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To what extent does the video game *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* have the potential to promote students' awareness of gendered stereotypes in Upper Secondary School?

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ABSTRACT

Gendered stereotypes are prevalent in society in general, and video games in particular. Many players of video games are young, and since young people are inclined to model their behaviour and expectations on the content they consume, it is crucial that their awareness of gendered stereotypes in video games is raised. Some video games aim for a less gender biased content and character gallery, however. Among them is the story-rich choice-oriented game *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*, which includes a female protagonist and non-stereotypical female characters. Despite its interesting female characters, *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* utilizes gendered stereotypes and plot devices to drive the story forward. This thesis investigates whether the game may be of value when it comes to promoting students' awareness of gendered stereotypes by testing out a gender-awareness teaching project in three English classes in a Norwegian Upper Secondary School.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ever since the arrival of coin-operated arcade computers in the 1970s, video games have been a popular past-time activity among youths, and as personal computers and video game consoles made their way into many Norwegian households during the 1980s and 90s, the younger generations' excitement for video games grew ever stronger. Among a considerable part of the parent generation, however, excitement grew into concern as video games became more violent in nature and took up more of their children's time (Dietz, 1998). The scepticism towards video games has since continued to influence people's attitudes towards video games and those who play them, and there is a stigma attached to being an avid gamer that you will not find for, say, an avid reader. For instance, a vast majority of parents would react positively to their child being so absorbed by a novel's story that they were hardly able to put the book down, while if said story were part of a video game the parents would arguably react with less enthusiasm.

Most teachers have long harboured similar attitudes, and as individual student laptops made their way into Norwegian schools with the implementation of the new national curriculum of 2006 "Kunnskapsløftet 2006", it was despite laptops' gaming feature, and not because of it. Since the arrival of the student laptops, not to mention smart phones, video games have to a large extent become known among Norwegian teachers as a nuisance disrupting their classes and distracting their students from coursework, and less so for their learning potential.

Though many of today's teachers grew up surrounded by video games, it is rarely an interest that has followed them into adulthood. According to Statistics Norway (2019a; 2019b), an average Norwegian teenager in 2018 was more likely to play a digital game than watch television during an average day, with 81% of the respondents from the age of 9 to 15 and 59% of those from the age of 16 to 24 reporting that they played digital games daily. Contrarily, as one can imagine, the older the respondent was, the more likely the tendency to prefer digital games over television was to be reversed (Statistics Norway, 2019a; 2019b). Respondents between the ages of 45 and 66, for example, spent merely eight minutes on digital games and 117 minutes on television during a day (Statistics Norway). Taking into consideration that 71% of teaching staff in Upper Secondary Education was over the age of 40 in 2019, the average student in Upper Secondary is unlikely to find that their teacher shares their passion for digital games (Statistics Norway, 2020). It is equally unlikely

that teachers will recognise a video game as a work of art worthy of study in their classroom as they would a novel, motion picture or television show. If video games come up in class at all it may be to criticise them as an inferior type of media due to their reputation as either being infantile, addictive or as promoting the use of violence and emotionally desensitising players to violence.

Though it is true that the misinformed belief that games are devoid of cultural or literary value keeps us from exploiting their true potential, that is not to say that video games and gaming culture are unproblematic (Ruberg, 2018). But by ignoring video games' value as art in educational settings, teachers are missing out on the opportunity to teach their students, who are likely already spending a significant amount of time on video games, how to critically engage with this type of media while applying strategies and developing skills similar to a literature curriculum (Teasley & Wilder, 1997, pp. 2-4). These strategies and skills may for example be applied in order to explore, criticise and suggest alternatives to the very same negative tendencies or topics popularly associated with video game culture that make many adults view them as inferior to other cultural expressions. It is not by denouncing video games and gaming culture entirely that we rid ourselves of the problematic aspects we associate with them, it is by recognising their educative potential, respecting their cultural value and joining the debate about their future. In the words of Dewey (1944, p. 167): "if we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow."

