Co-funded by
the European Union

EAIE
Esports as Accelerator for Social Inclusive Education

LESSON

USING GAMING TO MAKE THE ABSTRACT CONCRETE: TETRIS AND THE MYTH OF SISYPHUS

AUTHOR

MARIE ZEUTHEN HELSTRUP
HF & VUC KØBENHAVN SYD

TETRIS AND THE MYTH OF SISYPHUS

Reading existential philosophy can be a challenge for some students because of its abstract and complex nature. This learning design aims to make the abstract more concrete and thereby helping students in comprehending the existential concept of the absurd. The example provided is from a Danish class, but the activity is equally relevant in other subjects where existential philosophy is a topic.

Subject and level

Danish A-level, Upper Secondary Education

Connection to curriculum

This exercise forms part of the students' broader development in academic skills, with a specific focus on reflexive thinking, thus training the ability to analyze and interpret, discuss, reflect and assess.

Didactic and pedagogic considerations

The purpose of the exercise is to make the concept of the absurd more comprehensible and maybe even relatable to the students, thus increasing motivation. The game of Tetris can help the students in learning existential philosophy within the zone of proximal development. Learning goals of the exercise are: understanding the concept of absurdism according to Camus, practicing reflexive thinking, and increasing motivation in learning existential philosophy.

Time estimate

1-2 hours

Group size

Class, in pairs, and groups of four

Overall introduction to exercise

By playing the game of Tetris and afterwards analyzing and reflecting on the game rules and graphic framework, all in the context of learning about existential philosophy, the students will get a hands on experience of the meaningless repetitive action in the game but the game also provides the possibility of coming to accept the meaninglessness and absurdism of the game - and in a larger sense as terms of life - and thereby becoming Sisyphus themselves.

TETRIS AND THE MYTH OF SISYPHUS

Exercise as presented to the students

In an earlier class the students have read the original myth of Sisyphus and examined the crime and punishment in the myth, the symbols in the myth, and what terms of life the myth tells us about.

1. Teacher's introduction to the existentialism of Albert Camus.
2. The students read the interpretation of the myth of Sisyphus by Albert Camus. While reading the text the students take notes and after reading they are asked to explain how Camus look upon Sisyphus.
3. Classroom dialogue about the myth according to Camus.
4. Teacher's short introduction to the game of Tetris.
5. The students play the Game of Tetris in the time frame of 10 minutes.
6. In pairs the students analyze the game of Tetris focussing on the game rules and graphic framework.
7. In groups of four the students reflect on and discuss if and how the game of Tetris can be seen as an example of the absurdity and meaninglessness of life, and also if and why playing the game, knowing that the game is "endless", is still fun.
8. Classroom discussion of the game of Tetris in the light of the concept of absurdism and the perception of Sisyphus as a happy man.
9. At the end of the class the students evaluate what they have learned by throwing a ball from student to student. When a student gets the ball he/she answers one of two questions:

- What have I learned in class today?
- What is the Myth of Sisyphus about?

E-SPORT AS ACCELERATOR FOR SOCIAL INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

WWW.EASIE.GG

Co-funded by
the European Union

FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION. VIEWS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED ARE HOWEVER THOSE OF THE AUTHOR(S) ONLY AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION OR THE EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA). NEITHER THE EUROPEAN UNION NOR EACEA CAN BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM.