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# MASTEROPPGÅVE

## «Never Alone» in the EFL Classroom

Exploring the potential of the video game «Never Alone - Kisima Injitchuᅇa» in developing intercultural competence in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.

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1. juni 2022

*"I think everyone learned something, they're just not aware of it."*

– C6

## Abstract in Norwegian

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Videospel i undervisninga er på agendaen. Narrative videospel kan vere gode historieformidlarar og inviterer *gameren* med på ei interaktiv oppleving. Dei siste åra har det dukka opp fleire videospel i sjangeren *world games*: videospel som formidlar urfolkskultur til heile verda. *Never Alone - Kisima Inŋitchuŋa* vart i 2014 lansert som eit av dei første i denne sjangeren og gir eit autentisk og rikt innblikk i Iñupiaqfolket sin kultur, verdssyn og tradisjonar.

Denne studien ønsker å undersøke kva potensiale videospel har for å fremje interkulturell kompetanse blant elevar på vidaregåande skule innanfor rammene for Engelsk fellesfag. Studien er ei aksjonsforskningsstudie basert på kvalitative metodar og med mål om å formidle opplevinga læraren og elevane har knytt til eit undervisningsopplegg med utgangspunkt i *Never Alone*. Engasjement, læringsutbytte og praktiske utfordringar knytt til planlegging av spelbasert undervisning står sentralt.

Studien viser at videospel har stort potensiale knytt til å utvikle elevar sin interkulturelle kompetanse. Det å implementere videospel i undervisninga kan i seg sjølv danne utgangspunkt rundt interkulturell kompetanse og kommunikasjon i lys av den interkulturelle situasjonen alle undervisningstimar er grunna generasjonsskilnadar mellom lærar og elevar. Vidare legg videospel til rette for å utvikle og øve på ferdigheiter som samarbeid, kommunikasjon og problemløysing. Vidare så er videospel som *Never Alone* eller tilsvarende gode formidlarar av kultur, og vekker engasjement og interesse hos mange elevar. Samstundes er det krevjande å planleggje spelbasert læring. Læraren erfarer at det er tidkrevjande og vanskeleg å finne svar på utfordringar som oppstår undervegs. Det er behov for meir kompetanseutvikling innan spelbasert læring og meir tilgjengeleg utstyr og videospel på skular. Dersom potensialet i spelbasert læring knytt til interkulturell kompetanse skal kunne utnyttast, må det også tilgjengeleggjerast i større grad for lærarar. Funna i studien tyder også på at ein må tenkje nytt når ein skal vurdere elevane sine interkulturelle ferdigheiter.

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Thank you all!

Cecilie, May 2022

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

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When I decided on focusing my master's thesis on game-based learning, I must admit that it felt like I had tricked the system. Video games are fun so doing research and writing a master's thesis on this topic should be somewhat amusing too, right? At the same time, I was not completely sure if it was permitted to pick a fun topic. Fun does not exactly sound like schoolwork, nor appropriate for a master's thesis. When I told friends, colleagues, and family about my plans I got similar responses. "Oh, that sounds like fun. Can you really do that?"

This attitude or belief which made me question the appropriateness of doing research on game-based learning has made me reflect on what learning is and what it should be. In a discussion about game-based learning a colleague once asked me "But why does school have to be fun?". She was concerned that students would get expectations of constantly being entertained in all classes if they were allowed to play video games in some classes, and that this would corrupt the focus on learning. In a different setting, a student told me that "You can't learn anything from playing video games. It is fun, but I don't think I can learn anything useful!" This student initially argued that we should play video games in school more often, however he had to admit that this was mainly because it would make his school day more enjoyable. Furthermore, he did believe that you could learn and practice new skills, as well as gaining knowledge through playing video games, however not school-appropriate skills and knowledge. I find it both interesting and slightly worrying that both students and teachers seem to think that fun and education do not go together.

I do not believe that school must be fun at all times. That would be an impossible task considering what is regarded as fun depends on personal preferences. After all, despite the general opinion, I do have students who have made it clear to me that they do not like playing video games. However, I do believe that students learn better if they are engaged and doing something fun is one approach to engaging the students.

## 1.1 Aim and Scope

In this thesis, I am looking to explore the potential of game-based learning. More specifically, I aim to explore what potential a video game has with regards to developing high school student's intercultural competence in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. In order to do so, I have conducted an action research study with a phenomenological perspective. The findings focus on the experiences of the teacher and the students and aim to find the essence of these experiences. The participants in this study are two EFL-classes of 1<sup>st</sup> year high school students in vocational study programs. The video game that this study is based on is *Never Alone – Kisima Injitchuŋa* which is developed by Upper One Games and E-Line Media.

While this study first and foremost is within the field of information and communications technologies (ICT) in education, it is also an EFL didactical study. However, the results and conclusions in this study may also be relevant to other subjects where developing intercultural competence is central, such as social studies and religion.

## 1.2 Background and Rationale for Study

“Pleasure and learning: For most people these two don't seem to go together. But that is a mistruth that we have picked up at school, where we have been taught that pleasure is fun and learning is work, and, thus, that work is not fun” (Gee, 2007a, p. 10). With this, Gee exposes some of my own beliefs and beliefs that I have experienced both from fellow teachers, students as well as other acquaintances. Perhaps this needs to change?

Studies show that an increasing number of Norwegian teenagers are bored in school (Bakken, 2021). While some might brush this off as complaining from spoiled generations, others say we must take this seriously. The worry is of course an increase in dropouts, and the negative consequences that is associated with this for both the individuals and society. Studies show that students in vocational study programs are especially at risk of dropping out (SSB, 2021). Prensky (Prensky & Gee, 2006, p. 15)

claims that students are bored in school because the world is changing, and schools are not keeping up.

One of the main objectives in education is to prepare students for the future (The Education Act, 1998, §1-1). This is becoming increasingly difficult because of the rapid development and changes in the world. We simply do not know what the future will look like, and it is seemingly not as distant as it used to be. What used to be considered important skills and knowledge are not as important any more due to technology. The Minister of Education, Brenna, stated in 2022 that “Today, we are very focused on that which is measurable, but not all that counts in school can be measured” (Regjeringen, 2022, own translation). Further, she says that the education in Norwegian schools should be more practical and varied in order to offer the students better learning and thrive more (Regjeringen, 2022). In other words, there is a need for change: which competences should we learn in school, how do we assess these competences, and what we believe school is supposed to be like.

Studies keep reporting that Norwegian youth spend a lot of their spare time playing video games (Medietilsynet, 2020; Bakken, 2021). At the same time, they spend less and less time, if any, reading (Bakken, 2021). The Norwegian government shows that they take youth culture and gaming seriously. In 2019 the Ministry of Culture published a strategy for 2020-2022 with the intent to strengthen video games as cultural expressions and leisure activity, as well as the game developing industry (Ministry of Culture, 2019). This strategy stipulates including video games in the national library services, with the goal to make video games accessible for everyone. This report also implies that with a reformed national curriculum, video games will have a more natural role in Norwegian schools.

With the reformed Norwegian national curriculum of 2020, *the Knowledge Promotion* LK20, the EFL-subject for vocational students went through several radical changes. One of the reasons was to make the EFL-subject more relevant for the vocational students and their future occupation. Furthermore, LK20 mentions video games in the EFL-curriculum as relevant cultural artefacts (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019a). LK20 operates with a broad definition of text, which is evident in the EFL-

curriculum. First, it is clearly stated in the core elements: “The texts can contain writing, pictures, audio, drawings, graphs, numbers and other forms of expression that are combined to enhance and present a message” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019b). Thus, a text can have many shapes and forms, including multimodality. This opens to introducing a wide range of cultural artefacts in the classroom, and to use texts that the students are familiar with and find relevant.

Despite this, I find that there are still expectations that all high school students must read a novel as part of their mandatory EFL-course. This is often used as approach to the topic of indigenous peoples or other topics related to intercultural competence. I consider this a problem based on my own experiences with assigning such a task to my own EFL students in the past. Some students have told me explicitly that they do not like reading. They find it boring and are not motivated to read. More importantly, there are students who are unable to read a novel. Attempts to make the task more manageable by offering audio books or easier reads are seldom received positively by the students in question. It is nothing but yet another reminder of inadequate abilities.

I find it difficult to argue why the EFL-students in vocational study programs must read novels as part of their EFL-course. Still, I have experienced that many EFL- teachers keep this tradition. I have discussed it with colleagues in my workplace, and I have seen discussions in social media channels for EFL-teachers in Norway. Common arguments includes that teachers like working with literature and have an approach they are happy with, a belief that reading is good for the students whether they like it or not, or that teachers do not know how to use other types of texts as approach in their lessons. To keep a tradition which means giving students a task they have little or no prerequisites to succeed in is a problem that must be addressed. I would like to suggest using video games instead of reading a novel as one solution.

### 1.3 Video Games

Before I go any further it is necessary to discuss what a video game is. I believe most people have heard about video games and have some sort of a relationship to them. However, to define what a video game is proves to be a challenge. Thus, I will offer

some definitions before I narrow down what is meant by video game in this thesis.

A video game is a cultural artefact and a text of multimodal character. They usually have both a visual and an auditive trait, however, can be distinguished from movies due to the interactive trait. A video game will not progress unless the player interacts and engages in some form. A video game will not leave its main protagonist – you – behind. However, calling all movies and books non-active and all video games multimodal are simplifications that should be noted. There are many examples of books that are interactive or movies that have interactive elements. There are also examples of video games that do not fit in the multimodal category, where the interaction consists solely of reading text and writing commands. These gray areas prove the task of defining video games difficult. Nonetheless, for the purpose of this thesis, I find it beneficial to refer to video games as multimodal, interactive texts.

Aarseth calls video games *ergodic literature* (1997). Ergodic can be translated to “work way” and is usually used in the context of mathematical systems or processes. With regards to literature, ergodic refers to the work the gamer needs to do for the narrative to progress. These actions are more purposeful and directly linked to the plot itself, rather than the action of reading text on a screen or a page. Through this definition, Aarseth (1997) points at how video games and literature are closely related, and at the same time emphasizes the importance of interactivity for a text to be considered a video game.

For the purpose of this thesis, I will consider video games as digital multimodal texts which tells a narrative that is driven by the gamer through interactions, and where the choices the gamer makes will have consequences.

## 1.4 Never Alone – Kisima Inŋitchuŋa

*Never Alone - Kisima Inŋitchuŋa* represents a newer genre of video games referred to as *world games*; “games that bring carefully selected stories from indigenous cultures from around the planet to life in compelling, innovative ways that are accessible and entertaining for global 21st century audiences» (Never Alone, n.d.). *Never Alone* was developed by the older generations in the Iñupiat tribe, for the younger tribe

members. Colleps (2016) explains that the adult tribe members were concerned with the increasing gap between the older and the younger generations. The younger tribe members showed little interest in Iñupiat traditions, culture, and language. They were more interested in video games, social media, and general western digital and popular culture. “[T]heir culture and language were melting away like glaciers” (Colleps, 2016, p. 140). However, instead of viewing video games as a threat to their culture and heritage, they decided to take advantage of the potential video games have as cultural expression and a storyteller; a progressive approach to the challenges associated with digital development.

In *Never Alone* you are invited to experience the story about Nuna and the fox who are searching for the source of a blizzard. Nuna is a young Iñupiat girl, a member of a native community in Alaska. The story is based on an old Iñupiat legend and includes elements from Iñupiat folklore. The main protagonists have a close relationship and are both equals and dependent on each other. Nuna has certain abilities the fox does not have, such as the ability to throw a *bola*, a traditional Iñupiat weapon. The fox, on the other hand has other abilities, such as the ability to contact spirit helpers and materialize them. Thus, it is impossible for either of them to go on this journey without the other, they are interdependent.

As you progress in the game, small videos called *cultural insights* unlock. The cultural insights are small stories who serve a variety of purposes. Some explain game elements and others are pure anecdotes. There are also stories that offer an insight into the Iñupiat religious beliefs and world perspective through addressing the spirit helpers, afterlife or the symbiosis between humans, animals, nature, and spirits. In doing so, the cultural insights add a new dimension to the video game through linking it to the Iñupiat life and perspective on the world and existence.

*Never Alone* is a video game well suited to learn about a culture that is different from the Norwegian and western culture. Moreover, the story of how *Never Alone* came to be is an inspirational example of intercultural communication between generations within a society.

## 1.5 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the thesis that actualizes the topic, explains the background for the study, and narrows down the field of interest. Most importantly, chapter 1 identifies the problem which defines the first step in the action research study.

In Chapter 2, the overarching and subordinate research questions are defined, explained, and justified based on the field of interest. Chapter 3 offers an overview on previous research. The theoretical framework supporting the discussion of the findings of this study is presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 presents the research design and limitations, methods used for collecting data, how the data was managed and analyzed. Furthermore, the phenomenological perspective on philosophy of science in this study is discussed, as well as the validity and reliability of this study. The ethical formalities and considerations are presented and discussed. In Chapter 6 the findings are presented, and Chapter 7 discusses them based on previous research and relevant theory. Finally, Chapter 8 summarizes and concludes the study, and provides answers to the research questions. Furthermore, implications for future didactical practices discussed, and suggestions for further research proposed.

## 1.6 Disclaimer

This study does not intend to make claims whether video games are better for learning than other cultural artefacts or approaches. This study is merely interested in exploring which potential video games have, and to discuss whether this can be a more beneficial approach in certain contexts. Based on the findings I aim to make suggestions for whether teachers might consider using game-based learning and in which contexts this might be worth considering.

This thesis focuses on one specific video game, *Never Alone - Kisima Injitchuṅa*, and what student can learn about a specific culture that is different from their own through playing this video game. Thus, it does not attempt to claim anything general



about the learning potential in all video games, merely identify and discuss the potential of developing intercultural competence through using *Never Alone* in the classroom.

In the same way as there are many books and movies that are suitable for teaching, there are also many that are not. Of those that are suitable for teaching, some might be relevant for teaching one specific subject only, while others might be relevant for interdisciplinary teaching. The same applies to video games as well. This means that the result of this study can only truly say something about *Never Alone*. However, the results can imply the potential of other comparable video games in teaching intercultural competence and other closely related topics.

## Chapter 2: Research Questions

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The introduction identifies a problem that is necessary to address: EFL-students are being asked to read novels as part of an approach to develop intercultural competence, even though many of the students are not able or willing to do so. As I have implied, one solution is to use video games as an alternative approach in EFL while teaching topics, such as indigenous peoples, which typically involves reading a novel. To determine if this is a beneficial approach, I have formulated the following overarching research question:

*What potential do video games have in developing high school students' intercultural competence in the EFL classroom?*

To learn about indigenous peoples is first and foremost intended to develop the students' intercultural competence (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019b). Therefore, I have chosen to use this term in the overarching research question rather than indigenous peoples. Intercultural competence covers many of the core values in *the Knowledge Promotion (LK20)* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017) and is not exclusively relevant to the EFL-subject. The conclusion of this study may, as a result, prove relevant to other subjects as well as EFL.

Through exploring what potential video games might have with regards to developing intercultural competence, one can determine whether it is an approach that should be considered in the EFL classroom. This research allows for the consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of having high school students reading a novel to playing a video game while teaching and learning about indigenous peoples.

The video game selected as the cultural artefact of exploration in this study is *Never Alone - Kisima Injitchuŋa*. This video game has been chosen because it narrates an Iñupiaq story from an Iñupiaq perspective in an authentic and respectful way, similarly to novels that are typically selected for EFL-students to read. To narrow down the scope in this study, I have formulated three subordinate research questions that

focuses specifically on *Never Alone*.

- R1: How does the teacher experience using the video game *Never Alone* as an approach to the topic of *indigenous peoples* in the EFL classroom?
- R2: What is the perceived learning outcome with regards to the students' intercultural competences through using the video game *Never Alone* in the EFL-classroom?
- R3: How do the students experience using the video game *Never Alone* as an approach to the topic of *indigenous peoples* in the EFL classroom?

The subordinate research questions all explore the potential of using the video game *Never Alone* from different angles: R1 from the teacher's perspective with regards to the overall experience, R2 specifically with regards to the teacher's assessment of the EFL-students' learning outcome, and R3 from the student's perspective. All three angles are important to uncover to determine whether using video games is beneficial. Naturally, this study can only express something specifically about the video game *Never Alone*, however, I believe that the findings will be mostly transferable to other video games with similar qualities.

## Chapter 3: Previous Research

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Video games have had, and in some circles might still have, a bad reputation for conveying, promoting and glorifying violence to children and adolescents, and a number of studies indicated that video games could cause violent behavior (Greitemeyer & Mügge, 2014; Meyers, 2002). However, the last decade or so, the focus has gradually shifted over to what potential video games have and how this can be utilized in educational contexts. In this chapter I present a selection of research related to video games and learning and video games and teaching, as well as some research based on the video game in focus in this study, *Never Alone - Kisima Injitchuḡa*.

### Video Games in an Educational Context

In recent years, a large number of studies have been conducted with the aim to identify the potential effect video games have on students' learning outcomes in an educational context. A positive effect on learning outcome due to increased motivation and engagement seems to be a common denominator of significance (Tsai & Tsai, 2020; Wang et al., 2022). A meta-analysis conducted by Bai et al. (2020) on gamification for improved learning outcome points at video games' ability to foster enthusiasm, provide feedback, and fulfill the student's need for recognition as the main reason for increased motivation and learning performance.

### Video Games and EFL

There are many studies, both national and international, which show playing video games in one's spare time can have a positive effect on one's English language proficiency (Brevik, 2016; Brevik et al., 2016; Ebrahimzadeh, 2017; Sundqvist, 2019; Uuskoski, 2011). The studies indicate that this is due to the necessity to communicate in English to play multiplayer games and to take part in gaming communities. This also indicates that video games provide experiences which are engaging and motivating enough for children and young adults to learn and develop their English language skills.

In fact, Brevik et al. (2016) found a group of Norwegian EFL-students who did not only hold a high proficiency in the English language, but they were also better readers in EFL than in their native language. Some of these students were such poor readers in their native language that they were considered at risk of dropping out of school. The reason for this phenomenon is reportedly the students' interest in online activities, such as playing video games, indicating how important interest and motivation is for learning (Brevik, 2016).

### Video Games and Intercultural Competence

Some studies also show a positive effect with regards to video games' learning potential in developing and practicing intercultural competence. Bachen et al. (2012) found that a simulation game which lets the player experience the lives of someone else, had a positive effect on students' global empathy and an increased interest in global civic learning. Molnes (2019) explored in their master's study whether using the video game *Gone Home* can be used in EFL-class as an approach to promote building with similar results. The findings indicated that video games are suitable for developing sympathy and empathy for people in a situation one does not necessarily relate to on a personal level. Furthermore, Barr (2017) found in his study on undergraduate students that video games are helpful for improving communication skills, resourcefulness, and adaptability; these skills are relevant for intercultural competence (see 4.2). However, the students suggested the collaborative environment the video game was being played as equally important as the video game itself.