As mentioned previously, video games have a reputation for being addictive and glorifying violence, but another problematic aspect to video games and the gaming community is the often exaggerated use of gendered stereotypes and their tendency to exclude or disregard female and queer players. Although women play video games nearly as much as men, many assume that the maleness and heterosexuality of gamers is innate, and thus female and queer gamers are not viewed as genuine (Statistics Norway, 2019b; Kocurek, 2015, pp. 196-201). This assumption has led to a tendency to sexualisation and objectification of women, neglect of female interests and a poor representation of female and queer characters in video games. The gaming community has been equally unwelcoming to female and queer players, seeing as misogynistic and homophobic language is commonplace and that there is a tendency for harassment of female and queer players and game critics (Ruberg, 2018).

Life Is Strange: Before the Storm by Deck Nine (2017) is an example of a video game that counters some of the sexist tendencies of video game culture. *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* has a female protagonist and features a cast of female characters who are complex and exert strength without being sexualised, and the game might therefore be

interesting to study in English class as it suggests an alternative for how to include female characters in video games in a non-stereotypical and non-sexist way while also being engaging.

1.1 Background

Many publications investigate video games' potential for meaningful learning across disciplines. Among them are Buckingham and Burn (2007), who find there is a need to teach students how video games are to be studied in order to have a more coherent and informed debate of video game tendencies and culture. Meanwhile Thorne, Black and Sykes (2009) uncover that using video games in language teaching may enable learners to become proficient users of the language in particular speech communities, since they through interaction with games and in gaming communities will develop semiotic resources, familiarity with expected dispositions and normative patterns of interaction.

Sarkeesian (2013a; 2013b; 2014a; 2014b), Shaw (2014) and Kocurek (2015) find that there is a tendency to disempower female characters and players as they research video game culture. In addition, Sarkeesian, together with Petit and Adams, has developed teaching plans related to her video project *Tropes vs. Women in Video Games*, which concretise the educational potential in looking at gender issues in video games in general (Petit, Sarkeesian & Adams, 2018). But none of these papers research the educational value of playing and analysing a particular game from a gender perspective in the classroom.

Also, several papers research interesting topics as they are rendered in the first game in the *Life Is Strange* series. Among them are, Núñez, Catalán and Serrano's (2016) and Gheeraert's (2021) papers which explore guilt and time and de Miranda's (2018) article which compares the game to existentialist philosophy. Another example is Butt and Dunne (2017) who criticise *Life Is Strange* from a gender perspective and provide many specific examples which could be useful to discuss in class, but they do not investigate the educational potential of the game series. Furthermore, no research has been published on *Life Is Strange*'s successor and prequel *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*.

1.2   Aim

This thesis takes a closer look at video games as a didactic tool in the English classroom. In particular, I investigate whether the game *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* has the potential to promote students' awareness of the topic of gendered stereotypes. This is done through a study and research-based analysis of how gender is portrayed in the game, and a subsequent development and implementation of a gender-awareness teaching project, which was executed in three English classes in a Norwegian Upper Secondary School.

It is important to raise students' awareness of gendered stereotypes and how they are presented in literature and media products so that they may recognise patterns that lead us to act a certain way due to our assigned gender and, even more importantly, that they make us expect a certain behaviour and appearance from others because of their gender. Further, the aim is that the students will be better equipped to criticise and recognise how expecting certain behaviour of someone based on their gender may be exclusionary and harmful to those who do not live up to the stereotype, and how in some cases the expectations from gendered stereotypes set people up to fail because they are impossible to meet, for instance in cases where they are contradictory or anatomically impossible to achieve. By taking part in the debate over gendered stereotypes in a school setting the students may be better prepared to debate this topic in the public sphere, and become agents of change by explicitly calling out negative stereotypes against an outgroup (Walton, 2003).

The process of studying *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* from a gender perspective cannot be entirely removed from the process of reacting to and interpreting the story as a literary product, the tropes and stereotypes used may be key elements that provide the story with conflict that motivates the player to keep on playing in order to resolve it. Additionally, appreciating the game's literary quality and interpreting and reacting to its characters and plotline might increase the students' enjoyment of the game, and thus their motivation to work on a gender analysis of it.

