of-year grade (See NDET, 2020). The guidelines state that the students show competence by reflecting and explaining in texts, what is lacking is an explanation of what is meant by students showing intercultural competence and how teachers can use these to measure intercultural competence. Becoming intercultural competent is an inner process that involves changes within a person that are not easily measured. LK20 as a whole does not provide teachers with explicit ways to facilitate intercultural competence, nor does it provide an explanation of what intercultural competence implies, how to fully understand the processes involved in promoting intercultural competence in the classroom, and how to measure the outcome to grade students fairly. This is a challenge that every teacher in upper secondary school faces, and hopefully, the present thesis can provide some guidelines on how to use games in a way that facilitates intercultural learning and perhaps knowledge on how to assess students in line with the summative assessment criteria.

2.4. Interactive, digital texts in the English subject

As established in the introduction and in section 2.2, texts are seen as cultural expressions and as a way to explore different aspects of the world, and games are now considered texts (MER, 2017). The interactive features of *Spent* necessitate the investigation of this aspect and for it to be taken into account when analysing the data the present study uncovers. Especially in relation to if the interactive design had any influence on the student’s own feelings about their learning outcomes. This is because a text on its own is not enough to facilitate for intercultural competence, it is also “dependent upon the way in which the reader interacts with the text” (Hoff & Habegger-Conti, 2022, p. 69). Even though Hoff and Habegger-Conti focus on the use of movies in this context, the same principle can be applied to the use of *Spent* as both are digital, cultural expressions.

In the description of the basic skills of the English subject in LK20, digital texts are stressed as something the students should encounter and master: “Reading in English means understanding and reflecting on the content of various types of texts on paper and on screen [...] It means reading and finding information in multimedia texts with competing messages and using reading strategies to understand explicit and implicit information” (MER, 2017, p.

4), connecting it with the competence aim regarding reflection and finding meaning in different cultural expressions like for example *Spent*. Digital competence is emphasised as something that “requires critical and reflected behaviour using digital forms of expression in English and in communication with others” (MER, 2017, p. 4). It is also stressed that students should encounter “authentic language models” (MER, 2017, p. 4), further strengthening the aspect of communication with other cultures through text work as a focal point in the English subject and that using an authentic text like *Spent* might enhance the intercultural experience. The oral skills in the English subject are also connected to intercultural communication as: “oral skills in English means using the spoken language [...] to communicate on different topics in formal and informal situations with a variety of receivers with varying linguistic backgrounds” (MER, 2017, p. 4). From this, the conclusion can be drawn that interculturality is connected to not only the competence aims and the Core Curriculum, but it makes up a part of the basic skills of the subject, and that working with digital, interactive, authentic cultural expressions like *Spent* might be one of the routes to take.

The Internet is full of potential pedagogical digital expressions and opens for teachers to use new resources in their classrooms. This means that “students now meet the English language in innumerable new contexts” (Ørevik, 2020, p. 166). Following, it also means that this development makes it so that “different conventions – language-wise as well as cultural- challenge us in continuously new ways” (Lund, 2009, p. 92, my translation) and that “games and simulations motivate us to immerse ourselves in a vocabulary and register that belongs to different language situations” (Lund, 2009, p. 92, my translation). This means that interactive texts like games have the possibility of both making students encounter new cultures in a different manner than before, but it also means that playing games like *Spent* might motivate them to develop their English skills. This will affect the practices in the classroom and how educators use digital, interactive texts, as it requires teachers to “understand, promote, and design different collective and distributed learning processes” (Lund, 2009, p. 92, my translation). This means that teachers should incorporate authentic, interactive texts like *Spent* in the EAL classroom and that these types of texts have the possibility to serve as a gateway to exploring different parts of the world. When presenting digital, interactive texts to students, teachers give them the opportunity to experience the world in a different manner than just reading about it in a printed text.

Digital texts differ from the traditional printed text in both “*form and communication*” (Ørevik, 2020, p. 169, emphasis in original), meaning that the way people interact with the

two types of texts will be different. A student reading a printed text on paper will simply read words on a page from the beginning to the end. A digital interactive text opens for the reader to be an active part of the activity of reading. These types of text make the reader apply “principles of relevance to a page which is (relatively) open in its organisation, and consequently offers a range of possible reading paths, perhaps infinitely many” (Kress, 2003, p. 162), meaning that interactive texts give the reader choices on what route to take and depending on their choices, give them the opportunity to choose their own reading path. The way games are constructed is a good example of this type of interactivity. According to Isbister, this is a part of what makes games unique: “games differ from other media in one fundamental way: they offer the players to influence outcomes through their own efforts” (2017, p. 2). The game *Spent* will change direction depending on the player’s choices allowing them to play through the game multiple times and experience different outcomes each time. This involvement through interaction is something Ørevik also emphasises as a key feature of this type of text, the “audience for Internet texts accessed by digital learning material are invited to interact, contribute and negotiate” (Ørevik, 2015).

2.5. Motivation

According to the Media Authority in Norway (2022), as many as three out of four children and teenagers from the age of 9-18 spend time playing digital games every day. In addition, as mentioned in section 1.4, Brevik & Hellekjær (2017) reported that the 16-year-old “Outliers” reported playing games for more than three hours every day. Therefore, it is safe to say that many students in upper secondary school spend a great deal of time gaming and exploring interactive texts outside of school. This means that interactive texts such as games have the possibility of making the students more engaged in the classroom activity of playing, and, therefore, be more open to learning because this is something they actively choose and enjoy spending their time on (see Ørevik 2020). Motivation for schoolwork is, therefore, another important aspect of using games in the classroom. In the report following the annual national questionnaire for students in Norway, Ungdata, Bakken (2019, p. 29) states that as much as seven out of ten students in lower and upper secondary school report that they are bored at school, an increase from previous years. Regarding upper secondary, Hestetraet & Ørevik (2020) state that in reference to vocational studies, many students see their subjects that are not connected to their vocational line as something they are forced to go through to get to work in the line of the profession they aim for, therefore their work in these non-vocational subjects lacks motivation. This is, of course, not something that holds true for

every student, still, it is a well-known issue for English teachers in the vocational classroom. Even though Hestetraet & Ørevik (2020) are discussing this issue in the context of vocational classrooms, lack of motivation and boredom is not an uncommon issue in general studies classes either. According to Bergene et.al (2015), more students in general studies were happy with their choice of line in upper secondary school than students in vocational studies. Still, many of the students interviewed in their study did not know what they want to do as adults, and that was the motivation for choosing general studies- to keep options open. The students in general studies being able to decide on a line of work later was the reason for their contentment with their choice (Bergene et.al., 2015). Even though the students in general studies were satisfied with their choice of upper secondary education, Bergene et.al (2015) also discovered that more students in general studies than in vocational studies reported that they experienced feeling bored at school and that a lot of the time spent in school felt like a waste of time to them. From this, one can conclude that the lack of motivation referenced by Hestetraet & Ørevik (2020) in the vocational classroom, might also be present in the general studies classroom. Therefore, making use of a digital, interactive tool like *Spent*, which the students know from activities they associate with fun and enjoyment, might work as a gateway to obtaining “intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55) making the experience not only enjoyable but also engaging and fitted to promote learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This is supported by Van Eck (2009) who states that games “require active engagement” (p. 7), thereby strengthening the claim that games can promote motivation. Engagement in the activity and motivation, are tightly connected to intercultural learning. According to Byram (1997), encounters with cultural expressions in the EAL classroom require students to have an attitude of “interest in otherness” (p. 70). In other words, the students need to be interested and engaged in the activities of the classroom to be open for intercultural learning. The skill of “interpreting, relating and discovering [...] and enjoying intercultural contact” (Byram, 1997, p. 70) ties intercultural learning to motivation since the students’ should show “attitudes of interest and engagement” (Byram, 1997, p. 71) when presented with cultural expressions.

The basic skills in LK20 also encourage that the encounters with texts should be enjoyable for the students and that when the students are presented with texts, these should work as “contributing to reading pleasure” (MER, 2017, p. 4). The link between playing games as something enjoyable and the use of digital, interactive texts has the potential to increase motivation and, consequently, enhance learning. In addition, a study conducted in

Indonesia by Yusri, Romadloni, A. & Mantasiah, R., (2017) sought to discover if the intercultural approach to teaching EAL would have any effect on the student's motivation for the subject. The findings were clear from the student's self-reporting through questionnaires; The application of the intercultural approach increased the students' motivation as measured both before and after the method was implemented. In other words, games used in the EAL classroom have a strong potential to increase motivation by building on the students' activities in their spare time, and it might also function as a motivational factor for language learning and understanding the cultural aspect of the subject when using authentic cultural expressions like *Spent*. When conducting a study that involves investigating students' self-reporting of learning outcomes and processes, it is essential to examine whether motivation influenced their perception of what they learnt.

2.6. Games

Games come in many different forms: playing with marbles or rocks, board games, digital games and everything in between. However, today, when talking about playing games, or gaming, people are mostly referring to the act of interacting with a digital text in one way or another. In this thesis, the word "game" is used to describe the various video games that students spend their spare time playing, without differentiating between PC games and console games. Included in the term "game" in this context are also online games, both multi- and single-player, and games played on, for example, a cellular phone. This is a very simplistic use of the word; however, the focus of this thesis is not solely on games themselves, the focus is on the opportunities and challenges of using an interactive, digital cultural expression to hopefully facilitate for intercultural learning in the EAL classroom.

2.6.1 What makes a game?

According to McGonigal (2012), there are four aspects that make up the defining traits of a game: "a *goal*, *rules*, a *feedback system*, and *voluntary participation*" (emphasis in original p. 21). The goal concerns what the player wants to achieve by playing this specific game and the rules are the limitations within each game that dictate how the player can achieve said goal. A feedback system is needed to keep track of one's progress in the game, determine if the goal is achievable, and can take many different forms such as points, a score, a progress bar etc. The trait of voluntary participation relates to the willingness and acceptance of the three previous traits, a kind of contract that one enters into with oneself and the game to play (See McGonigal 2012). In *Spent* the goal is to make it through 30 days

without running out of money. The rules and limitations differ from the choices being made in the game since the game can have different outcomes depending on the choices made during gameplay, making the limitations different every time. For example, you can lose your job if you talk to a union representative in one round, while running out of money because you choose to help your ill mother pay for her medications the next. The feedback system is displayed on the side of the screen and counts down the 30 days represented as a version of the progress bar.

2.6.2 Games as a tool for learning

Games are now in the curriculum as an experience meant for the students in the upper secondary classroom. However, one could argue that using games as an educational tool holds many benefits and should be a part of the classroom regardless of whether it is stated in the competence aims. Gee (2004) is a well-known name in the field of pedagogical use of games in school. He argues that playing games and learning in school have many similarities and, therefore, playing games should be integrated into classrooms as a valuable resource. He also notes that one of the reasons why games should be integrated in a classroom setting is that learning how to play a game and solving analogue tasks have many similarities. Young people today are more willing to spend hours challenging themselves in gameplay than solving their assigned schoolwork. He states that games have principles of learning embedded and identifies several aspects of games that make them suitable for use in schools.

As specified in section 2.4, texts are no longer read only by putting the letters of the alphabet together so that they form words, in addition, images, symbols, graphs etc are decoded and made meaningful through “visual literacy” (Gee, 2004, p. 13), creating a new form of reading skill that needs to be developed. Through the combination of these different modes, multimodal texts are created, and students need to manoeuvre these texts both in and outside of school. Gee (2004) makes the point that these different modes make up different domains within the context and that it requires a different type of literacy for each context, meaning that people do not read the same text in the same way. In addition, he stresses that each text being read comes with a “particular social practice” (Gee, 2004, p. 15) and if the reader is familiar with the social practice surrounding the text in question it has the possibility to “*potentially* give deeper meanings to those texts” (Gee, 2004, p. 15, emphasis in original). In other words, the meaning is in need of interpretation in the context of the field or genre it is written in. He also argues that this skill is absent from the way texts are worked with in school; thus, students need to be taught how to find the meaning in a text beyond the literal

one (Gee, 2004). The modes of a text have different “*semiotic domains*” (Gee, 2004, p. 17, emphasis in original), they can be interpreted to find meaning and this the way the text is read is dependent on the person reading and their pre-knowledge. This is because the meaning is different depending on “situations, contexts, practises, cultures and historical periods” (Gee, 2004, p. 18). Today’s global society requires people to develop multiple literacies and understand an increasing number of semiotic domains, and this needs to be transferred to the classroom (see Gee 2004, Ørevik, 2020 and Skulstad, 2020). Gee (2004) claims that games are a semiotic domain that requires children to actively take part when learning the symbolic language and the literacy of the genre (Gee, 2004). He stresses that active learning involves “*experiencing* the world in new ways, forming new *affiliations*, and *preparation* for future learning” (Gee, 2004, p. 23, emphasis in original) and that video games have great potential to facilitate for learning through active engagement. The point in this is that playing games can give access to new semiotic domains that can be transferable, meaning that not only might games promote learning through intrinsic motivation (see Ryan & Deci, 2000 and Gee, 2004), they might have the possibility of making the player see the world in a different manner and from a different cultural perspective when the player learns to interpret the different semiotic meanings present. This is in accordance with what Hoff & Habegger-Conti (2022) state on the potential of a deeper understanding of cultures through the use of digital texts as discussed in section 2.4.

Gee classifies 36 learning principles that he has identified as being present in games (2004, Appendix). There is not enough room to discuss them all, so in this thesis, the ones that are related to the game in focus will be drawn out. The first principle is “The Active, Critical learning principle” (Gee, 2004, p. 49). This principle involves the fact that the student is an active part of the learning experience when playing making it more likely that they learn from it. This is connected to what he calls the “Text Principle” (Gee, 2004, p. 108): Texts read and interpreted are not just words, the semiotic domain meanings are also a part of the active reading experience. This means that when an authentic text like *Spent* is presented to the students, it has the potential to promote a different view. Therefore, the “Multimodal Principle” (Gee, 2004, p. 111) is closely connected to the text principle: “Meaning and knowledge are built up through various modalities (images, texts, symbols, interactions, abstract design, sound, etc.), not just words” (Gee, 2004, p. 111), a game like *Spent*, therefore, has the potential to engage the “reader” on many different levels through the game’s interactive design.

The “Identity Principle” (Gee, 2004, p. 67), has a strong connection to the use of avatars, or in the case of *Spent*, the use of the you-pronoun to force the player into the role of *the other*. When playing games that require the player to make active choices reflecting their own beliefs, the player is more likely to connect their actual self to the game-self, thereby making the emotional connection to, and reflections on, the game and its context stronger (Gee, 2004, Isbister, 2017) in accordance with Bredella’s claim that emotions play an essential role in promoting intercultural competence. Games, as a gateway to another culture, embody what Gee (2004) calls the “Cultural Models about the World Principle” (Gee, 2004, p. 166). This principle is strongly connected to Byram’s (2008) aspect of “*savoir être*” (p. 69), which emphasises the need to rethink your own and *the other’s* culture, because when playing a game in a pedagogical way,

Learning is set up in such a way that learners come to think consciously and reflectively about some of their cultural models regarding the world without denigration of their identities, abilities, or social affiliations, and juxtapose them to new models that may conflict with or otherwise relate to them in various ways (Gee, 2004, p. 166).

In other words, if teachers successfully implement the pedagogical use of games, playing the game might have the potential to make the students rethink their worldviews, but also their views on their own culture in alignment with the curriculum (MER, 2019) and its focus on guiding the students towards intercultural knowledge.

2.6.3 Games and emotion

Games are, by design, made to create an emotional response in the players. Isbister (2017) states that because games “depend on active player choice”, they have “an additional palette of social emotions at their disposal” (p. 9). This means that games can invoke strong feelings in the player, including empathy and sympathy. As previously stated in section 2.2, these emotions are identified by Bredella (2006) as aspects that need to be present for intercultural competence to develop. Isbister (2017) identifies four aspects of game design that create this emotional response in the people playing: the presence of meaningful choices, flow, social emotion and the use of avatars. Meaningful choices relate to the fact that the players are a part of deciding how a game unfolds through their own choices. Since these

choices will have consequences for the gameplay, they also have the ability to promote an emotional response in the player (see Isbister, 2017). Regarding flow, Isbister notes that the psychology researcher Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi identifies eight different features that need to be present for the player to enter the state of flow: “a challenging activity requiring skill, a merging of action and awareness, clear goals, direct, immediate feedback, concentration on the task at hand, a sense of control, a loss of self-consciousness and an altered sense of time” (Isbister, 2017, p. 4). All of these features need to work together for the gaming session to be enjoyable. For example, if there are not enough or too few challenges present, the gamer can quickly grow tired and abandon the activity of playing. *Spent* is designed so that meaningful choices are present and therefore has the possibility to promote emotions such as sympathy and empathy. The game also has the aspect of *flow* as there is direct feedback, a merging of action and awareness as the player is making choices and the presence of a challenge and a goal: Make it through the month. The other aspects of flow relate to inner thoughts and feelings and are difficult to comment definitely on as an outsider observing the gamers.

Social emotions depend on the first two aspects being present: “When designers [of games] offer interesting choices and keep players in flow, they’re able to start evoking another class of feelings in their players—the rich social emotions we experience in relationship with others” (Isbister, 2017, pp. 6-7). Social emotions refer to the emotions experienced by watching or interacting with others in our community via for example film or TV when people grow attached to characters in a film or a TV show when a book makes people cry etc. “So if we see or hear (or form a mental picture of) a person experiencing feelings in a social setting that we, too, are immersed in, our brains are “tricked” into believing that a real social experience is taking place” (Isbister, 2017, p. 8). This is something everybody participate willingly in on a daily basis without thinking about it. According to Isbister (2017), games have the possibility of making this connection even stronger; when people simply watch or read, they experience these emotions and connect with what is happening on screen as observers. When someone plays a game, they become an active part of the events, pushing the actions forward. This means that games have a unique capacity to make the player feel emotions that are not typically present in traditional media. An example is the feeling of guilt over hurting the character the player is controlling: “This capacity to evoke actual feelings of guilt from a fictional experience is unique to games” (Isbister, 2017, p. 8).

Spent seems to have been developed with this aspect in mind. The game starts with the text “Urban Ministries of Durham serves over 6,000 people every year. But you'd never need

help, right?” and continues with the challenge to prove it and push a button with the text “Accept the challenge”, putting the player in as a you-character already from the start, creating a “digital self” and therefore making the player the one pushing the action forward. This aspect of making the player a part of the gameplay by creating a character is also a part of the fourth aspect Isbister (2017) identifies as a contributor to evoking emotional response: the use of avatars. When one takes on the persona of a character in a game, the possibility of engagement is even higher as the player is personally experiencing the actions through a digital extension: “This joining of player to virtual self through avatar-based action marks a core innovation that games have brought to media and an extremely powerful one for evoking emotion” (Isbister, 2017, p. 13). Games that are played through the eyes of a character, make the player create a strong connection between “self” and “digital self” (see Gee 2004, Isbister 2017 and McGonigal 2012).

Even though *Spent* does not have this feature that the player can create their own avatar, it still holds some similarities to these types of games since it has features that actively try to make the player put themselves into the shoes of *the other*. The pronoun used throughout the game is “you” from the very start. It starts with a sentence saying: “Over 26 million Americans are unemployed” before that fades away and is replaced by “Now imagine you are one of them”, “Your savings are gone”, “you’ve lost your house”, “and you’re down to your last 1000 dollars”. All of these set the background for the gameplay and encourages the player to actively step into the game as a character and immerse themselves in experiencing life through the eyes of *the other*, more specifically *the other* from a different culture when playing in a Norwegian classroom setting. Every choice the player makes throughout the game sets off an explanatory fact on the consequences such a choice might have in real life (playspent.org, n.y). This means that through playing *Spent*, the player will get a unique look into what life as a person living in poverty is like in a culture that differs from their own through the gameplay, but also through reading the text pop-ups that give real-life facts on Americans experiencing these challenges. Since *Spent* also works as a fundraiser, it is a type of game Isbister (2017) classifies as an “editorial game- a game designed to persuade the player in some way” (p. 25), and that the use of the game format may be beneficial in reaching the younger audiences like teenagers:

Advocates of “games for change”- games designed to impact a player’s actions and growth toward advancing some kind of social good- believe this sort of immersion by enactment and identification may be an important tool in reaching younger audiences

who are turning less and less to traditional information sources such as print or television (Isbister, 2017, p. 25).

These aspects, the use of “you”- forcing the player to be in the game, and the connection to facts, make the gameplay in *Spent* more realistic and contribute to making the player feel that they are experiencing the game like living a different culture. This has the potential of helping the students develop some of the aspects that Byram (2008) includes as necessary for the promoting of intercultural competence; *savoir apprendre* and *savoirs'engager*: the ability to acquire new knowledge and to evaluate the practices of a different culture, in this case, the issue of poverty. In addition, immersing in the experience has the potential to evoke an emphatic and sympathetic emotional response and understanding of the people caught in these types of situations.

2.6.4. The importance of implementing games correctly

When introducing games in the classroom, one cannot simply give the students the task of playing any game and expect them to learn from the experience. How teachers implement games to promote learning is important. Lund (2009) states that the new focus on digital, interactive texts requires more of the teacher than other pedagogical tools: “the increase in complexity is so demanding that they [the students] need assistance from more competent forces to develop in the subject” Lund, 2009, p. 93, my translation) and that this demands that teachers using technology and interactive texts needs not only guide the students but also participate and give clear instructions for the students to gain something from the tool in use (see Lund, 2009). Van Eck (2009) stresses that if teachers are to make successful use of games in the classroom it requires that they “understand how games function in relation to the typical instructional strategies and practises of the classroom” (p. 1). Van Eck is referring to games for sale in stores and played on a game console or computer, however, the aspects that make up a commercial for sale game also apply to *Spent* as discussed in section 2.6.1 Van Eck points to the fact that “very few games are designed for the classroom” (2009, p. 1) and that this has to do with the fact that designers of games “do not understand how games integrate learning and content seamlessly throughout the game” (2009, p. 2) and therefore do not design games for the classroom that looks and feel like commercial games. He also stresses that many of the educational games that exist are poorly made because developers ignore the “theories behind how games teach” (Van Eck, 2009, p.2) and that if teachers do the same when using games in the classroom, this will lead to a classroom activity that is less effective for learning. Further, Van Eck (2009) states that “it is important to know the game you have

chosen very well” (p. 6). For teachers that means that they need to immerse themselves in the game to figure out how it works before letting the students play. This is especially important to be able to guide the students and make sure that the game is used in a manner that is supported by the aim of the lesson; “Every activity should incorporate multiple resources authentic to the game and problem context” (Van Eck, 2009, p. 9), and that teachers should “find ways to incorporate resources into the activities you [the teacher] design to extend the game environment” (Van Eck, 2009, pp. 8-9). This means that the activities in the lesson plan that work as a backdrop and surround the activity of playing *Spent* are important to make sure that the use of the game is implemented into the classroom in a manner that promotes learning. Making the lack of guidance for teachers to successfully use games as a pedagogical tool very clear and highlighting a challenge with the new curriculum: Teachers need to understand how to implement games in their classrooms, something that is clearly missing in LK20. The present thesis seeks to investigate the didactic implications of using *Spent* as a medium for intercultural learning, and in that respect, how to make use of games in a way that promotes learning. Therefore, hopefully, giving other educators information on how to implement games in an educational manner.

3. Materials and methods

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to investigate some of the opportunities and challenges of using the game *Spent* as a medium for intercultural learning through a qualitative case study on a class in an upper secondary EAL classroom of general studies. The country the lesson plan focused on was America, and the emphasis was on the American Dream and poverty as a societal issue. The present chapter gives an overview of the methods and materials used to investigate the implications of the research question. The chapter comprises eight sections. First, the rationale for the choice of research design will be discussed, and the context and participants will be presented. The didactic rationale for the lesson plan which served as a contextual background for the students' playing of *Spent* will be explained, and the material and data collection procedures will be presented. The next section deals with the rationale for conducting my research through interviews, in addition to field notes and essays from the students. Towards the end, the chapter will discuss ethical dilemmas and precautions one must take when conducting research in a classroom where the teacher is also the researcher, before moving on to the validity and reliability measures which have been taken in the study. The chapter ends with an acknowledgement of some possible limitations of the materials and methods used.

3.2 Rationale for choice of research method

According to Creswell (2012) one of the aspects that guide research in a school setting is that “a teacher first decides what needs to be implemented in the classroom, then examines alternative lines of research, and finally decides which line of research might help accomplish what needs to be done” (p. 5). Regarding this study, the features of the new curriculum are what needed to be implemented, and the research method chosen was the one most well-matched to shed a light on the issue at hand; The didactic opportunities and challenges of using *Spent* as a medium for intercultural learning.

Many methods were considered, but taking the aim of the research into consideration, a qualitative study seemed the best option. Compared to a quantitative research method, which is, in a simplified way, mainly concerned with numbers and statistics that can be measured (see Creswell, 2012), a qualitative research method is “best suited to address a research problem in which you do not know the variables and need to explore” (Creswell, 2012, p. 16). Qualitative research aims to investigate a central phenomenon by formulating a

research question that participants in your study can help you elucidate (Creswell, 2012), and also making sure that the research is focused on “learning from participants” (Creswell, 2012, p. 17). The researcher in qualitative studies “seeks to understand the meaning of phenomena from the perspectives of the participants” (Merriam, 2002, p. 12). Qualitative research is used when the researcher wishes to understand and learn “how individuals experience and interact with their social world” (Merriam, 2002, p. 4) and that involves learning “the meaning it has for them” (Merriam, 2002, p. 4). This aspect is vital since one of my aims is to look into how the students themselves viewed this lesson plan and the playing of *Spent*, and how they felt that this affected their views of American society, more precisely the probability of the American Dream while being poor. Creswell states that this form of “collecting data based on words from a small number of individuals so that the participants’ views are obtained” (Creswell, 2012, p. 16) is one of the major characteristics of qualitative research. To ensure the data collected gave a strong focus to the participants’ voices, I chose to gather data by taking field notes during classroom discussions, analysing essays written by the students, and conducting interviews that gave the student an opportunity to express themselves in group interviews, in addition to their essays, in an attempt to “understand and make sense of phenomena from the participant’s perspective” (Merriam, 2002, p. 6). These three methods of data collection were selected to give a broad selection of different quotes and observations to indicate if the lesson plan and playing of the game have facilitated intercultural competence, and the students have different ways to communicate it: private in their essays, in classroom discussions with their peers and in smaller groups during the interviews. After conducting the study, the results were triangulated to protect the validity.

Giving the students the opportunity to privately convey their feelings is key to answering the question at hand since intercultural competence is not something that can be easily measured as it can be conceived as an inner process and a change within oneself (see Hoff, 2020). Even though the essays are important, sometimes students of English as a foreign or additional language classroom can struggle to convey everything they want to in their written work, therefore, the students were given the opportunity to elaborate on their impressions in the group interviews after handing in the essays. Another possibility would be to give the students a questionnaire to answer, but in fright of ending up with many answers like “I do not know”, the questionnaire was abandoned as a possible data collection source.

Creswell states that qualitative research methods are focused on “analyzing the data for description and themes using text analysis and interpreting the larger meaning of the

findings” (Creswell, 2012, p. 16). These aspects of qualitative research seen together with the aim of this thesis make a qualitative research design the best option for researching intercultural learning as a central phenomenon while giving the participants a voice.

This study is driven partly by a goal to enhance my own professionalism, therefore different research designs were suitable. An action study is according to Creswell (2012) “systematic procedures used by teachers [...] to gather quantitative and qualitative data to address improvements in their educational setting, their teaching, and the learning of their students” (p. 22). Action research is often used in an educational setting as a form of self-reflection to identify areas of improvement in a work setting and then create a research question to better understand, work out and implement solutions for the areas in need of development (see Creswell, 2012). Still, even if my challenges with the new curriculum were part of the rationale for the study, the main focus is not on my own development, but to map didactic opportunities and challenges of using a game to promote intercultural learning to hopefully add to the research gap within this field. In addition, my own professional challenges were that I wished to learn more about the new aspects of LK20, not necessarily to develop skills that were already present in my classroom work. Therefore, an action research design was abandoned as a possible research design for this study.

Yin (2003) states that a case study aims to investigate “a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p. 13), making this research design appropriate for looking into the new features of LK20 in the setting they were developed for, the classroom. In addition, according to Creswell (2012) researching activity is one of the main characteristics of a case study; “The “case” may be a single individual, several individuals separately or in a group, a program, events, or activities” (p. 465), making a case study design appropriate to use as a means to investigate the didactic consequences of using *Spent*. Merriam (2002) states that case studies are used when the researcher “seeks to describe the phenomenon in depth” (p. 8) in alignment with the aim of this study. When the aim is to understand a phenomenon through an activity, the instrumental case study seems the most suited “because it serves the purpose of illuminating a particular issue” (Creswell, 2012, p. 465). This type of case study is used to investigate “a specific issue, with a case (or cases) used to illustrate the issue” (Creswell, 2012, p. 465), in this context the phenomenon of intercultural competence through playing *Spent*. Since the research is focused on one group participating in one activity, this study is a single-case study (Yin, 2003, p. 39). In this study, the findings are based on different sources to illuminate the central phenomenon: intercultural competence in the EAL classroom.

Therefore, a holistic approach is best, since this type of single case study is used when attempting to investigate the central issue in depth (see Yin, 2003). Taking the intentions of this research into consideration, the most purposeful methodology would be an instrumental single case study surrounding an activity: the playing of the game *Spent* as a part of a lesson plan concerning the American Dream and poverty in the US to promote intercultural learning. More specifically, trying to facilitate for this type of learning through the use of a game while mapping didactic opportunities and challenges that occurred.