### Video Games in Norwegian Classrooms

However, there are indications that Norwegian teachers are reluctant to utilizing the potential in video games. Brooks et al. (2019) conducted a study on teachers in Norway, Denmark, and Iceland to uncover what prevents them from using game-based learning in the classroom. The teachers reported, among other things, that they did not have sufficient information and knowledge about game-based learning. Technical obstacles were reported as the most common hurdle to be encountered while attempting a game-based approach. Nousiainen et al. (2018) found in their study that

teachers need pedagogical, technological, and creative competencies to successfully integrate game-based approaches in one's classroom. Thus, education is key if one is to expect teachers to utilize the potentials in game-based teaching.

### Student's Attitudes Towards Game-Based Learning

Despite research indicating video games can have a positive effect on students' learning in several ways, not all students are convinced. Sigurðardóttir (2016) found in her study that even though most of the students appreciate game-based learning, some of the students questioned the seriousness and usefulness of playing video games in their lessons. Moreover, Brevik (2016) found in her study that the EFL-students did not see the educational value of their informal EFL-learning they gained through gaming. This was due to the difference between the English language utilized while gaming and the English language which was normally presented and used in the EFL classroom. Thus, some of the students, although they held a high proficiency in the English language, did not engage in classroom activities. They did not think that their skills had any value in the classroom context.

### Research involving the Video Game *Never Alone* - *Kisima Injitchuḡa*

Finally, I would like to present some studies which have been conducted on *Never Alone* and which I find relevant to understand the depth of the potential of this video game with regards to cultural studies. After analyzing the ethnographic significance of *Never Alone*, Williams (2018) concluded that the video game is an important cultural artefact both within cultural and indigenous media studies. *Never Alone*, Williams claims, allows the Iñupiaq to self-represent and position themselves in the global community as well as within the Iñupiaq community. After a similar analysis focusing on indigenous well-being, Stone (2018) argues that:

*“Kisima Injitchuḡa represents a significant attempt to engage Iñupiat young people, Alaskans, and the broader game-playing community in a form of collective cultural well-being that exceeds any individual player. Within the Iñupiaq community Kisima Injitchuḡa supports the transmission of culture and language from one generation to the next, while outside of the Iñupiaq community Kisima Injitchuḡa promotes*

intercultural communication and appreciation for Iñupiaq culture. In so doing, the game responds to a series of longstanding historical traumas by engaging players in Iñupiat stories of resilience in the face of adversity.”

(Stone, 2018, p. 115)

Furthermore, in their master’s thesis, Lohne (2020) studied the verbal expression of religion in *Never Alone*. They argue that the Iñupiaq religion, traditions and values have been made accessible to the global community in an including manner through this video game and contribute to indigenous empowerment.

## Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

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In this chapter I will briefly present theory, including governing documents, that is relevant to discuss the findings of my study. First, I will say something about 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, followed by a brief review of intercultural competence in the context of the Norwegian curriculum. Finally, some perspectives and notions on game-based teaching will be presented.

### 4.1 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and Digital Literacies

Due to easy access to information, the transmission model of knowledge acquisition is no longer relevant. Rote learning is rather pointless if you have access to the information. What you need to know is how to find the information you need, how to evaluate the quality of the information and what to do with the information you are presented with. 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills are usually described as complex teaching, learning, and communication skills (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012). Thus, there is no point in uploading information into student's brains and store it there. We have computers for that. Despite this, Saavedra and Opfer (2012) argue that the transmission model is dominant in education. This statement was made back in 2012, however, in my experience I believe this to still be true to some degree within Norwegian schools in 2022. In particular with regards to learning and assessment methods.

The objectives clause in the Norwegian Education Act states that "Education and training in schools and training establishments must, in collaboration and agreement with the home, open doors to the world and the future and give the pupils and apprentices historical and cultural insight and anchorage" (The Education Act, 1998, §1-1, own translation). The need for a reformed national curriculum in Norway was partly due to the need for a curriculum with a clear focus on 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills (NOU 2014:7, p. 11). In this report they emphasize the importance of the students developing the ability to take personal, emotional, and social responsibility, as well as the ability to make ethical evaluations and considerations (NOU 2014:7, p. 127).



Furthermore, the report identifies several competences, including communication and cooperation, and intercultural competence, as interdisciplinary competences that should be implemented in the reformed curriculum. The result of this reform was implemented in 2020 with LK20.

## 4.2 Intercultural Competence

A key concept in this thesis is *intercultural competence*, and a common understanding of what this refers to needs to be established. For the purpose of this thesis, I find it beneficial to use a broad definition of the term *culture*: any group where the members share several aspects, such as material, social and subjective resources that has some degree of internal heterogeneity (Barrett et al., 2018a, p. 30). This definition includes groups with shared native language, nationality, and customs, as well as groups defined by for example generation and interests. Based on this, *intercultural* refers to interactions between two or more groups who identify themselves as different with regards to one or more of these aspects.

*The Knowledge Promotion* (LK20) states that “Competence is the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills to master challenges and solve tasks in familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations. Competence includes understanding and the ability to reflect and think critically” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 13). Thus, *intercultural competence* should in this thesis be understood as the ability to acquire and apply skills and knowledge to master interactions between two or more groups who identify themselves as different, including the ability to reflect and think critically on these interactions.

### Intercultural Competence in the Curriculum

The objectives clause in the Norwegian Education Act states that “Education and training must provide insight into cultural diversity and show respect for the individual's convictions. They are to promote democracy, equality and scientific thinking” (The Education Act, 1998, §1-1). Furthermore, the core values in LK20 reflects the importance of intercultural competence in education (for example identity

and cultural diversity; critical thinking and ethical awareness; and democracy and participation) (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). Even though these core values are overarching and interdisciplinary, EFL has a special responsibility in developing and practicing intercultural competence. The most obvious contribution is that through learning the English language, the students will be able to communicate and participate in the global community. However, the mandate of EFL goes further than that: “The subject shall develop the pupils’ understanding that their views of the world are culture-dependent” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019c).

The EFL-curriculum focuses especially on indigenous peoples in English speaking countries, which offers a historical context that can help understanding the western society, and the perspectives within different groups and cultures. Furthermore, the core elements in the EFL-curriculum suggests that using English texts (broad definition) is a beneficial approach to develop the students’ intercultural competence and gain “insight into ways of living, ways of thinking and traditions of indigenous peoples” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019b).

### Intercultural Competence in the EFL Classroom

As the EFL-curriculum suggests, using different types of texts are common approaches when teaching about indigenous peoples. In my school there is a long tradition of having the students read a novel that offers an authentic perspective on life as a member of an indigenous group, sometimes in combination with watching a movie with a similar perspective. This approach, or similar, is also suggested by the EFL textbooks we currently use thus it is not unlikely this is a common approach in many high schools across Norway.

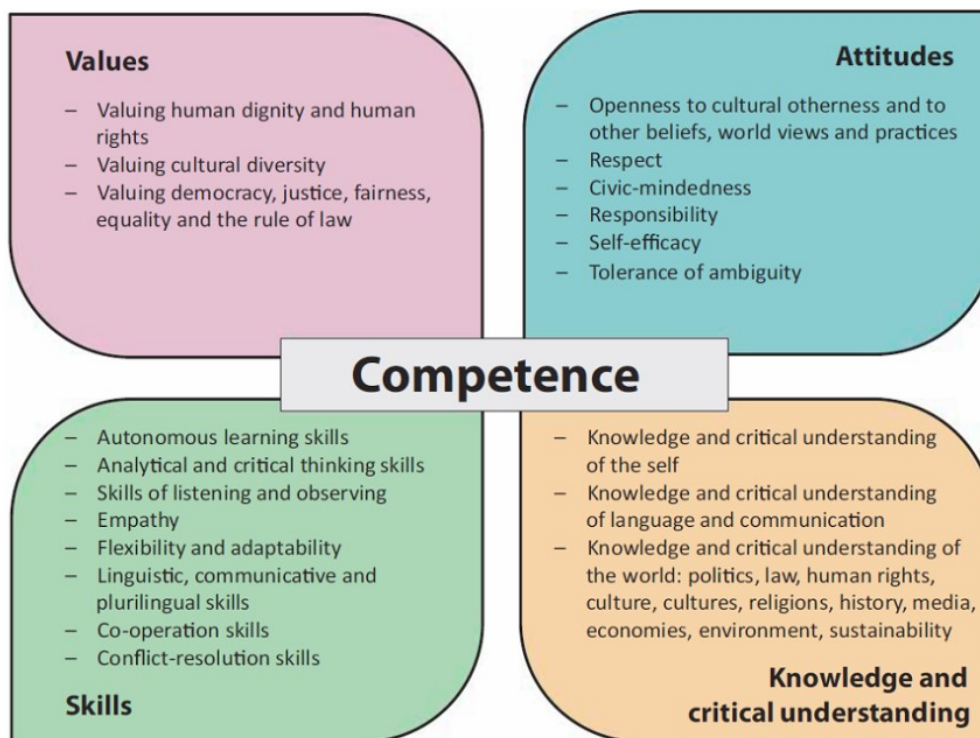
Murray (2022) stresses the importance of reflecting and relating what they learn to their own lives in developing intercultural competence. To do so, one needs to offer the students an outsider’s perspective on their own culture, which Murray (2022) suggests one can achieve through literature. Furthermore, Murray (2022) emphasizes the importance of authentic texts. The learning resources should offer the students “engagement with minority perspectives in texts created by authors from the minority

group”, where indigenous peoples tell their own stories (Murray, 2022). Literature is often seen as especially beneficial to develop intercultural competence due to the reader’s internalization of the story (Bland, 2020; Murray, 2022). Bland explains this as “While reading and listening to a story, the generation of mental imagery is important for intercultural learning, for when your experience of narrative is embodied, our empathy can be ignited” (2020, p. 73).

Dypedahl (2020, p. 61) divides the approaches of teaching culture into the *culture-specific* approach and the *culture-general* approach. The *culture-specific* approach focuses on learning about a different culture and comparing it to one’s own culture, which has been the leading approach within EFL traditions. The *culture-general* approach, however, focuses on developing knowledge and understanding with regards to how to interact with and understand other cultures in general, thus coincides well with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills. *Culture-specific* competences are important to develop cultural empathy and is often the path to developing *culture-general* competences. As Murray (2022), Dypedahl (2020, p. 65) suggests using authentic learning materials, cultural artefacts that are not intended specifically for the classroom, however suitable for learning, for *culture-specific* learning. This because authentic learning materials tend to seem more relevant to the EFL-students as well as accurately and respectfully displaying the culture in question. However, it is necessary to transfer the *culture-specific* competence to a *culture-general* level to reach the full potential of intercultural competence.

### The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

The Council of Europe (CoE) has developed a reference framework (Figure 4.1) of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) with the intent to assist educators in Europe develop and assess their student’s democratic and intercultural competences which, in turn, will support the development of tolerant and open multicultural societies (Barrett et al., 2018a). The framework includes a model which identifies 20 different competences, divided into four groups, required for an individual to be considered interculturally competent. Barrett et al (2018a, p. 33) points out that all the competences are equally important and many of them overlap to some degree.



*Figure 4.1: CoE's model of the 20 competences required for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue (Barrett et al., 2018a, p. 38).*

Interculturally competent behavior is displayed through “the application of these competences in a coordinated, adaptive and dynamic manner to concrete situations” (Barrett et al., 2018a, p. 33). The CDC framework offers several descriptors that help identify observable behaviors (i.e., written, or verbal statements) linked to each of these competences, as a tool to assess the students’ level of proficiency (Barrett et al., 2018b).

Thus, this model can function as a guideline both with regards to planning lessons where the aim is to develop and practice intercultural competence, and for assessing the students’ displays of intercultural competence. While there is no point in trying to include as many of the competences as possible into one lesson, one should keep in mind that it will be most beneficial to balance the four groups as opposed to focusing on only one or two of them.

With regards to values, the CDC framework emphasizes that these competences cannot be viewed in the same way as one normally sees competence (Barrett et al., 2018b). A person’s values are not something that can be gained or developed through

a lesson. Our values are so complex and so embedded in who we are and our world view and would hardly be affected much from a simple lesson. The same is partly true about attitudes, however attitudes are more open for being adjusted or changed than values. Nonetheless, the focus in lessons with the aim to develop and practice intercultural competence should be to allow the students to show their attitudes and values and have them reflect over them.

### 4.3 Game-Based Learning

Previous research has established that one can learn many different types of competences through playing video games. In this section I will present some theories relevant to discuss how learning through video games work.

Dewey (1998) believed that one could best learn through experience and criticized traditional education for not offering students any relevant experiences. Learning is only meaningful if you experience what you are learning (Dewey, 1998). Thus, education should be based on hands on experiences, interactivity and learning through experiences. The teacher's role is to be a guide, set up the activities, monitor the growth and lead the students through the experience in a way that allows growth and development (Dewey, 1998). Skaug et al. (2020) argues that such experiences can be provided through video games.

Video games are good for learning because of their ability to keep your attention and interest, and to actively engage you. Video games are designed to keep you in what Csikszentmihalyi (2002) refers to as the flow state. This means that as the gamer learns and masters the game, the difficulty level will increase, thus constantly keeping the game challenging, but not too hard. Being in the flow state means to be concentrated and completely absorbed in an activity, and, most importantly, in a state of happiness. Because of this, video games can be especially effective with students who have difficulties concentrating in traditional classroom activities (Harvaninen et al., 2015, p. 66). Another reason why video games are good for learning is the feeling of mastery one gets through «leveling up» (Prensky & Gee, 2006, p. 59). To level up means to reach a new level in the video game, and more importantly that you have learned, you

have developed, and you have accomplished. When you level up you do because you have earned it, and video games are designed to teach you how to achieve your goals. Through constant feedback and positive reinforcement, the gamer can easily see their own progress and learning curve, which in turns builds confidence.

### Learning Intercultural Competences through Video Games

Gee points out several aspects with educational value that applies to most good video games, even outside of an educational context. Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. (2012, p. 238-239) sums Gee's points up as following: 1. Video games are *semiotic domains*, meaning they contain a lot of symbolism and semiotics which gamer learns to understand navigate through. 2. Video games require the gamer to take on a different *identity* that they connect with. The gamer gets encouraged to identify with the avatar and experience something through a different perspective than their own. 3. Video games invites to *situated learning* where the gamer learns about a domain from the inside and understands the complexity of the domain. 4. *Telling and doing*. "[G]ames are virtual worlds with meaningful, concrete, and rich audiovisual learning experiences rather than abstract bits of concepts put together in a textbook" (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2012, p. 238). Video games allows to practice newly gained competences in a seemingly relevant context. Furthermore, these competences are often transferrable to other, real-life contexts. 5. Video games represent *cultural models* and introduce the gamer to experience worlds from different perspectives. Note that all of these aspects of educational value correlate with many of the competences presented in the CDC framework presented in section 4.2.

Gee argues that one can learn how to «experience (see and act on) the world in a new way» (2007b, p. 38) through playing video games critically. To play a video game critically implies that the gamer understands and reflects on the context encountered and consciously makes decisions on how to interact in a beneficial manner to achieve set goal. Good video games will encourage reflection, however, as Gee notes, this encouragement might as well come from outside the video game (2007b, p. 41). "Video games recruit identities and encourage identity work and reflection on identities in clear and powerful ways" (2007b, p. 46). The way a gamer identifies with

the avatar it controls is more powerful and on a deeper level than identification through movies and books because the relationship with the character is both active and reflexive. Even though Gee's focus is on what video games can teach educators about learning, many of his arguments can also be seen as reasons why video games. Gee also points out the importance of practicing the skills one develops in school (2007b, p. 65). In fact, most video games force you to practice your newly developed skills before you are allowed to move on to the next challenge. "Passive learning – rather than active, critical learning – will not lead to much power and empowerment in the contemporary world" (p. 66).

#### 4.4 Game-Based Teaching

Prensky uses the term *complex video games* (Prensky & Gee, 2006, p. 58). These are video games that require a variety of skills, strategies, and competences to master, and often requires that the gamer takes on an alternate identity, cooperate with others and commit to playing for a longer period of time. Gee (2007a) prefers the term *good video games*. By good video games, he simply means video games that are successful in a commercial sense. The reason why this term is useful within educational research is that good video games sell well because they are designed in such a way that they keep the gamer in the *flow state* (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Gee argues that good video games should be used more in formal learning contexts (2007a).

Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. (2012, p. 232) describes two main approaches to using video games in education. One approach is by playing educational games, games that are designed specifically to teach the gamer something. This is typically a simulation game or a drilling game, however they come in as many shapes and forms as non-educational games. The other approach is playing *commercial off-the-shelf* video games (COTS), video games who are designed for entertainment first and foremost (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2012, p. 233). Using COTS video games in education requires a well-planned pedagogical and didactical frame to ensure the approach to be beneficial since it is not embedded in the video game in the same way as educational games (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2012, p. 235). However, in using either educational or COTS video games in the classroom, conducting game-based teaching requires a

variety of competences from the teacher to achieve the requested learning outcome.

This study is based on a COTS game, which is why this section will focus on this type of games and not educational games. I specifically wanted to pick a COTS game for this study because I believe it is the best approach to give the EFL-students an authentic insight to a different culture. It is important that the story being told is of the Iñupiaq and not about the Iñupiaq. In my experience, the latter perspective often being the perspective offered in educational resources. Thus, I was concerned that selecting an educational game for the purpose of teaching and learning intercultural competence would be counter beneficial.