Besides, the aim of this research project is not merely to investigate how students may gain knowledge about gendered stereotypes and succeed to recognise them in a gaming context, the aim is also to broaden students' understanding of what a video game is by showing them that video games with a story may be treated as literature and therefore be as enriching an experience as reading an interesting novel or watching an engaging motion picture. Those students who already play a lot of video games may gain more tools for engaging with the games they play and be better able to recognise and be critical of the use

and overuse of gendered stereotypes in this type of media. And even if the participants never play another video game in their lives, they will still be better able to understand the appeal video games have to their peers who do play, as they themselves have engaged with a game on a deeper level, and thereby be less likely to dismiss them as a mindless timewasting activity and they will also be better equipped to join the conversation about gender representation in video games and gaming.

The main research question in this thesis is the following: To what extent does the video game *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* have the potential to promote students' awareness of gendered stereotypes in Upper Secondary School?

1.3   Overview of study

First, this study will provide a theoretical background of the topics of gendered stereotypes and sexism, both in society in general and in video games. Then follows an explanation of the method and material used in the study. After that there will be an account of gender portrayal in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*, followed by a teaching plan based on those results. Finally, the results from following the teaching plan in three different first-year English groups in Upper Secondary School will be discussed and connected to a discussion of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*'s potential to promote awareness of gendered stereotypes in Upper Secondary followed by a conclusion.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Every society recognises many particular behaviours and characteristics as more suitable to females or more suitable to males, which in turn causes members of the society in question to have preconceived notions about individuals based on their gender. Gendered stereotypes are made up of generally accepted notions about how a person will or should act, appear or be treated based on their gender.

Media has a powerful influence when it comes to generating and perpetuating stereotypes, especially when it comes to gender, and video games are no exception. On the contrary, video games are notoriously known for objectifying female characters and assigning them limiting roles (Yokoi, 2021). Since video games make up an increasingly important part of people's social and cultural life in today's digital world, it is important to discuss the ways in which many video games and a significant portion of the gaming community contribute to upholding gendered stereotypes and sexist attitudes.

2.1 Gendered stereotypes

Samovar, Porter, McDaniel and Roy (2013, p. 389) explain stereotyping as a form of categorisation that guides one's behaviour toward a particular group of people. Gendered stereotypes may be determined by biological factors, as for example expectations regarding procreation, but most are social constructs deriving from cultural conventions in a society where most institutions are led by men – a patriarchal society (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, p. 137). Some of those social constructs may originate from physical differences, however. For example, men's statistically greater strength and size is one of the reasons for why men have dominated preindustrial societies and today wield more structural power, while women may be viewed as more fragile. Similarly, women being pregnant and breastfeeding infants may have contributed to women's restricted domestic role (Glick & Fiske, 1996, p. 491).

Gendered stereotypes are also affected by how heterosexual men in a patriarchal society need women for reproduction and satisfying sexual and psychological needs (Glick & Fiske, p. 491). Both men and women largely depend on the opposite sex for reproduction, sexual gratification and relationships, which means women have a degree of dyadic power in their interactions and relationships with men, a power that is reflected in stereotypes of

women as needing to be protected and to be revered for their roles as romantic or sexual objects, wives and mothers (Glick & Fiske, p. 492).

De Beauvoir (1949/2015) highlights that while men dominate the public sphere and are considered by society to be "Subjects", women are defined with reference to men – for example as love interests or mothers, and thereby act as "the Others". Within the female stereotype lies a double standard – women should be pleasing to men, but not to a degree where they attract sexual attention.

Glick and Fiske (pp. 493-494) claim that the greatest threat of violence toward women stems from men's dyadic reliance on women as sexual or emotional partners because it makes an otherwise more powerful group, men, vulnerable to a subordinate group, women. Further, they argue that the resentment men have for this vulnerability manifests itself in the stereotype of women as "Manipulative Temptresses" who use their sexual allure to dominate men (Glick & Fiske, pp. 493-494).