3.3 Participants

This research took place in an upper secondary classroom in the first year of the general studies programme in an upper secondary school in Western Norway. The school offers both vocational and general studies and has about 900 students across all programmes it offers. The researcher was the English teacher in the chosen class. The students, who are all 15–17 years old, were selected because they have strong opinions that they often share. Additionally, earlier in the school year, they were very engaged when we talked about topics that evoked an emotional response in them, such as the hunt for likes on the Internet and the power of influencers. The class had 27 students, and 20 agreed to participate in the study. Out of the 20 students who answered that they would be a part of the project, 16 said agreed to be interviewed. However, one student was ill the day of the interviews, so only 15 students participated in the group interviews. In addition, one of the students did not hand in their essay, and another changed their course away from general studies, so the number of essays declined to 18.

The participants were selected in accordance with Merriam (2002), who states that “it is important to select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 12), meaning that to understand a phenomenon in a specific setting, one must choose participants most likely to provide insight, here, the students who are experiencing the new features of LK20. This is what Creswell (2012, p. 206) and Merriam (2002, p. 12) call “purposeful sampling”, which means that the “researcher intentionally selects individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2012, p. 206) in order “to develop a detailed understanding” (2012, p. 206) of the issue at hand. Namely, the didactic opportunities and challenges of using *Spent* to promote intercultural learning. The selection of participants was “homogeneous sampling” (Creswell, 2012, p. 208), where the researcher “purposefully samples individuals or sites based on membership in a subgroup that has defining characteristics” (Creswell, 2012, p. 8), in this case, being students in year one of upper secondary school.

3.4 Context

In accordance with Lund’s (2009) and Van Eck’s (2009) claim that implementing games in the classroom needs to be supported by a relevant lesson plan, the context for playing *Spent* is important. Therefore, as part of a longer period focusing on issues in the United States under the interdisciplinary topic of Democracy and Citizenship, the class participated in different activities. The main focus was on what the American Dream has been like in the past compared to now, and poverty as a societal issue. As a way to try and make the students put themselves into the lives of an average person struggling to get by on a low income, they played *Spent*. The different activities leading up to the game itself will hopefully function as a backdrop to explain the realistic traits of the game and that it can be used to paint a truthful picture of the struggles of low-income families. At the end of the period, the students will hand in reflective essays (Appendix G) where they reflect on the notion of the American Dream and whether they think it is achievable after the lesson plan and playing *Spent*. These essays are the students’ texts that will provide part of the data for analysis. After the essays were handed in and the lesson plan was concluded, the students participated in the semi-structured group interviews.

Lesson	Aims	Topic
1.	To give students an insight into the cultural difference within the USA and show how a nation of immigrants has many cultures that have affected the diverse regions differently.	Introduction to the USA, historical immigration. Diversity in the different regions. Start the road trip project.
2.	Make presentations so the students can teach each other about the different regions of the USA.	Work on road trip project.
3.	Encourage oral activity in class and show the students the size of the USA and the diversity of cultures that is present in the USA.	Presentations of the road trip task.
4.	To explain the development of the American Dream.	The American Dream before and now.
5.	To explain the system of health insurance in the USA so that the elements in the game that concern this are familiar to the students.	The US health system and minimum wage.
6.	To show how easy it can be to lose your home in the USA as preparation for playing the game since housing is one of the issues players face in the game.	Watch documentary.

	Give insight into the strong value of helping and performing charitable work in the USA.	
7.	To attempt to make the students experience a simulation of life in the USA while living on minimum wage.	Play game, and essay task
8.	Finish the essay and express their thoughts and reflections.	Write and play if needed

Table 1: Overview of the lessons with content

The lessons in this class consists of 2x45 minutes every week in addition to course days three times each semester. The first week of this lesson plan started with a text from the book *Target* (Balsvik et al., 2017) that shows the differences among the regions of the US. This book is from the previous national curriculum; however, it is still relevant for teaching cultural differences within the US. The text “The USA- a Patchwork Nation” (Balsvik et al., 2017, pp. 142-149), goes through the different parts of America, identifies seven cultural regions, and how immigration and settlement in these regions have contributed to the unique cultural diversity that is present in the US today. The text also briefly presents the American Dream as a notion that is difficult to define but a strong, defining moral in American society. Everyone has freedom, the opportunity to work hard and be successful, and hard work should be rewarded. When the reading of the text was finished, the students were grouped and then given the task to plan a road trip through one of the regions and present it to the class. The reason for starting the lesson plan with this task was to make it clear to the students how big the United States is and that it can be quite misleading to generalise all Americans together. The hope is that this knowledge might help towards avoiding stereotypical cultural views.

The following week, the discussion focused on the American Dream today compared to the past using a text adapted from Gale (2022). The following lesson was dedicated to going through the social support system in Norway compared to the USA, including the welfare state and the system in the US with medical insurance. The reason for showing the students how health care works in the US is that it is a major factor contributing to why minimum wage workers struggle to get these services. Even though some students might be familiar with what it is like to live in a family with financial difficulties, they are not necessarily acquainted with the aspect of health insurance since the system in Norway is different. When talking about health insurance, the topics of the difference in minimum wage between Norway and the US and the poverty line were also covered.

The documentary “Being Poor in the World’s Richest Country” (Gilles, 2019) available for purchase or rental from Vimeo.com covers homelessness in the USA. Both the

homeless population that is working and living in their car, but also the ones living on the street. The filming crew travels across the US and covers different regions and cities, many of which the students discussed in their presentations. In addition, it shows how many people in the USA spend their spare time helping the poor population by giving them food, in some cases housing, and free medical treatment. The documentary also covers how easy it is to lose your job and house and covers how some parts of the US have an eviction system that allows landlords to be able to evict people if they are a few days late with rent. These aspects are also present in *Spent*, and the class watching the documentary, therefore, served as an explanation that might further their understanding of the aspects of the game relevant to job security and housing issues. When playing *Spent*, the students were encouraged to play as many times as possible to make it through the month. They were also urged to take notes of their experiences while playing. In my experience doing this lesson plan in previous years in other classes, the students spend different amounts of time getting through the game, so when the game is introduced, and they start playing, it is best to let them do this alone so they can choose how many times they want to play without being rushed to the next activity. When the lesson is set up in this manner, the students can choose whether they want to start writing or play more rounds of the game.

Next, the focus was on playing the game if needed and the reflective essay task, starting with a run-through of the essay requirements and evaluation criteria (appendix F). The students then started writing to reflect on their own thoughts and emotions regarding the content of the lesson plan, their feelings about the American Dream and the gameplay. The essay task asks for the students' views of the American Dream and poverty in the US and encourages them to give their own opinions. The task also includes a requirement to incorporate whether they felt the Dream is achievable after playing *Spent* and some of the experiences they had while playing. At the end of the last lesson in the last week of the project, the essays were handed in and were returned with feedback and a grade. A downside to the grading of these essays is the fact that personal reflections such as these are not necessarily appropriate for grading when the goal is to develop the students towards intercultural competence. Hoff (2020) stresses that the reflections and ideas that appear in texts based on activities such as these should function as a way for the students to develop their inner selves to evolve, and not serve as an assessment of the learner's intercultural competence; "From an ethical standpoint, one might question whether one should pass judgement on the learners' worldviews, even if the criteria for such assessment are based on

principles of human rights democracy and the rule of law” (Hoff, 2020, p. 86). Because of this fact, the evaluation criteria for this task focused on reflection being present through the students’ ability to *show* personal reflection, not what they stated. If the students showed that they were trying to reflect on and discuss the task in their essays, that was the focus of the grading. What the students’ opinions were, did not matter as long as their essays indicated that they showed reflection and discussion. This meant that they could give their own opinions on the matter as there is no right or wrong answer. This is due to another possible challenge of assessing the students’ reflective essays, it might make the learners write what they believe is the “right answer” instead of their own true reflections in order to try to push for a better grade. Ideally, the essays should, therefore, not be graded but used as a means for the students to process their own thoughts. However, as any teacher in upper secondary school will know, it can be difficult to get students to produce written texts in the English language, especially if the students feel they are not gaining “a reward” in terms of a grade. In addition, since being interculturally competent is something that is included in the criteria for achievement for the summative assessment in English at the end of the upper secondary school year one (see NDET, 2020), every teacher is challenged to find a way to assess the outcome of one of many classroom activities meant to promote intercultural competence.

3.5 Data collection

Qualitative research involves the researcher to “pose general, broad questions to participants and allow them to share their views relatively unconstrained by your [own] perspective” (Creswell, 2012, p. 212), and using several sources to gather findings (Creswell, 2012). This is supported by Merriam (2002), who states that one of the traits of qualitative research is that “*the researcher is the primary instrument* for data collection and data analysis” (p. 5 emphasis in original) and that it is common to gather data from different sources, like “quotes from documents, field notes, and participant interviews [...] or a combination thereof” (Merriam, 2002, p. 5) to find “support for the findings of the study” (Merriam, 2002, p. 5). Therefore, in this study, the conclusions were drawn from the researchers’ field notes from the classroom, the analysis of the students’ essays and their answers in semi-structured interviews. In addition, the different types of data were compared to explore how and to what extent the researcher’s observations aligned with the student texts and what the students report in the interviews.

Type of data	Information
Field notes	The field notes were observations written down by the researcher after each class. They were in the form of descriptive field notes to be used to compare the notes and observations in class with the students' self-reporting in interviews and essays. Sometimes reflective field notes when the researcher's interpretations of the happenings in the classroom were noted down.
Student essays	18 essays varying in length from 161 words to 1162 words on the obtainability of the American Dream if living on minimum wage. The essays also include the students' experiences while playing <i>Spent</i> .
Semi-structured interviews	Four interviews with a list of key questions with the possibility to ask the students follow-up questions if needed: Interview one, four students, time: 12.58 Interview two, four students, time: 09.35 Interview three, four students, time: 14.01 Interview four, three students, time: 07.56

Table 2: Type of data collected.

3.5.1 Field notes and essays

According to Merriam (2002), data received from observation “represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a secondhand account obtained in an interview” (p. 13), meaning that data collection made through notes from my own observations would be beneficial for my study. Creswell (2012) classifies field notes as “text (words) recorded by the researcher during an observation in a qualitative study” (p. 216). To make field notes, a teacher who doubles as a researcher becomes what Creswell (2012) refers to as a “participant observer” (p. 214), and that this role “is an observational role adopted by researchers when they take part in activities in the setting they observe” (p. 214). In the classroom, the teacher guides the activities and answers questions, and when being an observer that takes part in the activities, at the same time notes down observations and quotes that emerge from the students (Creswell, 2012). This can be somewhat challenging to do, and

the solution was to write down relevant information immediately after class, a strategy suggested by Creswell (2012) precisely because managing both roles in a classroom setting might be demanding. Despite the possible challenges of taking field notes in this form, Creswell (2012) stresses that this way of working on collecting data “offers excellent opportunities to see experiences from the views of participants” (p. 214). This means that being a participating observer allows you to see different sides to the events taking place, even though there may be limitations in noting down everything during activities. When conducting field notes, the researcher needs to decide what the aim of the notes should be and what the purpose of the recorded material is. In this study, the field notes were used as a comparison of my own observations of the students’ reports of learning outcomes. I, therefore, chose to gather what Creswell (2012) refers to as “Descriptive field notes”, a type of notes that “record a description of the events, activities, and people (e.g., what happened)” (p. 217). Although, in some instances, there were also “reflective field notes” (Creswell, 2012, p. 217), where I recorded my own personal impressions of the happenings in the classroom.

Another important means of gathering information in a qualitative research project is using documents, in this study the students’ essays. According to Creswell (2012), using documents provides “valuable information in helping researchers understand central phenomena in qualitative studies” (p. 223) since documents are the “words of the participants” (p. 223) and can, therefore, help the researcher gather information from the participants’ view. Personal documents like these essays have the possibility of offering “a rich source of information” (Creswell, 2012, p. 223). This is also supported by Merriam (2002) because “documents often contain insights and clues into the phenomenon” (p. 13) leaving it up to the researcher to interpret the words and find the meaning in relation to the issue one is trying to research.

The task the students were answering was “Explain the American Dream and discuss whether you think it is possible to achieve when you are living on minimum wage or are unemployed. Include what you experienced while playing *Spent* and how you feel about poverty and the American Dream after you played this game” (Appendix F). The essay task did not have a word count demand since the focus were on the students’ own reflections and not have it turn into a race to write within a set limit of words. This resulted in essays differencing in length by quite a lot, ranging from 161 to 1162 words (Appendix G). The task itself was formulated in this way to try and make sure that everything was arranged for the

students to give their honest opinions and reflections on not only the American Dream but also their emotional experiences from playing *Spent*.

3.5.2 The interviews

According to Brinkmann & Kvale (2009) one of the most recognisable features of the qualitative research interview is that it “seeks to understand the world seen through the eyes of the person being interviewed. Getting the significance of people’s experiences and to discover their experience of the world [...] is a goal” (my translation; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 21), and this feature is in perfect alignment with the aim of this thesis. The chosen interview form was the semi-structured research interview. This interview form was chosen since it gives the researcher the option of asking follow-up questions should something not considered make its way into the conversation. This meant that the interviews were conducted with an interview guide with key questions, from which the interviewer could then diverge from by asking follow-up questions. In this situation, Brinkmann & Kvale (2009) stress that to ask follow-up questions is an act that also includes active listening, and that the interviewer needs to “learn how to listen to what is being said and how it is being said” (p. 170). In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer needs to be immersed in the situation and focused on getting an answer to the research question, and not focus on getting through the interview guide and asking the next question. Another important feature is to consider one’s own reaction to the things stated by the people being interviewed. One needs to be aware of how one can be perceived so that the person answering the questions feels like they can express their opinions (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009). The interview guide has been set up using Brinkmann & Kvale’s seven phases in preparation for a research interview: «1) setting the theme for the interview project, 2) design, 3) the interview itself, 4) transcribing or printing the interview, 5) analysis, 6) verification and 7) reporting» (2009, pages 38-39). The theme is decided by the research question. The design is, also to some extent, decided by the project as one of the best ways to research someone’s experience of a certain activity is to ask the person involved. In phase three, the interviews were made to be group interviews. The reason for this is that experience tells me that somewhat shy 16-year-olds often express themselves more on matters that involve classroom activities when in a group situation than when they are alone with a teacher. Then again, placing them together had the potential of students not feeling safe to express their own opinions if the opinions do not align with the opinions of their classmates. As an attempt to avoid social desirability responding (see Nederhof, 1985), the

students were grouped with the classmates they had chosen to work with themselves when allowed to form their own groups. The hope was that the students then would feel safe to express their own opinions regardless of it being different from their classmates' since they were with other students they felt comfortable with.

The ten questions in the interview guide (Appendix H) were open-ended to make sure that the students got the opportunity to express their opinions on the matter at hand and not just answer yes or no. The focus was on what the students themselves felt and thought about the lesson plan and the activity of playing *Spent*. Yes and no questions can, in this setting, be somewhat leading and may prompt the students into answering what they think the interviewer wants to hear instead of their own thought and reflections. Question one was about whether the students' played games in their spare time. This was asked to investigate if these were students that usually spent time gaming outside of school to map if playing games was already something they chose to spend time on. Next, they were asked what they had learnt about the USA during the last few weeks at school as a way to start their recollection of the lessons on this topic. After the initial two questions, the focus turned to *Spent* and the students' thoughts on if they found that the game painted a realistic image of poverty in the USA. Also, if they felt the game helped them understand how the conditions could be for economically struggling families and the reason why. These questions were asked as a gateway to open the students' own reflections and recall their experience of playing. The question concerning change in attitude towards the American Dream and poverty was raised in an attempt to make the student recollect their attitudes about this both before and after the lesson plan and playing the game. The intent was to determine if they self-reported a change in attitude and also if they showed signs of *savoir apprendre* (Byram, 1997). According to Byram's model includes "building up specific knowledge as well as an understanding of the beliefs, meanings and behaviours which are inherent in particular phenomena" (1997, p. 38). The aim was to assess their knowledge of the American Dream and their understanding of it as a cultural phenomenon.

When the focus again turned to the game itself, the question on the effect of the use of "you" in the game was intended to make the students consider the choices they had to make in the game and their feelings if this had been something happening to them in real life. It was also designed to investigate if the use of the "you"-pronoun had any effect on the students and if the digital interactiveness of *Spent* contributed to the impact of playing. The two next questions were concerning their feelings and what surprised them, and this was an attempt to

allow them to further investigate the emotions they were left with after playing. Another function of these two questions was to hopefully cover what had not been already put forward by the previous questions. When the students were asked regarding their feelings about playing games in English class and whether they felt they learnt something or not, the goal was to see if the students reported any effect on their motivation and learning outcome. The last question also came with a demand to explain why to make sure I was able to investigate more than the “more” or “less” answers it posed a risk of producing.

The language of the interview guide was set to Norwegian, and the interviews were conducted in Norwegian. A few of the students in this class find English to be a very challenging subject, and some of them have difficulty expressing themselves in English beyond a superficial manner; therefore, Norwegian was used as the language. When the aim is to find their thoughts and reflections, I strongly believe that allowing them to convey these in their native tongue is the appropriate route to take. The students were grouped into four groups and each interview lasted from seven to 14 minutes per group. All interviews were conducted during lessons at the end of the semester while the rest of the class was working on tasks in the classroom. The University of Bergen gave permission to use a personal recording device (Appendix B) and the interviews were recorded by using a computer set up so that it stores the data on OneDrive accessed through the University of Bergen. This way to store data was in accordance with the permission for data collection and storing of material given by Sikt [previously The Norwegian Data Protection Authority] (Appendix A) and with the University of Bergen’s internal guidelines for storing data containing personal information. Continuing with Brinkmann & Kvale’s (2009) phases when conducting research interviews, in phase four, the interviews were transcribed, and in phase five the findings were analysed and compared. Phase six involved the validation of the results, to ensure that the interpretations drawn from the interviews were supported by research material through analysis. To conduct phase seven, reporting, different approaches were needed as this involved triangulation of the data gathered from interviews, student essays and the researcher’s field notes.

3.6 Analytical procedures

The results of this study will be presented using quotes from student essays, the researcher’s field notes of observations from the classroom during different classes on this topic and quotes from group interviews. When reporting qualitative research, Creswell (2012) states that when the data is collected, the researcher needs to be engaged “in an initial

exploration of the data through the process of coding it” (p. 237). He further stresses that the object of this process is to “make sense out of text data, divide it into text or image segments, label the segments with codes, examine codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapse these codes into broad theme” (2012, p. 243), meaning similar ideas expressed or ways to express an opinion. In this analytic setting, themes are “similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database” (Creswell, 2012, p. 245). As part of this study, one of the aims is to determine the relationship between the students’ self-reporting of learning outcomes and the researcher’s observations and field notes. The main focus is however to see the didactic outcome of using *Spent* as a medium for intercultural learning. Therefore, the themes searched for were in relation to the students’ attitudes and feeling surrounding their new knowledge of the USA and the American Dream after playing *Spent*. After carefully reading through the data the study provided, the themes that emerged were:

- Negativity towards the US
- Something learnt from playing
- Positive about the American Dream
- Negative about the American Dream
- Feelings experienced while or after playing
- Positive towards volunteer charity work in the US
- Grateful to live in Norway
- Negative towards the US
- The American Dream has changed

Each sentence, part of a sentence, or paragraph relevant to the research was colour-coded to match the thematic categories, as referred to by Creswell (2012) as marking “text segment [s]” (p. 244), to correspond with each of the eight thematic codes.

Once the data has been analysed and coded, the researcher needs to make “an interpretation of the meaning of the results by reflecting personally on the impact of the findings and on the literature that might inform the findings” (Creswell, 2012, p. 237). This involves filling in the gaps between one’s own interpretation and previous research to support the findings. Analysing qualitative data involves finding the broader picture of the answers and interpreting and reporting the themes present (see Creswell, 2012). As a part of the data analysis, in this study, triangulation was used to validate the results from the different sources. This is something Creswell points to as a strategy often used; “Qualitative inquirers

triangulate among different data sources to enhance the accuracy of a study. Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from [...] types of data (e.g., observational fieldnotes and interviews), or methods of data collection (e.g., documents and interviews) in descriptions and themes” (Creswell, 2012, p. 259). In this way, the results are viewed from multiple perspectives and the different modes of information are validated through corroboration. In the present study, the thematic codes were searched for in all three sources of data, and the researcher’s interpretation of each data set was compared to discover if the results from the essays, interviews and field notes were comparable.

3.7 Ethical considerations

When doing research in a school setting, there are some aspects that need to be considered. This type of research gives a unique look into both the experiences of the individual and in some cases an eye into the school as an institution depending on what focus one takes as a researcher (Skaalvik, 1999). This means that when one conducts research in school one must carefully consider the ethical issues that might develop during a project. Like any other research, research within the institution of schools is bound by both ethical rules and laws. In Norway, there are ethical guidelines determined by The National Research Ethics Committee [NESH] that one as a researcher needs to follow. NESH is “an independent advisory body responsible for developing national research ethics guidelines” (NESH 2022, p. 4) to “promote free, reliable, and responsible research” (NESH, 2022, p. 5). This especially applies when one is conducting research that involves children and young people since this group has “a particular right to protection” (2022, p. 20). Because of this, ethical guidelines need to be the basis for every decision at every step of the research process, especially when conducting research within schools. Skaalvik identifies six aspects that are important to consider when preparing for a research project within the school: “voluntariness and informed consent, practical implementation/data collection, validity, feedback to schools, processing of accidental information and disclosure and recommendations” (1999, p. 90, my translation). The first four of these were especially relevant for me when preparing for and conducting the lesson plan and following interviews. The first aspect he points out will present the first ethical dilemma of the study. Both students and the administration at my school have been informed in detail about what the present thesis project entailed in accordance with the ethical obligations a researcher should be aware of, as stated by NESH (2022, pp. 18-27). The principal signed a consent form (Appendix D) giving me permission to conduct my research at the school and the project was approved by Sikt on 09.03.2022. Given the age of the

students, Sikt (sikt.no) states that they are old enough to sign the participation consent to be a part of this research on their own and without the consent of a caretaker. The students were all asked at the beginning of an initiating class if they wanted to participate in my study, and the consent form (Appendix C) was handed out so that they could read them and think about if they wanted to participate. In the next English lesson, I asked each student separately so that they could ask questions if they had any. Out of 28 students, 20 agreed to participation, while eight declined. When some of the students declined, I had to come up with a solution for me to conduct my research in the class without quotes from the students that did not want to participate. These students were placed in discussion groups together. On the school's learning platform, there is an option to assign tasks to specific students in a class. When the students were handing in their essays, I made two separate hand-in folders and chose the students to answer each one. This way all the students had one task to complete, and it was not visible to any of them that they were handing their work in different folders, making sure that the class was not visibly divided into a yes and no group and that I could conduct the research.

Since the researcher also doubles as the teacher in this project, there is a potential that the relationship with the students could affect both the project and the outcome, both negatively and positively (see Skaalvik, 1999, p. 95). If a teacher's relationship with their students is good, the students might feel that they should give the answers they think the teacher wants in order to help. If the relationships are bad, the students might try to sabotage the project. The same challenge can be present in the following aspect: to get students to participate in the research. Therefore, voluntariness is also a potential ethical problem in this thesis project. All the informants have turned 15 and are therefore allowed to give consent without the involvement of their parents (sikt.no). Even though the students have been informed that they are allowed to say no both to participate in their essays and in the interviews, they might have felt pressured to join, and give consent, both from their teacher as an authoritative figure, but also from the other students in the class (see sikt.no and NESH, 2022). To avoid this, as previously stated, the students were asked to participate both as a class and alone so that they were allowed to say yes or no out of the classroom, therefore hopefully avoiding the peer- pressure this type of question might bring forth. Both times it was explained that the students were allowed to say no and that if they said no this would not have an effect on the activities conducted in class (see NESH, 2022 and sikt.no). Skaalvik stresses that if one as a researcher finds oneself in a situation where one or more of the

students in the participating class do not want to give consent to participate, one must carefully consider if it is ethically proper to go on with the planned project, alternatively find other activities for the student(s) who have withdrawn from participation. Of course, the activities must be conducted in a way that will not be considered burdensome for the students in question (1999, pp. 92-93). The activities in this lesson plan were scheduled for this class regardless of the research, therefore, there was no need to think of other activities for the students that said no to participation. The students were informed that if they did not give consent to participate, what they would be saying no to was not writing the essay, but that their quotes from their essays and the classroom discussions and of course the interviews could be used in the present thesis. The interviews do not contain anything that will give away personal information about the students or their identity, to protect the student's identity, the students participating in the interviews were named with numbers to differentiate between them in reporting. There were 16 students willing to participate in the interviews, one was away on the interview day, they were grouped into groups of three and four and named interview groups 1-4 when reporting and discussing the results.

3.8 Validity and reliability

When conducting research, one needs to make sure that the results are accurate and valid, in other words, to check the validity and reliability of the research. These two are closely connected since results cannot be valid if they are not reliable. Due to the close relationship of validity and reliability in qualitative research, the concepts somewhat overlap in the study's following reports. Creswell (2012) states that "Reliability is [...] a measure of consistency" (p. 159), meaning that the results need to be compared to make ensure their reliability: "If scores are not reliable, they are not valid; scores need to be stable and consistent first before they can be meaningful" (Creswell, 2012, p. 159) clearly stressing that the researcher needs to take measure to validate the reliability of the results of a study.

Validating the reliability of the results in qualitative research means "that the researcher determines the accuracy or credibility of the findings through strategies such as [...] triangulation" (Creswell, 2012, p. 259), in other words, to compare the data the study generates to strengthen the interpretations. This is because "accuracy or credibility of the findings is of utmost importance" (p. 259). Since qualitative research involves interpreting the data emerged in the study, this means "that the researcher should be self-reflective about his or her role in the research, how he or she is interpreting the findings, and his or her

personal and political history that shapes his or her interpretation” (Creswell, 2012, p. 259). The subjective nature of interpreting qualitative data will, therefore, also affect the reliability of the study since reliability is a “measure of consistency” (Creswell, 2012, p. 159). Consistency is usually demonstrated with the study’s ability to be replicated, something that might not be possible as a new study would involve new students, and therefore different circumstances.

According to Skaalvik, there is a connection between validity and ethics when conducting research in schools since most research in this context has the outcome of recommending pedagogical practices for schools or the classroom (1999, p. 101). As a teacher and a researcher, one has a double role and is in danger of unwillingly affecting the results and therefore the validity and reliability. This is an important aspect to consider, particularly before and during the interviews, as the teacher’s relationship with the students could have an impact on the results. The same can happen if the interviewer asks leading questions, for example, because they feel a connection to the students, and therefore have knowledge of them. This knowledge might prompt the teacher to state the question differently to help the students answer, and therefore affecting the answers.

When conducting research in an educational setting the essays collected might also be a potential threat to the validity of the findings since writing in school leads to a grade, and students might feel that giving answers that are conceived as “the right ones” might reward them with a higher grade. In a hope to avoid the students trying to give the “correct” answers, the texts were handed in anonymously. The learning platform at the school has the function to not let the teacher know who handed in which text, and the hand-in folders on this task were set up with this function. The students were informed of this. Since the beginning of the school year, they have been ensured that their view and their interpretations of the topic in question should be in focus. They have also been repeatedly informed that they are not assessed on their opinions but rather their ability to find evidence to support their arguments in the texts being worked on, for example. Hopefully, this knowledge about their assessment criteria and that the classroom is open to different ideas as long as they are well-supported worked to help the students provide their true perspectives and reflections in their essays and subsequent interviews, thereby avoiding social desirability bias in their answers (see Nederhof, 1985).

When considering validity, it can be divided into two categories: internal and external validity. Internal validity deals with whether the results are valid on their own and true for the

people involved and the problem under investigation, while external validity deals with if the results are transferable to other people and situations (Kleven, 2007). In this research project the material collected will give an answer to the internal validity, but if the results are applicable to other classes is not something this thesis can answer. The study is also on a limited number of participants and involves the students' self-reporting of learning outcomes, meaning that their subjective perception of learning outcomes might colour the results. However, the hope is that the research methodology and lesson plan activities conducted in this class might work as a guide for other teachers to implement games as a medium for intercultural learning in their classrooms.

3.9 Possible limitations of the materials and methods

The dual role in the classroom as both the English teacher and the researcher, as discussed in the ethics section of this chapter, constitutes a possible limitation. Another issue that deals with the dual role in the classroom, is that as both the researcher and the teacher in a busy classroom, there is a chance that not all relevant situations that happened during a lesson was noticed and recorded. In a class of 25+ students, it is challenging to perform both roles despite the efforts of noting down everything immediately after each class. Therefore, a possible limitation is that the researcher has not been able to capture every aspect as a "participant observer" (Creswell, 2012, p. 214).

This study was set up to be an instrumental case study, to discover some didactic possibilities and challenges related to using a particular video game to promote intercultural learning in a specific educational context of an upper secondary EAL classroom in Norway. It relies on data drawn from one single class in general studies. Consequently, in small studies such as this, it is not possible to generalise on the basis of findings. In addition, this aspect is also relevant to the reporting of results. Since the results from a qualitative case study are partly based on the subjective interpretation of the researcher, it may not be possible to replicate the results exactly, making the transferability of the results potentially challenging and, therefore, potentially affecting the reliability of the study.

Another potential weakness can be found in the decision of conducting the interviews in Norwegian. When the interviews were in a different language, the quotes used needed to be translated after transcription. This opens up the possibility that meaning may get lost in translation between two languages when what the students conveyed was translated into a

different language. Still, the aspect of being able to fully articulate their feelings in their native language was deemed to outweigh that risk.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Introduction

The present chapter is concerned with presenting the results of the study and examining these results in the light of relevant theories discussed in chapter two. The analysis of the material seems to indicate that the use of *Spent* and the context it was placed in, has several didactic opportunities, but also challenges. The didactic opportunities were that the gameplay created a strong emotional response in the students, that they fully and willingly immersed themselves in the experience of playing, and that they found playing games in school motivational. However, the classroom project the game was a part of and the playing of the game itself seem to have provoked the ethnocentric view in the students that Norway was a better country to live in, making the creation of said views a didactic challenge. Firstly, the indicated learning processes and learning outcomes will be discussed through the findings from classroom observations, the students' essays, and the interviews. At the end of the chapter, some didactic opportunities and challenges, which were identified on the basis of the analysis, will be discussed.