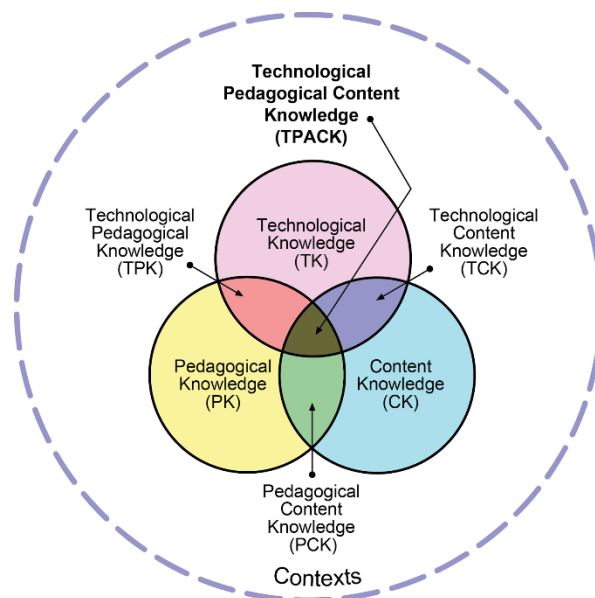
### Game-Based Pedagogy

When planning for game-based learning using a COTS game, Ziaeehezarjeribi et al. (2010, p. 281-303) proposes following strategy: 1. Evaluate the learning environment; 2. Select a game; 3. Play the game; 4. Connect curriculum standards to the game; 5. Communicate with the administration of your school; 6. Talk to your technology support staff; 7. Communicate with parents and caregivers. It is evident that using video games in their lessons is something teachers should think lightly of. As Ziaeehezarjeribi et al. (2010) suggests, this process should involve both the administration and the technological staff in the school, as well as the student's parents if they are below a certain age. In other words, those who think playing video games in a lesson is an easy and convenient way to engage the students are mistaken. In fact, according to Harvaninen et al. (2015, p. 67), one of the biggest challenges with game-based teaching is the time and enthusiasm it requires from the teacher. Prensky (Prensky & Gee, 2006) argues that video games are great tools for preparing children and young adults for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, However, teachers are not competent enough to do so. In my experience most teachers are interested in becoming more competent with using 21<sup>st</sup> century tools in their classrooms, however there is a mismatch between interest, and available time and resources.



## TPACK

To understand the complexity of knowledges teachers need to integrate technology effectively in their classrooms, Mishra and Koehler (2008) presents the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Figure 4.2). Technology tends to make our lives easier, introducing technology in a classroom context is an example that technology also makes our lives more complex and at times challenging. However, with the mandate to educate and prepare today's youth for a technology rich and complex future, there are no excuses. Teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century need to be competent within technology as well as pedagogy and content. However, knowledge within technology, content and pedagogy separately is not sufficient. TPACK refers to these competences understood in combination with each other, and that is the knowledge teachers need to successfully integrate technology in their classrooms (Mishra & Koehler, 2008, p. 10).



**Figure 4.2:** “The TPACK model”, 2011, by Koehler M. ([matt-koehler.com/tpack2/using-the-tpack-image/](http://matt-koehler.com/tpack2/using-the-tpack-image/)). CC BY 2.0.

## Assessing Game-Based Learning

With new approaches to learning, one might question how to best assess the competences the students gain and develop. Skaug et al. (2017, p. 17) points out that traditional assessment methods, such as writing assignments, discussions etc. are just

as relevant in game-based learning. There is no need to develop new methods for assessing the student's learning based on the video game approach. This based on the prerequisite that the traditional assessments are suitable for assessing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in accordance with LK20.

With LK20's focus on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, assessment methods must be reformed as well. Assessment methods looking for students' ability to remember facts and procedures are not assessing the competences students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century need (Shute & Ventura, 2013). "We need assessments that measure what students actually can *do* with the knowledge and skills obtained inside and outside of school" (Shute & Ventura, 2013, p. 67). With regards to assessing game-based learning Shute and Ventura (2013) suggest using the *evidence-centered design* (ECD). This is a framework that can help develop assessment methods, and contains three theoretical models: competency, evidence, and task (Shute & Ventura, 2013, p. 25). Competency refers to what competences should be assessed, evidence refers to what behaviors should reveal those competences, and task refers to what types of activities can bring forward the behaviors that will allow the students to show their competences. Shute and Ventura argue that since learning through video games are situated in context, "the products of learning cannot be isolated from the context, and neither should assessment" (2013, p. 26).

## Chapter 5: Method

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With the overarching research question *What potential do video games have in developing high school students' intercultural competence in the EFL classroom?*, qualitative classroom research stands as the best approach. I believe doing research on my own practice, by conducting, evaluating, and reflecting on a lesson plan based on a video game and in an authentic setting, will be beneficial to find answers. The subordinate research questions focus on the individuals' experiences. Due to the nature of the research questions in this study, action research with a phenomenological perspective comes forth as a superior choice of research design.

In this chapter I present and argue how my choices with regards to research design (5.1), perspective of philosophy of science (5.2) and data collecting methods (5.4) are beneficial to find answers to the research questions. Other important aspects are also presented, such as the selection of informants and participants (5.3), as how the data has been transcribed (5.5) and analyzed (5.6). Finally, I discuss the quality of this study (5.7), ethical issues (5.8) and limitations with regards to the research design and methods (5.9).

### 5.1 Research Design

The action research method is frequently used within educational research (Mills, 2007; Postholm, 2007; Tiller, 2004). Through choosing action research as methodology, I aim to gain authentic insight to this field of research, as well as to strengthen and further develop my own approach to the teacher's profession. This allows for a research design that closely resembles the cyclical process most teachers go through on a weekly, or even daily basis, while developing, conducting, and evaluating their own practice. "Action research is research done *by teachers for themselves*" (Mills, 2007, p. 5). This study is a practical action research study, which implies that it aims to improve practice (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021). In doing so, one must gain insight and develop reflective practice in the school environment (Mills, 2007, p. 5).

For master's students who are looking to conduct an action research study, Glosvik recommends a mini version of an action research study (n.d., p. 10). I have done this by limiting the timeframe one normally would conduct an action research study within. In addition, I have limited the amount of data collected by having the contributions made by the EFL-teachers involved included in the field notes, thus viewed as part of my own experience.

My action research design consists of 5 steps as shown in Figure 5.1. It is a dynamic process and the actions in the research process will not necessarily follow the steps strictly at all times (McNiff, 2009). An overview of the entire action research study and a schedule for the implementation-step is enclosed in Appendix XI.

### *Step 1: Identify*

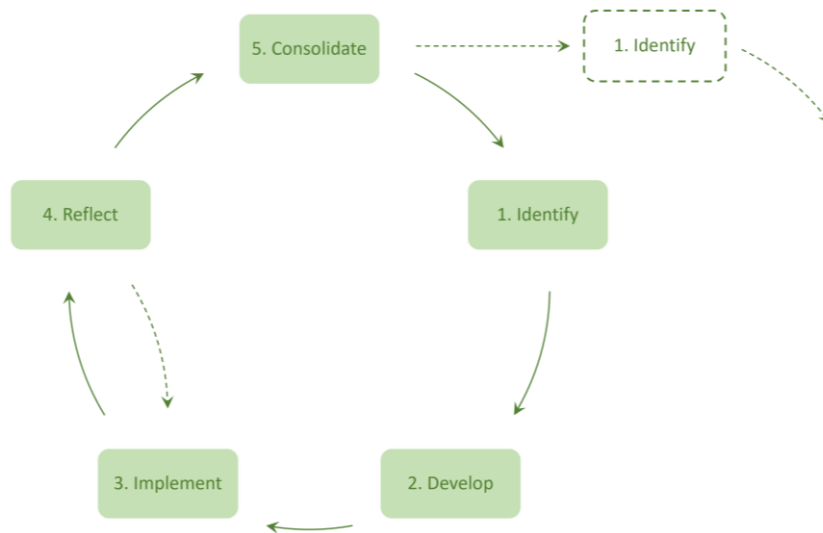
An area of interest or a problem is identified. Given that the aim of this practical action study is to improve practice, it is necessary to both identify current practice as well as a hypothesis on how this can be improved.

### *Step 2: Develop*

A suggestion of an improved action is developed. This includes careful planning with regards to the rest of the action research process, such as selection of informants, choice of data collection methods and how to analyze the data.

### *Step 3: Implement*

Once an action has been developed and the planning process is completed, the action is implemented.



*Figure 5.1: Model of the action research design.*

#### *Step 4: Reflect*

McNiff and Whitehead (2009) emphasizes the importance of learning through both action and reflection in an action research study. After implementing a new action, one needs to reflect on the experience and the effect of the new action. If adjustments are needed, one should alter the improved action accordingly and implement it again, causing a loop between step 3 and 4. This loop can be revisited as many times as the study's timeframe and resources allows to optimize the action.

#### *Step 5: Consolidate*

Consolidate the study in a formal report, in this case a master's thesis. The goal is both to have an experience, and to share this experience. Based on this, one aims to improve one's own practice and inspire or guide others to improve their own practice. A new action cycle might naturally follow the first one.

## 5.2 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is both a description of a phenomenon and an analytical process where the researcher interpretes the lived experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 78). Both R1 and R3 are looking to identify and describe both EFL-teachers and EFL-students' experiences with utilizing *Never Alone* as approach in the EFL classroom.

Thus, the phenomenological perspective on philosophy of science is a natural choice with regards to the choice of data collection methods and analyzing methods. The basic principle of phenomenological analysis is that the reality is how the individual experiences it. Consequently, the individual's lifeworld is the basis of the interpretation and analysis (Grønmo, 2016, p. 392).

Our experiences will always differ since we all live within our own individual contexts. One may question: Can we learn anything useful and transferable by this approach? In accordance with the phenomenological approach this can be done by identifying the essence of all the stories, by finding a common denominator (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 75). In other words, the answers to this study's research questions are to be found within the stories told by all the individuals, including myself.

R2 aims to identify the students' perceived learning outcome. It does not seek to identify anyone's experience. However, the teacher's experience of a lesson will be colored by their perception of what and to which degree the students learned. Through answering R2, one will get valuable insight to the teacher's experience of the lessons.

### 5.3 Context and Selection

This school year I function as an EFL resource teacher, which means that I had a supportive function to both the other EFL-teachers and their students. This was positive for the research in several ways. As an EFL-resource teacher I gained valuable experience with multiple EFL-classes and especially the students who, for a variety of reasons, were in danger of failing EFL. This was positive to get an authentic research context, because the EFL-students saw me primarily as a teacher and not as a researcher. Authenticity is important in an action research study to ensure its validity. Furthermore, with this role I did not have any responsibility for assessing the student's performances. This is critical with regards to ethical considerations. I will elaborate further on the validity in chapter 5.7, and the ethical issues of this action study in Chapter 5.8. After careful considerations I selected three EFL-classes with three different EFL-teachers for this action research study.

## Teachers

There are seven EFL-teachers at my workplace, however only three EFL-teachers primarily teach EFL-students in vocational study programs. As this thesis focuses on EFL-students within vocational study programs, I found these three teachers to have the most relevant experiences and know the target group best. On that basis, I invited them to be involved in my action research study in the roles of *critical friends* and *validation group* (McNiff & Whitehead, 2009). The three EFL-teachers (teacher A, B and C) selected have different educational backgrounds, ages between 40 and 55 and both genders are represented. All of them are experienced teachers and have had some, but limited, experience with game-based learning. The types of video games they had experience with were educational browser games. Two of them play video games in their spare time; the third had no private experience playing video games whatsoever.

## Students

All three EFL-teachers taught several EFL-classes. In cooperation with them I selected three EFL-classes, one for each of the teachers', where the EFL-students would be invited to be informants in the project. Teacher A's class will be referred to as class A, teacher B's class as class B and teacher C's as class C. The classes were selected due to them being representative with regards to demography and EFL-competence level.

Class A and B were groups of students who for the most part followed instructions and showed some interest in the EFL-subject. However, both class A and B also had students who were unmotivated due to issues with focusing and/or general reading and writing difficulties. Class C on the other hand, showed tendencies to rioting against EFL and everything that had to do with it. The class was similar to class A and B with regards to the number of students who found EFL challenging for different reasons. However, they were very vocal about what they found boring, what they found irrelevant for their future occupation, and about requests for more diversity with regards to methods. Occasionally, they resisted instructions and refused to do assignments.

I had some reservations selecting class C for my project, because I was not sure if they

were willing to follow instructions or even sign a consent form. However, as they specifically asked for more varied teaching methods, were critical with regards to the relevance of their EFL-education, and many expressed that they were unmotivated for EFL, I decided it was worth taking the risk.

Unfortunately, I was unable to complete the project within reasonable time with class B due to complications caused by the covid pandemic. As a result, I have not included any data or findings that stems from class B. Pandemic-related challenges were taken into consideration and explains the planned sample size of three classes, which was not strictly necessary.

The vocational study programs have relatively few students in each of the classes. In class A, 7 students signed the informed consent form, where two of them did not agree to be interviewed. In class C, 10 students signed the informed consent form, where one student did not agree to be interviewed, and one only agreed to be interviewed. The students were aged between 16 and 18, and only one girl was represented. This selection represents the age and gender distribution quite well in my school for the vocational study program classes.

## 5.4 Data Collection Methods

Both the overarching research question and the subordinate research questions are qualitative questions looking for qualitative answers in the form of experiences, learning outcome and opinions. The research design is, therefore, based on qualitative research methods. The most commonly used method in a phenomenological study is conducting interviews (Postholm, 2010). However, I found it necessary to implement multiple data collection methods to find answers to the research questions. Therefore, in addition to interviews, I have selected a variety of qualitative methods suitable for action research studies (McNiff & Whitehead, 2009; Mills, 2007; Postholm, 2007).

In addition to interviewing the EFL-students, I have observed the classes during the implementation phase as well as collected the students' work. Throughout the project I have also taken field notes. The interviews and the field notes are the main sources of data to describe the teacher's and the students' experiences in this study. In addition,



there is data based on observations and the students' work, which are not data typically associated with a phenomenological study. They are, however, the two most utilized methods implemented by teachers in the EFL-classrooms in my school. They are both relevant and necessary to describe the perceived learning outcome. As the teacher's impression of the students' learning outcome is closely related to the teacher's experience of a lesson, the assessment is highly relevant to describe the teacher's experience of the lessons.

Table 5.1 offers an overview of the steps, the data collection methods used, as well as who were involved and in which way. In addition, the table illustrates which of the different subordinate research questions are to be answered based on the data collected.

Step	Data	Involved (role)	R1	R2	R3
Identify	Field notes	Teacher researcher (active participant observer) EFL-teacher A, B and C (critical friends)	X		
Develop	Field notes	Teacher researcher (active participant observer) EFL-teacher A, B and C (critical friends)	X		
Implement	Field notes	Teacher researcher (active participant observer) EFL-teacher A and C (critical friends)	X		
	Observations	Teacher researcher (active participant observer) EFL-teacher A and C (privileged, active observers) EFL-students class A and C (informants)	X	X	
Reflect	Field notes	Teacher researcher (active participant observer) EFL-teacher A and C (critical friends)	X		
	Students' work	EFL-students class A and C (informants)		X	
	Interviews	Teacher researcher EFL-students class A and C (informants)			X
Consolidate	Field notes	Teacher researcher (active participant observer) EFL-teacher A and C (validation group)	X		

*Table 5.1: Relationship between the action research study steps, the data collection methods, those involved in the data collection process, and the subordinate research questions.*

The EFL-teachers are involved through contributions as professional colleagues; they are not considered informants as previously discussed. The EFL-students, on the other hand, are considered informants and direct sources of data. EFL-teacher B was involved in the identifying and developing processes, however due to the aforementioned issues during the implementation and reflection steps in class B, were

not included in the final two steps.

### Field notes

To be able to answer research question 1, I found it necessary to record my experiences and thoughts throughout the entire action research study process in the form of field notes. The field notes bare a resemblance to journal entries since they focus on my own experiences and thoughts. As I am actively involved throughout the entire project, I can be considered an active participant observer (Mills, 2007). The field notes are descriptive, which means they include documentation of my plans, actions, challenges, and other events relevant to my experience with planning for, conducting and evaluating the implementation of the EFL-lessons. In addition, they are reflective, and contain my personal thoughts on these events. The field notes are affected by contributions from my *critical friends* and *validation group* (EFL-teachers) as they influence both my actions and my thoughts throughout the process.

### Observations

In order to answer both R1 and R2 I chose to observe the lessons. Observations were important to answer R1; a teacher's experience will be colored by the students' actions, interactions, and perceived learning outcome. To answer R2, I found it beneficial to use data collecting methods that are commonly used by teacher professionals to assess the students' learning. This ensures that the lessons and the data are as authentic as possible (Postholm, 2007). One method used every lesson by teachers is observing the students. The teachers usually take the role as an active participant observer, meaning that they are actively engaging in teaching while observing (Mills, 2007, p. 58).

The observations were recorded in an observation guide. The observation guide has two parts. One part focused on the students' engagement and attitudes during the lessons. The second part focused on the students perceived learning outcome, based on the Council of Europe's reference framework of competences for democratic culture (see Chapter 4.2) (Barrett, 2018a). The observation guide is enclosed in Appendix IV.

Some of the observations were recorded while the students were actively engaged in the video game. Other observations, for example during class discussions following the cultural insights, were recorded after each lesson was completed. The EFL-teacher in each class had the role as a *privileged, active* observer. This meant that they observed their own students while not being directly responsible for the lesson and teaching, however still being able to interact with them (Mills, 2007, p. 58). These observations were particularly valuable because the EFL-teachers were more qualified to notice any changes or improvements that might be a result of the action implementation. The EFL-teachers shared their observations both during and after the lessons.

After completing all the lessons with class C, I noted that the communication between teachers and students were different than normal, however, I was not sure exactly what about the communication felt different. To investigate this further, I decided to observe the student-teacher communication in closer detail with class A. This included the students' body language and facial expressions.

### Students' Work

In addition to observing the students during the lessons, I found answers to R2 through analyzing the students' work. Written assignments is one of the most common sources for formal assessment in the EFL-subject in my school, and the students' grades are to a large degree determined by the competences they display through such work. Thus, determining the students' perceived learning outcome based on their answers to the written assignment is both relevant and authentic.

To ensure authenticity I chose to keep the circumstances surrounding the assignment familiar to the students. The students delivered their work via the school's Learning Management System. The written assignment is enclosed in Appendix VI.

### Interviews

In order to answer research question 3, I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews to gain insight into how the students' experienced the lessons. I chose to use focus groups because I am interested in the students' individual stories, but also identify

their shared experience (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021, p. 252).

Within a week after the lessons were completed, I invited 4 of the students from class A and 6 of the students from class C for interviews. Initially I planned on interviewing the couples who played together, however this proved to be difficult due to absence related to the corona pandemic. With the options of delaying the interviews or interview focus groups consisting of randomly selected couples from each class, I chose the latter. The interviews were all conducted in Norwegian, as all the interviewees had Norwegian as their native language. I did not want language skills and possible insecurities creating unnecessary challenges in communication and corrupt the EFL-students ability to share their stories.

I chose a semi-structured form because it appears to be most beneficial, as well as natural and authentic, in a phenomenological study (Postholm, 2010). This allowed me to ask follow-up questions and engage in a conversation rather than “quizzing” the informants. The interview guide is enclosed in Appendix VIII. With the informants’ consent, I audio recorded the interviews.

## 5.5 Transcription

To prepare the data for analysis, I found it most beneficial to have them all in the form of digital documents (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021, p. 275). The data collected through field notes were initially structured in a digital document and did not require to be further processed before analysis. The students’ work were submitted as digital documents and required minimal formatting adjustments. Notes taken during the observations were transcribed immediately after the lessons to make it possible to add, further explain and elaborate on the observations with the memory of the lessons fresh in mind. Examples of the transcribed data is enclosed in Appendix VII (student’s work) and Appendix V (observation transcripts).