When gendered stereotypes become a basis for one's attitudes and behaviour towards others it is what we traditionally refer to as sexism (Summers & Miller, 2014, p. 1031). Glick and Fiske argue that there are different levels of sexism, namely hostile, benevolent and ambivalent sexism. Hostile sexism is the most overt form of sexism and involves an antipathy towards members of a certain sex based on generalisation, whereas benevolent sexism is often well-intentioned but involves behaviour and attitudes that have their basis in a stereotypical view on women or men (Glick & Fiske, p. 491). Though benevolent sexism may be viewed positively by the perceiver, benevolent sexism is also harmful seeing as it perpetuates restrictive generalisations of gender. Ambivalent sexism – when someone holds both hostile and benevolent beliefs simultaneously, may manifest itself in a number of ways, for example through seeing two beliefs from opposite sides of the scale such as "women use sex to manipulate men" and "women are warm and nurturing" as consistent parts of one's attitudes towards women, or through having different attitudes towards different groups of women such as "decent women are to be cherished and protected" whilst "provocative women are temptresses looking to gain power over men" (Glick & Fiske, p. 494).

2.2   Gendered stereotypes in video games

Video games are an important part of popular culture and therefore have an impact on the shaping of their practitioners' values and identities. Despite digital games being a relatively new type of media, they are arguably one of the least progressive forms of media when it comes to gender representation (Shaw, 2015, p. 6). Yet, perhaps surprisingly, many studies show that a significant portion of gamers are female: in Norway a study by Statistics Norway (2019b) shows that women accounted for 46% of those who played video games daily and, similarly, a study from the Internet Advertising Bureau (as cited in Stuart, 2014) found that in 2014 women in the UK made up 52% of the gaming community. Though many players of video games are female, women are often being portrayed as ornamental and peripheral to the male gamer's experience in the actual games (Sarkeesian, 2014a). Further, a view of women as illegitimate gamers has kept female gamers out of video game production, advertising and online gaming forums for several decades (Butt & Dunne, 2017, p. 15).

In addition, there are many signs of female voices being treated as unqualified in discussing video games and instead being subject to threats and cyber bullying (Butt & Dunne, p. 15). For example, when Sarkeesian started exploring video games from a feminist perspective in 2013, the reactionary vitriol and threats that followed were significant. Sarkeesian received many threats of violence, as for instance a very detailed threat of a school shooting at an institute she planned to speak at, multiple cyber-attacks, frequent suggestions that she should commit suicide or threats of violence and the creation of an online game called "Beat Up Anita Sarkeesian" (Sarkeesian, 2017).

In Sarkeesian's video project *Tropes vs. Women in Video Games* popular video games are analysed for their female representation. Sarkeesian (2017) finds that video games often reduce women to very limited roles such as "Damsels in Distress", "Sexy Sidekicks", rewards or, simply, background decoration. What Sarkeesian (2013) finds these roles have in common is that there is a subject-object dichotomy between the male and the female characters – the male characters act while the female characters are acted upon. The portrayal of men as active and women as passive is certainly not unique to video games but bears resemblance to de Beauvoir's observation of woman as the Other in society.

One of the most prevalent video game tropes of women is the Damsel in Distress, a plot device where a male character must rescue a female character that finds herself in a state of helplessness or a perilous situation (Sarkeesian, 2013; 2017). The trope is likely often meant positively, seeing as saving someone from danger is a prosocial act. Still,

the Damsel in Distress plot device objectifies women by reducing female characters to an achievement or a prize to be won – an object, while the male character is the hero – the subject, and contributes to the common stereotype of women as frail and in need of protection (Sarkeesian, 2013).

The Damsel in Distress has been a popular plot device in literature ever since the ancient Greek myth of Perseus and Andromeda and has been applied to countless video game plots (Butt & Dunne, p. 5). Many widely played video games from the 1980s rely on this plot device, among them *Super Mario Bros* and *The Legend of Zelda*. According to Summers and Miller (2014, p. 1035) the trope's popularity peaked in 1991, with 69% of the games in their research material using it as a key plot device, but has since seen a decrease in popularity, until reaching zero games featuring the trope between 2005 and 2007. The Damsel in Distress trope has, however, had a resurgence in recent years and is a crucial plot device in many popular contemporary games such as *Bioshock Infinite*, *Resident Evil 4* and *Hitman: Absolution*, to name a few (Sarkeesian, 2013).