4.2. Classroom observations

The role of a teacher who is also the researcher in a classroom presupposes that one develops strategies to participate in the happenings of the classroom being studied while also reporting during the activities taking place. As mentioned in section 3.5.1, the role of a "participant observer" (Creswell, 2012, p. 214) is doubled in the sense that the teacher not only controls the lesson but also functions as a researcher who records field notes of the happenings unfolding. The purpose of the field notes and observations is to provide a rich and nuanced picture of the study's setting. Although the present thesis seeks to research didactic opportunities and challenges that emerged from using *Spent* as a medium for intercultural learning, the following observations are also concerned with the context and classroom project in which the game was introduced. This is not only due to the importance of contextualising and grounding the lesson plan surrounding the activity of playing (Van Eck,

2009, Lund, 2009) but also because the context presented in this lesson plan seems to have potentially coloured the students' views and consequently have had an effect on their experience while playing.

The classroom observations became the first indications of didactic opportunities and challenges arising from the use of *Spent* as a medium for intercultural learning, and quotes and observations in sections 4.2.1-4.2.4 are drawn from Appendix E: Field notes from classroom observations.

4.2.1 Classroom observations and emotions

As laid out in section 3.4, the students took part in many different activities leading up to the playing of *Spent*. Their reactions to both the introductory text, the road-trip task, and the text on the American Dream gave the impression that they were ready to learn new things about American society, thus showing one aspect of Byram's model: "*Attitudes*: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures [...] (*savoir être*)" (Byram, 2008, p. 69). When the classroom participants discussed healthcare and health insurance and the federal minimum wage of 7.25 USD (Department of Labor, 2021), this created strong reactions. The students said that they did not understand why America kept holding on to a health system that, for them, appeared broken and unfair. One student blurted out, "Can't they see that they are on a dangerous path? I am shocked at what goes on over there. They are ruined!" (Appendix E). Despite the negative impressions towards the USA the students communicated, the topic seemed to engage the students "in interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices" (Byram, 1997, p. 50), which is stated as one of the objectives of *savoir être* (Byram, 1997, p. 34). Already in these initial lessons, it became clear that the topics covered had the potential to evoke emotional responses in the students, making the creation of these responses a clear didactic opportunity since "emotional and personal involvement is essential" (Hoff, 2019, p. 446) when facilitating for intercultural learning in the EAL classroom.

4.2.2 Classroom observations and immersion

In the lesson where the students played *Spent*, they did so in absolute silence. This silence created a mood in the classroom that made it clear that the students were strongly engaged in the activity of playing and should not be disturbed by the teacher asking questions

or walking around in the classroom. Many students played more than one round and seemed to experience the sense of *flow* discussed in section 2.6.3. The observations during this lesson seem to indicate that every student immersed themselves in the gameplay as they all appeared to be fully absorbed and engaged in the events of the game. This is also something Gee (2004) points out as a possibility to enhance learning, as discussed in section 2.6.2. The impression of concentrated students while playing gave the indication that immersion in gameplay might be a didactic opportunity supporting using games in a classroom setting since engagement has the possibility of encouraging the students to learn. In addition, with reference to intercultural learning specifically, active engagement is emphasised as especially important as intercultural learning not only involves “encounter[s] with documents and events from other cultures” (Hoff, 2014, p. 511), but also the ability to “participate and mediate in intercultural exchanges in a profound and engaged manner” (Hoff, 2014, p. 511). This means that engagement in the learning activity has the potential to not only function as a learning enhancement for the students involved but also has the potential to promote and facilitate intercultural learning.

4.2.3 Classroom observations and motivation

When the lesson with playing concluded, many students wanted to share their experiences while playing. Even though many of the students made it through the month with money to spare, they expressed that they felt like it was “totally random” (Appendix E) if they made it or not because success in the game was the result of pure luck. Some had tried to create systems to beat the game but had discovered that the choices that helped them win in one round did not work in the next. They also shared that they thought that the game was very realistic because it gave dilemmas that could happen in real life if someone were struggling with money. Many stated that playing was stressful and that they felt they had to make bad decisions in order to survive, something that affected the people around them in the game. These reports from the students further fortified the didactic opportunity of games having an emotional effect. Although some of the students struggled to beat the game, they all expressed that this was a great activity to take part in and that they found it enjoyable to play games in class, supporting Gee (2004) that bringing games into school might help students focus. This might indicate that playing games at school has the potential to promote motivation for the work taking place in the classroom since enjoyment in the activity is a key feature of intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Additionally, as discussed in section 2.6.2, playing games in school has the potential to broaden the students’ perspectives as they actively engage in the

learning activity (see Gee, 2004) aligning with the “Cultural Models about the World Principle” (Gee, 2004, p. 166). The students’ reports of gaming being an enjoyable activity, supported by classroom observations, suggest that motivation could be a didactic opportunity with using a game as a medium for intercultural learning in the classroom.

4.2.4 Classroom observations and ethnocentric views

The documentary “Being Poor in the World’s richest country” (Gilles, 2019) seemed to have a strong impression on the students as they watched in complete silence. It also brought forth a shared opinion: The fact that people could be homeless while having a job was a surprise to almost every student. They also had many questions about why public services did not help these people and why many individuals in the documentary had such a strong belief in their country when the system was failing them. This showed that the students were empathetic towards the homeless people, but they did not fully understand the strong values of hard work, patriotism, and the right to pursue happiness in the US in relation to the American Dream. They did not “identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins” (Byram, 1997, p. 52), recognising the importance of the American Dream in American society both historically and today. In addition, it appeared like the lesson on the health care system and the documentary gave the students the impression that Norway’s system was better. The negative emotions evoked on the minimum wage information were not lessened in the following lessons, but rather the opposite. The students expressed, on more than one occasion in class, that they were glad to live in Norway and that they did not understand why the US maintained their unfair healthcare system. With their expressed gratefulness for living in Norway and not in the US, the students’ held the ethnocentric view that their country was better a view that was not changed during the remainder of the weeks working on this topic. According to Byram (1997), stereotypical and ethnographical views are what to avoid when working towards intercultural learning. This highlights the clear potential challenge of fostering an ethnocentric attitude in the EAL classroom when using a lesson plan and game that depicts the darker sides of American society.

4.3 Essays

The reason for using the students’ essays (appendix G) as a source of data is that analysing the students’ own words can provide an authentic and real-life perspective on their

individual experiences while playing *Spent*. The essays are based on their personal reflections. Additionally, this study aimed to map how the findings from the classroom observations connected with what the students reported and to what extent. This required giving the students a voice to enable a meaningful comparison. Providing the students with a means to express their thoughts privately through writing seemed appropriate, as individual work is important for the students to reflect on the impact of their participation in the intercultural encounter (see Hoff, 2020a).

4.3.1 Essays and emotions

Many students reported in their essays that playing *Spent* elicited an emotional response, albeit briefly. For example, one student wrote, “The game just made me feel very helpless” (Essay 14), while another student emphasised that the game almost felt like real life:

While playing the game I felt both anger, dissatisfaction, and tiredness of the whole situation. I almost felt that it was about me. When I had to disappoint my child or put down my dog to make it through the month, it felt real (Essay 3).

These students appeared to have embraced the interactive aspect of the game, allowing them to imagine themselves in the experiences of the character. In other words, the students were able to place themselves into the experience of *the other* and establish a personal connection to the events of the game.

Furthermore, many students expressed that they found *Spent* to be realistic due to its portrayal of “Impossible choices like that are real challenges some americans have every day” (Essay 17). Several students reported that the game was a shocking experience because it compelled them to contemplate matters they had not previously encountered: “I was shocked when I saw that my monthly use on chocolate milk and other groceries is as much as a single mother use to feed herself and her child in the game *Spent*” (Essay 3), while another student wrote “I got surprised when I saw all the problems that came up that I usually never think of” (Essay 1). Others emphasised that the game was scary:

This is quite scary to be honest [...] How much more has to be done and how scary it is that people have to prioritize normal stuff everybody needs. How things I don't even think about money while buying became a priority and not a necessity. Things like

food and birthday presents became hard to buy and how much it cost to have a roof over your head (Essay 2).

The experience of struggling with money in the game seems to have impacted the students in some way, providing them an immersive experience that has the potential to foster empathy for *the other* and expose them to different perspectives of the world. This highlights the didactic opportunity of games evoking an emotional response since emotions such as empathy are “central for intercultural understanding” (Bredella, 2006, p. 91).

4.3.2 Essays and immersion

Immersion in gameplay is closely linked to emotional response since the emotional response occurs while immersed. This is evident in the fact that many of the students reported finding the choices presented in the game to be challenging. One student wrote that “Choices like buying used clothes for my child made me feel bad, I felt poor and stressed about the next bill or the next broken bone in our little family” (Essay 10), and was supported in this by another who stated that:

The game *Spent* gave me options like for example save your dog or let it die, help your mom afford her operation or don't. And many times, I had to choose the one that let the dog die or to not help my mom because I dint have any money for it. If I helped any of them, I lost a lot of money that I may have needed later in the game. It made me feel horrible when I had to choose not to help, because I really wanted to, but I couldn't afford (Essay 11).

This immersion in the game was reported as difficult due to the game assigning the “digital self” up with a family: “In the game I also had a child which made it significantly harder” (Essay 17). The students that mentioned the immersion of *Spent* in their essays all agreed that this aspect of gameplay, which placed them into *the other's* position while also providing a family, made the experience more realistic and emotionally triggering. This is in support of Hoff & Habegger-Conti (2022) who asserts that reading a text in the context of intercultural learning means to “engage emphatically with literary characters whose worldviews and values may diverge from their own” (p. 69). This further reinforces the notion that immersion is a possible didactic opportunity when using *Spent* in the classroom to promote intercultural learning.

4.3.3 Essays and motivation

In the essays, the students also reported that the game helped them learn, one student wrote that “The game *Spent* is a game that shows the reality of how it is to live on a limited and small amount of money every month. It’s a very good game to play or try out because it gives you the reality of living in the U.S.” (Essay 11) and another put down that “I think it is a good game and a good way for other people to see how it is for people who are struggling financially and what issues they can come across” (Essay 13). From this, it is evident that the students were open and positive to the immersion and the perspectives shown in the game despite the feelings of stress and guilt. This further confirms that the students found the activity of playing enjoyable and motivational when they expressed that the game was good even though it produced emotions usually associated with negativity. Immersion in gameplay requires active engagement and engagement with the learning material is highlighted as important, both for intercultural learning, but also for motivation (see Gee, 2004, Lund, 2009, Ryan & Deci, 2000, Hoff, 2014 and Hoff, 2019). Again, supporting that games in the classroom might function as a motivational factor, making the use of these types of digital, interactive texts a didactic opportunity through their motivational effect on the students.

4.3.4 Essays and ethnocentric views

The didactic challenge that the activities used as a context for playing *Spent* and the playing of the game made an impression on the students that Norway was a better country to live in were evident in the essays. When the game made the students consider unfamiliar aspects of living in poverty, it also made a great deal of them happy that they were living in a country that did not have the same social support system. Many referred to themselves as grateful to live in Norway and the general impression was that they felt like the system here was a better solution: “The U.S. should have the same system as Norway because the system that they have is so bad” (Essay 11), and:

I live in Norway, one of the richest countries in the world. I get good health care, free education, I have nice clothes and live in a nice house. At the age of 16 I got a job in a grocery store; I even make more money by the hour than many adults in the US.

Poverty is something I don't know well, but I think that many people in the US has got a pretty different experience (Essay 3).

These statements show that the students demonstrated a negative attitude toward the social system in the USA, and this negativity seems to have coloured their opinions about the American Dream. A majority of the students stated that the Dream would be impossible to achieve while living on minimum wage, one student expressed in their essay "I think the typical American dream is out of reach for many people living on minimum wage. I believe that being able to afford only the most necessary things like house, food, and healthcare will be enough" (Essay 3). Others were negative to the concept of the American Dream as a whole:

I believe the American dream is a trap. And this is why, the American dream has for long been about material things like a house or a car and the reason it's a trap is because it just gives false hope and traps us in a system that's designed to keep us working to the day we die (Essay 17).

How is it possible for people living on minimum wage in the U.S. to fulfil the American dream? It isn't [...] The American dream claims everything is possible. It claims that everyone can fulfil their American dream. However, I do not think the American dream is possible to fulfil for anyone. People are greedy. When they reach their dream, they want more. That's just how it is. I do not think anyone can achieve the American dream, especially not people living on minimum wage or are unemployed (Essay 4).

These statements made it clear that the experience of immersing themselves in poverty through *Spent*, and perhaps also the other activities in the lesson plan, had a profound effect on their thoughts on the American Dream. They were explicitly negative towards the obtainability of the Dream in accordance with the aspect of intercultural learning that reflects "critical cultural awareness» (Byram 2008, p. 69).

However, this negative attitude towards the American Dream as a concept was not shared by all. Some of the students felt like the lesson plan and surrounding activities had opened their eyes to the achievability of the Dream through hard work:

I think the American dream goes out on living a good life. That you're able to do the things you want and not having to worry about money. I'm not saying that they need to have unlimited money, but enough so they don't stress when they think about their bills or having a low salary. [...] I do believe you'll need to work hard to achieve The American dream if you live on a minimum wage (Essay 14).

Even though poverty is a big problem in the US I think it's still possible to achieve the American dream, but it will be harder for some than for others. If you live on minimum wage or are unemployed it will definitely not be easy. The American systems are not fair nor forgiving. People are dependent on money to survive in those systems. You won't get any help without paying for it. You will have to work hard and crawl your way up and then you might have a chance to achieve the dream (Essay 17).

The students that shared this attitude seem to have gained an understanding of the US and the appreciation of the value of hard work inherent in US society and therefore showed that they were ready to gain new knowledge. In addition, it also gave the impression that they were open to different perspectives of the world, in other words, they expressed that they were able to “[...] suspend disbelief about other cultures [...] (*savoir être*)” (Byram, 2008, p. 69).

One aspect many students emphasised as something positive gained from the lesson plan was the fact that there are many people doing charitable volunteer work to help people living in poverty, “I think it's very smart and a good thing that it is free medical care that people set up. Especially when it's so expensive to do those things” (Essay 15), while another expressed that this aspect of American society made them feel that the Dream was achievable for all:

When I recently watched the documentary “Being poor in the world's greatest country” I saw that people all over the country volunteered for helping the poor. It gave me hope that the American dream would be more attainable for the poor too (Essay 17).

One student even expressed that helping others was a part of the American Dream: “After all that is what the American dream is about, helping the people around us get better and lifting them up” (Essay 2). In this, the students showed that there were aspects of the American way of life which had made a positive impact. With the positivity gathered from observing the value of helping, they showed that they had the ability to “elicit from an interlocutor the

concepts and values of documents or events and to develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena” (Byram, 1997, p. 52), which is a part of *savoir apprendre* (Byram, 1997, p. 34), they saw the charity work as a means for the Americans living in poverty to achieve equal opportunities regarding the Dream. This highlights the importance of contrasting the grim picture painted by *Spent* of poverty as an American societal issue with positive aspects of the US to avoid a one-sided biased view of American society. Still, the didactic challenge that the lesson plan and playing *Spent* created ethnocentric views was evident in the students’ expressed gratitude for living in Norway and critique of the American system of health care.

4.4 The interviews

As laid out in sections 3.2 and 3.4, the interviews (Appendix I) were held after the conclusion of the lesson plan and hand-in of the students’ essays. Conducting interviews to compare the students’ self-reports of learning outcomes to the researcher’s classroom observation, gives the possibility of investigating the students’ views more in-depth than only relying on their answers from the essays. In addition, it allows the researcher the possibility of exploring whether and how discussion amongst the students brought to the surface student views and experiences beyond those that were detectable in the individual student texts.

4.4.1 The Interviews and emotions

The emotional responses reported by the students seem to indicate that *Spent* has the potential to facilitate an impactful experience for the player through interactive hard choices that trigger emotional responses due to the realism of the game. One student stated that they felt disappointed that people could find themselves stuck living a life in poverty in that way and many said it made them sad to think about the people living in these circumstances. Some of the students even reported that the thought of this being the reality for a lot of families made them feel frustrated and angry when playing the game. A recurring feeling reported among the interviewed students was stress while playing. They felt that the choices they had to make were hard, and several students emphasised having to send their dog away or not attending to their child was especially difficult and that playing this game made them reflect on the harsh consequences of financial struggle:

Student 1, interview 3: I think it was a bit stressful like that, because I had very little money, and then all of a sudden it was like, you have to pay this and that, and then it

was like you're afraid that the kid was going to break a leg or had to go to the dentist, to get scared of what's going to happen, in a way. It was a little bit special.

In addition to feeling stressed, the students seem to have developed strong feelings of empathy for the in-game character while also imagining themselves in the situation. This could indicate that the students developed an understanding towards *the other's* struggles, this has the potential of providing insight into the experience and seeing the world through *the other*, something that is emphasised as important for intercultural learning (see Byram, 2007 and Hoff, 2014).

In accordance with Isbister's (2017) claim that games have the ability to produce feelings of guilt discussed in section 2.6.3, many students highlighted this aspect of the game having an emotional impact:

Student 1: It's so the feeling of guilt, like, for example, I got that choice too, that with the dog. So, I didn't want to take the dog away, I don't want to kill my dog. There were very little food, and it was very difficult. I knew I knew; it was kind of like what if it had been my dog, right?

Student 4: There was a lot of stress, there were a lot of things that needed to be done like that.

Interview 3:

Student 1: You got a little bit like that, you kind of felt a little bit like immoral. With sort of, you kind of have to choose to leave all the people around you.

Student 3: Yes, but at the same time, it was your child first, it seems. I think there are very few who choose their child away.

Student 1: Yes, but sort of, when in a way, like that to give your kid good food, sort of, that's kind of where shit. Can I somehow, can I do it? Got like, you want a little bit more somehow, yes.

Student 3: You got a sense of responsibility.

[...]

Student 4: And personally, maybe felt a little sympathy and stuff.

Interviewer: Sympathy for?

Student 4: For like, for the person you're playing as. I mean, it's not a real person, but, since you play like them, you feel more about it.

[...]

Student 1: I mean, that's kind of people, we can't understand anything, that is, reading about, kind of knowing something, and sort of having sympathy for those people, but you can never understand something like that, until you've kind of experienced it yourself.

Interviewer: (to student 1): Did you feel *Spent* helped with that?

Student 1: Yes.

This shows that the playing of *Spent* invoked feelings of guilt and sympathy towards their character and the people around the character, supporting Gee (2004), Isbister (2017) and McGonigal (2012) in their claim that games have a unique ability to enhance feelings. This connection can be particularly effective when the gameplay involves making a connection with a “you-character” as a “digital self”.

4.4.2 The Interviews and immersion

The immersion in the experience of playing was also something the students emphasised. The fact that they felt like they were *experiencing* poverty, made them believe that *Spent* gave a realistic picture of what life could be like as a family who barely gets by. The interactive aspect of *Spent* seemed to have strengthened the students' perceptions of their own learning outcomes because they had to stay focused and engaged to play the game and win. The interactive form of *Spent* created engagement in the students because they were in the game as themselves making the decisions. All the students expressed that they were playing as a “you-character” made an impression on them and made it more real:

Interview 2:

Student 3: It made it a little harder, to make choices like that and stuff like that.

Interviewer: Why is that?

Student 2: Because then, in a way, it's you it's about and not another person, in a way.

[...]

Student 2: So, it's like, if you get into the game really well, it's almost scary. You sit and just stress properly about what you can do to ensure that you can survive yourself.

[...]

Interview 4:

Student 1: I think it's easier to understand the, since, if you have an I-situation like that, in a way.

Interviewer: Yes?

Student 1: I think it made it better. What should I say? In our own situation that we kind of were ourselves who chose.

Student 3: Mhm, So, you have to make your own choices then it's like, it's very independent how it's going to work for you. About what your choices are. What you choose to do, then, like that.

Interview 4:

Student 1: I mean, we were able to get into the situation ourselves. That helped a lot with seeing how, what the different expenses are and yes, how much they spend on it. How quickly it runs out.

From these answers, it becomes evident that the immersive aspect of *Spent* was the main reason the students felt like they had learnt from the experience of playing, supporting Gee (2004) in his claim that video games have the potential to enhance learning through interactivity. In addition, regarding the “digital self”, it could appear like this had an even stronger effect on some of the students. Student 3 in interview 4 and student 2 in interview 1 both labelled their child a “she” and “the daughter”, a hint to the emotional response involved. This might indicate that these students pictured the “you-character” in *Spent* in such a vivid way that they saw their imagined children as boys or girls. This also suggests that the students were able to personalise and humanise their digital selves, immersing into the game in a way that enhanced their personal connection to the choices they faced in the game. This vivid emotional response and immersion could mean that these students had an experience while playing that has the potential to foster empathy with diverse experiences, making *Spent* a

potential tool to promote these types of experiences and encourage the emotions essential for intercultural learning, empathy and sympathy (Bredella, 2006).

4.4.3 The Interviews and motivation

The answers to the first question in the interview guide (Appendix H) on how much the students played games in their spare time, uncovered that not many of the students played anything other than games on their phones. Six students reported spending time playing different games on consoles and computers, while the remaining twelve reported either not playing, or playing killing time-type of mobile games. This means that while playing a game in English might help bridge the gap between out-of-school activities and classroom work (see Ørevik, 2020), this was not the case for the majority of the students interviewed. Still, all students were positive towards playing games in school. Most of the students interviewed characterised playing at school as a fun activity. In addition to being fun, three of the students reported that they felt the game was rich in learning potential, and one reported they felt it was a good way to learn because it showed them what it was like to live in poverty. Four of the students reported that they appreciated the “practical” approach to learning which *Spent* allowed for:

Interview 3:

Student 1: Yes, more like practical.

Interviewer: Practical?

Student 3: Yeah, it’s like natural science, and with experiments, then English has games.

Student 1: Yes.

Student 2: Get a little like, it is like, the people that attend construction, right, they have to like build things to be good at it, right? You kind of get like a bigger [...] insight to it. What it is like and not just sit and do tasks to it. It is kind of like, you don’t really catch what you are writing, you write what it says and then you don’t think a lot more about it.

Student 1: Mmm, more like permanent learning. Not just in one ear and out the other.

This experience described by the student might indicate that playing games in school could be a tool to avoid some of the boredom described by students in general studies, as reported by Bakken (2019). Avoiding boredom is naturally closely connected to the aspect of motivation. The fact that all students expressed in one way or another that they felt that the experience of playing was something they found enjoyable, could mean that this activity led to “intrinsic motivation” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55) because the activity was fun and engaging. This engagement has the potential of increasing the learning outcomes of an activity (Ryan & Deci, 2000, Van Eck, 2009) something the students also reported. Every student interviewed reported that they felt the use of games in the classroom helped them learn. When they were asked why they felt like the game helped them learn, the students emphasised the interactive aspect of *Spent*:

Interview 1:

Student 1: It's more fun to learn plus we have to get a little more into it because you have to sort of focus and do things yourself. So you kind of have to be focused and, and at the same time, I don't want to stop either. It's more fun to play than to sit and work on tasks.

Interview 4:

Student 1: No, you get a little bit more into it instead of just reading about it. So, it's easier to understand, perhaps.

Student 3: Easier to remember too.

The students' answers are in accordance with Fenner (2001), who states that if a text is to work as a facilitator for intercultural competence the students need to take an active part in the textual encounter as discussed in section 2.2. The students willingly and eagerly immersed themselves in the learning experience the game gave, something that could be an indication that they found playing *Spent* motivational.

4.4.4 The Interviews and ethnocentric views

A feeling that was frequently brought up was gratitude. The students were happy to live in Norway and grateful for the support system that can be found here:

Interview 3:

Student 3: [...] But, I don't know, it was kind of like gratitude I'm left with, then. Thinking that I am grateful that I can, live as I do, in a country where there is a safety net around me. That I can't end up in that situation myself, sort of.

Interview 4:

Student 3: Really that we live in Norway. That we are lucky that we live in Norway compared to such a system there. Since here it is much easier to get back on your feet again, then. Work is much easier, you can hold a job much easier, right. A lot better rights and stuff here in Norway.

Student 1: Much easier to get help, perhaps.

[...]

Student 3: With NAV and stuff.

This was a recurring thought throughout the interview, many of the students reported that they had learnt that they did not want to live in the USA. Other students emphasised that playing *Spent* made them realise that the people living in poverty were stuck and had to work a lot harder to achieve the American Dream. Additional things they felt they had learnt were that the health care system was “terrible”, and that poverty was a bigger issue than they had imagined. These answers might indicate that the students felt Norway was the favourable country to live in between the two, further emphasising that an ethnocentric view was a didactic challenge this lesson plan and the game produced. This general view of Norway being better was not contested in any of the interviews. It might indicate that the interaction between the students seems to have confirmed their beliefs on Norway’s superiority in liveability, and maybe even enhanced the ethnocentrism, as no one spoke against the expressed opinion, and everyone supported the students who initiated talking about Norway as the better country to live in.

4.5 Comparison of findings from the three data sets

As mentioned in the introduction of the present chapter, all three data sets, the field notes regarding classroom observations, student essays and interviews, produced results indicating somewhat the same didactic opportunities in a context of intercultural learning: playing *Spent* invoked an emotional response in the students, they immersed themselves in gameplay and the “digital self”, and playing was a motivating activity in school. At the same time, all three datasets indicated the same didactic challenges: the playing of *Spent* and the lesson plan seem to have created a feeling among the students that Norway is a better country in terms of social support without looking critically examining Norway. This means that the

students did not show the attitude of “readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own (*savoir être*)” (Byram, 2008, p. 69). In addition, this study highlighted the difficulties teachers face when trying to assess intercultural competence, the students interviewed seemed to have needed the oral communication to convey the emotional impact the playing of *Spent* had on them.

What can be concluded from the students’ statements about the game, is that it moved them in some way even if they did not reflect explicitly on this in their essays. They communicated strong feelings and reactions towards the dilemmas they faced in the game after playing, and from the way they expressed that they wanted to talk about it, it seemed to indicate that they needed to process the experience. Another shared opinion expressed in essays, interviews and in the classroom was that the activity of playing *Spent* helped them gain a deeper understanding of what living in poverty might be like and that they felt like this improved their learning outcome. This might be an indication that the classroom project has been successful in “expand[ing] young individual’s horizons by exposing them to texts and topics that they may not encounter in their own personal worlds of experience” (Hoff, 2020, pp. 83-84), and therefore perhaps helped them towards intercultural learning by letting the students experience what life could be like as *the other*. The emotions expressed showed that the students willingly immersed themselves in the game and that it had a strong emotional effect on them and worked as a motivational factor. This emotional response is stressed as an essential part of intercultural competence (see Hoff, 2020, Bredella, 2006). The engagement reported by the students has the possibility of fostering a deeper understanding of different perspectives and cultures, especially when the activity set up to give this insight is an activity the students find enjoyable and motivational.

One aspect of American society many students emphasised as admirable was the charitable work they witnessed in the documentary “Being Poor in the World’s richest country” (Gilles, 2019). In class, in their essays and in the interviews, the students mentioned that this made an impression on them, something that might have had an effect on their experience of playing. As mentioned in section 3.4, this documentary covers how easy it is to be evicted from one’s house in the US and interviews many people who became homeless due to bad luck. These aspects of losing money quickly, and consequently losing one’s home are also present in *Spent*, as the dilemmas in the game are based on real challenges Americans living in poverty might face every day (see Centre for Systems Solutions, 2018), meaning that some of the problems faced by the people in the documentary were also present in *Spent*.

Despite their new knowledge of charitable work in the US, in all three data sources, the students expressed a negative view of American society in the form of a critique of the healthcare system and social help available to those in poverty. Student 1 in interview 1 was the only one that expressed an understanding of the notion of working hard and making it on your own is a part of the American Dream:

It kind of makes sense that the USA is to make it on your own, and then they pay for everything themselves, but think that it is better to kind of, we do pay for it here in Norway too, but I feel it is a bit better that they, kind of like it is in Norway, that you still make it on your own. It is still you who has to, kind of

Even though the students' expressed an apparent understanding of the American value of obtaining their own success through hard work, they were still left with the feeling that the Norwegian way was better. One could argue that the students expressed "*savoirs'engager*: an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram, 2008, p. 69) in their critique, but it also seemed like these activities left the students with a feeling about the American system of societal help that was coloured by a feeling that Norway's system was better, a potential downfall when teaching intercultural competence (see Hoff, 2020). The students expressed gratitude for living in Norway and expressed the belief that the American system needed to change. This was also apparent when the analysed data revealed that most of the students had very few positive things to say about the USA, while negative critiques were abundant.

However, the lesson plan and playing *Spent* might not necessarily be the only reason for the students' negativity about the US. During these weeks, the only societal issue that was covered was poverty. Nevertheless, the students expressed their views on other issues in the US, such as gang violence and school shootings. They were concerned about healthcare costs, as well as violence and the safety of their hypothetical children:

Interview 1:

Student 1: But it, and it is that there are only some nice, those neighbourhoods and then there are some that are, terrible neighbourhoods. And then there are a lot of gang members there. That is scary.

Student 2: It is not safe to live there.

Student 4: It is a little bit kind of scary.

Student 2: I mean, you can like, you can't go into the street, you can't walk home from the gym without being scared to be shot like whenever.