The only data that was not initially in text form, were the interviews. The interviews were transcribed from the audio recordings within a few days after they were conducted. These data were the only data that were not in English. I decided to keep the transcriptions in Norwegian and in dialect, to minimize the likelihood of important

nuances getting lost in translation. Due to this being a phenomenological study, the informants' stories should not be interpreted but listened to and taken for what they are. Thus, the transcriptions primarily focus on what was being said, and not other forms of communications such as gestures etc. However, some examples of non-verbal communications were noted during the interview and included in the transcriptions. The quotes used to illustrate the findings in Chapter 6, however, have been translated to English.

## 5.6 Analysis

Different types of data require different types of analyzing methods. With the perspective of philosophy of science in this study being phenomenology, the analyzing methods need to follow phenomenological principles. The interviews and the field notes are the main sources of data to describe the teacher and the student's experience, thus they were analyzed with phenomenological methods. However, the data based on observations and student's work, are not data typically associated with a phenomenological study and need other methods for analyzation. The following methods were used to analyze the data in this study.

### Field Notes

As the field notes are based on my own experiences, I do not consider it necessary to categorize and analyze the data in the same sense as the other data in this study, however they have been synthesized and presented in section 6.1.

### Observations and Student's Work

In order to assess the students' learning outcome, I used the Council of Europe's reference framework of competences for democratic culture (Barrett et al., 2018a) and the competence descriptors (Barrett et al., 2018b) to analyze the data collected both during the lessons and in the students' work. Examples of this are enclosed in Appendix V (observation transcripts with coding). The findings are presented in tables in section 6.2. In addition, the observations were also categorized with regards to the students' expressed attitude towards the game-based approach in the lessons and

signs of engagement. These findings are synthesized and presented in section 6.1.

## Interviews

In order to detail the students' experience, I analyzed the interviews using Moustakas' modified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen-method (1994, p. 122). This is a commonly used method within phenomenological studies that categorizes the data and reduces them to manageable units. An example of this is enclosed in Appendix IX. The goal is to be able to, based on all the individual stories, «construct a composite textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience» (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122). The essence is the common denominator, the shared experience that represents the group as a whole. Finally, I synthesized the units and themes into “a description of the textures of the experience» (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122) and reflect on this description with reference to my own experience. The synthesis is presented in section 6.3.

## 5.7 Quality

There are several issues one needs to address to determine the quality of an action research study. First and foremost, action research studies aim to improve current practice, thus it is important to clearly identify a problem, develop an action that addresses this issue before reflecting on whether the action in fact improves practice (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021, p. 654). Other measurements of quality within research includes the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the study. Whether or not the findings are generalizable is not considered relevant in a teacher action research study (Mills, 2007, p. 96), I will, however, elaborate on the reliability and validity in this action research study in the following section.

### Reliability

The quality of a study with regards to reliability comes down to if the instruments give consistent and stable results. One key factor within scientific research is if the researcher is able to have an objective approach to the field of research and the findings. Objectivity is difficult to achieve due to the significance of the context and the

researcher's experiences, especially within qualitative studies. Within phenomenological research, one does not strive to achieve objectivity, simply because one acknowledges that this ideal is impossible (Postholm, 2010, p. 169). Instead, one aims to report on the study and the findings in a manner which is transparent (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 77). Moreover, the quality within a phenomenological study depends on the researcher's ability to handle and analyze data (Postholm, 2010, p. 136). The researcher is the most important instrument for analysis.

Thus, in combination with transparency, reflexivity is especially important within action research studies. Bjørndal states that it is equally important for the researcher to analyze oneself as well as the field of research (2004, p. 124). This means that it is necessary for the researcher to be open and discuss one's own experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 77), which research question 1 focuses on. In addition, it is necessary to be transparent with regards to the researcher's initial attitudes and experiences before entering the research field.

To ensure the quality of this study with regards to my ability to handle and analyze data, I have involved the participating EFL-teachers, in the roles of both critical friends and validation group (McNiff & Whitehead, 2009), for this purpose (See table 5.1). In addition, the reflective field notes will contribute to document the findings and contribute to transparency (Bjørndal, 2004, p. 138).

## Validity

The quality of a study with regards to validity, is dependent on the findings' relevance to the research questions and if the tools for analysis are beneficial (Postholm, 2010, p. 170). There needs to be internal concord throughout the entire study. This includes choosing a research design and data collection methods which support the formulations of the research questions and using analytical tools which extract findings relevant for the research questions. To ensure the validity in this study, I have primarily consulted my advisor throughout the entire research process. Furthermore, I have aimed to make the context surrounding the action research project as authentic as possible, both with regards to my own experience, and with regards to the informants.

It is also positive with regards to the validity of the interviews that I did not have the responsibility to grade the students' performance. Thus, the students may have been less concerned with giving the "correct" answers and showing the "correct" behavior during the lessons and the interviews.

The lesson plan and the written assignment used in this action research study have not been considered as data collection methods. The lesson plan and written assignment have been designed based on experience, common practice in my workplace and reflections with regards to this with the goal to improve practice. Thus, the lesson plan and the written assignment should be considered as part of the context. Any shortcomings with the lesson plan and/or the written assignment should therefore not be considered as flaws in the research design and data collecting methods. It could, however, be identified as findings that needs to be addressed to improve practice further.

## 5.8 Ethical Issues

There are many issues with regards to ethics one needs to consider and take seriously while doing research, especially when you use your own students as informants. I applied to the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) for permission to conduct my study as planned. This was approved, before I started collecting any data linked to the informants. NSD's letter of approval is enclosed in Appendix I.

In this section, I discuss the ethical aspects that I regard as especially important in my research: The ethics with regards to the informants, data collection and storage, and the societal responsibility.

### Informants and Data

One of the most basic considerations to take during research is to ensure that the informants have given their informed consent (Mills, 2007, p. 104; Slotfeldt-Ellingsen; 2020, p. 207). Thus, the EFL-students needed to be informed about the study, their role in it, and asked formally to sign a consent form to be informants. I used the NSD template for consent letters to ensure this was done correctly, however, there was too



much information to expect the students to read and understand it all. Thus, to ensure the informants were properly informed before signing the consent form, I presented all the information in a power point presentation in addition to handing out the consent letter. The students were 16 years old or older, which meant that they could sign the consent form without their parents or guardians' involvement (Slotfeldt-Ellingsen; 2020, p. 209). The students' Informed Consent Form is enclosed in Appendix III.

The informants were offered confidentiality (Mills, 2007 p. 105). In this case the EFL-teachers had access to the information they observed during the lessons and the student's work, like they normally would. However, no information would pass from the researcher to the EFL-teachers without the confidentiality being ensured. This meant, for instance, that I could discuss the actions of the informants during a lesson with the EFL-teacher that was present, but not with the other EFL-teachers without anonymizing the informants. Also, I could not discuss with my colleagues what the informants shared during the interviews without anonymizing them. The students in class A were assigned pseudonyms A1 – A7 and in class C pseudonyms C1 – C10. The key was stored digitally and separately from the data and protected by password. The EFL-teachers were not requested to sign a formal consent letter as they did not have roles as informants, and they did not provide data which needed to be protected.

As mentioned in Chapter 5.3, the issue of power imbalance between the students and their teacher in a classroom research context is important to address. Performing research on your own students rises an issue with regards to the power imbalance that occurs when grades are involved. For example, some students might feel like their decision on participating in the study might influence their final grade. This was avoided as I did not have any responsibility to grade the students.

There is also the issue of work ethics involved while doing research in your own workplace during work hours. The school's principal has a general responsibility for what takes place during the students' school day and the teachers' work hours. Thus, I asked for permission to conduct my studies with the school's students and teachers during work hours. The school's approval is enclosed in Appendix II.

## Societal responsibility

Another aspect of ethics to consider as a researcher is: am I wasting valuable resources and time on something meaningless or obscure? Any research conducted should aim to be of value to the society, if not it is considered wasted research. This is especially true when you conduct research that involves other people. The informant's time and efforts must be respected.

To ensure that my research is of societal relevance and value I consulted Slotfeldt-Ellingsen's (2020, p. 118) 4 characteristics of societal research based on the European Commission policy on "Responsible Research and Innovation". 1. *Foresight and reflection*: The study aims to make an improvement and move forward in accordance with the society's development. I intend to develop my own practices as a teacher, as well as inspire others to integrate video games as a method in the classroom. 2. *Openness and transparency*: I aim to offer openness and transparency through my thesis. This is especially important due to this being an action study. 3. *Responsiveness and flexibility*: The cyclic nature of an action study is based on a method of trial and error, and the researcher is expected to adjust in accordance with the development of the project. This includes dismissing my own beliefs and hypothesis if necessary. 4. *Diversity and including*: The study is focusing on intercultural competence, and how video games can be used to develop students' intercultural competence in an educational context. Furthermore, it is about including students who do not respond very well to traditional methods, as well as including youth culture by validating video games as cultural artefacts of relevance and importance. Based on this, I argue that my topic of research qualifies as both valuable and relevant for the society.

## 5.9 Limitations of the Research Design

As this is a master's project, there are some issues related to the action research methodology that needs to be addressed. This type of study usually requires research to be performed over several months, maybe even years, as well as resources that are not available within a master's project. Ideally, an action research study should not end after one cycle, it should continue into a new one (Madsen, 2004, p. 151).

Consequently, this project should be considered a light version of a full-scale action study. However, given the fact that I am aiming to improve my own practice, the action cycle process itself is likely to continue even after this master's project has concluded.

## Chapter 6: Findings

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In this chapter, I will present the findings of this action study. Section 6.1 will provide findings relevant to discuss R1:

*How does the teacher experience using the video game Never Alone as an approach to the topic of indigenous peoples in the EFL classroom?*

The teacher's experience of using *Never Alone* in the classroom includes the planning process, the action implementation, as well as assessments and evaluations after the implementation. Even though the research question specifies "in the EFL classroom", it is necessary to identify the entire process leading up to the action implementations, as well as following it, to understand the full context of the teacher's experience. Thus, the findings are based on observations during the action implementations, as well as field notes recorded during the entire process.

Section 6.2 will provide findings relevant to discuss R2:

*What is the perceived learning outcome with regards to the students' intercultural competences through using the video game Never Alone in the EFL-classroom?*

The perceived learning outcome will be based on the teacher's professional assessment of the observed lessons and the students' work. R1 is closely connected to R2 due to the effect the student's perceived learning outcome has on the teacher's overall experience.

The final section, section 6.3, will present findings relevant to discuss R3:

*How do the students experience using the video game Never Alone as an approach to the topic of indigenous peoples in the EFL classroom?*

The findings are based on the students' own stories, told through interviews. Here, I will present the essence of the student's lived experiences.

## 6.1 The Teacher's Experience

The findings relevant to discuss how I, in the role of being the teacher, experienced using the video game *Never Alone* as an approach to the topic of indigenous peoples in the EFL classroom are presented in table 6.1.

<i>How does the teacher experience using the video game Never Alone as an approach to the topic of indigenous peoples in the EFL classroom?</i>	
DATA	FINDINGS
Field Notes	<b>1-1:</b> It is challenging and time consuming to plan and use video games as part of one's lessons due to lack of competence and available equipment.
Observations	<b>1-2:</b> The students are more active, engaged and focused on their task when they are asked to play <i>Never Alone</i> than they usually are during EFL-lessons.
Observations	<b>1-3:</b> Teacher-student communication was more open and dialogic than usual during EFL-lessons.

**Table 6.1:** Findings with regards to R1.

Table 6.1 presents one finding related to the development step (1-1), and two finding related to the implementation step (1-2 and 1-3) in the action research study process. However, to provide the full context of my experience, I will present the entire action research study process, with emphasis on the findings in table 6.1. The 1<sup>st</sup> step, identifying a problem, has already been covered in section 1.2, thus I do not find it necessary to repeat that here.

### Developing an improved action

The action development step in this study can be divided into three stages: Selecting an appropriate video game, develop a lesson plan and finally, finding solutions to practical issues. This process has been following a similar structure to what Ziaeehezarijibi et al. (2010) proposed (see section 4.4).

### Selecting a Video Game

In order to find a suitable video game for this study, I first made a list of criteria:

- The game must present and represent a culture in a holistic and authentic manner through graphics and audio.
- The game must have a theme that is relevant to the EFL curriculum.
- The English language must be present in the form of text or sound.
- The video game must have a narrative structure.

I searched for “indigenous people” on *Steam* (store.steampowered.com), a digital distribution service for video games, and found *Never Alone*. Upon closer inspection I found that this video game meets all the criteria listed above. To further ensure that *Never Alone* was appropriate for educational purposes, I consulted the quality criteria in digital learning resources presented by the Norwegian ministry of Education and Research (Senter for IKT i utdanningen, 2012). Moreover, after doing research on the video game, I discovered that it had been the subject of several studies that are relevant to indigenous peoples and intercultural competence (Lohne, 2020; Stone, 2018; Williams, 2018). Thus, I had confidence that *Never Alone* was suitable for educational purposes in EFL-class, for teaching about indigenous peoples and to develop intercultural competence.

### Lesson Plan

In short, the improved action implied that I would replace having the EFL-students read a novel with playing a video game, while still focusing on the same competence aims in the EFL curriculum. Thus, the improved action was developed based on previous experience and common practice in my school, however with a different cultural artefact. The reasoning for this is that I found it more beneficial to develop a solution that closely resembles common practice to make the new solution seem manageable. Also, this makes it possible to compare the improved practice with the common practice.

In agreement with the other EFL-teachers, I planned for four lessons of 70 minutes playing *Never Alone* in combination with other activities, plus 1 lesson of 70 minutes for writing a 5-paragraph essay as a final assessment. When EFL-students are asked to read a book, this usually stretches over a longer period of time, however they do not

spend entire lessons reading. Thus, we agreed this amount of time was comparable to the amount one normally would spend during EFL-lessons on a cultural artefact. Also, the structure, alternating between playing the video game and reflecting on it, bares many similarities to the novel-reading approach. In addition to the story in the video game, the cultural insights were the basis for reflection. The lesson plan is enclosed in Appendix X. I describe the planned lessons in short in the next few paragraphs.

Lesson 1 started with background information about the indigenous peoples of the arctic regions of North America and information about *Never Alone*. There was a need to establish ground rules with regards to playing video games as part of the EFL-lessons and how the lessons would be structured: The students had to play in couples, to switch between being a watcher and being a gamer, to co-operate and communicate in English, and to pause the game when instructed to do so with a 2-minute warning.

Next, we watched the first two cultural insights. The cultural insights unlock as the game is progressed; however they are also available online. Following, the students answered questions based on the cultural insights, first in couples, then contribute in a classroom discussion. The students then entered the game and played the first part where they learned the basic principles of the game. Their first goal would be to get back to the village. When the students accomplished this, we would watch the next cultural insights, have a small classroom discussion related to these and continuing playing towards a new mission.

The dynamic between their mission and the cultural insights was that they first experienced something in the game, then they received an explanation or information related to their experience through the cultural insights. In doing so, the cultural insights will seem more relevant to the students. If they accomplished their missions early, they could watch the cultural insights they had unlocked while playing or ask for permission to continue the game. This was done to ensure that all the students progressed at a similar speed, and to avoid *speed-running* (when a gamer attempts to complete a game as quickly as possible).

Lesson 2 and 3, and most of lesson 4 followed the same structure: The students received a mission, we watched one or more cultural insights together and had

classroom discussions based on these, and then the students received a new mission. When we reached the final part of lesson 4, we summed up and consolidated the four lessons. If the students had not been able to finish the video game in the allotted time, we could watch the last cutscenes (in-game video clip that is not interactive).

As a final assignment, the EFL-students were asked to write a semi-structured 5-paragraph essay based on their experience with *Never Alone* and their knowledge about the Iñupiaq. The assignment was designed as a typical assignment the EFL-students would work with after reading a book, and in cooperation with their EFL-teachers. This was the first 5-paragraph essay the EFL-students were asked to write this year, thus it is semi-structured, meaning it explains specifically what each paragraph should contain and discuss. The written assignment is enclosed in Appendix VI.

### Planning for Game-Based Teaching

Even though the lesson plan might be a solution to the initial problem identified, a couple new issues arose when I tried to figure out how to actually do it. These issues were: How do I gain access to *Never Alone*? How do I distribute *Never Alone* to the students in a legal and practical manner? As mentioned before, *Never Alone* requires that you pay for a license and download the game before you can play, which is normal for video games of a certain quality.

As I normally would while working as a teacher, I asked colleagues, I looked for online resources, and asked the ICT-personnel at my workplace, however I did not find a solution. It appeared as if a lack of resources, a common problem for many teaching professionals, could affect this study in the planning phase. Fortunately, I happened to meet teachers from another school who are experienced game educators. They were able to offer advice on how to solve these practical issues.

The most important advice:

- Buy the licenses required for an average class to play the video game in couples. (The school might be willing to sponsor if it is a full class set of licenses.)
- Store the game on USB 3.0 (or better) memory sticks for distribution. (This way it is



easy to distribute, and the class set can easily be passed from class to class and teacher to teacher.)

- Have backup USB-C memory sticks for students who does not have a standard USB-port. (If you do not have that you will need it.)

Even though these are valuable and relevant findings, I believe the most important finding based on this part of the experience was how challenging it was to find answers and how much time and energy I spent looking for them. If it were not for the fact that my entire master's project relied on it, I do not think I would have followed it through. My field notes show signs of frustration over a lot of work that led to very little or no results.

The process could have stopped due to several hinders. The most obvious one was my own lack of competence with regards to gaming technology. Next was my school's lack of both competence, resources and equipment. For example, USB 3.0 memory sticks in the quantity that I requested, and x-box controllers to offer the students to use the 2-player function *Never Alone* offers. Thus, even though the school and my colleagues showed interest and support in my project, it, at times, seemed impossible.

### Implementing the action

My overall experience was that the majority of the EFL-students in both class A and class C were positive and interested in this project and the lessons playing *Never Alone*. In both classes there were students who entered the classrooms and immediately asked about the project, indicating that they had expectations of a lesson different from their typical EFL-lessons. It was also noticed in both classes that none of the students in any of the lessons, had forgotten their laptop or power cable; both EFL-teachers confirmed was noteworthy. Furthermore, both class A and class C showed genuine engagement in *Never Alone*. This was mostly observed through verbal expressions and exclamations of engagement related to in game events. It was also evident that many of the students had a good time, visible through smiles and laughter.