When Summers and Miller (pp. 1035-1036) found that the popularity of the Damsel in Distress trope had decreased, that did not mean they found a decrease in sexist content in video games. On the contrary, the usually benevolent generalisations of women as innocent or in need of saving lost ground to far more hostile tendencies of portraying women as hyper-sexualised objects wearing revealing clothing (Summers & Miller, pp. 1036-1037). Sexualising the female body is common in many types of media, but video games stand out in that they make the sexual objectification of women a participatory activity (Sarkeesian, 2014a).

Though male characters are often depicted as the heroes of video games, male characters are also more likely to have the role of the "Bad Guy". And whether the male character is characterised as good or bad, violent behaviour is often exhibited – it is common for the male character to be portrayed as both a hero and a violent perpetrator (Dietz, 1998, pp. 428, 438). Strength is stereotypically a desired attribute in men, and in video games this ideal is taken to extremes with the willingness to use violence as the ultimate display of strength.

As indicated in the previous chapter, when it comes to gendered stereotypes heterosexuality and a binary view on gender as either male or female is often implied. When queer characters are included in literature or media, which is fairly rare, they are often portrayed as suffering, and their love stories seldom have happy endings. A common trope is for queer characters to die, their death being used as a literary device to give the story

suspense – the "Bury Your Gays" trope. In addition, there is a tendency to overstate the impact of their sexual preference on relationships and interaction with society, how difficult it is to be openly gay is often a major concern, and being preoccupied with "coming out", being alienated by family, friends or society or experiencing homophobia may be all we get to see from a queer character, leaving little room for the other nuances of their identity. There are also many examples of queer characters having roles that leave the impression that queer people are not to be taken seriously, such as mentally deranged or sexually perverted characters or exaggerated queer characters added for comedic effect and ridicule.

3 METHOD AND MATERIAL

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the method used in this research project as well as give the reader some context regarding the participants and the type of empirical data that has been gathered.

3.1   Method

To investigate whether *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* may be used to promote students' awareness of gendered stereotypes, a qualitative content analysis that explores the game's potential to be engaging on a literary level as well as its potential to promote awareness on the topic of gendered stereotypes is offered. Then, based on that qualitative analysis a plan for a teaching project is developed and applied in three Upper Secondary English classes. The effectiveness of the project and *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* is then assessed through action research and the gathering of students' notes during classroom discussions as well as a final survey where the participants themselves assess the project and their learning outcome. The study is qualitative in nature, but due to the many participants, the research material has been limited in order to make it accessible.

3.2   Participants

The 72 participants in this study were English students from three first-year classes at a local Upper Secondary School, known as group one, two and three in this study. The groups have been numbered by order of project start date: the project was introduced in group one first, group two second and group three last. On the one hand, two of the classes, referred to as group one and three in this thesis, had a different English teacher than the one conducting this project, and the researcher thus had no previous knowledge or relationship with the participants in these groups, except for four students in group one whom were in a Spanish class taught by the researcher. On the other hand, one of the classes, referred to as group two, was the researcher's own English class and the participants of this group were therefore known to her beforehand. The possible significance of the pre-existing relationship between

the researcher and the participants in group two is factored in when interpreting the material of this study.

What otherwise set the three classes apart the most is that the students in two of the participating classes, group one and group two, attended the programme for general studies, while students in the third class, group three, attended the study programme of music, dance and drama, with a specialisation in music. The three classes do however follow the same English curriculum and will after completing their three-year study programme receive a general university admissions certification, which certifies them for higher education. The difference in study programme between the groups has not affected the teaching plan in the project, but it is possible that it has had an impact on the outcome.

All the participants in this project were between 16 and 19 years old when the project was carried out in January and February 2021. The majority was born in 2004, while 6% were born between 2002 and 2003. A noteworthy feature of the participants involved in this study is that 79% are female. All the groups have a majority of female students, where group one has the least disproportion with its eight male and seventeen female participants and group two and three having as few as three and four male participants, respectively. All the participants had at least some prior knowledge and experience working with gendered stereotypes seeing as group 1 and 2 had just worked with the topic in their Social Studies classes, and group 3 had conducted a gender analysis of excerpts and the film version of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in their English class.