Student 1: It is kind of like, or, either you have to be filthy rich, or you have to be in gang members. Then you are a little bit safe, then you have a gang. The ones that are, they are a little bit violent, but then you are kind of protected.

Student 4: I feel, it is kind of weird going from here, here you do not think about school shootings, then you get down there and have to like practice it, in everyday school life.

[...]

Student 1: But I actually think I like living in Norway. I can stay here. I haven't, so I don't think I'd want to send my kid to school in the USA. If so, it would have been home-schooling. It's scary, you don't even know if they'll even come home. You just send them out into the world, hmm, wonder if they're coming back home today, hmm, exciting to see.

From this exchange, it is evident that some of the students already held a significantly negative perception of US society. Although the lesson plan reinforced this view, many of the feelings expressed towards the USA in this context were from issues not covered at school.

A didactic challenge that emerged from the analysis was that these three different sources yielded varying results regarding the students' level of the students' emotional response. Although the essay task prompted the students to include their feelings on the American Dream after playing *Spent*, the essays did not reflect this connection. The majority of the students focused their essays on the notion of the American Dream in relation to poverty, but they somewhat neglected to comment on whether the playing of the game had swayed their opinions in any way, or if the playing produced an emotional response. The apparent emotional impact of playing *Spent* on the students was reflected in the students' essays, but not to the extent indicated by their initial response after playing. The classroom observations and following conversation with the students suggested that the playing made an

impression on the class, however, this emotional response was not as evident in the essays. Some of the students included what they had experienced while playing, but only briefly. The majority of the students focused on the obtainability of the American Dream, and less on the impact *Spent* had made on their own perception of the Dream. In contrast, the game having an emotional response was reported by every student during the interviews. They conveyed that the game made them learn more, that the gameplay produced a lot of different emotions and that they felt like the interactive aspect of *Spent* helped them and motivated them to learn. A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that when assessing the students' inner thoughts and perspectives, it is crucial to provide more than one way of reflecting on their experiences. This also suggests that attempting to find evidence of intercultural competence in the students' work and assessing it, might not give a sufficient result when the students only have one outlet to answer in. This conclusion further supports the notion that the students needed more prompts from the teacher to fully explore whether playing this game had an emotional effect on them. In addition, they seemed to need more outlets to reflect on if the playing swayed their opinion on the achievability of the American Dream. Even though the classroom observations indicate that the students were affected by playing in some way, it is difficult to observe the inner processes involved in intercultural learning. The behaviour of the class while playing was very different from how they typically act when given an activity, they usually end up discussing with their classmates. While playing the classroom was completely quiet, and not a single student uttered a word. The change in typical behaviour for the class made it evident that playing had an effect, however, it is difficult to determine exactly what. The complete silence that occurred while the students played could simply be immersion in what they found to be an enjoyable activity. It could also be an indication of an emotional response in accordance with Bredella (2006) and Isbister (2017) or an immersion brought by the "digital self" (see Gee, 2004).

During the lessons at school, when they were writing their essays, some of the students asked if they could be honest in their explanation and definition of the American Dream. They felt that the Dream was unrealistic but were afraid that this was the wrong answer. It was stressed again that they were allowed to have and give their own opinion, and the focus should be on finding reasons and arguments for their view, not whether it was the correct one. They liked that they were handing their work in anonymously and communicated that they felt they could be more honest. Their only concern was whether they would get their grade or not, which went away after it was explained that they would be able to see their grade even

though their names were not visible at hand in. This again highlights one of the main didactic challenges when it comes to promoting intercultural competence in a school setting: It is difficult for teachers to determine if a student is showing that they are interculturally competent when the student's main focus is the endpoint with a grade and not on the process of learning or their learning outcomes. In this context, Hoff (2020), states that teachers should be careful when assessing the students' interculturality because it involves assessing their "*attitudes and values*" (p. 86, emphasis in original) something that is not observable. The teacher cannot necessarily determine if and how the students have been affected and whether this effect is intercultural learning solely on the basis of observing what is going on in the classroom.

Relating to the American Dream, the class was divided, something that was visible in all the data collected in the study. While some reported feeling that it would be completely unrealistic for someone living in poverty to achieve, others pointed out that the Dream could be attainable if one made sacrifices and worked hard. Despite this division of opinions, the general impression emerging from the analysis of all three data sources was that the students had gained knowledge about the Dream as a concept and that they understood that this is a value present in the USA both historically and today. This new knowledge of both a strong American value, but also new knowledge of the American Dream could mean that activities of this classroom project were able to teach the students something they were not aware of in American society, giving them "*Knowledge: of social groups and their products and practices*" (Byram, 2008, p. 69). The activity of playing the game made most students question the attainability for people living on minimum wage and, therefore, expressing "critical cultural awareness" (Byram 2008, p. 69) on a phenomenon they learnt about through the lesson plan and activities, while for others, the Dream was still possible, although more challenging to achieve. What all students reported was that the lesson plan and playing gave them more knowledge than they started with, and that the game and its interactive features and the gameplay as a "you-character" deepened their understanding of *the other's* situation of living in poverty in the US. This is in support of Gee (2004) and his "Identity Principle" (p. 67), that a "digital self" supports learning and the "Cultural Models about the World Principle" (p. 166) that games have the potential to open up for other world views. The reported learning outcomes from the students could be an indication that this study succeeded in expanding the students' views of the world by creating an appreciation for social issues and cultural differences, making *Spent* a valuable didactic tool to use in this context.

In addition, student 1 in interview 3 gave a reason for why gaming should be used in class, which is probably in aligned with the reason why games were explicitly included in the current English subject curriculum in the first place:

I kind of think like, that kind of education and stuff, kind of has to adapt to the way the world is now, and people sort of, even kids when they're playing games. And it's like, you can think whatever you want about it, that it's stupid or that it's good somehow, but it's going to happen anyway like, so you kind of have to, you have to adapt for kids to actually learn something

In other words, this student seems to acknowledge the need for education to keep up with the fast-past changes of contemporary societies. However, since *Spent* gives a very harsh picture of life on minimum wage that seems to have coloured the students' views towards ethnocentrism, it becomes even more clear that teachers need to know the game they introduce in class and its potential pedagogical impact. The ethnocentric views of the students might have been counteracted if they had been given an opportunity to reflect on their experiences in conversations before the assessments. As a countermeasure, perhaps it would have been possible to include a contrasting view of poverty in Norway, as a societal issue present here as well, based on the thorough answers the students gave in their interviews. This further underlines the need for teachers to include both oral and written work when trying to facilitate intercultural learning in the classroom.

5. Summary and conclusions

5.1 Introduction

This thesis sought to investigate some of the didactic opportunities and challenges related to using the video game *Spent* as a medium for intercultural learning in an EAL classroom. It has done so by examining a group of students' self-reported experiences and learning outcomes in correspondence with the researcher's classroom observations. In this final chapter, a summary of the main findings will be presented in response to the research questions, before moving on to the implications these findings might have for using video games in the EAL classroom. The limitations of the study will be presented and discussed, and finally, concluding comments and reflections will be offered.

5.2 Summary of the main findings

Using the interactive game *Spent* as a medium for intercultural learning in an English as an additional language classroom offers several didactic opportunities and challenges. In all three data sets, the didactic opportunities that emerged were the creation of emotional responses due to the "digital self" in the game, the students' immersion into the interactive gameplay, and the motivational factor that the use of games in school has the possibility of producing. The students all reported that they found the activity of playing *Spent* enhanced their learning outcomes, something that was supported by the classroom observations while the students were playing the game. The class was very concentrated and immersed in gameplay and extremely keen to discuss their experience upon completion of the lesson. This might be an indication of the students showing readiness to learn. The impact of the gameplay was also evident in some of the essays, while the strongest reports of increased learning occurred in the interviews. Based on this study, the combination of written and oral work as a possibility to reflect on an experience seems to be the appropriate route for a teacher to take when trying to enhance the learning outcomes.

Something that surfaced quite prominently throughout all three sources was the didactic challenge that the playing of *Spent* and the surrounding lesson plan seemed to have encouraged strong ethnocentric feelings among the students. They all reported that they did not want to live in the US and that the Norwegian way was better. In other words, they did not show "*Attitudes: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own (savoir être)*" (Byram, 2008, p. 69), not displaying a critical view of their own culture.

Another challenge that this study highlighted, is the practice of assessing a concept like intercultural competence and the question of whether this is something teachers should aim for. In addition, the importance of teachers knowing the game they introduce their students to is a didactic challenge emphasised when games have entered the competence aims without any preparation for the teachers.

5.2.1 Emotional response

One of the didactic opportunities is the emotional response evoked by the game: When students play a game like *Spent*, they can experience a range of emotions, such as frustration, empathy, and stress, but also enjoyment. These emotions can create a powerful learning experience, as they can help students connect with the content on a deeper level and develop a more nuanced understanding. For example, frustration with the challenges of living on a limited budget can help students appreciate the difficulties faced by people living with these challenges. Empathy with the “digital self” in the game can help students develop a more open-minded and inclusive perspective on cultural diversity since they are the ones making the decisions and the ones these decisions affect in the game. Therefore, the emotional response to the game has the potential to create a meaningful and engaging learning experience that connects students to the content and fosters a deeper understanding of cultural diversity.

The students’ self-reporting of learning outcomes and the use of a game as an enhancer corresponds to the researcher’s field notes from the lesson when the students were playing and their essays. Of course, the field notes are observations, but still, it seems like the activity of playing moved the students in some way. It is also in accordance with what the students answered in the group interviews and wrote in their essays that the playing of *Spent* helped them develop a further understanding of the families in the US living on one income. The use of a you-character seems to be a feature of the game that might have invoked feelings of guilt since they were the ones making the decisions. This immersion was also an aspect the students pointed to when assessing their own learning outcomes of playing the game as something that enhanced the learning experience and created engagement among themselves. A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that playing the game has the potential to work as a facilitator for emotional response. This is in accordance with Bredella’s (2006) aspects of empathy and sympathy but also supports Isbiter’s (2017) claim that playing games has the unique ability to invoke the feeling of guilt, creating a personal bond with the character one

plays. Although one cannot definitely conclude that this activity facilitated the development of intercultural competence, it would seem like playing *Spent* might have the potential to do so.

5.2.2 Immersion

On the basis of this small-scale study, one of the opportunities of using this digital, interactive game seems to be the possibility of enhancing the learning outcome through the game's design. *Spent* can provide an immersive and interactive experience that engages students in a realistic and relevant context, which can enhance their intercultural competence. Immersion in gameplay can be seen as a significant didactic opportunity for promoting intercultural learning in an EAL classroom by creating a chance for the students to experience life as *the other*. When playing a game like *Spent*, students can fully immerse themselves in a different cultural context and experience the challenges and opportunities of living on minimum wage. This immersion in the “digital self” seems to have created a sense of empathy and understanding for people living in poverty, allowing students to gain a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of intercultural learning through a more immersive experience.

5.2.3 Motivation

It seems like the activity of playing *Spent* also had an impact on the students' engagement and therefore motivation in class. By using gameplay as a medium for learning, teachers can tap into students' intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000) to explore and experiment and create an engaging and interactive learning environment that promotes deep learning and knowledge retention. Many of the students are familiar with playing games in their spare time, and this activity is connected to feelings of enjoyment as it is something students choose to spend their time on, therefore, using a game in school might help connect learning to the familiar feeling of having fun while playing. In this context, the familiar interactive features of gameplay have the possibility to enhance the enjoyment of the learning experience and therefore be a motivational factor for schoolwork. Intrinsic motivation is an important factor in promoting deep learning, as it encourages students to engage with the content for its own sake, rather than simply to meet external requirements or receive rewards in the form of a grade. Therefore, the interactive features of *Spent* can be a powerful tool for promoting intercultural learning in an EAL classroom because the use of the game can create an engaging and immersive learning environment that promotes intrinsic motivation and therefore a deeper understanding of the issue at hand due to a willingness to learn (see Ryan

& Deci, 2000). When the students are motivated for learning, the activities in the classroom might have a bigger impact, something that might enhance intercultural learning when that is the desired pedagogical outcome of the lesson.

The interesting aspect that emerged from this study was that the reports of engagement and enjoyment applied to all the students, not just the “gamers” who regularly spend time gaming outside of school. This could indicate that using games might work as an engager and lifter of motivation for more students than just the ones that regularly game in their spare time. All students reported the positive aspects of playing and that the immersion in the interactive aspects of the you-character created a stronger sense of understanding. In that manner, one might draw the conclusion that the lesson plan and a game as a means for intercultural learning were partly successful as the students felt like they understood more and had gained knowledge of poverty in the USA and the American Dream they did not have at the start of this topic.

5.2.4 Ethnocentric views

There are also challenges related to using *Spent* in the classroom. One challenge is that the game's content and scenarios seem to have given the students the impression that every American who is not a movie star is poor, resulting in the ethnocentric view that Norway is the better country to live in of the two. This view can create bias and limit the game's effectiveness in promoting intercultural competence. The use of *Spent* in a classroom setting paints a rather grim picture of poverty in the US. This fact, put together with the documentary about the homeless and information on the health insurance system in the US, might have contributed to the students' attitudes that Norway is the superior country to reside in. A recurring theme that came up in the classroom, the students' essays, and the interviews was that most students felt like they learnt that they did not want to move to the USA and that they were happy and grateful to live in Norway. This might indicate that, after the lesson plan, the students were left with the impression that Norwegian society has improved ways of dealing with poverty and helping the citizens of the country who have economic challenges compared to the US. According to Hoff (2020), this development of an “us vs. them”- attitude is one of the risks for teachers when conducting lesson plans and activities meant to facilitate intercultural competence. Of course, there is no way of knowing if *Spent* and the other classroom activities were the only reason for negativity towards American society. During this lesson plan, the topics of gun violence and school shootings were not covered. Still, this was a concern for the students when discussing whether they wanted to move to the USA, both for

an exchange year in school and to live. The news that we see daily on police brutality and other issues in the States might have coloured the students' views on the US before the start of the lesson plan. In addition, this view might have been somewhat avoided if the lesson plan had included a stronger focus on the same societal issues in Norway regarding poverty and low-income families- something that needs to be researched further.

5.2.5 Assessment

This study also drew attention to didactic challenges besides the us vs. them- attitude and the students being critical towards the USA; How to assess the students' level of intercultural competence? And if evidence of such competence were present, how to know that the lesson plan and game were the reason for said competence? The questions regarding assessment, mapped out as a part of the rationale for writing the thesis, still stand after the research is done. How to determine and assess intercultural competence is a question that still stands unanswered. Quite the opposite, the impression that this study has emphasised is that for a teacher to assess intercultural competence in their students is very difficult. Even if the students self-report that they feel like the activity of playing altered or enhanced their views on US society and poverty as a societal issue, the aspects of how or whether it led to intercultural competence are not observable by the teacher. Even though it seems like the students were moved while playing, it is not possible for the teacher to determine whether this fact promoted the inner changes that are involved in intercultural competence, especially not through observation. This means that whether the activities in the classroom have the desired outcome of the development of intercultural competence cannot be determined definitely or at all.

5.2.6 Pedagogical use of games

As with any lesson plan with a desired goal at the end, the use of games in the classroom needs to be planned out to map the desired pedagogical outcome. As stated in the introduction, a part of the rationale for this thesis was the lack of preparation for the new competence aim including gaming (MER, 2019). Upon completion of the study, this lack of preparation remains as a didactic challenge for teachers. This is because the use of games requires that the teachers know how to use them in accordance with Van Eck's (2009) and Lund's (2009) emphasis on successful teaching through games, as discussed in section 2.6.4. Teachers should be cautious when using games in the classroom without a plan that highlights what the game is meant to achieve. The learning potential and learning goals of each game

used should be mapped out before employing one of these digital, interactive, pedagogical tools. In other words, teachers have to know the games they use and analyse their possibilities in relation to the topics covered in their classroom in order to fully employ the game's educational potential. This strongly highlights a major issue with LK20's demand that students of upper secondary should experience and reflect on games in the classroom: Teachers were not, and still are not, prepared and are in need of a more thorough explanation of how to implement games in their teaching. As mentioned in the introduction, the preparation material was delayed due to the Covid pandemic, and the teachers of Norway were struggling to stay afloat in the uncharted waters of digital home school. This fact is problematic when games are implemented as something obligatory to be taught in the EAL classroom despite the lack of preparation. The demand to use a new and unknown tool for many should include a proper explanation and support for the teachers meant to execute the requirement both practically and economically.

5.3 Didactic implications

Teachers are guided by the curriculum, meaning that the use of games has to be included in the upper secondary EAL classroom in Norway since it is stated in the competence aims for the English subject (MER, 2019). The positive attitude in the students' self-reporting in the interviews and the researcher's field notes make a strong case that the decision to include games in school is supported by the students. A definite trait of the game that the students especially emphasised was the use of the you-character. That they themselves were forced to make the decisions was highlighted as the aspect that increased their learning. This might indicate that for a teacher to make use of a game in the classroom, a game that features this aspect can be beneficial for engaging the students. As a facilitator for intercultural learning, it would appear that games showing different aspects of cultures will be enhanced through the use of a "digital self". When *Spent* forces the student into the shoes of *the other*, it has the potential to enhance learning and to make the students immerse themselves in the situation in a way no other medium does. It is, however, important that the students get to process the experience, something it can seem that the interviews made them do more so than just writing their essays. Meaning that letting the students reflect on the impact of their position as *the other* in the game is crucial for the gameplay to have an effect. This is also something that Hoff & Habegger-Conti (2022) stress as an important part of intercultural learning: It is important for the students to "explore the effects of such elements in order to gain an understanding on how the text positions itself and its readers" and that

“text interpretation processes that take into consideration the impact of literary devices can be integral in the reader’s ability to explore” (Hoff & Habegger-Conti, 2022, p. 70), in this context, specifically the impact of *Spent’s* interactive design.

In the EAL classroom, assessing the students’ written work is a common practice. The results of this study, however, indicate that when working with intercultural competence, only relying on written work is not nearly enough to fully grasp if the coursework has made an impact on the class in one way or another. When interviewed, the students all gave more elaborate answers that helped the understanding of what they were left with after the completion of the lesson plan. Therefore, it would seem that a combination of the written task and conversation would be beneficial. Not just for the students’ grades, since grades are an obligatory part of school, but also to facilitate so that the students have different ways of reflecting on their own understanding of the world and their own learning outcomes. In relation to intercultural competence, this aspect is far more important than grades. The fact that a combination of written work and interviews might help teachers to understand the students and their responses means that giving the students more than one way to process their emotional responses might help map what the students truly feel about the issues at hand.

However, what the students genuinely believe regarding an issue is, and always will be, affected by how much the students are willing to share, and to what extent they are sharing their true feelings. These aspects are again closely connected to their relationship with their teacher, not to mention the danger of the teacher in question letting their own thoughts on the matter categorise the answers and reflections from the students as wrong or correct. Intercultural competence is seen as something “fluid and dynamic” (Hoff, 2020, p. 86), something one glides in and out of to a varying degree throughout the entirety of life, and not something one can check off after completing one lesson plan. It is something hard to determine and measure, and definitely not achieved through one activity. Therefore, despite LK20’s strong focus on intercultural learning and its implications of teachers being able to grade the students’ intercultural competence, these potential pitfalls further highlight that something that involves the students’ own reflections and inner changes is not suited to be graded and assessed. From this, it is clear that setting the educational goal of assessing a student’s inner thoughts and behaviour patterns is difficult. The processes within a student in relation to intercultural competence are unobservable for teachers and not measurable, making the assessment of intercultural competence a tough didactic challenge for teachers of the English subject.

5.4. Possible limitations of the thesis and suggestions for further research

Although LK20 makes a clear connection between games and interculturality, to the best of my knowledge, the link between games and intercultural learning has not yet been extensively researched. The results of this small-scale study could be considered a start, however, there is a definite need for more research into the topic of using games in an educational setting to facilitate for intercultural learning.

The study was conducted in only one class of general studies over the course of a few weeks. This means that the data and results are gathered from a small sample of only 18 students. This fact limits the generalisability of the results. Consequently, more research is needed to determine if the use of this game brings forth the same didactic opportunities and challenges in different classes and if the results might change over time or with a longer timeframe for more in-depth exploration. Connected to this limitation is the fact that the researcher was also the teacher in the class in question, which might have affected the results, as the students might have given answers that did not truly reflect their opinion due to their relationship with their teacher. Results based on self-reporting also have the possibility of not truly reflecting the students' experiences and reflections, as they aim to provide what they perceive as the correct answer. The same applies when the results are drawn from essays that were graded. It would be interesting to see if the same results emerged from a larger sampling conducted by an observing researcher and included written work that does not offer a grade.

Another limitation of this study is that *Spent* is a game focusing only on poverty in the US and therefore gives a one-sided view of US society. This focus on the struggles of low-income families seems to have created an ethnocentric bias in the students and consequently coloured their view of Norwegian society as the superior one and therefore limiting their exposure to different cultural perspectives and the development of a truly inclusive intercultural competence. Further research into the use of *Spent* might benefit from including a contrasting view on the same societal issue of poverty in Norway to allow the students “examine one’s own culture from another point” (Hoff, 2014, p. 514) and develop “an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries (*savoirs’engager*)” (Byram, 2008, p. 69) an essential part of intercultural competence.

5.5 Concluding remarks

Intercultural competence is complex and multileveled, and it takes time to develop. Working with and reflecting on different cultural expressions continuously in the classroom is the suggested way to facilitate intercultural learning in an educational setting. However, it is difficult to definitively determine if this one activity had an impact on the students' inner thoughts and learning outcomes as these inner processes are difficult to determine and observe. Despite this, the indications from the results of this study are that the activity of playing *Spent* brought forth many didactic opportunities making it suitable to use in the context of intercultural learning.

In addition to highlighting the didactic challenge that teachers need support, this research uncovered another: The use of this lesson plan and game seems to have strengthened the students' impression that Norway is the superior country to reside in, meaning that they were not able to critically investigate their own culture. They expressed gratitude toward the Norwegian welfare and health care system and showed this gratitude in both classroom discussions, their essays and the interviews. Despite this, based on the other findings of this study, the use of games in the EAL classroom seems to have the potential to enhance the students' learning outcomes of a topic and their motivation and enjoyment in school. This applies only if the game is used in a manner that is pedagogically supported.

The world is changing, and educational institutions need to keep up to give students a relevant education that prepares them for the world when they grow up as mandated in the Education Act (1998). Therefore, making use of interactive, digital tools in the classroom will be important to help the students develop the literacy needed to navigate our digital world. From this study, the conclusion is that there seem to be many didactic opportunities for using games as a means for intercultural learning, although further research is needed. The use of games in school is obligatory in year one of upper secondary, and finding strategies to make pedagogical use of them, as well as finding a solution for how to avoid the challenges uncovered, is necessary.

References

- Aaberg, L. (2020). *Beyond Gaming. Video Games in the Classroom*. [Master's thesis, University of Agder]. uia.brage.unit.no. <https://uia.brage.unit.no/uia-xmlui/handle/11250/2681150>
- Bakken, A. (Ed.). (2019). *Ungdata 2019. Nasjonale resultater*. NOVA, Oslomet. 2019;9. <https://oda.oslomet.no/oda-xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12199/2252/Ungdata-2019-Nettversjon.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>
- Balsvik, L., Bratberg, Ø., Henry, J.S., Kagge, J. & Pihlstrøm, R. (2017). *Engelsk VGI Targets*. (4th ed.), (pp. 142-149). Aschehoug.
- Bergene, A.C., Borg, E. & Steen, A.H. (2015). *Framtidsdebatten Retningsviser for arbeidslivet*. Unio. DOI: [10.13140/RG.2.1.3717.2241](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.3717.2241)
- Bjørklund, P. (2022). *Lower secondary teachers' reported attitudes towards digital games and gaming as educational tools for English teaching in Norway. A mixed methods study of reported attitudes among game-using and non-game-using lower secondary English teachers*. [Master's thesis]. University of Bergen.
- Bredella, L. (2006). The significance of multicultural literary texts for intercultural understanding. In Čok, L (Ed.), *The Close Otherness*, (pp. 73-92). Koper.
- Brevik, L. M. & Hellekjær, G. O. (2017). Outliers: Upper Secondary School Students Who Read Better in the L2 than in L1. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 89, 80-91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2017.10.001>
- Brinkmann, S. & Kvale, S. (2018). *Det kvalitative forskningsintervju* (3rd ed.). Gyldendal Norsk Forlag.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence* (1st ed.). Multilingual matters.
- Byram, M. (2021). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence Revisited* (2nd ed.). [Kindle version]. Multilingual matters.
- Byram, M. (2008). The Intercultural Speaker: Acting Interculturally or Being Bilingual. In Byram, M. (Ed.) *Foreign Language Education to Education for Intercultural Citizenship. Essays and Reflections*. (17, pp. 57-76). Multilingual Matters.
- Centre for Systems Solutions. (2018). *Spent*. games4sustainability. <https://games4sustainability.org/gamepedia/spent/#:~:text=SPENT%20is%20an%20online%20game,decision%20which%20impacts%20their%20income>
- Creswell, J.W. (2012). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. (4th ed.) Pearson Education Limited.

- Department of Labor. (Last updated 2023, January 01.). *State Minimum Wage Laws*. Retrieved 24.10.2021 from: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/minimum-wage/state>
- Fenner, A.-B. (2001). Dialogic interaction with literary texts in the lower secondary classroom. In Fenner, A.-B. (Ed). *Cultural awareness and language awareness based on dialogic interaction with texts in foreign language learning*. (pp. 13-46). Council of Europe Publishing.
- Gale. (2022). How the American Dream Has Changed Over Time. In *Gale in Context OnlineCollection*.https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=SUIC&u=ndk12a_58504zbiz&id=GALE|EJ2181500191&v=2.1&it=r&asid=b55d2b9e
- Gee, J. P. (2004) *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gilles. S. (Director). (2019). *USA: Being Poor in the World's Richest Country*. [Documentary]. Java films. <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/usapoverty>
- Hamm, Ingrid Elise. (2019). *Interactive Literacy in the EFL Classroom: Exploring the video game Gone Home* [Master's thesis, University of Bergen]. Bora.uib.no. <https://bora.uib.no/bora-xmlui/handle/1956/19992>
- Helgesen, M. V. (2017). *Learner Involvement Related to Intercultural Competence and Bildung: A Comparative Study of Literary Texts and Tasks in Textbooks for Upper Secondary School*. [Master's thesis, University of Bergen]. Bora.uib.no. <https://bora.uib.no/bora-xmlui/handle/1956/16334>
- Hestetræet, T.I & Ørevik, S. (2020). English in Vocational Studies. In Fenner, A.B & Skulstad, A.S (Ed.). *Teaching English in the 21st Century: Central Issues in English Didactics* (2nd ed. pp. 311-336). Fagbokforlaget.
- Hoff, H. E. (2014). *A critical discussion of Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence in the light of bildung theories*. *Intercultural Education*, 25(6), 508-517. doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2014.992112
- Hoff, H. E. (2019). *Fostering the "Intercultural Reader"? An Empirical Study of Socio-Cultural Approaches to EFL Literature*. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 63(3), 443-464. doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2017.1402366
- Hoff, H. E. (2020a). Intercultural Competence. In Fenner, A.B & Skulstad, A.S (Ed.). *Teaching English in the 21st Century: Central Issues in English Didactics* (2nd ed. pp. 69-91). Fagbokforlaget.
- Hoff, H.E. (2020b) *The Evolution of Intercultural Communicative Competence: Conceptualisations, Critiques and Consequences for 21st Century Classroom*

- Practice. Intercultural Communication Education*, 3(2), 55-74.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1284796>
- Hoff, H.E. & Habegger-Conti, J. (2022). Film and the Intercultural Multimodal Reader: Expanding Intercultural Literary Literacy as a Theoretical and Pedagogical Concept. *Intercultural Communication Education*, 5(3), 68–85.
<https://doi.org/10.29140/ice.v5n2.677>
- Isbister, K. (2017). *How Games Move Us- Emotions by design* (1st ed.). MIT press.
- Kleven, T. A. (2008). Validity and validation in qualitative and quantitative research. *Nordic Studies in Education*, 28(03), 219-233.
- Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the new media age*. Routledge.
- Little, D. G. & Singleton, D. M (1988). *Authentic materials and the role of fixed support in language teaching: Towards a manual for language learners*. CLCS Occasional Paper No.20. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED316033.pdf>
- Lund, A. (2009) Å være digital i engelsk. In Otnes, H (Ed). *Å være digital I alle fag*. (pp. 87-102). Universitetsforlaget.
- McGonigal, J. (2012) *Reality is Broken- Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World* (1st ed.). Vintage.
- Media Authority. (2022). *Spillfrelste tenåringsgutter og jenter som faller fra*. Mediatilsynet. https://www.medietilsynet.no/globalassets/publikasjoner/barn-og-medier-undersokelser/2022/221109_gamingreport.pdf
- Merriam, S. B. (2002). Introduction to Qualitative Research. In Merriam, S.B. (Ed.). *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples For discussion and Analysis*. (pp. 3- 17). Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Molnes, S. (2019). *Go hard or Gone Home: Video games' potentials for the promotion of Bildung in the Norwegian upper secondary EFL classroom. A Case Study* [Master's thesis, University of Bergen]. Bora.uib.no.
<https://bora.uib.no/bora-xmlui/handle/1956/19986>
- Ministry of Education and Research. (2019). *Curriculum in English*. (ENG01-04).
<https://data.udir.no/k106/v201906/laereplaner-lk20/ENG01-04.pdf?lang=eng>
- Nederhof, A. J. (1985). Methods of coping with social desirability bias: A review. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 15(3), 263-280.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420150303>
- Norwegian Directory for Education and Training. (2022) *April 2022: Rapportering til*

- Kunnskapsdepartementet om koronasituasjonen våren 2022 – skolens arbeid med fagfornyelsen.* (Svar til Kunnskapsdepartementet på oppdragsbrev 2022-013). The Norwegian Ministry for Education and Training. <https://www.udir.no/kvalitet-og-kompetanse/sikkerhet-og-beredskap/informasjon-om-koronaviruset/april-2022-rapportering-til-kunnskapsdepartementet-om-koronasituasjonen-varen-2022--skolens-arbeid-med-fagfornyelsen/>
- Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. (2020). *Kjennetegn på måloppnåelse.* (ENG0104). <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/lareplanverket/kjennetegn/kjennetegn-pa-maloppnaelse--engelsk-vg1-sfyf/>
- Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. (2017). *Core curriculum – values and principles for primary and secondary education.* <https://www.udir.no/lk20/overordnet-del/?lang=eng>
- Nygaard, A.B. (2014), *How do textbooks in International English invite students to expand their intercultural perspectives through tasks related to texts about multiculturalism?* [Master's thesis, University of Bergen]. Bora.uib.no. <https://bora.uib.no/bora-xmlui/handle/1956/8943?locale-attribute=en>
- Playspent.org. (n.y.) *Sources.* https://playspent.org/html/files/sources/umd_spent_sources-2.pdf
- Ricoeur, P. (1986). *Fallible Man.* Fordham University Press.
- Ryan, R.M., & Deci, E.L. (2000) Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25(1), 54-67. <https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1020>
- Sikt (n.y.). *Barnehage og skoleforskning.* Sikt, Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør. Retrieved 11.03.22 from <https://sikt.no/barnehage-og-skoleforskning>
- Sikt (n.y.). *Samtykke og andre behandlingsgrunnlag.* Sikt, Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør. Retrieved 11.03.22 from <https://sikt.no/samtykke-og-andre-behandlingsgrunnlag>
- Skaalvik, E.M. (1999). Ethiske spørsmål i skoleforskning. I *Etikk og metode.* Oslo, De nasjonale forskningsetiske komiteer: Skriftserie nr. 12.
- Skulstad, A.S. (2020). Multimodality. In Fenner, A.B & Skulstad, A.S (Ed.). *Teaching English in the 21st Century: Central Issues in English Didactics* (2nd ed. pp. 261-283). Fagbokforlaget.
- Spent (PC-version) [Video game]. (2011). Ministry of Durham: McKinney.