In class C, changes in both attitude and behavior were especially evident. Interestingly

enough, some of the students were verbally demonstrating against playing *Never Alone* and questioning the potential learning outcome during the first lesson. Such verbal expressions are fairly common in EFL-lessons with class C. However, the students' behavior throughout the lesson were less familiar. There was a drastic decrease in the use of smart phones and wandering (both in the classroom and leaving for toilet breaks and filling up water bottles). In fact, almost all the students followed instructions throughout the entire lesson. When it was time for the 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson, most of the negative expressions were gone. Instead, they were happy to continue playing *Never Alone*. This behavior continued throughout the rest of the lessons, including lesson 5 where they wrote five-paragraph essays.

One of the concerns I had before implementing the lesson plan was how difficult it would be to instruct the students to pause the game and pay attention to the cultural insights and discuss them. My overall experience was that the students followed the instructions surprisingly willingly.

I constantly reflected on the observations I made; thus, some changes were implemented between most of the lessons with class C. These were small adjustments, such as how much time should be spent on the cultural insight, how to best start the lessons and conclude them etc. After the implementation with class C was completed, I did not see the need to make any large changes to the lesson plan. It was still interesting to implement the lesson plan in a different class, because of the differences in the groups. The main differences were how well I knew the students in advance and how their attitude towards the EFL-subject was.

As expected, class A was easier to manage from the first lesson and willingly followed instructions throughout all five lessons. However, it was a bit harder to get responses from them with regards to classroom discussions. Even though my experience with class A to a large degree were according to my expectation, EFL-teacher A was positively surprised with two of the students. EFL-teacher A claimed that they always would leave the classroom at least once during the lessons, and often get distracted by their phones. EFL-teacher A said these students are experienced gamers and probably did not want to waste a chance to play video games during the lesson. On the contrary,

these two students behaved politely and showed genuine interest in my project, which EFL-teacher A claimed was “weird”.

In both class C and class A I experienced that it was easier to communicate and connect with the students. There was an overlap between what we were supposed to talk about during class, what the students are interested in and the type of task they were given. Observable signs in communication with many of the students were eye contact and smiles while talking to me and their EFL-teacher, a general openness expressed with body language, such as facing their upper body towards the person they were talking with, and proper two-way communication (as opposed to the question and answer-dialogue that I find happen way too often while talking with students in classroom situations).

## Summary

To sum up the findings related to R1 up: my experiences with using *Never Alone* in EFL-class to develop the EFL-students’ intercultural competence were both positive and negative. I experienced that planning for using *Never Alone* in the classroom very challenging and time consuming. However, when it was time to execute the plans, the experience became more positive. The lessons were colored by engaged, appreciative and focused students and a positive attitude towards both the approach and the topic of the Iñupiaq. Furthermore, I experienced it was easier to communicate with the students as some of them showed more openness and interest in dialogue than normal during EFL-classes.

## 6.2 Perceived Learning Outcome

The findings related to the student’s perceived learning outcome with regards to intercultural competence are presented in Table 6.2. There were no noteworthy differences with regards to perceived learning outcome between the classes, thus the findings are treated as one unit. It is important to note that all the students did not display all the competences mentioned below in their texts and/or during the lessons, however all the competences mentioned were displayed by at least one student.

<i>What is the perceived learning outcome with regards to the students' intercultural competences through using the video game Never Alone in the EFL-classroom?</i>	
DATA	FINDINGS
Observation Students' work	<b>2-1:</b> The students gain, and practice competences related to knowledge and critical understanding.
Observation Students' work	<b>2-2:</b> The students can actively practice skills associated with intercultural competence while playing <i>Never Alone</i> .
Observation Students' work	<b>2-3:</b> The students get the opportunity to express their attitudes associated with intercultural competence.
Observation Students' work	<b>2-4:</b> The students' display of values associated with intercultural competence is very limited.

**Table 6.2:** Findings with regards to R2.

It is necessary to point out that the four groups of competences in CoE's reference framework of competences for democratic culture (Barrett et al., 2018a), knowledge and critical understanding, skills, attitudes, and values, are of different nature and have different qualities. Where one might expect a student to gain new knowledge about a topic, it is not realistic to expect a student to gain a new skill, attitude, or value. However, inviting the students to practice their skills that are relevant for intercultural competence will contribute to developing their intercultural competence. Likewise, inviting the students to express their attitudes and values is important so that one can discuss, challenge, and potentially change attitudes and values that are not consistent with intercultural competence.

### Knowledge and Critical Understanding

During the introduction part of the lesson plan, the students were asked if they had any knowledge of the Iñupiaq; no students reported having any previous knowledge of them. In fact, when expanding the field of interest and asking if they had any knowledge about the indigenous peoples living in the circumpolar areas of North America, the knowledge was limited to stereotypes and generalizations such as

“eskimos live in igloos and hunt seals”. With this in mind, one can assume that all the knowledge about the Iñupiaq the students displayed through their texts were gained during these lessons.

The findings related to the EFL-students’ perceived learning outcome with regards to knowledge and critical understanding (finding 2-1) are presented in table 6.3.

Knowledge and critical understanding...	Students’ work	During lesson (observation)
<b>...of the world</b>		
Describe cultural practices (basic)	X	X
Reflect critically on their own world view being one of many world views (basic)	X	X
Assess society’s impact on the natural world (basic)	X	X
Reflect critically on the risks associated with environmental damage (basic)	X	X
<b>...of the self</b>		
Describe their own motivations (basic)		X
Describe the ways in which their thoughts and emotions influence their behavior (basic)		X
Reflect critically on their own values and beliefs (intermediate)	X	X

*Table 6.3: Intercultural competences displayed through the students’ work and during the lessons which are related to knowledge and critical understanding. Descriptors in accordance with CoE’s reference framework for competences for democratic culture (Barrett et al., 2018b).*

The findings suggest that the EFL-students gained and practiced several competences related to knowledge and critical understanding on a basic level. There were only findings related to one competence on an intermediate level and none on an advanced level. Observations of displayed competence were made both while the students were playing *Never Alone* and while they were discussing cultural insights. Some of the competences displayed during the lessons, however, were not expressed through the students’ work. Following are some examples of findings based on the students’ work.

Example of knowledge and cultural understanding of the world through describing cultural practices:

*“When the Iñupiaq people kill an animal, they utilize every part of the body.”*

(C7)

Example of knowledge and cultural understanding of the world through reflecting critically on their own world view being one of many world views:

*“But at the end of the day their and our culture is different so we might not understand their view of the world and they might not understand ours.”*

(A9)

Example of knowledge and cultural understanding of the world through both assessing society’s impact on the natural world and reflecting critically on the risks associated with environmental damage:

*“Iñupiaq’s (sic.) only gather as much as they need to stay alive and nothing more. This is a good way to help with climate change. [...] we could prevent a lot of food waste if we did it like the Iñupiaq’s (sic.) did. [...] We would have had a healthier earth if we utilized our natural resources like the Iñupiaq’s (sic.) did.”*

(A4)

Example of knowledge and cultural understanding of the self through reflecting critically on their own values and beliefs:

*“We throw so much food and materials because we want new things. When we throw something, they see an opportunity to use it for something useful.”*

(A8)

Example of knowledge and critical understanding of the self through both describing their own motivations and the ways in which their thoughts and emotions influence their behavior: After watching cultural insight 12 about how climate change is making it challenging for the Iñupiaq to hunt on the ice, one student admitted that he thinks it is a shame that the ice is melting, however, since the melting ice does not affect him directly, he is not very motivated to make any efforts or changes to his way of living. In fact, he explains that he does not mind climate change if this means the temperatures in Norway will be a bit higher.

## Skills

The findings related to the EFL-students' perceived learning outcome with regards to skills (finding 2-2) are presented in table 6.4. The findings suggest that the EFL-students practiced several skills associated with intercultural competences. Most of them were on basic level, however there are also skills on intermediate level and advanced level. The findings are primarily based on observations during the lessons. There are very few indications of any skills being developed or practiced in the students' work. In fact, the only findings in the texts related to skills were empathy and communication skills.

The displays of adaptability and analytical thinking skills are directly linked to playing *Never Alone* and solving the puzzles. The displays of co-operation and communication skills were a result of the students having to play in couples. Thus, these observations were made primarily in the classroom while the students were engaged with *Never Alone*. These findings were somewhat expected. Seeing students practice autonomous learning skills on both basic, intermediate, and advanced level was less expected. Displays of empathy were observed both between students and between the students and the characters in the game.

### *Co-operation skills*

The students had different approaches to co-operating and some students showed more advanced co-operating skills than others. I identified groups who displayed the three different levels of co-operation skills.

Basic co-operation skills:

Some couples co-operated only through doing their part when it was their turn to be the gamer. While watching, they barely interacted at all, and the gamer did not involve the watcher in what was going on in the game. However, they both did their part when it was their turn to game and made sure the game progressed. On one occasion, I noticed a student who was on his phone instead of watching. It turned out his partner could not get past a challenge, so the watching student got bored and did not see the

Skills	Students' work	During lesson (observation)
<b>Co-operation skills</b>		
Builds positive relationships with other people in a group (basic)		X
When working as a member of a group, they do their share of the work (basic)		X
Works to build consensus to achieve group goals (intermediate)		X
When working as a member of a group, keeps others informed about any relevant or useful information (intermediate)		X
Generates enthusiasm among group members for accomplishing shared goals (advanced)		X
<b>Adaptability</b>		
Adapts to new situations by using a new skill (intermediate)		X
Adapts to new situations by applying knowledge in a different way (intermediate)		X
<b>Communicative skills</b>		
Can express their thoughts on a problem (basic)	X	X
Asks speakers to repeat what they have said if it was not clear to them (basic)		X
<b>Autonomous learning skills</b>		
Shows ability to identify resources for learning (basic)		X
Can learn about new topics with minimal supervision (intermediate)		X
Can select the most reliable sources of information or advice from the range available (advanced)		X
Shows ability to prioritize and complete tasks without direct oversight (advanced)		X
<b>Analytical thinking skills</b>		
Can identify similarities and differences between new information and what is already known (basic)		X
<b>Empathy</b>		
Expresses sympathy for the bad things that they have seen happen to other people (basic)	X	X

**Table 6.4:** Intercultural competences displayed through the students' work and during the lessons which are related to skills. Descriptors in accordance with CoE's reference framework of competences for democratic culture (Barrett et al., 2018b).

point in continuing watching until the challenge was overcome. I asked if the student who was on his phone had any suggestions how to get past the challenge, and he did. However, he was waiting for his turn to try it out. After I suggested that he share his idea with his partner his partner was able to get past the challenge and proceed.

*Intermediate co-operation skills:*

Most of the couples co-operated at the intermediate level. They were actively



engaged both when they were gaming and watching. The watcher typically interacted through pointing at the screen or gesticulating with hand movements and suggested solutions to get past the challenges. The gamer typically involved the watcher through expressing his or her thoughts with regards to the events in the game, asked for advice and acted on the suggestions the watcher offered.

Advanced co-operation skills:

Some of the couples were continuously co-operating through communication, expressing support to each other and had a teamwork attitude throughout the game. Some of these teams did not follow the instructions of when to switch roles, but seemingly switched whenever they found it more beneficial to make progress in the game.

### *Communicative skills*

The students who alternated between gaming and watching communicated primarily through verbal communication. Some of the couples had to communicate a lot to overcome the challenges in the game. Most of the time the communication was in the form of the watcher giving instructions to the gamer on how to solve the puzzles and challenges, however it was also necessary at times for the gamer to accurately explain why controlling was difficult.

Even though the students were instructed to communicate in English, this was easily forgotten in the heat of the moment. Some of the couples decided to switch roles instead of communicating or when communication failed, even though they had been instructed not to. However, this could also be considered a display of an advanced autonomous learning skill; showing ability to prioritize and complete tasks without direct oversight.

### *Flexibility and adaptability, and analytical thinking skills*

While playing *Never Alone* the students were continuously facing new situations and challenges which they had to adapt to in order to proceed. The students had to quickly analyze the new situations to decide how to approach the challenges and use newly required skills to do so. All the students were able to progress in the video game,

however at different speeds. The students showed both analytical thinking skills, flexibility, and adaptability through solving the different challenges in the game.

### *Autonomous learning skills*

Most of the couples experienced at least once that they were stuck and could not find a solution among themselves. They showed different tactics to overcome these hurdles. Some asked the teacher for guidance, which is only natural in a classroom context. Others asked their classmates who had already succeeded. Others went online to look for hints or a walkthrough (explanation or demonstration of how to progress in the game). However, not all students had this drive. Some did what they often do during classroom activities: sit back and wait for the teacher to ask them if they need any help.

### *Empathy*

The displays of empathy were for the most part through expressions of sympathy, either directed at Nuna or the fox, or from the watcher to the gamer. In fact, one of the most visible signs whether a student was engaged in the game was when they expressed sympathy with the events in the game.

(Nuna gets mauled by the polar bear)

C4: *“Ouch, that must have hurt!”*

### *Attitudes*

The findings related to the EFL-students’ perceived learning outcome with regards to attitudes (finding 2-3) are presented in table 6.5.

The findings suggest that the EFL-students showed several different attitudes associated with intercultural competence on both basic, intermediate, and advanced level. The findings are primarily based on observations made during the lessons. The only attitudes that were expressed through the students’ work were a curiosity about other beliefs and interpretations and discussions about what can be done to help make the community a better place.

Attitudes	Students' work	During lesson (observation)
<b>Openness to cultural otherness</b>		
Shows interest in learning about people's beliefs, values, traditions, and world views (basic)		X
Express curiosity about other beliefs and interpretations and other cultural orientations and affiliations (intermediate)	X	X
Expresses an appreciation of the opportunity to have experiences of other cultures (intermediate)		X
Seeks and welcomes opportunities for encountering people with different values, customs, and behaviors (advanced)		X
<b>Respect</b>		
Expresses respect for other people as equal human beings (basic)	X	X
Expresses respect for religious differences (advanced)	X	X
<b>Civic mindedness</b>		
Expresses a willingness to co-operate and work with others (basic)		X
Collaborates with other people for common interest causes (basic)		X
Discusses what can be done to help make the community a better place (intermediate)	X	X
<b>Responsibility</b>		
Submits required work on time (intermediate)	X	X
<b>Self-efficacy</b>		
Expresses a belief in their own ability to understand issues (basic)		X
Expresses the belief that they can carry out activities that they have planned (basic)		X
Expresses a belief in their own ability to navigate obstacles when pursuing a goal (intermediate)		X

*Table 6.5: Intercultural competences displayed through the students' work and during the lessons which are related to attitudes. Descriptors in accordance with CoE's reference framework of competences for democratic culture (Barrett et al., 2018b).*

### *Openness to cultural otherness, and respect*

Most of the students showed interest and curiosity towards the Iñupiaq as a result of playing *Never Alone*. Some of the students explained that they developed a better understanding of the story, and it was easier to solve the puzzles when they learned more about the Iñupiaq through the cultural insights. Furthermore, there were no signs of disrespect towards the Iñupiaq in the form of jokes or undermining, which was slightly unexpected. The overall behavior observed during the lessons as well as formulations in the students' work were in a respectful manner.

### Civic-mindedness

The findings related to civic-mindedness on a basic level are in accordance with the findings related to co-operation skills, and they naturally go together. It would not have been possible to co-operate without expressing a willingness to co-operate and work with their partners with the aim to progress in the game. The students also discussed in their texts what the Iñupiaq can teach us and pointed out that some aspects of the Iñupiaq way of living might have had a positive effect on our community.

*“We would have had a healthier earth if we utilized our natural resources like the Iñupiaq’s (sic.) did.”*

(A4)

### Self-efficacy and Responsibility

All of the students took on the assignment of playing *Never Alone* with a positive attitude and showed a belief in their own ability to master playing the video game, thus displaying self-efficacy. In addition, through following instructions, answering questions during the lessons, and submitting their texts on time, most of the students also displayed a positive attitude towards the responsibility they were given.

### Values

The findings related to the EFL-students’ perceived learning outcome with regards to values (finding 2-4) are presented in table 6.6.

Values	Students’ work	During lesson (observation)
Valuing cultural diversity		
Promotes the view that we should be tolerant of the different beliefs that are held by others in society (basic)	X	X

**Table 6.6:** Intercultural competences displayed through the students’ work and during the lessons which are related to values. Descriptor in accordance with CoE’s reference framework of competences for democratic culture (Barrett et al., 2018b).

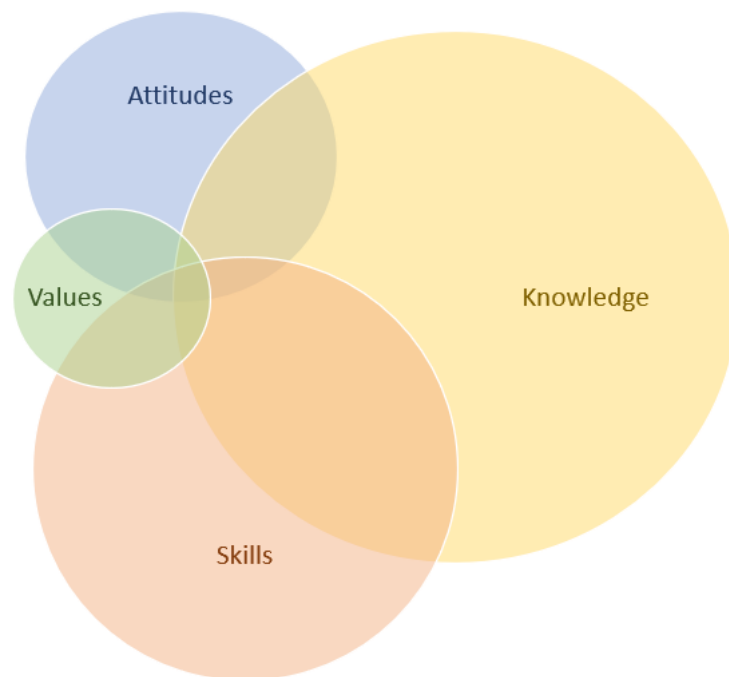
There were few findings related to the students' values with regards to intercultural competence. The only findings were related to displays of tolerance to different beliefs than one's own both during the lessons and in the students' work. However, there were few students who displayed their values with regards to this.

*"I think the Iñupiaq has an interesting view of the world, and it seems as they are happy with what they believe."*

(A6)

### Overall Learning Outcome

The tables presented in chapter 6.2 focus on the different types of competences the analysis of the data found evidence for, however they do not say anything about the volume or frequency of the findings related to the different competences. Due to this being a qualitative and phenomenological study, such numbers of quantity are not easy, nor necessary, to produce. Figure 6.1 illustrates the overall impression of the frequency each of the competences were displayed during the lessons and in the students' work. Even though the findings suggest a larger number of descriptors



*Figure 6.1: Illustration of perceived learning outcome.*

indicating attitudes than knowledge and critical understanding, the illustration shows that the students displayed their knowledge to a much larger degree than their attitudes.