While the project had 72 participants, not all consented to being observed during the teaching project. The students of all three groups were given the consent form in Appendix 9 to be filled out by them and their parents if they were under the age of 16, if they consented to being observed and letting the researcher gather anonymised data from them, something 49 of the 72 participants allowed. The 23 participants who did not consent to the researcher observing them did however consent to having their anonymous responses to the final survey published in this thesis (see Appendices 7 and 8).

3.3   Material

The material used in this study consists of a summary of the observations of the participants made while conducting the teaching project in the three groups (see Appendix 2), a list of gendered stereotypes based on the students' contributions to the discussion before instruction

on the topic began (see Appendix 3), a collection of notes taken by anonymous groups of students during classroom discussions of the episodes (see Appendix 5), a final survey handed out to the participants after the project had finished (see Appendix 7), and the participants' anonymous answers to that final survey (see Appendix 8).

4 *LIFE IS STRANGE: BEFORE THE STORM*

Life Is Strange: Before the Storm is a story-rich graphic adventure game based on choice and consequence which serves as a prequel to its critically acclaimed predecessor in the game series, *Life Is Strange*.

4.1   Game overview

The graphic quality and animation of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* correspond with the level of other games released in 2017, and the space is reminiscent of the real world, with an environment consisting of buildings and scenery mimicking an American seaside town where the real world's physical laws, such as the laws of gravity and light, apply.

Life Is Strange: Before the Storm does not feature many supernatural elements, such as the ability to manipulate time or the non-linear timeline found in its predecessor, *Life Is Strange* (Dontnod, 2015). The only playable character is the protagonist Chloe Price, whose special ability, "backtalk", involves using snarky comments, wordplay and rude comebacks to win arguments – an ability well within what is humanly possible. The game's linear timeline is, however, frequently interrupted by what seems to be lucid dream sequences where Chloe interacts with her deceased father (Deck Nine, 2017).

One moves around in the game by using the arrow keys and mouse and interacts with other characters and objects by pointing the cursor and clicking. Movement is somewhat restricted, one cannot jump or climb over obstacles or explore spaces unless it is part of the storyline, nor is it possible to interact with all objects. The game is predominantly linear – one may choose to stop and explore some spaces and make conversation with most characters, but, ultimately, one must fulfil the requirements of a carefully scripted storyline in order to progress.

The dialogue in *Life Is Strange* received a lot of criticism for its overuse and misuse of colloquialisms such as "hella" and "chill", and though the developers have taken this feedback into account, the sometimes stilted dialogue of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* may still make the player uncomfortable (Deck Nine; McElroy, 2016; Morganti, 2015). The sometimes awkward presentation of teen culture is however aided by *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*'s powerful narrative which will be recounted and elaborated on at length in the next

chapters. A thorough presentation of the game's narrative is warranted since readers who are unfamiliar with video games in general, and *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* in particular, will need to understand the intricate structure of the game in order to appreciate the vast array of choices the game offers. Furthermore, a proper understanding of the complexity of the *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*'s story is needed to properly identify its use of gendered stereotypes, and thus uncover its potential for promoting students' awareness of gendered stereotypes.

4.2   The narrative

Just like its predecessor, *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* is set to the fictitious seaside town of Arcadia Bay by the coast of Oregon, and it is mostly here the game's narrative takes place. While the nucleus of the first game in the series, *Life Is Strange,* was the disappearance of Chloe Price's friend Rachel Amber, *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*, focuses on how the relationship between the two came to be and how their bond grew so strong (Deck Nine, 2017).

Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* opens with sixteen-year-old Chloe Price, trying to get into a concert with the band Firewalk at an old mill. Depending on the choices the player makes, she either talks her way in by insulting the bouncer who does not want to allow her in due to her young age, or sneaks in through a backdoor. Once inside, Chloe can interact with people and objects. One of the people she may talk to is Frank Bowers, who we learn is her drug dealer whom she owes money. It is also possible, but not required, to steal a band t-shirt and some money, which the player may use to buy weed or keep.