<http://playspent.org/html/>

Stautland, H. J. (2020). *Exploring traces of worldviews in literary texts in an EFL textbook*. [Master's thesis, University of Bergen]. Bora.uib.no.

<https://bora.uib.no/bora-xmlui/handle/1956/22869>

The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities. (2022). *Guidelines for Research Ethics in The Social Sciences and Humanities*. (5th ed). <https://www.forskningsetikk.no/en/guidelines/social-sciences-humanities-law-and-theology/guidelines-for-research-ethics-in-the-social-sciences-humanities-law-and-theology/>

The Norwegian Education Act. (1998). (LOV-1998-07-17-61). Lovdata.

<https://lovdata.no/NLE/lov/1998-07-17-61>

Van Eck, R. (2009). A Guide to Integrating COTS Games into Your Classroom. In R. Ferdig (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Effective Electronic Gaming in Education* (pp. 179-199). IGI Global.

Vogel, K. (2022). *Promoting critical intercultural awareness in an upper secondary EFL classroom: A case study using the film Gran Torino*. [Master's thesis, University of Bergen]. Bora.uib.no. <https://bora.uib.no/bora-xmlui/handle/11250/2998014>

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*. (3rd ed). Sage publications.

Yusri, R. A. & Mantasiah, R. (2016). Intercultural approach in foreign language learning to improve students' motivation. In Adamson, J. *The Asian EFL Journal Professional Teaching Articles*, 8, 61-73. English Language Education

Publishing. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324976247_Interculturalapproachinforeignlanguagelearningtoimprovestudents'motivation

Ørevik, S. (2015). From book to screen: Changing genre patterns and communicative purposes. *Nordic Journal of Educational Research*, 9(2), 102-120.

Ørevik, S. (2020). Digital technology in the English classroom. In Fenner, A.B & Skulstad, A.S (Ed.). *Teaching English in the 21st Century: Central Issues in English Didactics* (2nd ed. pp. 165-184). Fagbokforlaget.

Appendix A: Evaluation and approval from Sikt

Sikt

Meldeskjema / Can you make it through the month? / Vurdering

Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Referansenummer	Vurderingstype	Dato
653025	Standard	09.03.2022

Prosjekttittel

Can you make it through the month?

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Universitetet i Bergen / Det humanistiske fakultet / Institutt for fremmedspråk

Prosjektansvarlig

Hild Hoff

Student

Elise Brakstad

Prosjektperiode

31.01.2022 - 30.06.2023

Kategorier personopplysninger

Alminnelige

Lovlig grunnlag

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. I bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 30.06.2023. Meldeskjema

Kommentar

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg, og eventuelt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og Personverntjenester. Behandlingen kan starte.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til den datoen som er oppgitt i meldeskjemaet.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

Personverntjenester vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om: . lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen . formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål . dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet . lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), og dataportabilitet (art. 20).

Personverntjenester vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold,

jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

Personverntjenester legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

Microsoft Office er databehandler i prosjektet. Personverntjenester legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29.

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til oss ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde: <https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema>

Du må vente på svar fra oss før endringen gjennomføres.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

Personverntjenester vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet. Lykke til med prosjektet!

Sikt

Meldeskjema / Can you make it through the month? / Vurdering

Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Referansenummer	Vurderingstype	Dato
653025	Standard	23.01.2023

Prosjekttittel

Can you make it through the month?

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Universitetet i Bergen / Det humanistiske fakultet / Institutt for fremmedspråk

Prosjektansvarlig Hild Hoff

Student

Elise Brakstad

Prosjektperiode

31.01.2022 - 31.12.2023

Kategorier personopplysninger

Alminnelige

Lovlig grunnlag

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 31.12.2023.

Meldeskjema

Kommentar

Personverntjenester har vurdert endringen i prosjektslutt dato.

Vi har nå registrert 31.12.2023 som ny slutt dato for behandling av personopplysninger.

Vi vil følge opp ved ny planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Kontaktperson: Line Raknes Hjellvik

Lykke til videre med prosjektet!

Appendix B: Approval for use of personal recording device



UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN
Institutt for framandspråk

Til den ditt målte vedkome

Dato
03.01.2023

Stadfesting ved bruk av privat opptaksutstyr

Institutt for framandspråk stadfester med dette at Elise Brakstad, 25.02.82 er student ved masterprogrammet i erfaringsbasert master med fordyping i engelsk ved Institutt for framandspråk, Universitetet i Bergen.

I samband med gjennomføring av intervju til masteroppgåva, treng Elise Brakstad å nytte privat opptaksutstyr. Institutt for framandspråk stadfester med dette at vi godkjenner bruken av privat opptaksutstyr.

Desse forholda ligg til grunn for stadfestinga

- studenten må setje seg inn i relevant regelverk, og følge dette
- studenten må bruke ei sikker løysing for handsaming av personopplysingar, som til dømes SAFE (Sikker Adgang til Forskingsdata og E-infrastruktur)
- persondata skal så raskt som mogleg fjernast frå privat eining og ikkje delast utover det som er tillate i regelverket/godkjenninga av prosjektet


Nyttige lenker

[SAFE](#)

[Datatilsynet - Personvernregelverket](#)

Denne stadfestinga skal signerast av student og administrasjonssjef ved Institutt for framandspråk.

Elise Brakstad
student


administrasjonssjef,
Institutt for framandspråk

Institutt for framandspråk
Telefon: 55202340
post@iuh.uib.no

Postrarfresse
Postboks 7805
5020 Bergen

Brevkassen
Bytnespllassen 7
5007 Bergen

side 1 av 2

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

"Can you make it through the month"?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å finne ut om et spill kan hjelpe kulturforståelsen i engelskfaget. I dette skrivet gir jeg deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

I forbindelse med skriving av masteroppgaven min i engelsk, ønsker jeg å forske på om bruk av et spill kan øke elevenes forståelse av engelskspråklige samfunn og kulturer, og å undersøke fordeler og ulemper ved bruken av denne typen spill i engelskundervisningen. Selve forskningen vil foregå på skolen i engelsktimene, med gruppeintervjuer i programfagstimer en fredag.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Universitetet i Bergen er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Dere får tilbud om å delta i denne studien siden du går i min engelskklasse i år.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Dette prosjektet vil være i forbindelse med en ordinær vurdering i klassen, med fokus på skriving av reflekterende tekst. Om du godtar å være med på studien, vil jeg gjerne bruke sitater fra teksten din anonymt i masteroppgaven min.

Jeg vil også be deg gi noen opplysninger om din opplevelse av dette undervisningsopplegget i et intervju. Det vil være opplysninger om hva du føler du sitter igjen med etter å ha gjennomført undervisningsøktene og aktivitetene. Jeg tar lydopptak og notater fra intervjuet, men sitater herfra vil også refereres til anonymt.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg. Det vil ikke påvirke ditt forhold til skolen eller lærer om du velger å ikke delta.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrevet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Veileder ved UIB vil se materialet, men ikke før det er anonymisert, og lydopptakene vil ikke inneholde personopplysninger som er gjenkjennbare.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er mai 2023. Når masteravhandlingen er publisert vil alle personopplysninger slettes og all data publisert vil være anonymisert.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra UIB har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

UIB ved Hild Elisabeth Hoff, e-post: Hild.Hoff@uib.no.

Eller UiBs personvernombud, Janecke Helene Veim e-post:

Janecke.Veim@uib.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Personverntjenester sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- Personverntjenester på epost (personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Prosjektansvarlig
Hild Elisabeth Hoff

Elise Brakstad

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *Can you make it through the month*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju
- at mine sitater kan brukes anonymt i masteroppgaven

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix D: Signed consent form from the principal

"Can you make it through the month"?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å gi tillatelse til å utføre et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å finne ut om et videospill kan hjelpe kulturforståelsen i engelsktåget. I dette skrevet gir jeg deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet.

Formål

I forbindelse med skriving av masteroppgaven min i engelsk, ønsker jeg å forske på om bruk av et spill kan øke elevenes forståelse av engelskspråklige samfunn og kulturer, og å undersøke didaktiske fordeler og ulemper ved en slik tilnærming. Forskningen vil bli utført på skolen i engelsktime til en engelskklasse på VGI, med gruppeintervjuer i programfagtimer en fredag. Elevene vil først gi skriftlig tillatelse til å delta. Disse intervjuene vil bli tatt opp, transkribert og lagret anonymisert på OneDrive. I tillegg vil elevene skrive reflekterende essay som jeg vil bruke anonymiserte sitater fra. Disse essayene leveres inn på It's Learning, og lagres der. Jeg behandler opplysningene som kommer frem i dette prosjektet konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Veileder ved UIB vil se materialet, men ikke før det er anonymisert, og lydopptakene vil ikke inneholde personopplysninger som er gjenkjennbare.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Universitetet i Bergen er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om den, ta kontakt med:

- UIB ved Hild Elisabeth Hoff, epost: Hild.Hoff@uib.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Personverntjenester sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- Personverntjenester på epost (personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

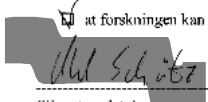
Hild Elisabeth Hoff
(veileder)

Elise Brakstad

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *Can you make it through the month*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

at forskningen kan foregå ved skolen


(Signatur, dato)

22/8 - 2022

Appendix E: Field notes from classroom observations

Week 45:

Monday:

Talked about immigration, that America is a nation of immigrants and that many different cultures have been a part of shaping the country. I also gave a very brief explanation of immigration and how it has been regulated since the beginning. One student: “It is very interesting to know the beginning, I have never heard that part before, and I want to know more about it”.

Asked who knew what the American Dream was, most students knew a little bit. Read the text out loud. “I did not know that there were these many differences between cities and states”.

Gave a group task of presenting a region of the US to the rest of the class.

Wednesday and Friday:

Working in groups wherever they wanted in school, I spent all lessons walking around and talking to the groups. “How are we supposed to do this realistically? There is no way that we can cover our region”. Told them that they should not care about the timeframe and pretend like time and money were not an issue. Many students expressed that they were surprised by the distances, climates and different cultural traces that could be found. Very surprised that getting from one place to another in the US could take days if driving.

Week 46:

Monday:

Presentations. Fun lesson according to the students. They liked that they taught each other things. Did Mentimeter (make a word cloud where students send in words): What do you associate with the USA? Many answers in the word cloud were positive and clearly affected by the things we did-“differences”, “rich nature” and “vast lands”. Many students gathered during the break and asked questions about regions of the US. Two said that this was a very different way of teaching the States compared to what they had learnt about the US previously (guess that’s positive?).

Wednesday:

Started the lesson by asking them to write what the American Dream was on a post-it and signing their names, then read the text on the history of The American Dream, how it has

changed and what it is today. After reading the text: What do you think about the American Dream, one student; “It is a nice concept, and I think it used to work, but it just does not work anymore”. Most of the students agreed. Some argued that the dream was changed in a way that made it difficult to compare: “In the past, they gave everyone land and the dream was to start a new life and cover basic needs, now it is about living comfortably or getting filthy rich. It is different now”. Not relevant anymore.

Then discussion: Those who participated agreed that the American dream as a concept was good, but if it was something realistic and achievable for all, not so sure.

They worked on tasks and were asked to define the dream again, reporting that they saw the Dream in a different way today compared to the past. Many worked with their learning partners and discussed. While walking around I heard students discuss what the Dream was: “I like that they have this” and “Nice that everyone has the same opportunities, at least in theory”.

Week 47:

Monday:

US- health system and minimum wage. STRONG reactions from many. Students that usually never speak asked questions like why they kept this system and how people without insurance survived. Talked about the government aid packages available for people in need. Generally, the students seemed surprised about how the system of health insurance worked. Contrasted minimum wage and poverty line in Norway. “I make more in my summer job if I work a lot than what adults do in the US!”.

Negative about the US: “Can’t they see that they are on a dangerous path? I am shocked to what goes on over there. They are ruined.” Still, the topic created engagement: many questions and questions about people from their own life and how that would work in the USA like family members with different illnesses. Diabetes and insulin, they pay for it in the US, free here (after paying a certain amount per year). “I would never move to the USA, too expensive, what if I get sick?”, was a strong agreement in class.

Wednesday:

Watching the documentary in absolute silence, every student is quiet. Very strange mood in the classroom today. Not usually this quiet. One student needed water and walked backwards to the sink, so they did not miss anything from the film.

When answering the questions after viewing: No one said a word and the only noise was people typing fast. Very different, they usually discuss with their learning partner or ask to sit in groups to cooperate. Seems like they needed to reflect in peace? I let them work in silence. Also very quiet when leaving the classroom after the end of the lesson. Some stayed behind with a lot of questions regarding why no one was helping these people and why many in the documentary had such a strong belief in their country when the system was failing them: “Why is no one helping them?”, “Why are the few people that help not supported?” “I did not know it was this bad over there” “I never knew you could be homeless while working” “Why do they have the system that if you are late with rent you are kicked out? That is too fast, people should be given a chance”.

Week 49:

Monday:

The task of making a budget, one for a family in the US, and one for a family in Norway. Not very effective, most pretended to be millionaires and found pictures of extravagant houses and cars. Should have made the task with a clearer focus. Still, the students had to do research on things like the prices of health insurance, something that made them very surprised when they discovered that the most expensive coverage was about 4000 dollars each year for a family of four.

The task concerning themselves worked better: What do you spend your money on? Make an average monthly for yourself. Created reactions “Elise, this is no fun, I do not want to know how I throw away my money each month, look at how much I spend on food when I can get it for free at home!” (While showing bank transactions).

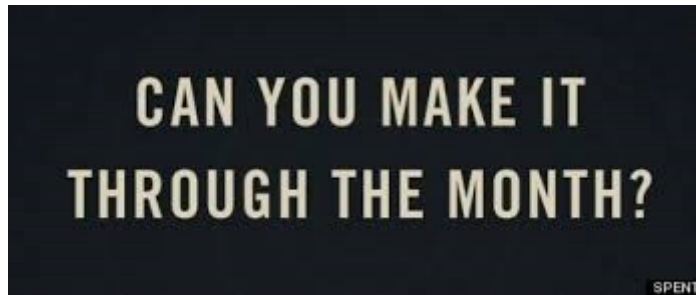
Wednesday:

Playing *Spent*, had it on the whiteboard to explain first, then they played alone. Another lesson in complete silence and a very different mood (immersion). Felt like it would be wrong to make a noise or walk around. They forgot their break (never happened before)! Did not want to disturb them, so I was also quiet. When the lesson ended a large group of students gathered to talk about the experience (seemed like they needed to process it). Spent my entire lunch talking to them. Many had played more than once, and made it through the month, “totally random” if they made it or not because it was pure luck. Some made systems, that did not help them beat the game. Felt realistic.

Week 50:

The essay task and evaluation criteria were introduced, then writing. Many questions about their grade since the essays were to be handed in anonymously. Assured them that they would get their grades regardless. “Can I be honest? If I write that the American Dream is a trap is that the wrong answer? Will it pull my grade down?” “What is the correct answer here?”. Had to say to the entire class collectively that I wanted their opinions and thoughts, no wrong answers. Say what you mean, but include why, that is the important part. Everyone handed in.

Appendix F: Essay task and evaluation criteria



Reflective essay

Tips on how to write a reflective essay and example texts, look at this website:

<https://examples.yourdictionary.com/reflective-essay-examples.html>



Task: Explain the American dream and discuss whether you think it is possible to achieve when you are living on minimum wage or are unemployed. Include what you experienced while playing *Spent* and how you feel about poverty and the American dream after you played this game.

If you want to, you can follow this structure:

1st paragraph- introduction

Write an introduction and explain about what you are going to include in your text. Introduce the game *Spent*. Key words: The American dream and poverty in the US. Try to make the task a part of the introduction.

2nd paragraph- main part

Explain what you think what the American dream is. You could also write about what it is like living on minimum wage in the US. The documentary “Being poor in the world’s richest country” is a good example to use.

3rd paragraph- main part

Introduce the game *Spent*. Explain some of the difficult challenges you had to face while playing the game. How did it make you feel?

4th paragraph- conclusion

Give a short summary of what you have written about and give your conclusion about the American dream and the game.

Remember to write down and cite your sources!!

Evaluation criteria:

	5-6	3-4	2
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is very clear what the task focuses on Uses (very) precise and relevant examples Discussion shows personal reflection. Strong use of sources throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the most part easy to understand what the task focuses on For the most part strong use of examples Discussion shows some personal reflection. Good use of sources in most places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to understand what the task focuses on Some use of examples Discussion shows little personal reflection. Some use of sources
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proper structure for an essay: Introduction, body, conclusion. (Very) varied sentence and paragraph structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proper structure for an essay, but unclear in places: Intro, body, conclusion Good sentence and/or paragraph structure most of the time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear structure for an essay: Missing parts in intro, body, and/or conclusion Ok sentence and/or paragraph structure.
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varied and concise vocabulary throughout Few or no grammatical, orthographic, and/or syntactical errors. No errors that break communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varied and concise vocabulary in most places Some grammatical, orthographic, and/or syntactical errors Understanding text is difficult in places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses correct vocabulary at times. Many grammatical, orthographic, and syntactical errors Understanding the text is difficult in many places

Appendix G: The essays

1. The American dream

I am going to write about The American Dream, and why some people may live the American dream, and some don't. In USA all the costs are high, and you have to have much money to live a good life. Many people live poor, and barely have enough money to survive. In the game Spent, I learned much more about this. In the us it's not just to go to work, buy groceries and then do nothing. Problems and difficulties always come up. You have to pay high rent and the medical prices are dramatically high. All these high prices you often have to pay with a really bad payment.

I think the American dream is the market of possibilities. You can start as a poor little girl who no one knows, and get a good education, a good job and become a millionaire. The dream everybody thinks of when they hear the word America. I think the American dream was more common before, then now. Now, America is much more about poverty, and you have to have a really good job to live a good life. The difference between poor and rich are really big. According to the UD Department of Labor(n.y), the federal minimum wage in the US is \$7.25 per hour. If you have this salary, you can (maybe) pay for your rent, food and a few more things. You cannot be rich with this salary.

The game Spent, taught me a lot. It gave me an insight into what it is actually like to live in poverty in the US. I got surprised when I saw all the problems that came up that I usually never think of. For example things like "what if your kid is out playing football in your garden, and suddenly he kicks the ball on your window, and it breaks". Now you just stand there with a big hole in your house wall, and you don't have any other choices but to fix it. No matter how much money you have. Many households may not have the money to fix this. What should you do then? Steal money from your children? Ask a friend to borrow money, and then have a big problem when you should pay them back? It is hard, this lifestyle in the US. You have to fight to survive.

To sum up, the American dream was more common before, then now. I think some people live the American dream and have a good life, but it is also a big part of the land who struggle with money and live on the minimum wage. When you live on the minimum wage, you only have enough money to buy and do the most important things, like buy food and pay your rent. All the prices in USA are high, so you have to have a good payment to pay all the high prices. However, USA is not the worst country to live in poverty. It is even worse in lands like

Somalia and Afghanistan. The temperature is high, the houses are in such bad condition that they could collapse any time. It is also even harder to get a job than in the US and access to drinking water are much worse.

SOURCES

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/minimum-wage>

2. The American dream

The American dream has changed a lot over time. It has gone from peace and liberty to being rich and having the coolest car. Thousands of people around the US live in poverty and dream big for themselves but can only manage to get only what they need to survive.

A few years back the American dream is known to be a dream about freedom and success. To live in a free country, where you are able to be who you want. In the US you are able to be your own success, you do what you want with what you have. What many forget is that you have to get everything yourselves and stand on your own feet. This leads to many people falling in to poverty.

The poverty rate in 2021 is 11.6 %, with 37.9 million in poverty. In the game spent we get to live the life of someone under the poverty line. We get to see how hard it is to get by with the little they have. Every expense they have and rent they have to pay to get by and not get homeless. I think this showed me a lot about poverty in the US. I got to see how easy it is to spend all of the money you have and more. This is quite scary to be honest. To see how hard it is to live on minimum wage and how many people that live in the US and dream about the American dream every day. This made me think that the American dream is far from achieved. How much more has to be done and how scary it is that people have to prioritize normal stuff everybody needs. How things I don't even think about money while buying became a priority and not a necessity. Things like food and birthday presents became hard to buy and how much it cost to have a roof over your head.

In an article written in on the website medium.com Joann Ryan writes that in 2016 there was more than 100 000 people lived in their car. In the 2019 the numbers had gone up to 140 000 people and the number just keeps increasing. This is way too many people, many organizations has stepped in to help. They are not able to help them with getting them homes,

but they help other ways. For example, they make parking lots with locks for people to feel safe and kitchens so they can make food and running water. This helps many people not only because they can make food and feel safe but also as motivation so that they can get back on their feet.

Poverty has always been something the American dream has been against. And even though the dream has changed a lot over time, it still is a part of the dream to get rid of all the poverty in America. Lately the dream has been about having a cool car and being rich, but before this the American dream was about freedom, being able to be who you want to and do what you want to do. There is still some that see this as the American dream but not as many as before. People see success and as something to rub in other peoples faces and therefor forget that others can have problems with getting by. This is something that needs to end. Instead of doing everything we can to show of what we have, we can work together and help the people that need it but are too scared to ask for it.

Poverty is not something to mess with. It's like a spiral, you do one thing and your opportunity's get "smaller" for each choice. The poor people of the United States cannot afford basic necessities. They have trouble putting food on the table and keeping their home. This leads down a dangerous path, there is a thin line between poverty and crime, one that many choose to cross over. Poverty has been proven to be one of the most common reasons for crimes like stealing or robbery. However, this does not mean that poverty is the only driver of crime.

In the article "The link between poverty and crime in the US by state" they talk about how poverty can lead to violent crime. They say that unemployment specially the last few years because of covid has cost a lot of people to losing their money and homes. The number of poor people has gone up a lot because of things like health insurance and rent without any income. Sadly, this leads to many people choosing violence and homicide. The US witnessed 25% more homicides in 2020 than in 2019 according to the FBI crime data explorer website. Economic problems and uncertainty are one of the reasons for the increase in crime.

The American dream is far from accomplished. People all around the US need help, we need people to see the problems around the states. We need to help them. They don't need much, we can help them with so little but it's still help. We can make a difference with something as little as giving away our old stuff that we don't use. So, you don't have to give much to make someone's life in poverty a little better. After all that is what the American dream is about,

helping the people around us get better and lifting them up instead of showing everything we have that they don't.

Sources:

- The link between poverty and crime in the u.s by state, by Jim Hughes (feb 15, 2022) <https://opencashadvance.com/blog/link-between-poverty-and-crime>

3. Being poor in the states.

There has always been emphasis amongst people on reaching “The American dream” in the United States. Is it possible to reach, and how has it evolved? Is it harder to reach if you are living on a minimum wage?

In the start was The American dream about working hard to get a good life. Anyone should have the same possibility to success in life. It was about the whole nation. I think that it has changed to focus more about your own personal success.

I live in Norway, one of the richest countries in the world. I get good health care, free education, I have nice clothes and live in a nice house. At the age of 16 I got a job in a grocery store; I even make more money by the hour than many adults in the US. Poverty is something I don't know well, but I think that many people in the US has got a pretty different experience.

The minimum wage in the US is about seven to eight dollars per hour. In a year, that makes about 15.000 dollars if you are working 40 hours a week.

From the documentary we learn that there are many people with good full-time jobs who can't afford to live in a house. If you rent is due, and you can't afford the payment, the landlord has the right to throw you out. An expensive health insurance is needed if you need health care of any kind, or else you might have to pay a fortune for health services if you need treatment. Some people get their health insurance through their employer.

Spent is a game/ simulator where you try to make it through a month while living on a minimum wage. You choose between three jobs; they got different types of salary (if you get paid by the hour or day). You get several questions where you must make a choice.

Sometimes this includes not going to any social occasions, not paying bills, put medical needs on wait, letting your children down and even not buying food. While playing the game I felt both anger, dissatisfaction, and tiredness of the whole situation. I almost felt that it was about

me. When I had to disappoint my child or put down my dog to make it through the month, it felt real.

Just imagining how this life can be. Work is about the only thing you do. As a parent you want to make your children satisfied and as the game shows, that might not be easy if you are poor in the US.

From the perspective the documentary, and "Spent" provides, I think the typical American dream is out of reach for many people living on minimum wage. I believe that being able to afford only the most necessary things like house, food, and healthcare will be enough.

Sources:

<https://playspent.org/>

<https://e24.no/internasjonal-oekonomi/i/L522z1/amerikansk-minsteloenn-naar-nytt-bunnivaa>

<https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2022/demo/p60-277.html#:~:text=The%20official%20poverty%20rate%20in,37.9%20million%20people%20in%20poverty.>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f78ZVLVd00A>

4. The American dream and poverty in the U.S.

More than 20 million U.S. children rely on school meal programs to keep from going hungry. It is projected that about half of all American adults will spend at least some time living below the poverty line before they turn 65. One out of every six elderly Americans lives below the federal poverty line. This is the reality of those living in America. But how can we who live in privileged Norway relate? That's the reason why the game *Spent was* invented. A game where privileged people can try to get through the month on a 1000\$, as a single parent in the U.S. This was truly a challenge where we all learnt a lot. After playing the game I have a great respect of the homeless and poor living in the U.S.

The life of some of these peoples is shown in the documentary "USA: Being Poor in the World's Richest Country" directed by Sébastien Gilles. The documentary shows that poverty exists in all regions of the U.S. We get to meet a lady living in her car because she lost everything in a divorce settlement. She works all day every day and gets nearly nothing. The documentary also shows another lady living in a mini home where she has taken in her niece

and her niece's two children, even though she barely has enough money and resources for herself. Others often think homeless people or people who is living with minimum wage are lazy people who do not know economic. Of course, there is some who follows this description, but we cannot see homeless and poor people as a stereotype. They have all different backgrounds and are all individuals. Some of them have been unlucky but are working their way back. They are not lazy, and they know economics. They have to because they are forced to think carefully trough what they put each penny into. For me as a privileged girl living in Norway this can seem hard to understand. I can go into the grocery store, grab a chocolate milk without even thinking about that I just used money. I was shocked when I saw that my monthly use on chocolate milk and other groceries is as much as a single mother use to feed herself and her child in the game *Spent*.

The game *Spent* was made by the advertising agency McKinney for their pro-bono customer Urban Ministries of Durham. UMD is an organisation that provides service to those in poverty. *Spent* is about making difficult but necessarily decisions poor people face in everyday life. You would have to take choices such as giving your pet to a shelter, not going to the doctor even though it could be dangerous not to and to take money from your child. It was hard to read the brutal truth about how some Americans are living. At the same time, it made me feel grateful and appreciate what I have even more. Before playing the game, I was prepared on losing both my job and my child. This would be the worst-case scenario. Therefore I made all my choices to prevent this from happening. Still, I won the game every single time.

When I looked back at all my previous decisions, I saw that none of the decisions was based on what would be best for my character. Every decision I made was based on what would be best for my child and the future. In real life I hate to spend money on myself, I would much rather save them for the future. Therefore, I do not look at myself as selfish person. But after playing this game I could not look at myself as anything else but selfish. I felt both grateful and ungrateful. Grateful that I live in Norway that catches me in our safety net no matter what happens. Ungrateful that I live I a world where poverty is the life of billions of people, and where social diversity is one of the biggest problems and so few are doing something about it.