Figure 6.1 also illustrates that there is some overlap between the different competences, however the joint sections should not be read as representative with regards to the findings.

### Summary

The findings through observations and interviews suggests that the students were able to practice and possibly develop several competences on different levels associated with intercultural competence through playing the video game *Never Alone*. Whereas some of these competences are related to the activity of playing a video game, and having to co-operate to do so, others are related to the story in *Never Alone* and the other classroom activities that frames the video game and defines the approach as a formal learning context. Some of the competences are displayed in the written texts, however there are many competences that are only observable during the lessons.

### 6.3 Students' Experience

The findings related to how the students experienced using the video game *Never Alone* as an approach to the topic of indigenous peoples in the EFL classroom are presented in Table 6.7.

<i>How do the students experience using the video game Never Alone as an approach to the topic of indigenous peoples in the EFL classroom?</i>	
DATA	FINDINGS
Interview	<b>3-1:</b> The students found playing <i>Never Alone</i> more engaging than traditional EFL-lessons.
Interview	<b>3-2:</b> The students are unsure if what they learned through playing <i>Never Alone</i> is relevant to the EFL-subject.

**Table 6.7:** Findings with regards to R3.

Through analyzing the interviews two themes emerged: Engagement and learning outcome. In this section I will describe the experiences and reflect on them with reference to my own experience.

## Engagement

During the interviews, all the informants expressed that they found the approach through playing *Never Alone* engaging. Different reasons were given to what made it so. Some emphasized they appreciated doing something other than reading, writing, studying grammar and other traditional classroom activities they associate with the EFL-subject.

*C1: Instead of just sitting still and listening to the teacher talking about theory, we could do something ourselves, kind of. A bit more exciting. A bit more engaging.*

Some pointed out that they found the approach interesting and appreciated that video games were considered a source for learning. Others merely expressed that it was fun. One student pointed out that it was nice being allowed to do something they were good at in school, which in terms builds confidence.

*A1: I'm not very good at school-stuff. So, it is nice to feel that what you are good at can be useful in school. You know... Not that we are supposed to be graded based on our gaming skills, but it makes me feel more confident anyway.*

All in all, the students expressed that playing *Never Alone* made them more active and less passive. They appreciated spending less time receiving information through listening and reading and instead have the illusion of discovering and creating information themselves as a result of progressing in the game.

*C6: If you play a video game, you control it yourself, right.*

*C3: Yes, you are game! (slang for being eager to do something, ready for action)*

## Self-Assessment

With regards to playing video games as an approach to learning, some of the student reflected on the effect the interactivity in video games have or might have on their learning.

*C9: You remember more afterwards.*

*C1: Yes, but I wouldn't have remembered it if the teacher had just said it. A bit more if you game and watch, kind of, and do it yourself, then it is easier to remember.*

With regards to the learning outcome the experiences were more divided. Some students did not believe they had learned anything that had to do with the EFL-curriculum.

*A4: It was fun, but I did not learn any English.*

Others claimed that they probably had learned something useful, however they were not sure exactly what.

*C6: I think everyone learned something, they're just not aware of it.*

Some students expressed that they think video games are good for learning, however they cannot learn anything that is relevant for school. The reasoning for this was that they what they learn in video games is nothing they can use in school or that will improve their grades. So, when playing video games is a part of their lessons, they believe that it does not have any educational value. However, the teacher might teach them something while they play.

When asked to give examples of what they had learned most of the examples referred to factual knowledge about the Iñupiaq. One student (A1) concluded that it was fun to play *Never Alone*, and that video games should be used more in the classrooms. This because school should be more fun to avoid students dropping out and to be considerate of the students' wellbeing. After all, they said, students spend a lot of time in school and most of them hate it. However, they admitted that they could probably have learned what they learned through playing *Never Alone* for 4 lessons a lot more



effectively by just watching a power point presentation. I argued that then they would not have been able to practice co-operation skills etc., to which they replied that it does not matter. The grade does not depend on that kind of competence anyway.

When asked about the learning outcome after playing a video game, compared to reading a novel, some of the students were very clear that there was a significant difference:

*C6: Uhm... I would not have learned anything by reading a book. Because I would never have read. So... [laughter].*

*C1: I would have learned something there and then, while reading the book. But over time, I probably would have forgotten it faster than after playing the game. Because then I would, kind of, have the memories in my head, that I could, kind of, attach facts to... Compared to just pages in a book.*

These findings indicate to me that the students believe that they can learn a lot from video games and that the experiences they have are helpful for long-term memory. However, they seem unsure whether they can learn anything relevant to EFL.

## Summary

The students expressed that they found playing *Never Alone* engaging in comparison to more traditional EFL-lessons. Furthermore, this approach made some of the students feel more confident. With regards to learning outcome the students are of different opinions. Some believe they learned a lot, however, find it difficult to pinpoint exactly what. Others point out factual knowledge as the only learning of importance. Some also question the effectiveness of spending time playing a video game when it takes a lot less time to go through a power point, again pointing at factual knowledge as the purpose of learning in school.

## Chapter 7: Discussion

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In this chapter I compare the findings to previous research presented in chapter 3 and discuss the findings based on the theory and governing documents presented in chapter 4.

### 7.1 Technological Competence in Game-Based Teaching

***Finding 1-1:*** *It is challenging and time consuming to plan and use video games as part of one's lessons due to lack of competence and available equipment.*

As finding 1-1 indicates, suggesting that more teachers should consider game-based learning in their classrooms, that being EFL or other subjects, is, in my experience, easier said than done. I encountered many challenges during the development stage of this project, mainly related to technical equipment and my own lack of competence with regards to video game technology. To overcome these hurdles was time consuming and not something I believe most teachers would, or should, do. Even though this master's project does not have a practical approach, I do believe that these experiences are necessary and important to discuss. The learning potential in a video game is only true in theory if it is not accessible. Furthermore, it is debatable if one can call the video game approach an improved action if it is not accessible for the average teacher.

My experiences are similar to the findings Brooks et al. (2019) and Nousiainen et al. (2018) reported as well as what Harvaninen (2015) claims. Even though these studies were conducted a few years ago, and there has been an increasing interest in game-based learning in Norwegian schools since, they are clearly still relevant. What I experienced is that most resources for game-based learning are focusing on convincing educators that video games have educational value in addition to inspiring and suggesting specific video games for specific curricula. Practicing teachers (Skaug et al., 2020), teacher educators and the government (Skaug et al., 2017) are encouraging

game-based learning. However, what I needed was a resource with a clear practical approach.

My overall experience with preparing for game-based teaching can be discussed in the light of the TPACK framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2008). The resources which I found helpful can be placed within the areas of content knowledge and/or pedagogical knowledge (Ziaeehezarjeribi et al., 2010). What I was not able to find was resources that could develop my technological knowledge with regards to game-based learning. This is especially true within the Norwegian context. There were reflections and discussions regarding this, however nothing that could help me conquer the specific hurdles that I encountered. Trial and error seemed to be the main suggestion accompanied by a “good luck” and a pat on the shoulder. As I experienced, even those who are competent with regards to gaming technology, have difficulties solving technological issues in the classrooms. This is due to the challenges, such as how to distribute the video game to 15 – 30 students with laptops, not being familiar to the average video game enthusiast. Furthermore, there is little overlap between technological knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, and certainly not much information to find where teachers can develop their TPACK with regards to game-based teaching. This indicates that there is too much focus on content and pedagogical knowledge and not enough on technological knowledge with regards to game-based teaching and competence development.

Based on finding 1-1 I would like to suggest two possible solutions to help teachers develop their technological knowledge with regards to video games:

1. Develop resources and guidelines that focuses specifically on the practical issues with game-based learning.
2. Make equipment available. Skaug et al. (2020), suggests setting up a gaming room. If schools have the necessary equipment available (consoles, gaming computers, controllers, etc.), including a selection of video games, teachers who are interested in game-based learning will be able to experiment without spending too much time on the technical issues. A digital library that offers easy access to video games, similar to what the Ministry of Culture (2019, p. 39) suggests, would also be a good and practical solution.

## 7.2 The Student's Engagement

**Finding 1-2:** *The students are more active, engaged and focused on their task when they are asked to play Never Alone than they usually are during EFL-lessons.*

**Finding 3-1:** *The students found playing Never Alone more engaging than traditional EFL-lessons.*

Both finding 1-2 and 3-1 show that all the parties involved in the lessons found that the students playing *Never Alone* in the EFL-lessons were more engaged. The teachers were able to observe this during the lessons, and the students themselves confirmed this in the interviews. This is not surprising, given that this is one of the effects many studies on game-based learning points at (Bai et al., 2020; Tsai & Tsai, 2020; Wang et al., 2022). These studies explain an increased learning outcome as a result of increased engagement. While my study is not a comparative one, it cannot determine whether playing *Never Alone* ensured the students a better learning outcome than for example reading a novel. However, the findings indicate that the lessons offered the EFL-students an enjoyable learning experience, which in turn might have given them a larger learning outcome than less engaging lessons.

Video games, at least the good ones, are designed to engage and keep the gamer in a flow state where they feel mastery and involvement (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Prensky & Gee, 2006). This is something education also strives to achieve however this is a large challenge. When many people, including teachers and students, seem to believe that education and fun do not go together (Gee, 2007a), it is time to rethink what school should be. Education should not necessarily be fun first, however there is nothing wrong with having fun while learning. Having fun means having experiences, and experiences are the basis for learning (Dewey, 1998). Furthermore, having fun implies engagement, focus and involvement, all elements that can give improved learning. Based on this, given that most students play video games on a regular basis in their spare time (Medietilsynet, 2020; Bakken, 2021), and that video games can have a positive effect on a variety of skills, including EFL-skills (Brevik, 2016; Brevik et al.,

2016; Ebrahimzadeh, 2017; Sundqvist, 2019; Uuskoski, 2011), using video games in the EFL-classroom might provide fun and engaging learning experiences. One should not underestimate the effect of this, especially while dealing with students who are bored, not motivated for school or at risk of dropping out (Bakken, 2021; Harvaninen et al., 2015; SSB, 2021).

### 7.3 Teacher-Student Communication

***Finding 1-3: Teacher-student communication was more open and dialogic than usual during EFL-lessons.***

Finding 1-3 implies that the video game approach influenced the teacher-student communication in the EFL-lessons. I got the impression that the video game approach worked as an arena where I could meet the students; they were comfortable in an arena they saw as their own and not one they were forced to be in. This can be explained in the context of intercultural competence. As the teachers and the students can be viewed as members of two different cultures, every lesson is an intercultural experience (Barrett et al., 2018a). Integrating a video game in the EFL-lesson is one way of reaching out and inviting for intercultural dialogue. Many of the students who are in the vocational study programs are in a context they are not confident nor comfortable in whenever they are in classrooms. In fact, many of them have chosen, or been advised to choose vocational studies specifically because of this.

The teacher's display of intercultural competence can achieve better communication, openness and understanding across cultures. I believe intercultural competence in this sense is something teachers should keep in mind in all classes, regardless of subject. However, while working explicitly with developing students' intercultural competence, displaying intercultural competence one way or another gives integrity to what the teacher communicates. In integrating video games in lessons, the teacher must display all the categories of competence in the CDC framework (Barrett et al., 2018a, p. 38). Even teachers who are experienced gamers will display this through being representatives for the subject they teach and the entire school system. Furthermore,

this can also provide a platform for discussing and reflecting what intercultural competence and communication is, a platform which is easy for the students to relate to. If one feels an appreciation for someone else initiating intercultural competence, understanding and openness, one might see the value of initiating similar acts towards others. Based on this, I argue that one can justify using most video games as an approach with the aim to develop intercultural competence, due to this being an excellent example of intercultural competence.

## 7.4 Assessment

**Finding 2-1:** *The students gain, and practice competences related to knowledge and critical understanding.*

**Finding 2-2:** *The students can actively practice skills associated with intercultural competence while playing Never Alone.*

**Finding 2-3:** *The students get the opportunity to express their attitudes associated with intercultural competence to some degree.*

**Finding 2-4:** *The students' display of values associated with intercultural competence is very limited.*

**Finding 3-2:** *The students are unsure if what they learned through playing Never Alone is relevant to the EFL-subject.*

The findings indicate that using the video game *Never Alone* as an approach to develop the students' intercultural competence is fruitful. This is in accordance with previous research on video games learning potential with regards to developing intercultural competence or similar competences (Bachen et al., 2012; Barr, 2017; Molnes, 2019). Furthermore, the findings correlate with previous research looking specifically at the cultural value of *Never Alone* and how this video game effectively communicate Inupiaq culture (Lohne, 2020; Stone, 2018; Williams, 2018).

### Knowledge

The students both gained and displayed a variety of competences during the lessons and in their answers to the written assignment. First and foremost, the students gained knowledge about the Iñupiaq and their view on the world (Finding 2-1). This knowledge is a direct result of the experiences they had through playing *Never Alone*, in combination with watching the cultural insights.

One might argue that they primarily learned through watching the cultural insights, however, I believe the combination of experience and content is key. The cultural insights contain a lot of information compared to the video game itself. This information is not meaningful unless you combine them with experiences (Dewey, 1998). The video game makes a connection between the students and the information and makes the information relevant to the students on a personal level. The students' experience how challenging it is to move safely on unstable ice. They fall in the water; they get crushed by falling ice. The way the students talk about what they experience also adds to this. They do not refer to the things that happen to Nuna or the Fox. It is *they* who fall in the water, through Nuna. They watch the Terrible man kill the fox, however they do not say "the fox died": they say "*I* died". This personal connection one gets through actively interacting with a story, creates a personal connection and allows the gamer to identify as the main protagonist(s). There is an important distinction between watching a clip about how to use a bola that the Iñupiaq use and watching a clip about how to use a bola that I was rewarded and need. A consequence of this distinction is that the information seems meaningful which in turn makes it worth remembering.

### Skills

The study also found that the students must practice many important skills related to intercultural competence simply by playing *Never Alone* in couples (Finding 2-2). It is not uncommon to have students co-operating, communicating, and solving problems in collaboration with each other in traditional lessons. The challenge for the teacher is often to make the students engaged, so that they actually do these things requested of them. I have observed students working on a group project simply divide the tasks

among themselves and work separately until it is completed. Sometimes one person solves the task while the others sit in silence and wait. Their reasoning to this is often that this is the easier, more effective, or more practical solution, which is probably true in many cases. However, the engagement and focus I saw among the students while playing *Never Alone* was key to have them actually doing what I wanted them to do: Co-operate, communicate, and solve problems together.

### *Attitudes and values*

Some of the students' attitudes were also observable both during the lessons and in their texts, however not displayed as often as their knowledge (Finding 2-3). Furthermore, it was not easy to detect the student's values (Finding 2-4). Seemingly, the students were more reluctant to give answers when this means that they must share something personal in doing so. Answering factual questions, such as "What is *siġla*?" is a lot easier than answering "what do you think would be the right thing to do?". Giving the wrong answer on a factual question is not as sensitive as showing the wrong attitudes and values. Moreover, one can hardly expect the students to do so unless the learning environment feels safe and there is a respectful relationship between all the participants, including the teacher. One explanation for this could be that the students did not feel safe enough to display their attitudes and beliefs. Given that most of the students did not know me very well, this might very well be true. However, I would like to point out some other possible explanations for the lack of displayed attitudes and values.

Similar to what Brevik (2016) and Sigurðardóttir (2016) found in their studies, there are indications that the students did not find what they learned through playing a video game relevant for the EFL-subject. Some pointed at it not being serious enough, others that what they learn would not be assessed. If what they learn is not being assessed, thus is not reflected in their final grade, how can it be relevant?

Schools are too focused on knowledge and skills. Naturally the students are too. As the Minister of Education, Brenna, stated: we are too focused on measuring qualities that are measurable, and we ignore other qualities (Regjeringen, 2022). This despite that the competences needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with unlimited access to information,



points at other, more complex competences first (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012). My experience is that many students are uncomfortable answering questions that do not have a right or wrong answer. Furthermore, it seems many students do not know how to answer questions asking for their opinion on a topic. It does not match the students' view on what a school assignment is supposed to be and what teachers want to know.

After completing lessons with both class A and class C and analyzing the data, I had to reflect on the questions and tasks I had given the students. As previously discussed, these tasks have been developed to be comparable with tasks that typically would be given when reading a novel about indigenous peoples in my school, similar to what Skaug et al. suggests (2017). In retrospect it is evident that these tasks are primarily looking to uncover the knowledge the students gain and not much else. The assignments need to be updated to better fit assessing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (Shute & Ventura, 2013). Thus, one cannot expect the students to display their attitudes and values to any large degree.

### *Assessing Intercultural Competence*

Finally, I would like to comment on how the student's perceived learning outcome would have been reflected through the grades they would have received based on these lessons. As table 6.4 shows, very little of the students' intercultural competence skills were displayed in their texts. However, the skills should be considered equally important to the other competences in the CDC framework (Barrett et al., 2018a). Given that the students would normally get a grade based on their text, they would hardly get any credit for their intercultural skills. Thus, their grade would not reflect their intercultural competence, only parts of them. Based on this, it is safe to say that the assessment methods need to change. As Brenna suggests (Regjeringen, 2022), this is an issue that needs to be addressed within the entire school system, and not only within the EFL-traditions in my school. I would suggest consulting the *evidence-centered design* (ECD) framework and focus more on how tasks can bring forward behavior that displays competence instead of asking them to reproduce facts and knowledge (Shute & Ventura, 2013).

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

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*What potential do video games have in developing high school students' intercultural competence in the EFL classroom?*

This action research study has aimed to find answers to this question through exploring the video game *Never Alone* as approach to the topic of indigenous peoples in the EFL-subject. This has been done through conducting an action research study with a phenomenological perspective. Based on three subordinate research questions focusing specifically on *Never Alone*, some findings have been provided.

R1: *How does the teacher experience using the video game Never Alone as an approach to the topic of indigenous peoples in the EFL classroom?*

Implementing a video game in the EFL-classroom is challenging and time consuming. It is difficult to find helpful resources and one must be willing to use the trial and failure method to be successful. To make such approaches more available in classrooms it is necessary to take one step past encouraging teachers to try out game-based teaching and provide them helpful equipment and opportunities to develop their TPACK within game-based learning.

The findings suggest that there are many benefits from game-based approaches, thus worth the effort. The students showed engagement and interest in the task and were actively engaged throughout the lessons. In addition, there were signs of the teacher-student communication got more open and dialogic as a result of implementing something the students are comfortable and familiar with, the video game. This added a new dimension to the lessons with regards to intercultural competence. Thus, the findings imply that game-based learning should be encouraged, however teachers need support in the form of equipment and competence development in doing so.