The American dream has changed over time. It has gone from being about opportunities, to freedom, to material goods and to living the best life. It is the dream about fulfilling your life and live the best life you possibly can. How is it possible for people living on minimum wage in the U.S. to fulfil the American dream? It isn't. These people work for their life to try to make the ends meet. If they manage it, they see it as a big victory. If they don't, they see it as

everyday life and try to find their way through. In addition to that they must worry about health insurance. They have to tell their children that they cannot go ice skating cause if they break their arm on the ice their parents cannot even afford the ambulance ride.

I bet that the poorest people are those who are best at dreaming. The dream about a life with a family, a house, two cars, a pet and a stable income. But why should someone dream about somebody else's life when they work just as hard, if not harder? It is not fair. The whole system is broken! Normal people can get their life turned upside down by inflation, a divorce settlement, bills from health insurance and more. And when you first live on minimum wages or are unemployed it is minimum ways back to the life you have known before.

The American dream claims everything is possible. It claims that everyone can fulfil their American dream. However, I do not think the American dream is possible to fulfil for anyone. People are greedy. When they reach their dream, they want more. That's just how it is.

I do not think anyone can achieve the American dream, especially not people living on minimum wage or are unemployed. Poverty is one of the biggest problems in the US. and it is urgent to find a solution. I am glad I'm not the one in charge, because I do not know how to fix this problem. Although, one action that help is to spread awareness. One can spread awareness by playing and spreading the game *Spent*. This is a good way to learn about poverty and at the same time be grateful for what one has. The sad part is, poverty is not a game, it is the reality of millions of people living in the US.

Sources:

Creamer, John et.al. (2022) Poverty in the United States: 2021. *Census 13.09*. Retrived from <<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2022/demo/income-poverty/p60-277.html> [Read 14.12.22]

Fox, Liana et.al. (2021) The supplemental poverty Measure: 2020. *Census 14.09*. Retrived from <<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/demo/income-poverty/p60-275.html> [Read 14.12.22]

Givenes, Aine. (2020) 50 facts about poverty in America. *Stacker 03.12*. Retrived from <<https://stacker.com/society/50-facts-about-poverty-america> [Read 07.12.22]

Gilles, Sébastien. (2019) USA: Being Poor in the World's Richest Country. *IMDb*.

Retrieved <<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13148874/> [Read 07.12.22]

Spend. *Wikipedia*, 15.08. Retrieved from <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spent_\(video_game\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spent_(video_game)) [Read 07.12.22]

5. The American Dream in 2022

How is it living in poverty in the richest country in the world today? The Americans have always had a focus about fulfilling their dreams. In this essay I will show how unlimited access to social media create a pressure of how to obtain your own path to success.

The idea of The American dream started in the 19th hundreds. I would say The American dream is a belief or goal, regardless of where you are born or which class you are born into, can attain your own version of success.

In 2020, people spent more time on social media during lockdown, because people had to stay home. TikTok is an app, where you scroll through videos that people have posted. Today many focus on being rich, have nice cars and fame. Due to the poverty in the US, the definition of success has developed as being rich. TikTok is an easy way for people to get rapid progress and earn a lot of money fast, with only posting videos and get views. I think that people's dream of getting rich on social media platforms, is their way to achieve their dreams, by being successful.

There are many people ...in the United States that are unemployed and people that live with minimum wage. The number have risen after the pandemic. In the article: 'U.S. poverty statistics', the author points out that in 2019, 10,5% lived in poverty. In 2020 the poverty rate increased to 11,4% and 11,6% in 2021. Many people lost their jobs, which is some of the main reasons why the poverty rate increased.

I feel social media has made a stereotype of what success is; namely rich and famous. This makes the American dream achievability limited for people that lives with minimum wage in the US. Rich and fame are two things that goes together. Actors, artists, celebrities, businesspeople, and athletes is seen as the most successful persons in the world. Most of them lives in US as well. Social media is constantly expressing that fame is the "definition" of success. The American dream in 2022, is about attain your own version of success. By creating goals and set dreams that you can living for. Social media hides this principle, by the

influential and trending opinions about fame and wealth. Being poor can't be compared with the richest in the world.

In my opinion a success for an unemployed could for example be to get a regular income or start with savings. If we look at what social medias unachievable version of success, as an unemployed, it destroys for them to make realistic dreams. These dreams are what creates hope, that cheers and motivate them forward to better life. By losing their hope, they don't have something to lean on through difficult days.

The US Health Care system is one of the most expensive health care programs in the world. They are ranked as 26th and 27th most expensive, out of 33 countries. Many people pay more rent than they earn. In the article; Poverty in the United States: 2021, the author writes THAT the official poverty in 2021 was 11.6%, with 37.9 million people that lives in poverty (2022). The average household debt is \$96.371 for an average family. Of course, that will create many problems when any unexpected expenses appear.

The Health Care systems have different insurances, that covers health or hospital expenditures. If you don't have health insurance, you can end up not having enough money to pay the expenses and can risk getting kicked out of your house. Most people living on minimum wages or are unemployed in US, can't afford health insurance. That causes many people to avoid hospital visits when they are sick. This is a serious problem that leads to even more poverty, sickness, and death.

The game Spent is about a family who tries to survive a month, with a minimum wage. The game is to understand the reality for 37.9 million people in the United States. You learn how they faces problems that appears every day and the following consequence. Challenges I found hard while playing the game, was to make decisions. If one in your family get sick, you can't afford a doctor appointment or even stay home with your kid.

If you think about the US, you most likely think about the most powerful country in the world. But as the game tells us, we don't see the whole reality about living there. Spent is a good way to understand people that lives in poverty, because the game is realistic. When I played, I imagined the situations I faced. I felt sad and got bad conscience for the people that live like this. As a parent of a poor family, you have a lot of pressure. Every day you must make choices, that can change your life.

My conclusion is that The American dream is a belief or goal to attain your own version of success. Today, many focuses on being rich and be famous on social media. In my opinion, this has created a stereotype and a pressure of how to attain success. This leads to people with minimum wage, not set their dreams and makes it difficult to achieve any success. This makes them lose their hope for better life. By playing Spent, we can understand realistic how poor families and people live and the challenges they face.

Sources:

J., Creamer & E., Shrider,....(2022), *Poverty in the United States: 2021*, retrieved 07.12.22, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2022/demo/p60-277.html#:~:text=The%20official%20poverty%20rate%20in,37.9%20million%20people%20in%20poverty>

Federal Safety Net, retrieved 07.12.22, <https://federalsafetynet.com/poverty-statistics/>

J. Caporal & D. Albright, (2022), *Average American household dept in 2022: facts and figures*, retrieved 07.12.22, <https://www.fool.com/the-ascent/research/average-american-household-debt/>

6. The American Dream

The American dream, in my opinion, claims anyone can build a good life for themselves through hard work. That no matter where you come from or what your social status is you can achieve a successful life with financial freedom. Is this true? If so, does that mean homeless and poor people are lazy? That America's richest citizens are the best and most hardworking people? Who are the good American citizens, that the American dream awards? In my opinion the answer is quite clear and that is what I am going to discuss in this essay along with discussing what I believe the American dream is today.

According to the poverty rate in the in the US, 12.8% of the population were living under it and if we only measured children under 18 it would have been 16.9% of the population in 2021. For this to be the richest country in the world I find the numbers shocking. The fact that this country also tries to claim that anyone can live a good life if they work hard is very strange. Because today the American dream, is quite simply a dream. You can argue that it

was the reality once, and to some degree, I can agree on that because everyone who came to America in the beginning started on the same line. But mostly I think this dream today is an excuse for rich people to justify their extreme, unethical wealth. Because when a country with about 331 million citizens, has 735 billionaires that together share 7.4 trillion dollars while about 25 million people live in poverty, something is wrong.

Through the game Spent I could set myself into the choices that someone living off a minimum wage must take, despite not having experienced it first-hand. I learned one very important lesson from that. Life around the poverty line is not for the soft or lazy. You work long, hard hours for little pay in a country where nothing comes for free. This resulted in having to make both hard and immoral choices. I did not have the resources to help my sick mother, I lied to my boss to avoid getting fired resulting in another woman getting fired, I avoided bills and had to say no to my kids when they asked for things like money for lunch. I worked instead of going to my child's school play, I turned down offers to spend time with friends and had to send my dog away. I felt a touch of the toll having to lose your morals and dignity to survive can have. Because there is no place for morality in survival, especially when you must provide for your family as well. The game made me realize how lucky I am to live in a country where we are treated as people and not objects, because as a someone who has a mother that is physically unable to work, the American dream sounds more like a very scary nightmare. Every day in the game was a battle to stay afloat and not get dragged down to the streets. So how is the American dream relevant then, if hard work can barely get you by, much less let you live comfortably?

In my opinion hard work is a lie. This is perhaps a controversial statement, but I really do believe it. Not that doing your best and pushing yourself isn't important when pursuing your goals, but the ideology that hard work will get you your dreams, is fundamentally false. People are working themselves to death all over the world for a barely liveable wage. The richest of the rich exploit workers and systems like a ladder to the top, while people barely getting by, are often working multiple jobs while they try to balance the rest of their lives and put food on the table. Workers constantly get stepped on and pushed down by greedy companies and a system that works against them. A Tesla employee can expect an hourly pay ranging from \$12 to \$45 for senior specialists. The co-founder and owner Elon Musk makes

about \$375 each second which is an average on around \$432 million in a day. A minimum earning employee would have to work about 31 hours to earn what he makes in a second. If hard work is a lie that also means the American dream is a lie. Because while you can work yourself up to a comfortable life, there are so many factors that play in, and it's too easy to lose everything. Having your citizens rely on luck and having to ignore their own morals to put food on the table is not a dreamlike system. A country that is ran like a business and where people live to work, rather than work to live is a country doomed.

To sum it up I would like to put the \$7.4 trillion dollars into perspective. \$7.4 trillion is about \$7400 billions and \$7400000 millions. Experts have estimated that ending world hunger would cost about 7 to 265 billion dollars. The CEO of Hunger Free America, Joel Berg has estimated it would cost about 25 billion dollars to end hunger in the US. Is this a fair distribution of recourses powered only by hard work? Is it ethical, for someone to sit with that power and not use it? The fact is, there is not a right answer, but in my opinion, no one is a good enough person to deserve that much wealth and no good person would sit with that themselves.

Sources:

Lillian Kilduff, How Poverty in the United States Is Measured and Why It Matters (2022), retrieved 30.11.22 from <https://www.prb.org/resources/how-poverty-in-the-united-states-is-measured-and-why-it-matters/>

Craig Benson (2022), U.S. Poverty Rate Is 12.8% but Varies Significantly by Age Groups, retrieved 30.11.22 from <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2022/10/poverty-rate-varies-by-age-groups.html>

Richard Mille, Forbes Billionaires 2022: The Richest People In The World (2022), retrived 30.11.22 from <https://www.forbes.com/billionaires/>

How Much Would It Cost To End World Hunger?, 2022, retrived 7.12.22, <https://www.globalgiving.org/learn/how-much-would-it-cost-to-end-world-hunger/>

Tesla salaries: how much does Tesla pay?, retrived 13.12.22 from <https://www.indeed.com/cmp/Tesla/salaries>

7. Living the American dream on a budget

In this text I am gonna be writing about the american dream and poverty in the US and how it is to live in poverty and it can effect you on living the amrican dream. The game spent has some good exampals of how it is to live in poverty

Many people in the US can't or struggle to live the American dream because theymore or less live in poverty. The american dream is about being successful, having freedom, ideals and opportunities in life. Not least is it about the citizens beeing able to take care of themselves economically. Poverty is however starting to be a big problem in the US for a considerable share of the population.

The game "Spent" is about a parent and his child who are going into a situation of living in poverty. In the game he is trying to find a job so that he can afford to rent an apartment. In the game it comes up bills that has to be paid for example on health insurance. When you are almost out of cash it is difficult to pay small expences like paying for small gifts, taking your kid out to eat and paying for electricity. In the game I learnt that if you want to keep a job if you even get one you have to be there every day and work good since there are plenty of other people who can do the same job that you do so you have to make sure you keep it buy working hard.

-Spent

-Organisations

8. The American dream

What is the American dream about, and can we achieve the dream in some way? And does the poverty in the USA affect the American dream? In the game "Spent" we can feel what it's like to be a normal person with a normal job in the Us. And how difficult it can be.

What is actually the American dream? The American dream is about that people in the USA should have a great democracy, equal rights, freedom and possibilities. Is's about finding room for these goals. And how we are going to move forward to achieve the American dream.

Many people in the Us have a hard time to know where they must use their money. When you live on a minimum wage in the Us, it's even more difficult. It's difficult in the way where you

have to take something away, so you afford things you need for living. Sometimes people can't afford health insurance. The health care in the Us is very expensive for some people. Some have to live in their car because they don't afford living in a normal house. In some places like in the documentary "Being poor in the world richest country" they have open up for people where they can park their car and a place where they can make themselves food. This is very common in Us, it is a big difference between poor and rich.

In the game "Spent" we can kind of feel what it's like to be a normal person with normal payment. When you play the game you choose different task and what you want to spend money on and what to not spend money on. While you play you can get out of money, and that's what the game is about. It's about how to spend the money reasonable, and how difficult it is. Especially in the Us, where the difference between rich and poor is huge. While I played the game, I felt like I had to put something aside to afford other things. Some task could be to choose between leisure activity for your children or to work to get more money. Or something like that. The game make you feel what a normal person in the Us have to do on a daily basis. And these horrible choice they have to make because of the budget.

This is what the American dream is about. It's about getting rid of problems like this, getting rid of the huge difference between rich and poor. And the goals for the whole USA to get a better standard life. It's about making USA a great place to live for all of the people living here.

9. American dream

The American dream is something all of us have heard about. What is the American dream? The American dream is for example to have a big house, maybe a pet, a cool car, children maybe, a wife/husband and have money enough to buy food, drink, to take a shower and use electricity.

How can you achieve the American dream if you are homeless in America? If you are homeless in America, but you want to achieve the American dream, you can always ask for help to get some money. You must spare the money and not use it on unnecessary things.

Most homeless people use their money on drugs and alcohol. The reason they often use their money on that is because they think that their life is meaningless now that they are homeless, and they see no other way out, so they think that the only thing that can make them happy is drugs and alcohol.

Sources:

<https://researchoutreach.org/articles/homelessness-american-dream-inconvenient-truth/>

10. Reflective essay – the American dream

I have always thought that the American dream was achievable for everyone, that was until I watched the documentary “being poor in the world’s richest country,” I got another perspective on what types of people that could achieve the dream. Can everyone not depending on money achieve the American dream? What is the American dream? How would the situation be if you did not have a home place? After playing the game spent, I got a further understanding on how it is for the ones suffering poverty and how it really can destroy the perfect image of the American dream.

I think that the American dream is the belief that everyone can go from having nothing to becoming filthy rich. The dream is promising the possibility to go from having not much, to having it all. It promises people the freedom to make life decisions that affect their lives, such as choosing where they want to live and work, achieving wealth or power, and living according to personal values. I also believe that if you are going to carry out the dream you will need a combination of political and economic freedom. However, I have always thought that the American dream hasn't been truly carried out by any Americans, that there was always something “missing” for them. But also, what exactly is the American dream. I think everyone can achieve it just by having their own opinions on what the dream is.

Before I watched the documentary “being poor in the world's richest country,” I thought that it could be possible, that the American dream was achievable for everyone, and that there was not such big poverty rate. However, my opinion changed quickly after watching the documentary. I saw how awful living conditions were for the homeless, and how easy it was becoming homeless. After watching the documentary my viewpoint changed, it is extremely hard to live of minimum wage and still have a place to live. Most people living of minimum wage doesn’t have a good life and doesn’t have many opportunities. I expect that it is hard to earn enough to have freedom. By any means I think that many poor Americans believe that everything they achieve is good. It really depends on how far you fell. If you had decent income before, a home and care. You would probably have higher merit for what the American dream means and if you have been poor your whole life, insignificant things like getting a higher wage can be the American dream. I am a privileged child in a rich country,

but after playing spent I got a more fulfilling understanding of poverty and the American dream.

The game spent Is an online game about homelessness and poverty. It takes you through a month, with only a certain amount of money. This game was made so people could understand how it is for the people who suffer from deprivation.

After I played the game spent, I became even more optimistic to the topic. I finished the game with zero to little money, In the game I had to make some choices for my child, food restrictions, and even health. I made the choice to get rid of my dog because I could not afford it. Choices like buying used clothes for my child made me feel bad, I felt poor and stressed about the next bill or the next broken bone in our little family. Moreover, when I tried the game one more time and got through the month with more money left, I felt happy. I felt like I achieved something, and I keep wondering if the poor people in America thinks that that is the American dream, having money to buy new clothes.

So, my conclusion is no, I don't believe that it is possible to achieve precisely what the American dream is if you live in poverty. You can maybe have a chance if you win lottery, or a miracle happens. If you're already entitled "homeless," it can get hard to find a job because everyone will look at you like you're worth nothing. But it is all based down on what the individual thinks the American dream is. However, I do believe that some levels of homelessness can get a better job and work their way up. For example, in the documentary I mentioned earlier there were people who lived in their car and that is way better than being homeless on the streets.

Sources:

Barone, A. (2022), what is the American dream: Examples and how to measure it. *Investopedia* (the internet) 01.08 <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/a/american-dream.asp#toc-advantages-and-disadvantages-of-the-american-dream> (Read. 07.12.22)

<https://playspent.org/>

<https://examples.yourdictionary.com/reflective-essay-examples.html>

11. The American dream and the minimum wage

The American dream is something that only a few people can reach. Most of the people in the U.S. are not able to reach the American dream. That's because of all the poverty. There are

really really rich people, there is middle class which is not super rich but not poor and then there is poor people or people who may not have enough money to pay rent, enough food in their house, maybe they live on the street, stuff like that. When I played the game Spent, which is a game where you try to live in the U.S. with a job and a child, I failed. I failed so many times. I will talk more about the game Spent later. But what is the American dream, and why is it so hard to achieve it? Back when the American dream started, it was to have a home, nice family and having their own land. Now it's to have the most expensive cars, having the newest phone and the biggest and the most expensive house. This shows how the American dream has changed since the beginning.

It's so hard to live in the U.S. and being able to live the American dream, especially when the health insurances are so expensive. Of course, you want the best type for health insurance for your family but if you only live on the minimum wage, you cannot afford the best. And also, if you are unemployed, you don't have any income so how could you then be able to live the American dream? In 2021, 8,3 percent/27,2 million people did not have health insurance at any point during the year according to: United States census. That's almost the whole population in the U.S.

The game Spent is a game that shows the reality of how it is to live on a limited and small amount of money every month. It's a very good game to play or try out because it gives you the reality of living in the U.S.. When you are playing the game, you get a limited amount of money that you earn from your job every month. It gives you options to choose between what to do. You have a child and must pay rent, health insurance, food. It is very easy to lose your job due to job strikes (not going to work three days). You lose the game when you don't have any money left.

The game Spent gave me options like for example save your dog or let it die, help your mom afford her operation or don't. And many times, I had to choose the one that let the dog die or to not help my mom because I dint have any money for it. If I helped any of them, I lost a lot of money that I may have needed later in the game. It made me feel horrible when I had to choose not to help, because I really wanted to, but I couldn't afford.

In my opinion the American dream should be easier to achieve. The U.S. should have the same system as Norway because the system that they have is so bad. I believe that if the U.S. had the same system as Norway, the American dream would be easier to achieve for more people. I find that the game Spent is realistic and an eye opener for me because I never knew

how bad the U.S. system actually worked. After I played the game, I realized that the American dream is difficult to achieve and that we have a way better social system in Norway.

sources <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2022/demo/p60-278.html>
<https://assignment.itslearning.com/mvc/Attachment/Get?FileId=sD6Ehn3If0eYBxW92Wxy618MqcS1zsWOd4ebWPmUVjdaa3j%2f7109KVYSitrq0Tom&UniqueFileId=86843eb0-c87d-477f-9807-15bdd96c72eb&ViewOnly=True&AnswerId=0&LearningObjectId=336151116&LearningObjectInstanceId=475330646&PeerAssessmentId=0&Type=1>

What we have talked about in the classes.

The game spent

12. Reflective essay about the American dream

I will write about the American dream and how you or I can accomplish it by the end of this essay. This essay will be most focused on the poverty crises in the Us, and the online game spent.

The American dream has been used for centuries by the European immigrants when they settled in The United States. And after the Us managed to defeat the British in their war and gain its independence, a word quickly spread around. And it was the American dream. The American dream insists of few single goals you must achieve to get it. One of them is getting land, with a house or a farm. The second goal was getting a family. Family was important too of course, however another important thing was money. If you did not have money, you would be struggling to get over all the expenses you needed to cover or other important things.

It was like that centuries ago. Now over the years the American dream changed and changed its definition. These are still some similarities between the old American dream and the newer modern American dream. The new dream is more focused on not becoming poor or even worse homeless. The low-income person or family often end up being homeless due to their not making enough money to pay rent for a house or an apartment and other necessary items or needs.

The game “spent” was difficult to win. I made several attempts to try and beat it and somehow managed to do that with 19 \$ to my name. At the very end it said rent is due next day and I got shocked instantly. There were so many challenges or needs to overcome that took away so much of my money and left me practically broke. One of the challenges was for example car insurance and if the insurance were not covered, I would have the chance to lose my in-game vehicle and the cost to cover it was too much for me anyway. Another difficulty I found out was dental care was not cheap either.

13. The American dream

If you search “the American dream definition” on Google, this is what comes up: “The American dream is the belief that anyone, regardless of where they were born or what class they were born into, can attain their own version of success in a society in which upward mobility is possible for everyone”. And that sounds like a good thing, right? Maybe it’s a good thing for people who have grown up in a home where your parents have money, and you have a good education because you went to a good school. Can you achieve the American dream if you don’t have education or money? In the game “Spent” you can try to live a life with minimum wage.

In America you must pay a lot of money just to get medical help. But you can get insurance, and then if you must get medical help, you will get some of it covered by the insurance plan. There are four different types of insurance you can get. Bronze, silver, gold and platinum. If you have the Bronze insurance you pay 40%, and the insurance plan pays 60%. If you have the silver, you pay 30% and the insurance plan pays 70% and so on. But if you don’t have Insurance and you don’t get it through work, it can be very expensive. If you are pregnant and you are going to a hospital to deliver it can cost you 2008\$ if you don’t have insurance. And a normal headache can cost 1727\$. That is a lot of money for a normal headache.

The American health care system is one of the examples of why it's hard to achieve the American dream. Because if you have a job that doesn’t pay a lot of money, you still have to pay for your living expenses, you might not afford insurance. And if you don’t have insurance and you get sick, you are in big trouble. And if you decide to pay your medical bills you might end up broke and lose your house or apartment because you can't pay for it.

Some people that work can't even pay for a house. And some people that lose their job can't get a new one because they didn’t have the money as a child to get into a college and get a

degree. If the American dream were possible everyone should get a job, even if they don't have a degree. Many people don't. Of course, some people can find a job even if they don't have a degree, but many don't. And those people often end up homeless or must live in their car.

If you have a job that pays minimum wage, it's hard to live a life. Imagine having kids or an old mum to take care of. Imagine you live with your mum. She is sick and needs medication, or else she will die. You must pay for the apartment, food, clothes and so on. Your mum doesn't have a job and gets no money because she isn't old enough to get retirement money. You have a job, but only get paid the minimum wage. How are you going to afford all of this? Some people must decide whether they should help or if they want to keep their house.

In the game "spent" you can experience how it is to live with minimum wage. You first pick a job, and then you get different issues and different options to choose between. I played this game twice and did it both times with leftover money. I think it is a good game and a good way for other people to see how it is for people who are struggling financially and what issues they can come across.

I think this text shows that it is hard to achieve the American dream, especially if you don't make a lot of money and/or have children or other family member you have to take care of as well. And it shows that the most famous country that everyone wants to live in, isn't that great after all.

Sources:

<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/a/american-dream.asp>

14. Reflective essay

In this text you're going to read about my thoughts when it comes to the American dream and poverty in the US. I'm also going to talk about a game called spent where you have to take difficult decisions when it comes to money.

I think the American dream goes out on living a good life. That you're able to do the things you want and not having to worry about money. I'm not saying that they need to have unlimited money, but enough so they don't stress when they think about their bills or having a low salary. I don't think it's possible to live a good life with your family if your parents only get minimum wage. That will not be enough money to buy a house or rent an apartment, it

will neither be enough money to get health insurance, doctor visits or enough food for everybody.

But a lot of people have to live like that, getting a \$7.25 monthly salary. Luckily there are good people in this world who helps people like that. I do believe you`ll need to work hard to achieve The American dream if you live on a minimum wage. In the documentary “being poor in the worlds richest country” we meet different people and different families who live on a minimum wage. Some of them has normal jobs such as cleaning staff or janitors, where they work up to seven days a week. But their salaries are extremely low.

One place there are many people who live under a minimum wage, who sleep in their cars on a private parking lot with a fence around and a gate that closes at 21.00. An organization has supplied them with a water fountain, toilets and a outdoor kitchen so it`s actually possible to live there. There is also a pizza place that supplies them with alle the pizza that hasn`t been sold the day before. We also meet this very poor family, their getting free doctor checks by volunteers that are dentists, family doctors and specialists.

There is this game called spent as I introduced in the starts, where you`re trying to make it through the month with enough money. In the game you`re to adults with 2 kids, you have to provide them as the same time as you have to find a house and a job. You get many difficult questions where you have to decide if it`s worth the money. I found some of the questions really hard. For example, either paying lots of money to help my sick dog, paying a little less to put it down or let it suffocate. I obviously picked paying way to much money to help my dog. I couldn`t put it down, I also got questions about things my kids wanted/needed and saying no to that was hard. But as soon at it came to myself, I didn`t want to pay any money to help myself. The game just made me feel very helpless.

In this text i`ve talked about

[Poverty in the USA: Being Poor in the World's Richest Country | ENDEVVR Documentary - YouTube](#)

[SPENT \(playspent.org\)](#)

[Reflective Essay Examples | YourDictionary](#)

15. The American dream

1st paragraph- introduction

In my text I am going to write about the American dream. And write about the people in the US who don't have much and them trying to get through with what they have. Everything in the US is expensive. They don't pay much tax in the US. But they must pay all the medical bills self. If you don't have a life Insurance and don't get paid well, you are not going to make it. We played a game which is exactly about this. I got through the game with much money, but it's not enough. I had to get away with my dog. That's maybe somethings people must do often because they can't even afford, they own pet. In the game you could use your kids' savings, and that's horrible. I am also going to talk about poverty.

2nd paragraph- main part

America got independent in 4. July 1776. The American Dream is defined as "the ideals of freedom, equality, and opportunity traditionally held to be available to every American and a life of personal happiness and material comfort as traditionally sought by individuals in the United States" (Definition of American Dream).

Poverty overwhelms nearly 44 million Americans today. Most of those people are women and children. It's hard to be a parent and know that you can't give your child so much, because you must pay the other things. If you don't get much in one month that not good. Many people have jobs that they get 10\$ hours. That's not even enough. If you are a teenager in Norway and you have a small job beside school, you can get that as a payment. And as a teenager in Norway, you don't have to pay bills and stuff like that. Because like their parents pay the bills if the teenager lives at home. Let's say you are a mom of 3 and you don't have a husband. You are from Texas. Your children's goes to school. When its lunch time for your children, they often don't eat. Because you can't afford it. You have 2 jobs but barely get through. You must pay the bills in time, you must buy food, pay for medical bills, and one of your children must visit the dentist 1 time in a month. That's something a woman with her children must do every day. People often must take their kids away from sport. Can't make it that that their kids can join their class on fun things often.

Things that can be done to stop these things is to take down the medical bills. Not make people pay so much for just a visit to the dentist or somethings like that. People's payment can go up. They earn very little for a month. The American system is very wrong, nothing in that is saying a thing about that the American dream are working. I think this system got even worse when the covid hit. Many people lost their jobs and was left with nothing.

Watching that documentary about all those people that did not have much was very sad to watch. Even if people can't afford a house, I think people still should have a place to live. Outside its just cold and living in a car is just as bad. One lady who was in that show, had a very normal life until she did not have that anymore. She lives in her car in one place with many other people. She goes to work and drive the car she lives in to work and act like everything is normal. Many times, she doesn't know if she has food to eat and what is waiting for her. They close the gate at one set time and after that people can't get in or out. Later in that show we get to know a family. They sleep outside because they are waiting to get free medical care. She had kids, I don't remember how many they were. The lady with the kids needed dentist care. They got her new tooth so that she was not in pain. I think it's very smart and a good thing that it is free medical care that people set up. Especially when it's so expensive to do those things.

3rd paragraph- main part

I choose an office job most because it had the best payment. It started of very good but longer in the game the money got little and little. I had to make many decisions. Like that my pet needed help, but it was too expensive for me, so I had to let the pet, go. The thought of people having to do this is very sad. Yes so, I had to do that because it was too expensive for me. Something come up with my car and I decided to ignore it. Something I should not have done. We needed to buy food and that was somethings we did. Buying food was hard. It was expensive but is something we need. I bought food that was many things in to save money. Also had to buy toilet paper and paper towels. My kid was also going to school and one of the decisions I had to make was if I should give my kid a lunch coupon that was a school thing. It was 3\$ a day. That is not that bad. I pretty much got all the things to my kid that was needing for the kid. In the end of the month, I lost my job. It was something with the car thing I did not pay.

The game was a very good game, and you can really learn from it. I liked he game and you can ask a friend for help. The game really shows how a normal life can be in the Us.

4th paragraph- conclusion

I have written about the task we had. The American dream and what that is. People who don't have much and must pay expensive bills daily. Lots of people who don't have jobs.

I think the American dream is so many different things, and the things it is not the same anymore. They need to fix those things. And more people must get their jobs back.

The game we have played is an easy way to show what people go through.

16. The American dream

Opening

Since the start America has been a place where immigrants have moved to dream of a new life. The American Dream has been described and redefined from era to era. This dream and the concept of the American dream has been disgusted if it is even possible to achieve it with the minimum wage. And in this essay I am going to discuss what the American dream, is, is it achievable with the minimum wage and I am also going to discuss the poverty problem in the us. In this text I am talking about Living on minimum wage and my opinion on the american dream and the poor education system in the us.

American dream

The american dream, what is it, is it freedom, is it money or what is it? In 1931 James Truslow Adams said that "life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement". And I think this is something we all should dream about, but I also think that the American dream has evolved and become more about owning your own house, starting a family, and having a stable job.

Education system for the minimum wage group

The American education system isn't designed for the poor. Getting a simple education in the US as a part of the minimum wage group is almost impossible to do without setting yourself into a lifetime of debt and due to the link between poverty and education. People living in poverty may stop attending school in order to work, which leaves them without the skills they need to advance their careers. And according to [Student Loan Debt Statistics: 2022](#) one in 7 Americans and around 13.5% of americans has student loans and also according to a CNBC report that, "85 percent of student loan borrowers say difficulty in saving has delayed their ability to buy a house," and other research indicates that "Those with student loan debt also are less likely to have taken out car loans. They have worse credit scores.

Minimum wage problem

In the US just over 1% of the population earn less than or equal to the federal minimum wage as of 2021 and the overall poverty rate is 13.5%. And people cannot afford good homes when wage earnings are far below housing costs. The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that a family of four would have to earn \$15.37 an hour in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent. And to be part of the minimum wage group in us makes 7,25\$ an hour and that's less than what The National Low Income Housing Coalition said the minimum wage should be. Because of the rapid growth of inflation, the 7,25\$ they make is worth less each year and in 1970 the average hourly income was 3,25\$ an hour now it is 27\$ even tho it seems like a massive improvement but because of inflation they only make around 10 cents more than they did in 1970. Overall the us poverty problem is a massive problem that just never seems to get fixed.

Ending statement

in Conclusion, I believe the American dream is a trap. And this is why, the American dream has for long been about material things like a house or a car and the reason it's a trap is because it just gives false hope and traps us in a system that's designed to keep us working to the day we die.

The American dream is described by the average American as owning a nice house, having a family, and having a nice car and etcetera, but that's the trap. Because to own things like a nice house or a nice car you need to have money but 99% of Americans doseent have enough money to buy all these things without a loan so they take out loans mortgages and they get stuck in this trap that keeps them working like slaves to the day they die.

scorses

A Brief History of the American Dream

<https://www.bushcenter.org> › catalyst › churchwell-hist...

[Student Loan Debt Statistics: 2022 - NerdWallet](#)

<https://www.nerdwallet.com> › Student Loans

<https://nlihc.org/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMjTKbUTaMs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f78ZVLVdO0A>

[Poverty in the United States: 2021 - U.S. Census Bureau](#)

<https://www.census.gov> > library > publications > demo

[Can a Family Survive on the US Minimum Wage? - Investopedia](#)

<https://www.investopedia.com> > ... > Budgeting

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5i45h76ioHY>

17. The American dream. Is it Still Possible?

In 2021 there was 37.9 million people in poverty in the United States. Many of them are people who had house, a car, a job, and they lost it all after they became jobless. Spent is a game where you are one of these people and you try to survive a whole month with only 1,000 dollars. Is it possible to achieve the American dream when you live like this? And what challenges to these people need to go through? That is what I will talk about in this text.

The American dream is a term which I think has drastically changed meaning over the years. The origin of the expression can be dated all the way back to the late 1700s in the wild west in the beginning of USAs history. Back then the dream was about expanding west because they had the idea that the land would be better the further west you travelled. In the early 1900s is when I think the american dream became a popular term not only in america, but also in Europe. In this period the dream meant that anyone can achieve great success with hard work regardless of your religion, culture, family history and social status. After the second world war the dream changed once again, and this time became more and more materialistic. Because Europe's manufacture capacity was devastated by the war, the US was producing half the world's manufacturing goods. Therefore, the amount of available jobs heavily increased for the middle class workers and also their income. Because of their growing salary consumer culture thrived. People bought themselves luxuries such as televisions, lawnmowers and air conditioners. The American dream was all about having the most of these luxuries and buying big houses and cars. Today I see the American dream as still being materialistic, but also to earn the largest amount of money with the least amount of work.

The game spent is supposed to give you challenges that match the ones poor people in America face. The first thing you do in the game is to choose a job. I could choose between

working in a restaurant, an office and in a warehouse. After that I had to choose a health insurance plan. The first real challenge was to buy an apartment. I used almost all the money I had on that and still it was too small so I had to sell some of my things. In the game I also had a child which made it significantly harder. Sometimes I even had to choose between buying new clothes to my child or buying food. Impossible choices like that are real challenges some Americans have every day. It made me feel sad because many of them had a good life and suddenly lost everything and gets faced with these challenges.

Even though poverty is a big problem in the US I think it's still possible to achieve the American dream, but it will be harder for some than for others. If you live on minimum wage or are unemployed it will definitely not be easy. The American systems are not fair nor forgiving. People are dependent on money to survive in those systems. You won't get any help without paying for it. You will have to work hard and crawl your way up and then you might have a chance to achieve the dream. When I recently watched the documentary "Being poor in the world's greatest country" I saw that people all over the country volunteered for helping the poor. It gave me hope that the American dream would be more attainable for the poor too.

In conclusion the American dream is something that will always be changing. And all the poverty in the US has made it harder to achieve. The game spent shows you how hard they need to work just to survive. Helping each other out is the key to make dream possible, and make America great again.

Kilder

Gray, C.C. (2000, May). The post world war II era American dream home and its influence on the homes of today. <https://ttuir.tdl.org/bitstream/handle/2346/23203/31295014859382.pdf>

Wikimedia Foundation Inc. (2022, 7. December). Poverty in the United States. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_in_the_United_States

Urban Ministries of Durham. (2011, February). Spent. Playspent. <https://playspent.org/>

18. The American dream, just a dream after all?

The American dream is what most people living in the US are trying to achieve and has been a goal that people have strived to reach for a very long time. The dream may have changed on the surface, but the fundamentals are still present. The need to be able to support you and your

family and the possibility to succeed if you just work hard enough. Now this is not the case for a lot of Americans, and that's what I am going to focus on in this reflective essay. Is it possible to achieve the American dream when you have fallen to poverty, and what is my view on the situation?

Poverty in the US is a big problem and affects millions of Americans all over the country. The bad health and insurance system leaves a lot of people financially ruined. Even though the US has the highest annual spending on health care, the country still have some of the worst offers when it comes to helping its own people. The unreasonable prices for even the smallest of services, can make it difficult for even the people with descent to high pay to keep up. Health problems is defiantly on of the biggest reasons for the high percent of people falling to poverty. Insurance is also one of the reasons. Insurance plans have high monthly premiums, which allows the payer to get some of the cost covered by the insurance. The amount that the insurance covers, depends on the plan that the payer pays for. The more expensive plan, the more covered.

So how is it to live in poverty in the US? Being poor in the US means to not have enough money or funds to cover the needs of either yourself or your family without extra help. Normally working with the minimum wage or lower, which leaves little room for laziness. The people in poverty often have a misconception around them that they are just too lazy to work hard enough, but they are often more hard working then the average person. They can for an example have two jobs at the same time spending most of their time of the day working. As we saw in the documentary *Poverty in the USA: Being Poor in the World's Richest Country* | *ENDEVR Documentary* most of the time, the people in poverty were the ones who had just been unlucky. They were hard working and just tried to get through life on a day-to-day basis. Some of them had gotten deals to get food and others had thought of some smart ideas to meet their basic needs, but they were still struggling. Sleeping in their cars or tents instead of homes and being afraid that someone might attack them while they're trying to sleep.

Now in class we have also tried out the game "SPENT". Which is a game based on how it is to live in poverty. The game starts out with you having 1000\$ and your objective is to survive through the month without going to or under 0\$. The game is both slightly luck reliant and strategy heavy, like in the real world. The game did make me question whether it was realistic or not, considering how much bad and unlucky stuff happened to my character, but thinking about it now, it seems more reasonable. The bad working conditions and pay in the US, really

makes it difficult to get through. Although I felt going through it in the game it was only moderately difficult, in the real world it's on a whole different level. I would recommend checking it out.

My thoughts on this entire situation are that there is defiantly something that needs to be done. Staying like this will only bring more people down and leave them to rot with the others. So, do I think it's possible for every American to achieve the American dream? Simple answer, with a ton of changes most people can probably achieve it, but not all most likely.

Source list:

ENDEVR. (2022, 9 januar). *Poverty in the USA: Being Poor in the World's Richest Country | ENDEVR Documentary* [Video]. Youtube.

[Poverty in the USA: Being Poor in the World's Richest Country | ENDEVR Documentary - YouTube](#)

Spent [web-based game]

[SPENT \(playspent.org\)](https://playspent.org)

Appendix H: Interview guide

Intevjuguide gruppeintervju

1. Spiller du mye videospill på fritiden, og om du spiller, hvilken type spill?
Do you play a lot of video games in your spare time, and if you do, what type of games?
2. Hva har du lært om USA de siste ukene?
What have you learnt about the USA in the last few weeks?
3. Syns du *Spent* hjalp deg med å forstå mer om forhold noen familier lever under? På hvilken måte?
Do you think *Spent* helped you understand some of the conditions that some families live in? In what way?
4. Tror du *Spent* gir et realistisk bilde av det å være fattig i USA? Hvorfor/ hvorfor ikke?
Do you think *Spent* paints a realistic image of being poor in the USA? Why/ why not?
5. Hvordan har din holdning til den amerikanske drømmen og fattigdom i USA endret seg siden vi begynte med dette opplegget?
How has your attitude to the American dream and poverty in the USA changed since we started this topic?
6. I *Spent* må du sette deg inn i en annen sin livssituasjon, hva gjorde dette med spillopplevelsen?
In *Spent*, you have to put yourself into someone else's life and their situation, what did this do with the experience of playing?
7. Hva fikk *Spent* deg til å føle?
What did *Spent* make you feel?
8. Hva i *Spent* overrasket deg mest?
What about *Spent* surprised you the most?
9. Hva syns du om å spille spill i engelsktimene?
What do you think about playing games in English class?
10. Syns du spill er et verktøy som får deg til å lære mer eller mindre om emnene vi jobber med i engelsktimene? Hvorfor?
Do you think that games are a tool that makes you learn more, or less, about the topics we are working with in the English lessons? Why?

Appendix I: Interview transcript

Intervju 1

Intervjuer: Spiller dere mye videospill på fritiden, og hvis dere gjør det, hvilken type?

Alle: Øøøøø, nei.

Elev 1: Litt sånn HayDay, og før spilte jeg Fortnite.

Alle elevene: Ja, ja

Elev 1: Men det var liksom ikke så lenge. Det var sånn to måneder, så jeg ferdig. Det var kjedelig, liksom.

Elev 2: Jeg har liksom aldri spilt, det er mer gutter som pleier å spille.

Elev 1: Så spiller jeg av og til, hvis jeg kjeder meg skikkelig. Men da kjører jeg bare biler rundt omkring. Det er alt jeg gjør på. Kjører helikopter og

Elev 3: Stjeler biler og sånn.

Alle elevene: Ja

Elev 1: Ja, stjeler biler. Og får sånn stjerner. Det er det jeg gjør på.

Intervjuer: Hva føler dere at dere har lært om i USA de siste ukene?

Elev 2: Jeg har lært at, at det er dyrere å bo der enn jeg trodde.

Elev 1: Jeg visste det var dyrt, men ikke at det var så dyrt.

Elev 2: Med de der Medical.

Elev 4: Ja, medial health. Det var et rart konsept i forhold til hva vi har på en måte.

Intervjuer: Forsikring?

Elev 4: Ja.

Elev 1: Men jeg lurer på, for det er jo sånn at hvis vi har forsikring her sånn når vi reiser ned til USA og på ferie, så er jo forsikring, da er jo vi forsikret her, sant, men hvis vi da, hvis vi flytter ned dit og bor der i to år, er vi fortsatt forsikret i Norge da. Eller? Må vi liksom begynne å betale?

Intervjuer: Det vet jeg ikke. Nei, nei, det går det går.. Altså, det går jo på sånne ting som, at de som reiser ned som studenter har en sånn egen type forsikring som varer et år. Det er en greie du kan kjøpe du betaler 4000 eller hva det er, og så varer det et år. Det måtte vi gjøre med min når hun dro til Roma. Men ellers så, når du bor der og har fast adresse så må du følge de reglene som er der.

Elev 1: OK det er greit, men da har jeg lært at jeg ikke, tror egentlig ikke jeg har lyst til å bo der nede lenger.

Elev 4: Ikke jeg heller.

Elev 2: Jeg har alltid lyst til å bo der, men etter, og at det med de høye prisene så.

Elev 1: Men det, også det at det er kun liksom det er noen fine, sånne nabolag også er det noen som, helt forferdelige nabolag liksom. Og så er det masse sånn gang members der. Det er jo skummelt.

Elev 2: Det er utrygt å bo der.

Elev 4: Det er litt sånn skummelt.

Elev 2: Altså, du kan liksom, du kan ikke gå ut på gaten, du kan ikke gå hjem fra trening uten å være redd for å bli skutt når som helst liksom.

Elev 1: Det er sånn enten eller, enten må du være skamrik eller så må du være med i gang members. Da er du litt trygg, da har du en gjeng. De som er sånn, de er litt voldelig da, men da er du liksom beskyttet.

Elev 4: Jeg kjenner, det er litt rart å gå fra her, her man ikke tenker på noen skoleskytinger, så kommer man ned dit så må man øve på det liksom, i skolehverdagen..

Elev 1: På skoleskyting?

Elev 4: Nei, sånn i skolehverdagen.

Elev 3: Elever som liksom aldri har opplevd sånt, også må de øve seg på det, som norske folk liksom.

Intervjuer: Ja, men går du på skole, så går du jo på skole.

Elev 3: Ja.

Elev 1: Men jeg tror egentlig jeg liker å bo i Norge. Jeg kan holde meg her. Jeg har ikke, altså jeg tror ikke jeg hadde hatt lyst til å sende ungen min på skole i USA. I så fall hadde det vært hjemmeskole. Det er jo skummelt, du vet jo ikke om de kommer hjem igjen en gang. Du bare sender de ut i verden, hmm, lurer på om de kommer hjem igjen i dag, hmm, spennende å se liksom.

Alle ler.

Intervjuer: Spennende å se, faktisk.

Elev 2: Grunnen er, ja, jeg vet ikke.

Elev 1: Ja, er spennende.

Intervjuer: Så dere har egentlig lært at dere ikke vil bo der?

Alle elevene: Ja.

Elev 3: Jeg hadde egentlig hatt lyst å flytte dit engang, gå på skole der.

Elev 4: Hva ville du flytte dit for?

Elev 3: Liksom bo der et år, gå på skole der.

Elev 1: Ja, men er det er det samme med New York? Hvis jeg bor i New York i 2 år. Ååå, det er helt forferdelig. Jeg tenkte jeg skulle studere i New York og sånn, men da må jeg jo betale sånn greie. Det har jeg ikke lyst til lenger.

Intervjuer: Ja, universitetet er ganske dyrt, men du får stipend da, i Norge.

Elev 1: Men hvis man, får man stipend for å studere i New York?

Intervjuer: Du får litt, det dekker ikke alt, men det dekker litt.

Elev 1: Dekker det alt her i Norge?

Intervjuer: Det koster 600 kroner å studere i halvåret i Norge.

Alle ler.

Elev 2: OK, så lite?

Elev 1: Da tror jeg kanskje jeg klarer meg.

Intervjuer: Det er studieavgiften, pensum kommer utenom.

Elev 2: Og vi får 600 i stipend?

Intervjuer: Nei, det er det det koster å gå på universitetet.

Elev 2: Hva får vi i stipend da?

Elev 1: Sånn 2000 hver, eller?

Intervjuer: Det spørres om du bor hjemme eller ikke.

Elev 4: Det er jo bare å si at man ikke bor hjemme.

Elev 1: Hva får de i New York da, tror du? Flere tusen?

Intervjuer: I don't know.

Elev 1: Du kan jo si at du bor der.

Intervjuer: Okei, very much digress. Syns dere at *Spent* hjalp å forstå litt mer om forholdene som noen familier lever under?

Alle elevene: Ja, mmm.

Elev 1: Jeg følte meg fæl for jeg måtte drepe hunden min.

Elev 3: Ja.

Elev 1: Det var faktisk, ikke litt gøy engang!

Elev 4: Det er det med hvilke valg man må ta og sånt. Og hva de faktisk liksom prioriterer og sånn. Hva ting de må velge vekk for å få råd til andre ting.

Elev 2: Ja, og det at man faktisk må, kanskje må knuse sparegrisen til ungen sin liksom.

Elev 1: Gjorde du det?

Elev 2: Gjorde ikke det, men jeg vet ikke, jeg valgte å ikke gjøre det.

Elev 1: Det var en gang jeg greide det, og en gang jeg failet sånn skikkelig. Da brukte jeg penger på moren min og gav henne penger til sykehus.

Elev 2: Ja, jeg tok, jeg tok noen penger som ungen min fikk, så måtte ta de til meg selv i stedet for å gi det til henne.

Elev 4: Ja, vi hadde så lite penger.

Elev 1: Ja, det gjorde jeg og. Men samtidig var det sånn at fordi at jeg hadde liksom lyst til at ungen min skal ha det gøy og liksom gjøre tingene hun hadde lyst til og så bare så, så, jeg pengene minske sånn skikkelig, jeg bare eh. Da begynte jeg å stresse litt, men samtidig så er det sånn. Tenk å være ungen, da. Hadde jo ikke klart å gjøre noe. Ikke at det er det verste her, men, ja. Jeg vet ikke. Hadde aldri tenkt at det var så gale, liksom. Jeg hadde en sånn, jeg har sånn ideal om USA, det var kanskje the American Dream som jeg tenkte det var USA liksom. Jeg visste at det var litt sånn fattigdom, tenkte ikke at det var sånn det faktisk var.

Elev 3: Det er helt forferdelig. Skal aldri bli fattig.

Intervjuer: Tror dere at spillet gir et realistisk bilde?

Elev 3: Ja.

Elev 4: Ja, det tror jeg.

Elev 2: For noen, ja. Det er jo ikke alle som er sånn. Det er jo noen som har penger, på en måte. Men det er veldig mange som har lite penger

Elev 4: Det gir jo inntrykk av, det er jo mange som er tom for penger.

Elev 2: Ja.

Elev 1: Men, hva skjedde om man tok for lite mat i løpet av en måned? I spillet.

Intervjuer: I spillet, liksom?

Elev 1: Ja, for lite mat i løpet av en måned. Hva skjer da liksom? Sulter du i hjel da?

Intervjuer: Jeg vet ikke.

Elev 2: Du har liksom et brød og et egg til noen, liksom. Det var sånn, we're starving, men jeg bare fortsatte. Jeg kjøpte ikke mer mat.

Elev 1: Jeg kjøpte peanøttsmør og brød og litt sånn pasta og litt sånn saus og, litt sånn, litt sånn forskjellig.

Elev 3: Ja, jeg brukte veldig mye penger på mat, og så brukte jeg veldig mye penger på ungen min.

Elev 1: Jeg tror det var der alle pengene egentlig gikk. Ungen min, og moren min. Ikke hunden min. Jaja.

Intervjuer: Okey, hvordan, altså, ble det noe endring i den amerikanske drømmen og fattigdom, altså har den holdningen dere har til den amerikanske drømmen og fattigdom endret seg siden vi begynte med USA?

Elev 2: Ja, jeg trodde det var mye mer dreams. Jeg trodde det var bedre å bo der.

Elev 1: Jeg tror egentlig den eneste siden vi egentlig ser på sosiale medier, det er bare den brae.

Elev 4: Det er jo for det bare influensere og sånn viser det.

Elev 1: Men det er liksom veldig stor forskjell fra de rike og de fattige, så i Norge er, så er det litt sånn, jeg føler det er litt mer sånn utjevnet på en måte. Altså det er sånn at det er noen som er skamrik, og så er det noen som er sliter med å holde seg i live liksom.

Elev 4: Ja, det finnes ikke så mange der av de som er midt imellom.

Elev 2: Ja, det er det at vi her har hjelp, liksom.

Elev 1: Hvis vi er midt imellom, så ligger jeg kanskje litt over midt imellom. Det er litt sånn, skjønner du? Jeg føler det er liksom noen som ligger mellom der.

Elev 3: Hvor?

Elev 1: Jeg føler liksom sånn, enten så er de fattig,

Elev 2: I Amerika.

Elev 1: Enten så er du fattig, eller så har du litt penger så å klarer å overleve, eller så er du skamrik, eller sånn medium rik. Det er ikke midt imellom der.

Elev 4: Det liksom sånn fire stykk, men det var ingen som var sånn..

Intervjuer: Sånn middelklasse liksom?

Elev 1: Ja, jeg syns, jeg vet ikke. Den eksisterer kanskje.

Intervjuer: Men hvordan har handling holdningen forandret? Altså hva tenker dere når vi er ferdig på en måte?

Elev 3: Jeg tenker vi burde gjøre noe, liksom. Sånn som de i den serien vi så, i den filmen. Er det en film? Ja.

Elev 1: Det gir egentlig litt mening at USA er å skal klare seg selv, og så skal de betale for alt selv, men synes egentlig det er bedre at liksom, vi betaler jo for det her i Norge også, men jeg synes det er litt bedre at de liksom sånn som er det i Norge, at du klarer fortsatt deg selv. Det er jo fortsatt du som må liksom.

Intervjuer: Det sitter kanskje litt langt inne å be om hjelp?

Alle elevene: Mmm.

Intervjuer: OK, i *Spent* så er det satt opp sånn at de snakker til deg at det er du skal gjøre det. Du må sette deg inn i situasjonen og det er du som tar avgjørelsen. Hvordan følte dere at det gjorde med spillopplevelsen?

Elev 2: Det ble egentlig lettere å, liksom skjønne.

Elev 4: Det blir jo mer realistisk når det er du som må gjøre det. Da er det du som liksom må ta ansvar. Og derfor kanskje gir det en følelse om hvordan det faktisk er å ha det sånn. **Elev 2:** Ja, du lever deg liksom godt inn i det. Tenker liksom sånn, tenk om det var meg. **Elev 4:** Hver gang du liksom gjør noe innpå der, så går det liksom utover deg og så din familie.

Elev 1: Jeg føler liksom det var jeg som hadde valgene å gjøre. Det var liksom alt, på en måte tingene som skjedde sånn, det var liksom på meg, så var det liksom jeg hadde styringen over hva som skjedde. Det var litt sånn, som om det ikke gikk bra så var det min feil. Hvis det bra, så var det også min feil. Ja.

Intervjuer: Så ja, hvilke følelser fikk *Spent* fram?

Elev 1: Det var litt trist.

Alle elevene: Ja, ja trist.

Elev 1: At det faktisk er så gale. At det er noen som må leve et sånt liv. Jeg er vant med liksom, ingen av de problemene der, liksom. Og at man må liksom prioritere ting over andre, liksom. Sånn prioriterer kanskje deg og din familie over kanskje foreldrene dine eller ikke noen andre som du og har lyst til å hjelpe, men du kan ikke hjelpe de, liksom. Du er litt sånn låst.

Intervjuer: OK, hva var mest overraskende med å spille?

Elev 2: Egentlig bare det vi har sagt at, at det var at det er så gale.

Elev 3: Ja.

Elev 2: At det er noen som må leve et så,

Elev 4: Ha et så lite budsjett liksom.

Elev 3: Ja.

Elev 1: Det var overaskende hvor realistisk det var. Liksom sånn, det er faktisk realistiske situasjoner man blir satt i, på en måte. Altså kjøpe mat, og så er det det at det var et eller annet som skjedde på skolen som ungen din ville på og du måtte betale for eksempel. Og så måtte, så hadde du ikke penger til det, også var det sånn, ja du får ikke lov å dra. Det var ganske realistiske og sånne ting som kunne skjedd, på en måte.

Intervjuer: Hva synes dere om å spille spill i engelsktimen da?

Alle elevene: Gøy.

Elev 3: Å ha litt forandring.

Alle elevene: Ja.

Elev 4: Det var bra.

Elev 2: Det var liksom, det var et spill jeg faktisk lærte noe av og.

Elev 1: Vi kan spille Fortnite, i timene.

Alle ler.

Intervjuer: Men, føler dere at spill er et verktøy som får dere til å føle, nei ikke føle, lære mer eller mindre?

Elev 3: Mer. Klare å følger mer med, så det er jo liksom, jeg har liksom lært noe, på en gøyere måte liksom.

Elev 4: Det er på en måte en gøyere måte å lære noe liksom.

Elev 2: I stedet for å bare høre på en lærer som snakker.

Elev 1: Det er jo gøyere å lære pluss at vi må sette oss litt mer inn i det for man må liksom fokusere og gjøre tingene selv. Så man må liksom være fokusert og. Og samtidig som at jeg ikke har liksom ikke lyst til å stoppe heller. Det er gøyere å spille enn å sitte og jobbe med oppgaver.

Intervjuer: Jupp, det var faktisk bare det som var spørsmålene da, så thank you.

Intervju 2

Intervjuer: Jupp, okei. Spiller dere mye videospill på fritiden, og hvis du spiller, hvilke type spill?

Elev 1: Nei.

Elev 2: Spiller egentlig ingenting.

Elev 3: Nei

Intervjuer: Ingenting?

Elev 4: HmMMM, dataspill.

Elev 2 (til elev 3): Du spiller Hayday.

Elev 3: Ja, men, er det, telles det?

Intervjuer: Ja.

Elev 3: Ja, jeg spiller Hayday.

Elev 1: Jeg og!

Elev 4: Spiller Hayday!

Elev 2: Jeg spiller ingenting.

Elev 1: Jeg spiller Candy crush.

Alle ler

Intervjuer: Candy crush, Okey. Ja, hva har dere lært om USA de siste ukene?

Elev 1: Fattigdom.

Intervjuer: Hmm?

Elev 1: Fattigdom

Intervjuer: Fattigdom?

Elev 1: Ja.

Intervjuer: Okey. Har dere lært om fattigdom eller?

Elev 2: Vi har lært mer om fattigdom.

Alle elevene: Ja.

Intervjuer: Okey.

Elev 4: Hvor mye fattigdom det er.

Alle: Ja.

Intervjuer: Okey.

Elev 1: Altså, hvordan de egentlig har det.

Alle elevene: Ja, mmmm.

Elev 1: Og så, helse, health care liksom, ja.

Intervjuer: Okey, synes dere at det å spille *Spent* hjalp med å forstå mer om forhold som noen familier lever under?

Elev 3: Ja.

Elev 2: Mmmm.

Elev 1: Ja, litt i hvert fall.

Elev 4: Jeg har liksom gode eksempler på liksom hva man må prioritere og kanskje gjøre for å liksom komme gjennom en måned eller sånn ja.

Elev 3: Mmmm.

Elev 1: Jeg tror kanskje sånne valg det er realistiske velg man må ta.

Alle: Ja. Mmmm.

Intervjuer: Ja, tror dere at spillet gir et realistisk bilde av det å være fattig i USA?

Elev 3: Ja, jeg tror det.

Elev 2: Ja, isj.

Elev 1: Ja, du kan jo komme opp i sånne situasjoner.

Elev 4: Ja det kan være noen ganger det er forskjellig.

Intervjuer: Så det er noen situasjoner som

Elev 2: Liksom, bare sånn det er jo ikke alt der som kan skje liksom. Men det er jo mye av det som kan skje og.

Elev 1 og 3: Ja.

Elev 4: De jo være enda fattigere enn det man er i det spillet.

Elev 2: Ja, hvis jeg liksom, du har faktisk allerede tatt alle de dårlige valgene og så er du liksom stuck med en sånn nesten ingenting, så er du jo enda fattigere enn det igjen, på en måte.

Elev 1: Hvis du er så fattig fra før at du ikke kan kjøpe mat, du kan ikke ta, liksom de valgene som i spillet, på en måte. Det er en helt annen situasjon.

Elev 2: Ja.

Intervjuer: Ja, hvordan har holdningen til den amerikanske drømmen og fattigdom i USA endret seg etter vi begynte med dette opplegget, hele opplegget, eller har den endret seg?

Elev 3: For oss?

Intervjuer: Ja.

Elev 3: Litt.

Intervjuer: Hvordan?

Elev 4: Ja.

Elev 2: Ja, jeg vet ikke.

Intervjuer: Okey.

Elev 1: Jeg trodde litt sånn at the american dream var sånn villaer, og sånn Los Angeles strender, og sånn hvite hus liksom, sånne ting.

Elev 3: Ja.

Elev 1: Men nå tror jeg ikke det lenger.

Intervjuer: Hva tror du det er nå da?

Elev 1: Nå, altså, tanken min om the american dream nå er mer sånn at det er veldig få som får den på en måte. Ja.

Intervjuer: Okey, *Spent*, spillet, da må jo du på en måte spille som deg selv, du må sette deg inn i en annen sin livssituasjon. Hvordan følte dere at dette påvirket spillopplevelsen deres?

Elev 1: Jeg vet ikke.

Intervjuer: Det at det var «you», altså det var deg-person. Spillet pekte deg ut som en person, at det var du som faktisk styrte ting og gjorde ting. Hadde det noen effekt?

Elev 3: Det gjorde det jo litt vanskeligere, å ta sånne valg og sånn.

Intervjuer: Hvorfor det?

Elev 2: For da, på en måte, er det deg det handler om og ikke en annen person, på en måte.

Elev 4: Det er jo litt sånn, chance, selv om det ikke blir i virkeligheten, men ja.

Elev 2: Altså, det er jo sånn, hvis du lever deg veldig godt inn i spillet så er det jo nesten skummelt. Du sitter og bare stresser skikkelig med hva du selv kan gjøre for at du selv kan overleve.