R2: *What is the perceived learning outcome with regards to the students' intercultural competences through using the video game Never Alone in the EFL-classroom?*

The traditional assessment methods show that the students learned what they were expected to learn through playing *Never Alone*. However, there is an imbalance between how well the written assignment allows the students to display all of their competences relevant for intercultural competence. Competences related to knowledge are very dominant, attitudes and values less observable. Skills were primarily only observable during the lessons and not in the students' texts, thus they would not be evaluated for a formal grade and would not be relevant for their final grade in EFL. As a result, the students argued that these skills are irrelevant, however they should not be. These findings indicate that the traditional assessment methods with regards to intercultural competence needs to be adjusted.

R3: *How do the students experience using the video game Never Alone as an approach to the topic of indigenous peoples in the EFL classroom?*

The students in this study reported that they appreciated the video game approach and found it more engaging. Furthermore, they believe that video games can be useful sources for learning, however they are unsure if this type of learning is relevant with regards to the EFL-subject. This because the competences their grades are based on, primarily factual knowledge, could have been learned in other and more effective ways. When comparing the video game approach to reading books, several of the students reported that they probably would not have learned anything from reading a novel. This because they considered this an impossible task. Thus, playing a video game is a more beneficial approach to these students.

## 8.1 What Potential Is There?

Both the teacher's experience, the students' experiences and the perceived learning outcome indicate that there is a lot of potential in using video games for developing high school students' intercultural competence in the EFL classroom. Video games such as *Never Alone* are appropriate and relevant media to communicate culture to the students. The experience one has while playing a video game have many similar qualities as one gets through reading novels have, however video games are more accessible to students who struggle with focusing, reading or general motivation for

school. Moreover, while playing video games one actively practices and can further develop important intercultural competences such as cooperation skills, problem solving and communication skills. In implementing video games in the classroom, one also opens up for discussions and reflection with regards to the cultural differences within a classroom and how one can approach this. Thus, video games are helpful in developing a wide range of intercultural competences, as well as activate students and keep them engaged. However, teachers need both equipment and resources to develop their TPACK with regards to game-based learning if this potential is to be utilized.

## 8.2 Future Research

The findings in this study correlate with previous research. There is not a lot of research done on game-based teaching in the Norwegian context, especially with regards to developing intercultural competence. Therefore, I hope this thesis might inspire others to conduct similar studies, both in small scale, like this action study is, and in large scale.

As a result of this study, I see the need the assessments we normally use in my school with regards to intercultural competences in the EFL-subject. Thus, this action research study will spiral into an action learning process in the EFL-section in my school where we focus on improving the assessment methods we utilize. I also suggest more research within this field. Not only how to assess students' intercultural competence more successfully, however, how to implement new assessment practices in schools.

Furthermore, it might be fruitful with some research looking into to which degree does teachers display intercultural competence while planning lessons and interacting with students. Is this something teachers and administrators consider, and to which degree? What effect does successful displays of intercultural competence with regards to the generational differences in classrooms have on the learning environment, the teacher-student relations, and the learning outcome? Does implementing video games in the lessons effect the teacher-student communication and relations? I believe this research has provided me with more new questions than answers to old ones.

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# Appendices

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## Appendix I: NSD Approval

# NSD NORSK SENTER FOR FORSKNINGSDATA

## Vurdering

### Referansenummer

871581

### Prosjekttittel

Videospel i undervisning: "Never Alone" for interkulturell kompetanse

### Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Høgskulen på Vestlandet / Fakultet for lærerutdanning, kultur og idrett / Institutt for pedagogikk, religion og samfunnsfag

### Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Anders Grov Nilsen, anders.nilsen@hvl.no, tlf: 53491511

### Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

### Kontaktinformasjon, student

Cecilie Kartveit McRae, cecilie.mcrae@gmail.com, tlf: 47617011

### Prosjektperiode

31.01.2022 - 01.06.2022

### Vurdering (1)

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#### 22.12.2021 - Vurdert

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 den 22.12.2021, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

#### TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 01.06.2022.

#### 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

NSD 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).

NSD 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

NSD 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).

Ved bruk av databehandler (spørreskjemaleverandør, skylagring eller videosamtale) må behandlingen oppfylle kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29. Bruk leverandører som din institusjon har avtale med.

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 NSD 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/fulle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema>. Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

#### OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

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

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Silje Fjelberg Opsvik  
Lykke til med prosjektet!

## Appendix II: School's Administration's Approval Form

Til rektor [REDACTED]

13. januar 2022

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Førespurnad om å utføre forskingsprosjekt:

«*Never Alone*» for intercultural competence

- an action study on the use of the videogame «*Never Alone*» in high school for building intercultural competence.

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### Bakgrunn og føremål

Eg er masterstudent i IKT i læring ved Høgskulen på Vestlandet og eg ønsker i den samanheng å gjennomføre eit forskingsprosjekt i 2 eller 3 klassar ved [REDACTED] i februar/mars 2022. I studien min vil eg undersøke bruk av narrative videospel som eit alternativ til meir tradisjonelle narrative medium som film og skjønnlitteratur. «Korleis kan ein gå fram når ein skal bruke videospel i undervisninga?» og «Kva læringsutbytte kan elevane få av ei slik tilnærming?» er sentrale spørsmål. Heilt konkret vil eg lage eit undervisningsopplegg der eg brukar videospelet «[Never Alone](#)» som medium til å undervise om temaet *indigenous peoples* i engelsk fellesfag. Målet er blant anna at elevane skal utvikle sin interkulturelle kompetanse.

Arbeidet med denne masteroppgåva skjer under vegleiing av Anders Grov Nilsen, førstelektor ved fakultet for lærarutdanning, kultur og idrett; institutt for pedagogikk, religion og samfunnskunnskap ved Høgskulen på Vestlandet.

### Kva inneber studien?

Eg ønsker, etter avtale med faglærarar, å invitere elevar [REDACTED] til å vere med på dette prosjektet. Det er ein stor fordel både med tanke på autentisiteten i studien, samt etiske utfordringar, [REDACTED]. Prosjektet vil gå føre seg i 3-5 undervisningsøkter i engelsk fellesfag som ein integrert del av undervisningsplanen. Eg ønsker å gjennomføre aksjonsforskning, noko som inneber at eg fungerer både som lærar og forskar, [REDACTED] og med profesjonsutvikling som eit overordna mål.



Dataa eg ønsker å samle inn er observasjon av elevane i undervisningssituasjonen, analyse av elevarbeid, samt gruppeintervju med utvalde elevar i etterkant av undervisninga. Gruppeintervjua vil gå føre seg i løpet av skuledagen og etter avtale med lærarane deira. Elevane vil få informasjon om prosjektet i forkant og det vil berre bli samla inn data blant elevane som leverer skriftleg informert samtykke. Dei kan trekkje samtykket og få innsyn i dataa til ei kvar tid ved å gi munnleg eller skriftleg beskjed til meg eller læraren sin. Prosjektet er meldt til NSD (Personvernombudet for Forskning, Norsk Samfunnsfaglig Datatjeneste A/S) og godkjent 22.12.2021. Alle personopplysningar og data vil bli anonymisert og behandla konfidensielt, samt makulert/sletta når prosjektet er avslutta.

Eg håpar på klarsignal til dette prosjektet og at det vil vere ei nyttig og lærerik erfaring for involverte elevar og lærarar. Dersom du har spørsmål eller noko er uklart er det berre å ta kontakt.

Venleg helsing,  
Cecilie Kartveit McRae

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### Samtykke til forskingsprosjekt ved [REDACTED]

Eg gir med dette samtykke til at Cecilie Kartveit McRae kan utføre eit forskingsprosjekt knytt til masterstudie i IKT i læring v/HVL vårsemesteret 2022 slik det er skildra over.

Dato og signatur:

14.01.22

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Rektor [REDACTED]

## Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

### ” Videospill i undervisning: «Never Alone» for interkulturell kompetanse”?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et aksjonsforskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke om man kan bruke videospill i undervisninga for å utvikle interkulturelle kompetanse. I dette skrevet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

#### Formål

Dette er et masterprosjekt som tar utgangspunkt i å teste et undervisningsopplegg som innebærer å spille et videospill og reflektere rundt tematikken i spillet. Med utgangspunkt i videospillet «Never Alone» skal vi utforske og reflektere rundt Inupiat-folket (urfolk som hører til i Alaska i USA) sin kultur og syn på verden, og sammenligne med vår egen kultur. Interkulturell forståelse og urfolk i den engelskspråklige verden er en sentral del av engelskfaget på vg1.

Jeg ønsker å undersøke om det kan være nyttig, motiverende og/eller lærerikt å bruke videospill når man skal lære om temaer der man ofte bruker film eller bøker. Jeg ønsker også å undersøke hvilken type interkulturell kompetanse man kan tilegne seg gjennom å spille et slikt videospill.

#### Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Høgskulen på Vestlandet er ansvarlig for prosjektet. Masterstudiet er et studium for lærere og heter Master i IKT i læring.

#### Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Faglæreren din i engelsk har sagt ja til å være med på prosjektet og har gitt meg tillatelse til å undervise dere i noen økter i engelsk fremover. Det er to andre klasser som er med på prosjektet også.

#### Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Undervisningsopplegget går over ca 3 økter og krever ikke noe mer av deg enn den undervisningen du er vant til. Elever som ikke ønsker å delta i forskningsprosjektet skal også gjennomføre det samme undervisningsopplegget og gjøre de samme oppgavene. Forskjellen er at de som vil være med i forskningsprosjektet vil bli observert underveis i undervisningen og at oppgavene de leverer vil bli samlet inn som en del av datamaterialet som skal forskes på.

Metodene som skal brukes for datainnsamling er:

- Observasjon: Jeg kommer til å notere det jeg ser og hører underveis som dere spiller og jobber med oppgaver. Jeg kommer spesielt til å følge med på hvordan dere snakker om spillet og temaet med hverandre, og om dere virker motiverte for arbeidet eller ikke. Observasjonen skjer samtidig som jeg fungerer som læreren deres.
- Sporreskjema: Dere skal jobbe med og levere en skriftlig oppgave der dere svarer på spørsmål knyttet til videospillet og temaet *indigenous peoples*. Denne leverer dere til faglæreren deres på ITS som vanlig. Jeg kommer så til å få de tilsendt av faglæreren din slik at jeg kan analysere de nærmere.

Omtrent 1 uker etter at vi er ferdige kommer jeg til å spørre noen av deltakerne om jeg kan intervju de om hvordan de opplevde undervisningen. Det er mulig å delta i prosjektet og likevel si nei til å bli intervjuet.

- Gruppeintervju: Jeg ønsker å intervju noen små grupper om hvordan de opplevde undervisningen. Spørsmålene kommer til å dreie seg rundt om dere syntes det var lærerikt og motiverende eller ikke. Intervjuet tar 15-30 minutt og gjennomføres i skoletiden.

### 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. Eventuell vurdering av oppgaven du leverer vil ikke bli påvirket av analysen jeg gjør.

### 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. Det er bare jeg som har tilgang til dine opplysninger. Istedenfor å bruke navnene deres vil dere få pseudonym, f.eks elev 1, elev 2 osv. Datamaterialet vil bli lagret på NVivo som er en programvare for lagring og behandling av data som Høgskulen på Vestlandet har avtale med.

Masteroppgaven kan bli publisert på nett. I oppgaven vil det ikke komme frem noen opplysninger som kan identifisere deg. Programfag, navn på skole, fylkeskommune osv. vil være anonymt.

### Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er juni 2022. Da vil den informasjonen som eventuelt kan koble navnet ditt til pseudonymet bli slettet og/eller makulert.

### Dine rettigheter

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

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg, og
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

### Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Høgskulen på Vestlandet har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

### Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

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

- Høgskulen på Vestlandet v/Anders Grov Nilsen (veileder)  
E-post: anders.nilsen@hvl.no, tlf: 53491511  
eller Cecilie Kartveit McRae (masterstudent)  
E-post: cecilie.kartveit.mcrae@vlfk.no, tlf: 47617011 eller send melding via It's Learning.
- Vårt personvernombud: Trine Anikken Larsen. E-post: personvernombod@hvl.no

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

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Anders Grov Nilsen  
(Veileder)

Cecilie Kartveit McRae  
(Masterstudent)

## Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «Videospill i undervisning: «Never Alone» for interkulturell kompetanse», og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i observasjon
- å delta i spørreskjema
- å delta i gruppeintervju

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

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

## Appendix IV: Observation Guide

<b>Group:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Event:</b>
<b>Signs of motivation and attitudes amongst the students</b>		
<b>Positive attitude with regards to the method</b>		
<b>Negative attitude with regards to the method</b>		
<b>Positive attitude with regards to the theme</b>		
<b>Negative attitude with regards to the theme</b>		
<b>Signs of engagement</b>		
<b>Signs of lacking engagement</b>		

Group:	Date:	Event:
<b>Signs of intercultural competence<sup>1</sup></b>		
<p>Expressions of values: Human dignity, human rights, cultural diversity, democracy, justice, fairness, equality, laws.</p>		
<p>Expressions of attitudes: Openness to otherness, world views, religious beliefs, respect, civic-mindedness, responsibility, self-efficacy, tolerance, ambiguity</p>		
<p>Expressions of knowledge: Critical understanding about the self, language and communication, politics, laws, human rights, culture, cultures, religion, history, media, economy, sustainability, environment</p>		
<p>Expressions of skills: Autonomous learning, critical thinking, listening, empathy, flexibility, adaptability, linguistic, communicative, plurilingual, co-operation, conflict-resolution.</p>		

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<sup>1</sup> [16807bc66c \(coe.int\)](https://www.coe.int)

## Appendix V: Excerpt of Observation Transcripts

Class: C	Date: 2 <sup>nd</sup> of February	Event: Lesson 1
Signs of motivation and attitudes amongst the students		
Positive attitude with regards to the method	"Dette er bedre enn det me pleier å gjere..." (C6)	
Negative attitude with regards to the method	<p>"Kossen ska me lære noko av dette?" (C6)</p> <p>"Me kan lære matte av å spele Mine Craft, det skjønna eg. Men ikkje dette!" (C6)</p> <p>Small actions of protest, such as leaning back and surfing on their phone when the game would not start instead of trying to fix the problem or ask for assistance. (C9)</p> <p>Demonstratively ejecting the USB-pin while the game is still running. (C9)</p>	
Positive attitude with regards to the theme	Nothing to add	
Negative attitude with regards to the theme	"Syns du dette spelet er gøy??" (C3)	
Signs of motivation	<p>Laughter. (overall)</p> <p>Expressions of excitement, surprise etc. as reaction to the game. (overall)</p> <p>Engaged talking about how to navigate and solve problems within the couples. (overall)</p> <p>The students were in their seats and participating in the activities. (overall)</p>	
Signs of lacking motivation	<p>With regards to watching the cultural insights: "Ska me sjå heile den?!" (C3)</p> <p>Problem med å fokusere på generelt grunnlag (C10)</p> <p>Some, but little phone-usage</p>	
General notes (me)	<p>The students were more willing to follow the instructions given by the teacher during this period. Negative attitudes towards English as a subject and were still expressed, however to a much smaller degree than normal. Some students who earlier have expressed that the English subject is too boring, lack of varied methods etc. made it clear that this was an improvement. Others maintained the negative attitude. Only a few of the students started surfing on their phones, which is normally a large problem. Some of them because they had a</p>	

	hard time staying interested while not being in charge of the controllers themselves. I have asked them to bring extra controllers for next class if they have something at home. This is something I wish the school could provide! I also notice that the students did not wander around a lot. Every class small groups of students go out of the classroom to fill their water bottles, go to the bathroom etc., however none of this occurred today
General notes (EFL-teacher C)	Nothing to add
Signs of intercultural competence <sup>1</sup>	
Expressions of values: Human dignity, human rights, cultural diversity, democracy, justice, fairness, equality, laws.	Nothing to add
Expressions of attitudes: Openness to otherness, world views, religious beliefs, respect, civic-mindedness, responsibility, self-efficacy, tolerance, ambiguity	The spirit world makes the game fictional. Far from one's view of the world.
Expressions of knowledge: Critical understanding about the self, language and communication, politics, laws, human rights, culture, cultures, religion, history, media, economy, sustainability, environment	Mentions of sustainability with regards to natural resources, how the Iñupiat live more sustainable lives and how they have a respectful relationship with animals, nature and the environment.
Expressions of skills: Autonomous learning, critical thinking, listening, empathy, flexibility, adaptability, linguistic, communicative, plurilingual, co-operation, conflict-resolution.	Natural effects of playing the game and co-operation with solving problems. Nothing special with regards to the theme. Different approaches to co-operating and communicating. Some couples are displaying very good communicating and co-operation skills.

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<sup>1</sup> [16807bc66c \(coe.int\)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/intercultural-education/16807bc66c)



## Appendix VI: Written Assignment



### Written assignment

Write a 5-paragraph essay based on the video game *Never Alone*.

#### Paragraph 1

Introduction: Let the reader know what the text will focus on. Describe the structure of your text.

#### Paragraph 2

Describe the video game *Never Alone*. This should include the *setting*, the *main characters*, and the *theme*.

#### Paragraph 3

Describe the relationship between the Iñupiaq, animals, spirits, and nature. Use examples from both the video game and the cultural insights to illustrate.

#### Paragraph 4

Compare the way Iñupiaq utilizes (utnytter) natural resources to how Norway and the western world does.

#### Paragraph 5

Conclusion: Give a final perspective on your text. Is there anything Norway/Norwegians/the western world can learn from the Iñupiaq based on your text?



## Appendix VII: Example of a Student's Work

Student: A6

In this text I am going to talk about the videogame never alone and what it is about. And the relationship between animals, nature, and humans. And I'm also going to compare the Iñupiaq people and how they do things to other countries.

In the game never alone, there are two main characters a girl called Nuna and her fox. And they are on an adventure in Alaska where they come across many different challenges such as escaping a polar bear and a man to just jumping over cliffs or cracks in the ice. And in the game the fox can summon spirits to help them on their adventure. And in the game, they also find or get things like the drum and the bone witch they use to hit things or destroy ice on the walls.

The Iñupiaq people believe that they must be respectful to the animal they kill because or else they will come back as spirits and haunt them. So, they find a use for everything on the animal they have killed. But the Iñupiaq is also respectful to the animals they don't kill. And they believe that after death the animals become spirits. But the Iñupiaq is also respectful to nature so they don't use more resources than they need, and they also believe that everything has a soul.

The Iñupiaq use just the resources they need, and they don't sell them like most western countries. Like Norway which uses the resources they need and then they sell the rest because then they get money like they sell electricity, water, oil, gas, fish and torpedoes or penguins as they are called. But yet so the difference is that the Iñupiaq use just what they need, and the western world makes more than they themselves need to earn money from other countries or customers which need these resources.