Alle elevene: Mmm.

Elev 1: Det er så skyldfølelse, sånn, for eksempel, jeg fikk det der valget om å, det med hunden. Så jeg ville jo ikke ta vekk hunden, jeg vil ikke drepe hunden min. Det var veldig lite mat, og det var veldig vanskelig. Jeg kjente, kjente, det jo litt sånn hva om det hadde vært min hund, ikke sant?

Elev 4: Det var mye stress, det var mye ting som måtte gjøres sånn.

Elev 1: Ja, sånn som å gå på bursdagsfest.

Elev 2: Eller å kjøpe gave til vennen sin.

Intervjuer: Okey, hva, hva, var det med *Spent*, altså hva var det det fikk dere til å føle mens dere satt der og spilte?

Elev 4: Skuffelse, kanskje?

Intervjuer: Over?

Elev 4: At skal man ikke kunne komme seg ut, hvis det går dårlig, liksom. Og så sånn som elev 1 sa, sånn skyldfølelse da.

Elev 1: Jeg synes vendepunktet var når du mister jobben.

Elev 2: Gjorde du det?

Elev 1: Jeg mistet jobben etter, ja flere ganger.

Elev 4: Jeg vant, jeg vant alle tre gangene.

Elev 1: Jeg mistet den sånn, etter en uke kanskje. Men jeg overlevde da! Jeg hadde noen penger igjen også.

Elev 4: Såpass.

Elev 1: Ja.

Elev 3: Jeg hadde han mannen som bodde i stuen ene uke.

Elev 1: Ja! Jeg hadde en mann som bodde i stuen min.

Elev 2: Ikke jeg!

Elev 2: Nei, det var meg, og så hadde jeg en unge, og så, ungen ville i bursdagsbesøk. Og så hadde jeg vel ikke akkurat råd til å kjøpe gave til de, så det var sånn enten når vi skulle bare finne noe dritt vi alle hjemme eller og at jeg skulle spandere en gave. Jeg trykket på å spandere gaven. Jeg fikk litt dårlig samvittighet.

Elev 1: Jeg gjorde sånn, sendte med noe brukt eller noe sånt, jeg husker ikke.

Elev 3: Ja, noe sånt.

Elev 4: Ja.

Intervjuer: Hva synes dere var mest overraskende med spillet da?

Elev 2: At det var så realistisk.

Elev 3: At vi måtte ta så vanskelig valg.

Elev 2: Ja.

Elev 1 og 4: Mmm.

Elev 4: At det faktisk er realiteten for, ja kanskje, mange folk? Ja?

Elev 2: Ja.

Elev 1: Jeg synes det var litt stressende sånn, for jeg hadde ganske lite penger, og så plutselig var det sånn, må du betale ditten og datten, og så var det sånn du er redd for at ungen skulle

knekke et ben eller skulle til tannlegen, å bli redd for hva som skal skje, på en måte. Det var litt spesielt.

Elev 2: Jeg endte opp med å ikke ha bil så jeg kunne ikke kjøre ungen min, det var veldig stressende.

Elev 4: Altså uten bil, vondt i tennene, uten mat, hadde liksom bare egg, nudler og melk. Det var det jeg hadde, wooh!

Elev 2: Jeg handlet sykt mye. Jeg er bare stacket opp alt.

Elev 4 (til elev 2): Du gjorde det du?

Elev 1: Jeg handlet bønner, for jeg var sånn, det er hermetikk, og det er billig og det er litt sånn, da kjøper jeg masse.

Elev 2: Jeg var på et level hvor jeg har det sånn skikkelig masse, masse penger. Jeg bare sånn wow, jeg skal kjøpe meg masse mat.

Elev 4: Jeg gjorde det den ene gangen.

Elev 2: Stacket opp.

Elev 4: Alt!

Elev 2: Men jeg klarte det ganske bra. Jeg kjøpte ikke mat gjennom hele spillet ene gangen.

Intervjuer: Okey, hva synes dere om å spille spill i engelsktimene?

Elev 4: Det er gøy.

Elev 1: Kjempegøy.

Elev 3: Ja.

Elev 2: Og det at alle sammen var faktisk med på det og.

Elev 4: Ja.

Elev 2: Jeg tror.

Intervjuer: Faktisk.

Alle ler.

Elev 2: Ja, faktisk! Liksom guttene og.

Elev 4: Nei, det var det var gøy det. Lærerikt.

Elev 2: Det var faktisk ganske lærerikt.

Intervjuer: Okey, så synes dere at spill er et verktøy som får dere til å lære mer eller mindre?

Elev 1: Mer.

Intervjuer: Mer?

Elev 2, 3, 4: Ja, mer, ja.

Intervjuer: Hvorfor?

Elev 4: Man blir litt mer engasjerte, kanskje, enn i, å bare å lese.

Elev 2: Ja, man lærer ofte bedre da man ikke kjeder seg. Det er sånn at hvis du har det litt sånn gøy, eller det er litt sånn spennende så er det mye lettere å på en måte å følge med.

Elev 4: Det blir litt mer deltakelse. I timen. Av sånt.

Elev 3: Ja

Elev 1: Og så på det spillet så er det jo veldig sånn, du opplever det jo på en måte selv. Og en lærer jo mye bedre av å være i situasjoner selv liksom.

Intervjuer: Okey, noe mer dere vil si?

Elev 3: Nei.

Intervjuer: Nei.

Alle ler.

Intervju 3

Intervjuer: Spiller dere mye videospill på fritiden, og hvis du gjør det, hvilke type spill?

Elev 1: Jeg spiller Sims.

Intervjuer: The Sims?

Elev 1: Mmm.

Elev 2: Jeg spiller Hayday og Fortnite.

Elev 3: Ja, jeg spiller Fortnite og Sims.

Elev 4: Øøøø, litt forskjellig, men hovedsakelig, Minecraft, Fortnite og ja, sånne ting.

Intervjuer: Okay.

Elev 1: Ja, Subway surfers.

Elev 3: Ja, Garden scapes.

Elev 4: Clash of clans.

Intervjuer: Okey, så mobilspill og gaming er det jeg hører her?

Elev 3: Og Fortnite.

Intervjuer: Fortnite og ja.

Elev 3: Ja.

Intervjuer: Ja, okay, så på PC eller på mobil liksom?

Elev 1: Playstation.

Elev 2: Nintendo Switch.

Elev 4: PC.

Intervjuer: PC?

Elev 4: Og Playstation.

Elev 1: Mest på mobil, men litt PC og.

Intervjuer: Okay, hva føler dere at dere har lært om USA de siste ukene?

Elev 2: At det er et ganske mye verre land enn det det høres ut som. Eller sånn jeg har lært fra før liksom. Før har jeg liksom lært, sånn, oi USA, det har jeg lyst å reise til og sånn, men hvis du reiser der og bare bli syk, så er jo jeg ganske fu**ed, sant. Jeg har lært at det er ganske, ganske annerledes enn det jeg har hørt før, om liksom USA. Ganske mye bak det, alt det gode liksom.

Elev 1: Sånn, jeg visste jo liksom de tingene som jeg har lært om sånn at liksom det er dårlig sånn der helsesystem og at det er masse sånn skoleskyting, men du lærer jo liksom bedre sånn, sånn, i dybden om det da.

Elev 4: Du forstår egentlig ikke helt hvor ille det egentlig er, eller du forstår mer og mer hvor eldre du blir, så.

Elev 3: Men det er kanskje ikke det drømmelandet, med de mulighetene sånn som det fortsatt var, i starten.

Intervjuer: Tror dere det har vært drømmelandet før?

Elev 3: Når de flyttet dertil, sånn de fra Norge, så var jo helt sikkert det. Når du liksom kom fra trange lille Norge med masse regn til, store, store, åkrer.

Elev 4: Også fikk du ditt eget land, det er liksom, du fikk din egen eiendom.

Elev 1: Da begynte jo liksom alle sammen på en måte likt, og nå begynner jo noen med liksom masse, masse, masse, penger også noe som begynner med liksom ikke et hus en gang.

Elev 3: Men sånn, mulighetene for andre har alltid ødelagt for noen andre. Sånn mulighetene til, ja hvis jeg kom til USA, som Europeerne, de ødelagte jo for indianerne og native americans.

Elev 1 og 2: Mmm.

Intervjuer: Okay, synes dere at det å spille *Spent* hjalp å forstå mer om forhold som noen familier lever under?

Elev 1: Ja, kanskje, for sånn, altså det ble jo littegranne sånn der når liksom du måtte sende vekk hunden din og du bare lot moren din dø, og liksom ungen din fikk ingenting og så satt du fortsatt ikke igjen med penger liksom.

Elev 3: Jeg synes egentlig det var ganske sånn, jeg er tapte ikke fordi at jeg var villig til å gjøre ganske mye, og pengene forsvant jo med en gang. Så da kjøpte jeg en gulrot og levde på det rimelig. Men det var jo sånn, du fikk ikke den typen innblikk, hvis det hadde vært i levende live, så hadde jo jeg kanskje ikke levd på en gulrot en hel uke, og sånt da.

Elev 2: Ja, jeg er ganske enig, fordi sånn, jeg tok veldig mange sånne valg, sånn vil du betale for moren din sin medisin, sant, og jeg var litt sånn, helst ikke, det var dyrt, sant. Det, liksom, hadde det vært i virkeligheten hadde jeg selvfølgelig gjort det. Så det er litt sånn, det gir et innblikk, på en måte, sånn hva situasjonen vi kan komme opp i, men hadde det skjedd på ekte med meg, så hadde ikke jeg gjort liksom i nærheten av det samme som jeg har gjort, eller som jeg har gjort i spillet liksom.

Elev 1: Jo, og så ødelagte jeg livet til en dame fordi at jeg ikke vil bruke 25 sånn der dollar for jeg ødelagte noe på jobben sant, men så fant jo han der sjefen ut av det, og ble kjempesint. Så gav han skylden til hun andre, men jeg turte jo ikke si at det var meg, da kunne det jo vært han hadde sparket meg, sant og så ødelagte jeg livet hennes. Proud moment.

Elev 3: Men, det er ikke så realistisk for du har liksom ingen rundt deg, det virker som du er helt alene.

Elev 1: Det er jo realistisk, da.

Elev 3: For enkelte ja, men sånn for meg er det veldig urealistisk liksom, for jeg har liksom foreldrene mine og søsknene mine, og resten av familien.

Elev 4: Har ikke så mye å tilføye.

Intervjuer: Så, det, det var ikke et realistisk bilde, det å spille det?

Elev 3: Jo, men, nei.

Elev 2: Altså, jeg tror jo, de som, de kommer jo, de kommer jo til å oppleve liksom flere gode ting og flere dårlige tider akkurat det som var i spillet. Det gir liksom litt sånn, på hva som faktisk kan skje, og liksom, hvordan det skjer, og sånn, hva som skjer med personer og sånn, da. Så det gir, det er både og.

Elev 3: Det var jo realistiske hendelser, men allikevel vanskelig å se for seg. Men det er kanskje det at vi er oss, og ja.

Intervjuer: Dere har ikke hatt ansvar for økonomien i et hus før?

Elev 3: Nei, det har jeg ikke.

Intervjuer: Ja, hvordan føler dere at holdningen til den amerikanske drømmen og fattigdom i USA har endret seg siden vi begynte med dette opplegget. Hvis det har endret seg.

Elev 1: Jeg synes ikke det kanskje, kanskje, det har ikke endret seg så masse, men jeg har jo liksom lært på en måte mer om det. Sånn at jeg har liksom, bedre forståelse av det. Det er ikke bare sånn at, å USA-folk er dumme, at liksom, nå får vi se hvorfor de er dum og.

Elev 2: Vi har jo lært at de kun er kommunister.

Alle elevene ler.

Elev 3: Men sånn, hva jeg kunne om den amerikanske drømmen fra før av, så visste jeg det var en drøm liksom den drømmen har endret seg litt. Men, etter at vi jobbet med det så har jeg lært at den fortsatt er i endring og den er forskjellig fra person til person, så å si.

Elev 2: Jeg visste ikke hva, liksom the american dream var før vi begynte med dette. Jeg har liksom hørt om det, men jeg visste ikke hva det egentlig var og hva det gikk ut på og sånn. Så det var litt sånn at jeg lærte ganske masse på grunn av jeg ikke kunne så masse, av det fra før av.

Intervjuer (til elev 4): Okey, er det noe, har noe skjedd med din holdning?

Elev 4: Nei, helt, egentlig. Altså det var vel litt med det de er ikke late de som prøver å oppnå det eller, og ikke greier det. Hvis du ser hvor mye de sliter og, og så prøver å komme seg opp til det, så.

Intervjuer: Okey, når vi spiller *Spent* så er jo det utformet sånn at det er du som tar avgjørelsene. Hva synes dere at det gjorde med hele spillopplevelsen?

Elev 1: Du fikk jo litt sånn, du følte deg jo littegrann sånn der umoralsk. Med liksom, du må på en måte velge vekk alle folkene rundt deg.

Elev 3: Ja, men samtidig så var det sånn at det var barnet ditt først, virker det som. Jeg tror det er veldig få som velger vekk barnet sitt.

Elev 1: Jaja, men liksom, når på en måte, sånn der å gi ungen din god mat, liksom, det var sånn der shit. Kan jeg liksom, kan jeg gjøre det? Fikk jo liksom, du vil littegrann mer liksom, ja.

Elev 3: Du fikk en ansvarsfølelse.

Elev 1: Mmm.

Elev 2: Ja.

Elev 4: Og personlig, følte kanskje litt sympati og sånt.

Intervjuer: Sympati for?

Elev 4: For liksom personen du spiller som. Altså, det er jo ikke en virkelig person, men, siden du spiller som den så kjenner du mer på akkurat det.

Elev 1, 2, og 3: Mmm.

Elev 4: De der valgene.

Elev 1: Altså det er sånn mennesker, vi kan jo ikke skjønne noe, altså, det å lese om, på en måte vite noe, og liksom ha sympati for de folkene, men du kan aldri skjønne noe helt liksom, før du har, på en måte opplevd det selv.

Intervjuer (til elev 1): Følte du *Spent* hjelp med det?

Elev 1: Ja.

Intervjuer: Okey, hvilke følelser satt dere igjen med etter å ha spilt *Spent*?

Elev 2: Jeg ble litt sur. Altså, første gangen klarte jeg meg helt fint, da mistet jeg ikke jobben før sånn dagen før jeg liksom var ferdig, men sånn når jeg spilte det på nytt igjen så mistet jeg jobben sånn femte dagen eller noe sånt, og da ble det sånn, oi shit. Hvordan skal jeg klare meg nå liksom, så, ja.

Elev 1: Enig.

Elev 3: Jeg trodde jeg hadde gjort noe galt for jeg mistet den der jobben. Så det ble jo egentlig sånn, hva er det jeg har gjort nå liksom? Men, jeg vet ikke, det var litt sånn takknemlighet jeg sitter igjen med, da. Tenker at jeg er takknemlig for at jeg kan, bo som jeg gjør, i et land der det er sånn der sikkerhetsnett rundt meg. At jeg ikke kan havne i den situasjonen selv, liksom.

Intervjuer: Så det var noen av valgene som fikk dere til å føle på en spesiell måte?

Elev 2: Sånn som for eksempel når det var sånn der at ungene ble liksom mobbet fordi at han ikke hadde ordentlig skolemat eller ikke kunne kjøpe sant, da. Da var det litt sånn, litt sånn, du fikk jo litt sånn oi jeg ville ikke at ungene skal bli mobbet liksom. Men å gi liksom penger til mat og sånn når vi kan lage matpakker hjemme og sånn, det er liksom litt unødvendig, men samtidig ikke. Det var litt sånn, det var jo et valg som var sånn, oi nå må jeg liksom enten tenke på meg selv eller så må jeg tenke på ungen min, og så er det liksom, nå føles det kanskje litt egoist noen ganger etter noen valg, fordi at du må tenke litt på økonomien din i stedet for andre sine ting, sånn som når jeg krasjet med andre sin bil og liksom ville jeg skulle betale for det, så stakk jeg av istedenfor, sant. Så tenkte jeg litt sånn, øøø, stakkars person liksom, men tenk på meg selv og.

Elev 1: Og så når jeg sender vekk hunden ble jeg sånn skikkelig lei meg.

Elev 4: Det det var jo ingen gode valg der, nesten, og det var også utrolig dyrt å fortsette å ha hund, eller sånn, ja.

Elev 3: Nei, den tenkte jeg egentlig ikke så mye over. Jeg tenkte at den har det like bra for eksempel på en gård med andre hunder, og, ja. Nei, men jeg synes sånn, det med mamma, operasjon, var vanskelig. Det var sånn jeg burde jo visst hva, hvordan er forholdet mellom mor og meg. Har mor har vært tidligere rusmisbruker og mishandler? Det det vet ikke jeg, men, allikevel fortjener hun (kan ikke høre ordet). Så jeg tenkte da, men ja.

Intervjuer: Okey, hva var mest overraskende med *Spent*?

Elev 4: Hvor mye galt som kunne skje med den personen.

Elev 1: Mmm.

Elev 4: Det virker til og med litt urealistisk, hvor mye ting som kunne skje på sånn tre dager.

Elev 2: Men det var liksom litt sånn, dilemma så jeg aldri har liksom opplevd før.

Elev 1: Ja.

Elev 2: Noe som jeg aldri kunne tenkt meg, at det kunne bli et dilemma liksom, det var litt sånn.

Intervjuer: Som hva da?

Elev 2: For eksempel det med sykehuset og moren, sant. Hadde jeg fått det i virkeligheten så hadde jeg selvfølgelig gitt penger til mamma for at hun skulle operere, men det var liksom når jeg hadde såpass lite penger så var det liksom, så ble det jo et dilemma. Om jeg skulle klare å overleve resten av uken, eller om hun skulle klare å overleve liksom. Det, det er et dilemma jeg aldri kunne opplevd i, eller jeg kan jo selvfølgelig, det er da et dilemma jeg aldri kunne tenke meg å oppleve i virkeligheten liksom.

Elev 1: Jeg ble mest overrasket når jeg fant ut at, fordi jeg ikke betalte de 25 dollarene, så har jeg mest sannsynlig ødelagt hele livet til en dame og to unger. Det var liksom oi, shit.

Intervjuer: Ja, okay, hva synes dere om å spille spill i engelsktimen?

Elev 2: Gøy.

Elev 1: Ja. Mer sånn praktisk.

Intervjuer: Praktisk?

Elev 3: Ja, det er sånn naturfag, og med forsøk, så er engelsk med spill.

Elev 1: Ja.

Elev 2: Får litt sånn, det er sånn, sånn, folka som går på bygg sant, de må jo liksom bygge for å bli god på det, sant? Du får liksom sånn større innlegg, nei innblikk på det. Hvordan det er og ikke bare sitte og gjøre oppgaver til det. Det er liksom, du får egentlig ikke med hva du skriver, du skriver det som står og så tenker du ikke så masse mer over det.

Elev 1: Mmm, mer som permanent læring. Ikke bare inn det ene øret og ut det andre.

Intervjuer (til elev 2, 3, og 4): Enig, eller?

Elev 2, 3 og 4: Ja.

Intervjuer: Okey, synes dere at spill er et verktøy som får dere til å lære mer eller mindre?

Elev 1: Mer.

Elev 2: Mer, ja.

Intervjuer: Mer? Hvorfor?

Elev 4: I alle fall hvis du gjør det i tillegg.

Elev 1, 2 og 3: Ja.

Elev 4: Og så, ganske mye av min engelsk kommer jo fra at jeg har spilt spill siden jeg var liten av, og jeg måtte lære meg hva de forskjellige tingene var.

Elev 2: Ja, same.

Elev 3: Det spørs jo kanskje litt sånn hva spill. Vi prøvde jo ut sånn minecraft education men det var jo helt ut vinduet for min del. Det var, så det kommer litt an på, og så spørs det hvor ofte du gjør det og. Men jeg tror du lærer mye mer.

Elev 1: Jeg tenker liksom sånn at, sånn utdanning og sånn, må jo på en måte tilpasse seg til sånn verden nå, og folk liksom, også unger nå de spiller spill. Og det er liksom, du kan synes hva du vil om det, at det er dumt eller at det er bra liksom, men det kommer til å skje uansett liksom, så du må på en måte, må jo tilpasse for unger skal faktisk lære noe.

Elev 2: Ja, altså jeg har, jeg har jo faktisk kusiner som er fire år. Hun har sittet og sett, sett, på YouTube og spilt spill og sånn, sant. Hun kan jo, nesten mer engelsk enn meg nå. Altså, hun

er jo, hun er, foreldrene vil at hun skal begynne å se på spansk YouTube sånn at hun kan ha tre språk, liksom, til hun begynner på skolen. Men hun er veldig god i engelsk og det kommer fra at hun har sittet og sett på YouTube og lært seg ordene og sånn, og så har hun sittet og spilt spill, og da må hun lære seg hva de forskjellige tingene heter, og sånn på norsk, hva det egentlig er og sånn. Så jeg tror det er ganske lurt å jobbe med sånt og.

Elev 4: Så er det det med at masse spillsamfunn og nå er jo på engelsk, og skal man, skal møte noen eller snakke med noen, så, er jo mange, på en måte bruker engelsk da. Selv om ikke alle er fra England, eller så, eller, engelsk snakker med noen.

Intervjuer: Ja, lingua franca? Okey, så er dere positiv til mer spilling i engelsktimene fremover? **Alle elevene:** Ja.

Elev 3: Hva spill har du planlagt?

Intervjuer: Øøøø, jeg har nettopp fått vite at jeg blir her resten av året, så jeg vet ikke.

Elev 4: Så, etter jul?

Intervjuer: Hm?

Elev 4: Så etter jul og?

Intervjuer: Mmm.

Elev 4: Ah!

Intervjuer: Yes, men det var egentlig bare det, så tusen takk.

Intervju 4

Intervjuer: Spiller dere mye spill på fritiden, og om du spiller, hvilken typer spill?

Elev 1: Nei

Intervjuer: Nei.

Elev 2: Altså, hva skal det bety? Hvilke spill?

Intervjuer: Nei, altså, gaming-type spill.

Elev 2: Ah, gaming? Én type.

Intervjuer: Og det er?

Elev 2: I don't know... action?

Elev 3: Jeg spiller både sånn FPS-type, sånn Fortnite og sånt, og så spiller jeg også FIFA. Så sport er omtrent det eneste jeg spiller. Så NBA2K.

Intervjuer: Hva har dere lært om USA de siste ukene?

Elev 3: Først var det American Dream. Og så litt sånn om fattigdom i USA, da.

Elev 1: Vi har lært mye om hvordan det er å leve som fattig og se litt mer om hvordan den amerikanske drømmer er for dem i forhold til hvordan det er for dem som har mer.

Elev 2: Ja, jeg har lært at health care-en der borte er helt skrekkelig.

Intervjuer: Skrekkelig?

Elev 2: Ja.

Intervjuer: Okay, synes dere at det å spille *Spent* hjalp med å forstå om hvilke forhold noen familier lever under?

Alle elevene: Ja

Intervjuer: Hvordan?

Elev 1: Altså, vi fikk jo satt oss inn i situasjonen selv. Det hjalp jo veldig mye med å se hvordan, hva de forskjellige utgiftene er og ja, hvor mye de bruker på det. Hvor raskt det går tomt.

Elev 3: Og så måtte du ta valg som barnet ditt, hvor mye penger du skulle gi barnet ditt, og om du kunne la henne gå på sånne bursdagsbesøk eller noe sånt, uten å ha med gave eller å ikke gå i det hele tatt, siden du egentlig ikke har råd til noen gave.

Intervjuer: Nei.

Elev 3: Ja, det er jo, du, du, må ha sånn grenser for hvor mye du kan bruke.

Intervjuer (til elev 2): Synes du det var hjelpsomt? Eller mer forståelse?

Elev 2: Nei, jeg vet fra før av.

Intervjuer: Okay. Tror dere *Spent* gir et realistisk bilde av det å være fattig?

Elev 2: Nei.

Elev 1: Jeg tror det er mye mer, å betale for, sånne ting. At de bare viser oss noen ting. Men ja, på én måte et ganske realistisk syn på det.

Intervjuer (til elev 2): Okay, hvorfor nei?

Elev 2: Det er liksom, man trenger mat hver dag og den eneste gangen du kjøper mat, det skjer jo kun én gang. Og hvis du kjøper ett brød, for eksempel, da skjer det jo ingenting. Du dør ikke. Og hvis du kjøper hundre brød, da, som er hundre dollar, for eksempel, da skjer det heller ingenting. Så, ja, det er det. Det med matgreiene.

Intervjuer: Okay, så maten var det som gjorde det urealistisk?

Elev 2: Mmm.

Intervjuer: Okay.

Elev 3: Altså, hvis du handlet én sånn pakke med cereal, så trengte du ikke handle for resten av måneden, liksom. Det var jo.

Intervjuer: Men hva med de andre tingene, da?

Elev 3: Ja, det var jo sånne ting som kom opp som du fikk kanskje en liten småjobb, sånn femti dollar for å hjelpe en nabo flytte, sånn ting kan jo skje og sånn. Det er jo alltid det med alle de forskjellige greiene. De kostnadene som da, hva heter det? Forsikring, og bare, regninger og sånt for, du sånn, strømgjeld og så, jeg husker det var noe med vasken eller noe sånt. Det var en vask, så var det lekkasje eller ett eller annet.

Intervjuer: Okay, har holdningen deres til den amerikanske drømmer og fattigdom i USA endret seg siden vi begynte med dette opplegget?

Elev 1: Jeg har jo merket mye mer hvordan den har utviklet seg dem nå. Det virker jo som at den har liksom endret seg til å bli noe helt annet enn det den var for noen år siden. Og jeg har liksom tenkt det gamle [går ikke an å høre] at den er fortsatt der. At det handler om frihet og alt det der. Nå virker det litt mer som om det går på hvor mye penger du faktisk har.

Intervjuer: Ja?

Elev 3: Og jeg er ganske enige med det, elev 1.

Intervjuer: Hmm?

Elev 3: Ja, jeg er ganske enig. Jeg har ikke så veldig mye mer å si.

Intervjuer: Okay.

Intervjuer (til elev 2): Har du noe å si?

Elev 2: Nei.

Intervjuer: Nei, okay. Det at du må sette deg selv inn og spille som deg selv i *Spent*, hvordan påvirket det spilloplevelsen?

Elev 2: Jeg synes det var gøy, jeg.

Intervjuer: Du synes det var gøy?

Elev 2: Ja

Intervjuer: Ja, men det er jo bra.

Elev 3 (til elev 1): Ja, bare snakk først.

Elev 1: Jeg tror det er lettere å forstå siden, hvis du har en sånn jeg-situasjon, på en måte.

Intervjuer: Ja?

Elev 1: Jeg tror det gjorde det bedre. Hva skal jeg si? I egen situasjon at vi liksom var oss selv som valgte.

Elev 3: Mhm, Sånn at man må ta egne valg så er det liksom, det er veldig selvstendig hvordan det kommer til å gå med deg. Om hva dine valg er. Hva du velger å gjøre, da, sånn.

Intervjuer: Okay, hvilke følelser satt dere igjen med, eller hadde dere, mens dere spilte?

Elev 3: Egentlig at vi bor i Norge. At vi er heldige at vi bor i Norge i forhold til et sånt system der. Siden her er det jo mye lettere å komme seg tilbake på føttene igjen, da. Jobb er mye lettere, du kan holde en jobb mye lettere, sant. Mye bedre rettigheter og sånt her i Norge.

Elev 1: Mye lettere å få hjelp, kanskje.

Intervjuer: Okay.

Elev 3: Med NAV og sånt.

Intervjuer: Men når dere liksom spilte var det noe spesielt dere satt og følte mens dere spilte, liksom?

Elev 3: Det var ganske synd på datteren, da, sånn, jeg kan ikke ødelegge denne grisen og, sånt ja.

Intervjuer: Hva var mest overraskende med spillet, da?

Elev 2: Du blir tatt av politiet.

Intervjuer: Ble du tatt av politiet?

Elev 2: Ja! Det der bilopplegget. Jeg trodde jeg kunne slippe unna. Men nei, det kom politiet bak meg dagen etterpå. Tar vekk hele bilen. Så plutselig må betale noe som jeg ikke kan betale i det hele tatt.

Intervjuer (til elev 1 og 3): Var det noe dere synes var overraskende?

Elev 1: Det var egentlig bare hvor lett det er å bruke opp penger og prioritere hva du faktisk må ha og hva som er bare, ja, kan droppes. Som ikke føles så veldig bra å droppe. Som for eksempel bursdagsgave til, ja.

Intervjuer: Okey, likte dere å spille spill i engelsktimen? Eller, hva synes dere om å spille spill i engelsktimene?

Elev 1: Jeg synes det var en veldig fin måte å lære på, å se hvordan det er.

Elev 3: Det var på en annerledes måte, da. Så det er litt bedre enn å lese, da. Du får litt mer innlevelse. Du bli jo veldig mye oppfordret til å lese akkurat som står der og så får du ikke til å gjøre det. Det var litt mer interessant, og, sikkert for noen.

Intervjuer: At du er en del av lesingen, liksom?

Elev 3: Ja.

Intervjuer: Okey, synes dere at spill er et verktøy som får dere til å lære mer eller mindre?

Elev 3: Mer.

Elev 2: Mer.

Elev 1: Ja.

Intervjuer: Hvorfor?

Elev 1: Nei, du lever litt mer i det istedenfor å bare lese om det. Så det er lettere å forstå, kanskje.

Elev 3: Lettere å huske også.

Intervjuer: Det var egentlig det. Noe mer dere ønsker å si?

Elev 3: Nei.

Intervjuer: Nei.