Well here in Norway we could learn a thing or two from the Iñupiaq people like using just what we need so that we save the climate and money if you think about it in that way. But at the end of the day their and our culture is different so we might not understand their view of the world and they might not understand ours, but that might be for the best. But yeah, I think the Iñupiaq has an interesting view of the world, and it seems as they are happy with what they believe.

## Appendix VIII: Interview Guide

Date:	Participant 1:	Participant 2:
<b>Experience with <i>Never Alone</i></b>		
General experience		
Experience with playing in couples (watcher and gamer)		
Experience with being a watcher/gamer with regards to engagement		
Engagement in general in EFL-class when working with <i>Never Alone</i>		
Experience with regards to working with the cultural insights		
Experience with regards to working with the written assignment		

General opinion about game-based learning in the classroom		
Reflection on learning outcome		
General learning outcome		
Opinion on the learning outcome: video game vs reading a novel		

## Appendix IX: Example of Interview Transcripts with Coding

Date: 14 <sup>th</sup> of February		Participant 1: C4	Participant 2: C7
<b>Background and previous experience</b>			
Level of enjoyment   Game-based learning   Learning outcome			
<b>Experience with Never Alone</b>			
<b>General experience</b>	<p>Interviewer: Kva syntes dåke om å spele <i>Never Alone</i> då?</p> <p>C4: Synst nå da va veldig greit. Lerte meg litt kva da va og kem dei va, kor dei levde og kossen dei levde. Så da va veldig kjekt. Og å sjå på dei kortfilmene og, lera litt kossen dei har da. Da e jo greit, og i allefall ikkje ta det kvar gong nåken kommer til eit checkpoint for eksempel. Det var jo eit checkpoint med den ugla - se filmen. I stedenfor å vente til kanskje alle var ferdig med den delen, så såg me alle di, og så gjekk vidare, men da va jo veldig greit syntes eg.</p> <p>C7: Eg e egentlig enig i da.</p>	<p>Knowledge (facts)</p> <p>Fun</p> <p>Knowledge (way of living)</p> <p>Okay</p>	
<b>Experience with playing in couples</b>	<p>Interviewer: Korleis opplevde dåke det å spele i par og å måtte bytte på roller?</p> <p>C4: For meg var det greit, men når det var ein og ein... Da va heilt greit syntes eg. Kjekkare hvis begge kunne da.</p> <p>C7: Eg syns nå da gjekk fint å spela ilag, men hadde me kunna kobla to pcar ilag for eksempel og spelt multiplayer så hadde da vore gøyare, ja.</p>	<p>Co-operation</p> <p>Co-operation</p> <p>Could have been more fun</p>	
<b>Experience with watcher -role vs gamer-role</b>	<p>Interviewer: Opplevde dåke at det var stor forskjell på å vere watcher og å vere gamer?</p> <p>C7: Me fekk da nå lika bra te begge to egentlig. Eg fekk med meg litt når eg ikkje styrte, men ikkje alt.</p> <p>C4: Det var greit. Då trengte eg ikkje å spela heile tio. Då kunne me snakka ilag og sånn, så eg syns da og var greit.</p> <p>C7: Nei, eller me sat nå egentlig bare å, eg prøvde litt... Det var eit husker eg, då fekk ikkje eg da te så prøvde [partner], og han fekk det heller ikkje te, og så prøvde me nå bare forskjellige gongar og så gjekk det til slutt.</p>	<p>Co-operation</p> <p>Okay</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Autonomous learning</p>	

Experience with EFL-class	<p>Interviewer: Korleis var det å komme til engelsktimar når dåke visste at dåke skulle spele video spel?</p> <p>C4: <b>Pittelit meir motivert jaffal</b>, men eg va interessert i kossen det kom til å blei, kossen da blei, med speling. <b>Så eg va nå jaffal interessert i kossen da kom te å gjekk, gå. Så da va nå kjekt. Eg gledde meg pittelitt te å prøva, da va litt bedre.</b> Eg va interessert i kossen spelet kom te å ver. Hvis da va litt aensleis enn da eg trudde. Men så va da faktisk heilt sånn da va. Med at da bare va 2D for eksempel, eg trudde da kanskje sku ver 3D. Da e greit med 2D, for då e da berre to veiar du kan gå.</p> <p>C7: <b>Eg syns nå da va gøyare å komma til di timane me sku spela.</b></p>	<p>A bit motivated</p> <p>Interested</p> <p>Fun</p> <p>Looked forward to it</p> <p>Fun</p>
Experience with cultural insights	<p>Interviewer: Korleis opplevde dåke det å bli pausa for å sjå på cultural insights innimellom?</p> <p>C7: <b>Nei da va fint da egentlig da, å få ein pause midt inni og sånn og.</b> Lerte jo litt av å sjå på videoane og. Eg syns me forstod da [spelet] litt bedre og litt sånn når me såg videoane.</p> <p>C4: Ja, eg syntes da va greit. <b>Da va... eg sa jo da i stad, va greit.</b> Da va veldig kjekt, og så lerte eg liksom masse om folkene. Og så på slutten, når me gjekk litt meir igjennom ka di gjor og... sånt. Så då lerte eg litt meir. <b>Da va veldig greit.</b></p>	<p>Nice</p> <p>Knowledge (way of living)</p> <p>Okay</p>
Experience with written assignment	<p>Interviewer: Kva syntes dåke om å få ei skriftlig oppgåve på slutten?</p> <p>C4: <b>Da va litt kjedelig da. Me trengte ikkje å skrive så mye, så da va litt greit syntes eg.</b> Lerte i alle fall masse om dei, da gjor jaffal eg. Så kan eg litt meir om dei folko... no har eg glømt navnet deiras</p> <p>Interviewer: Inupiat-folket</p> <p>C4: <b>Inupiat... eg komme ikkje te å lera da. Men nå vet eg at dei finnes og kor dei levde. Og litt om dei, så da e jo... Då kan eg liksom litt meir når folk spør om da.</b></p> <p>C7: <b>Va da da greiene me hadde på tavlo?</b></p> <p>Interviewer: Nei, dåke skulle skriva ein 5-paragraph essay i siste timen.</p> <p>C7: <b>Åja, den ja! Neei, eg synst nå. Da va nå greitt da egentlig.</b></p> <p>C4: <b>Litt lidelse for å ha da gøy må da ver.</b></p> <p>C7: Ja.</p>	<p>Boring</p> <p>Okay</p> <p>Knowledge</p> <p>Knowledge (facts)</p> <p>Okay</p> <p>Suffer for fun</p>

General opinion: game-based learning	<p>Interviewer: Synes dåke at me bør spele video spel oftare på skulen?</p> <p>C4: Ja!</p> <p>C7: Ja.</p> <p>C4: Ikkje alt for mye, ikkje heile tida, men liksom...</p> <p>C7: Nei.</p> <p>C4: Av og te!</p> <p>C7: Sånn som detta for eksempel.</p> <p>C4: Ja. <b>For det liksom gjør timene litt meir spennende...</b> enn å sitte her.</p> <p>Og lesa... og lesa..! [legg hovudet ned på bordet] Og lesa! Eg med dysleksi for eksempel, eg hate å lesa. Og så foreksempel når eg spele så kan eg hørre, i staden for å lesa. <b>Mye enklere. Det er mye enklere i alle fall.</b> For då e eg liksom interessert i å hørre, og det er veldig viktig hvis du har vansker.</p> <p>C7: <b>Eg e egentlig enig med [C4] at da va litt meir spennande, timane og sånn.</b></p> <p>C4: <b>Pluss, me leve litt meir moderne om dagen, og liksom folk spele frå før av.</b> Da kan jo henda eg kan lere dei andre. <b>Då e eg jaffal meir interessert!</b> Folk like jo å lære andre. Og når dei lere folk andre ting, så lere dei bedre... godt sjølv har eg sjønt.</p>	<p>More exciting</p> <p>Easier than reading</p> <p>More exciting</p> <p>Relevant</p> <p>Co-operation</p>
<b>Reflection on learning outcome</b>		
General opinion on learning outcome	<p>Interviewer: Trur dåke at dåke har lert noko av å spele <i>Never Alone</i>?</p> <p>C4: Ja!</p> <p>C7: Me lerte jo om di der folko då. Ka di må gjera kvar dag og kossen di har da og sånt.</p> <p>C4: Kossen di leve.</p> <p>C7: Ja.</p> <p>C4: Nettsom... di leve veldig likt som samene, bare med is, meir is. Og bruke veldig mye av da di, liksom, går etter, for eksempel dyr. Da bruke jo samane ofta og, lage sånn blodpannekaker og sånt har eg sett. Og di trur jo på sånne spirits, liksom... hvis ikkje di gjer... blir du liksom haunta for resten av livet ditt av ein spirit då. Da... eg vet ikkje med samene, men di trur sikkert på at da sjølv, eg vett ikkje...</p>	<p>Knowledge (way of life)</p> <p>Knowledge (environment, resources, religion)</p>

<p>Opinion on learning outcome: video game vs reading a novel</p>	<p>Interviewer: Hadde dåke lært meir eller mindre av å lesa ei bok med same historie som i spelet trur dåke?</p> <p>C4: Mindre! Fordi me hadde jo sånne småvideoar, da viste jo allerede fra før av, da... ting ein kanskje ikkje har lært endå. For eksempel då... da e jo viktig videoa, da e jo spelet om folket. Så lere liksom litt. For eksempel, alle spel har småvideoar. Hvis det e noko med ei historie å gjera. Folk ska forstå da liksom meir. Kva som skjer. Kva di gjør. Og då e jo folk interessert i da, ka som skjer i videoen! Sånn at du kan forstå koss du ska spela vidare. Og da gjer da litt meir enn at du sitte å bare... sovna... Så eg lerte... Eg trur personlig at eg lerte meir av å spela spelet.</p> <p>C7: Ja, man lere jo... Sånn som når du gjere ting sjølv og sånn, så lere du jo meir enn å lesa ei bok for eksempel, av nokon som berre fortelle kossen du ska gjera ting.</p>	<p>Engagement</p> <p>Learn more from video game</p> <p>Engagement</p>
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## Appendix X: Lesson Plan

<b>Lesson plan: Never Alone - Kisima Injitchuᅇa</b>
<b>Subject:</b> EFL <b>Time:</b> 5 x 70-minute lessons (some lessons might be double lessons)
<b>Theme:</b> Indigenous people of North America – the Iñupiaq <b>Interdisciplinary topic:</b> Democracy and citizenship – intercultural competence (+ sustainable development)
<b>Competence aims:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- discuss and reflect on form, content and language features and literary devices in cultural forms of expression in English from different media in the English-speaking world, including music, film, and gaming</li><li>- explore and reflect on diversity and social conditions in the English-speaking world based on historical contexts</li><li>- express oneself in a nuanced and precise manner with fluency and coherence, using idiomatic expressions and varied sentence structures adapted to the purpose, recipient, and situation</li><li>- assess and revise one's own texts based on criteria in the subject and knowledge of language</li><li>- use knowledge of grammar and text structure in working on one's own oral and written texts</li></ul>
<b>Resources:</b> <p>Cultural Insights: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkGCR-KZ-7M&amp;t=672s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkGCR-KZ-7M&amp;t=672s</a></p> <p>Cutscene - Finding the Blizzard man: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqqbyOaa4ml&amp;list=PLGKJJhcJXINxySSfRskDMkF_ehqLFmrbT&amp;index=7">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqqbyOaa4ml&amp;list=PLGKJJhcJXINxySSfRskDMkF_ehqLFmrbT&amp;index=7</a> (From 4.20)</p> <p>Cutscene - The adze: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqqbyOaa4ml&amp;list=PLGKJJhcJXINxySSfRskDMkF_ehqLFmrbT&amp;index=7">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqqbyOaa4ml&amp;list=PLGKJJhcJXINxySSfRskDMkF_ehqLFmrbT&amp;index=7</a> (From 17.30)</p> <p>Cutscene - Ending: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjBOd_LzC4o">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjBOd_LzC4o</a> (From 07.56)</p> <p>Questions to the cultural insights are enclosed</p>

Lesson	Class	Couples	Resources
1	<p><b>Introduction:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Indigenous peoples of the Arctic region of North America</li> <li>- <i>Never Alone - Kisima Injitchuᅇa</i>: Background information</li> <li>- Establish ground rules</li> <li>- Describe the structure of the lessons</li> <li>- Cultural Insight: 1 + 2</li> <li>- Answer questions in couples, then classroom discussion.</li> <li>- Hand out USB-sticks</li> </ul>		<p>Cultural insight 1: <a href="#">A Living People, a Living Culture</a></p> <p>Cultural insight 2: <a href="#">It Would Be Really Nice to Hear a Story</a></p>
		<p><b>Mission:</b> Get back to Nuna’s village Extra: Watch cultural insights 3 + 5 and answer the questions</p>	<p>Cultural insight 3: <a href="#">Scrimshaw</a> Cultural insight 5: <a href="#">Caribou Skin Clothing Was the Best</a></p>
	<p>Watch cultural insight 4 + 6. Answer questions in couples, then classroom discussion.</p>		<p>Cultural insight 4: <a href="#">Arctic Fox</a> Cultural insight 6: <a href="#">Sila Has a Soul</a></p>
		<p><b>Mission:</b> Get the drum back for the Owl Man, then escape the Terrible Man Extra: Watch cultural insight 8 and answer the question</p>	<p>Cultural insight 8: <a href="#">The Heartbeat of the Community</a></p>

	<p>Watch cultural insight 7 + 8 + 9.          Answer questions in couples, then classroom discussion.          If end of class: Consolidate class and collect the USB-sticks</p>		<p>Cultural insight 7: <a href="#">The Trapping Trail</a>          Cultural insight 10: <a href="#">Bola</a>          Cultural insight 9: <a href="#">Little People</a></p>
2	<p>If start of new class:          - What did the students learn during the previous lesson? What happened with Nuna and the fox?          - Remind the students of the ground rules          - Hand out USB-sticks</p>		
		<p><b>Mission:</b> Escape the polar bear          Extra: Watch cultural insight 13 and answer the question</p>	<p>Cultural insight 13: <a href="#">A Girl &amp; Her Nanuq</a></p>
	<p>Watch cultural insight 11 + 12          Answer questions in couples, then classroom discussion.</p>		<p>Cultural insight 11: <a href="#">Stranded</a>          Cultural insight 12: <a href="#">No More Thick Ice</a></p>
		<p><b>Mission:</b> Escape the whale          Extra: Watch cultural insight 15 and answer the question</p>	<p>Cultural insight 15: <a href="#">Everything is Alive</a></p>

	Watch cultural insight 14 + 16 Answer questions in couples, then classroom discussion.		Cultural insight 14: <a href="#">Subsistence Lifestyle</a> Cultural insight 16: <a href="#">Sharing for Survival</a>
		<b>Mission:</b> Escape the Terrible Man (again) Extra: Watch some of the cultural insights you have not had time to watch before and answer the questions	
	Watch cultural insight 17 + 18 Answer questions in couples, then classroom discussion. If end of class: Consolidate class and collect the USB-sticks		Cultural insight 17: <a href="#">King Island</a> Cultural insight 18: <a href="#">Northern Lights</a>
3	If start of new class: - What did the students learn during the previous lesson? What happened with Nuna and the fox? - Remind the students of the ground rules - Hand out USB-sticks		
		<b>Mission:</b> Make the three in the forest lake come alive Extra: Watch cultural insight 19 and answer the question	Cultural insight 19: <a href="#">The Month of Night</a>

	Watch cultural insight 20 + 21 + 22 Answer questions in couples, then classroom discussion.		Cultural insight 20: <a href="#">Animal Spirits</a> Cultural insight 21: <a href="#">Rebirth &amp; Naming</a>
		<b>Mission:</b> Battle the Terrible Man Extra: Watch some of the cultural insights you have not had time to watch before and answer the questions	
	Watch cultural insight 22 Answer question in couples, then classroom discussion. If end of class: Consolidate class and collect the USB-sticks		Cultural insight 22: <a href="#">Man Slayer</a>
4	If start of new class: - What did the students learn during the previous lesson? What happened with Nuna and the fox? - Remind the students of the ground rules - Hand out USB-sticks		
		<b>Mission:</b> Find the source of the blizzard and stop it. Extra: Watch some of the cultural insights you have not had time to watch before and answer the questions	

	Watch cultural insight 23 Answer question in couples, then classroom discussion.		Cultural insight 23: <a href="#">Reading the Weather</a>
		<b>Mission:</b> Get back to the village Extra: Watch cultural insight and answer the question	
	Watch cultural insight 24 Answer question in couples, then classroom discussion. Consolidate class and collect the USB-sticks		Cultural insight 24: <a href="#">Kunuuksaayuka</a>
5	<b>Written assignment:</b> 5-paragraph essay based on Never Alone		

## Appendix XI: Action Research Study Overview

Rough outline of the action research study timeline:

Period	Action Research Step
January 2021 – August 2021	Identify
September 2021 – January 2022	Develop
January 2022 – March 2022	Implement and reflect
March 2022 – May 2022	Consolidate

Schedule for action implementation and interviewing the EFL-students:

1 <sup>st</sup> implementation: Class C + EFL-teacher C		
Date	Period(s)	Plan
1/26	5 <sup>th</sup>	Give information about the project and ask for consent
2/2	5 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 1
2/3	2 <sup>nd</sup> + 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Lesson 2 and 3
2/9	5 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 4
2/10	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Lesson 5
2/14	2 <sup>nd</sup> + 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Interviews
Cancelled <sup>1</sup> : Class B + EFL-teacher B		
Date	Period(s)	Plan
2/14	1 <sup>st</sup>	Give information about the project and ask for consent
2/16	3 <sup>rd</sup> + 4 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 1 and 2
2/21	1 <sup>st</sup>	Lesson 3
2/23	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Lesson 4
2/25	1 <sup>st</sup>	Lesson 5
2/25	4 <sup>th</sup> + 5 <sup>th</sup>	Interviews
2 <sup>nd</sup> implementation: Class A + EFL-teacher A		
Date	Period(s)	Plan
3/7	1 <sup>st</sup>	Give information about the project and ask for consent
3/9	3 <sup>rd</sup> + 4 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 1 and 2
3/14	1 <sup>st</sup>	Lesson 3
3/16	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Lesson 4
3/18	1 <sup>st</sup>	Lesson 5
3/22	1 <sup>st</sup> + 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Interviews

<sup>1</sup> Implementation with Class B was cancelled due to many students absent during week 8. Week 9 was winter break, which made it difficult to ensure continuity and to interview the students in close proximity to the lessons. It was considered sufficient to implement the lessons in two classes