Chloe then tries to make her way through the crowd to get a good view of the band when someone pushes her and she accidently spills a man's beer. The incident leads to a minor altercation and Chloe leaves the crowd, ascends a rotten staircase to observe the concert from the first floor. After a while, the man from the previous altercation and his friend show up to confront Chloe again. Just as one of them breaks a beer bottle and threatens Chloe with it, Rachel Amber, a popular girl from Chloe's school, Blackwell Academy, shows up to distract them and helps Chloe escape. The player can choose between attacking one of the men or running away, the first alternative would leave Chloe with a bruised eye. Then the two girls run down the stairs, where Frank stops the two men in their pursuit of the girls. The

scene ends with Chloe and Rachel making their way to the front row of the concert where they dance to Firewalk's music.

The following morning Chloe wakes up to her mother, Joyce Price, calling her down for breakfast. The player then has to select an outfit for Chloe to wear and find her mobile phone and Joyce's purse before descending. In the kitchen, Chloe and Joyce have a conversation where Joyce expresses concern over Chloe's late nights and absence from school, warning that Chloe might lose her scholarship if the trend continues. One can assess that losing the scholarship will likely mean Chloe has to quit Blackwell, as Chloe comments on how the rest of the money in the "swear jar" after her deceased father, William Price, was spent on bus fare and milk and Joyce explicitly mentions that "money's tight enough as it is" (Deck Nine). During the same conversation, Chloe and Joyce also discuss Joyce's new boyfriend, David Madsen, whom Chloe disapproves of. Chloe comments on how she does not like that everything is changing to accommodate him and how he addresses her using derogatory language while Joyce urges Chloe to be more understanding and respectful towards him. The conversation ends with Joyce telling Chloe to find David's keys so he may drive her to school.

After finding the keys Chloe goes outside where David greets her by saying "Why do you women always take forever to get ready?", despite him being the one who is not ready to leave yet as he is still working on his car, which Chloe responds to by retorting "We're hoping you men will leave without us" (Deck Nine). The interaction between the two continues to be fraught with poor communication and disrespectful remarks, and it is apparent that the state of their relationship is dismal. During the car ride David and Chloe, depending on the player's choice, either have a discussion or David lectures Chloe without much opposition. Chloe then falls asleep for the remainder of the trip and has a dream where she is in a car with her father, William. The car in Chloe's dream is eventually struck by another vehicle, which indicates that William has passed away due to a car accident.

Arriving at Blackwell Academy's school grounds Chloe first encounters her classmate Eliot Hampden, who shows concern about Chloe's bruise if she has one and tells her there are rumours about Chloe's activity last night in a way that might suggest he dislikes these rumours. Eliot proceeds to ask Chloe if she will go with him to see the school's production of Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, which the player may then either accept or decline. Chloe must then search for another student, Steph Gingrich, in order to retrieve a DVD from her. When Chloe finds Steph, Steph asks her if she and Rachel went out last night or whether it was "just like… a friend thing", revealing that Steph herself is interested in

Rachel romantically (Deck Nine). After talking to Steph, Chloe goes towards the school's entrance but is interrupted by a heated discussion between Drew North and Nathan Prescott. It appears as though Drew, being a strong and confident athlete, is bullying the smaller and more insecure Nathan, and Chloe is urged by another female student, Samantha, to step in in Nathan's defence, a decision which is left up to the player to make. If Chloe does not intervene Samantha is disappointed and if Chloe defends Nathan Samantha is grateful. When the fight ends, Drew is heard saying "Take your pervy picture book" as he hands a folder back to Nathan, which is a reference to Nathan's involvement in the non-consensual drugging and photographing of female students that is revealed in the sequel *Life Is Strange* (Deck Nine; Dontnod, 2015).

As she is about to enter the school building, Chloe runs into Rachel who takes her by the hand and guides her without explanation to Rachel's Drama class, where they are rehearsing *The Tempest*. Rachel asks Chloe about her opinion on the feelings between the play's characters Miranda and Fernando, and the player may choose whether Chloe thinks it is true love or not. The class ends and Chloe and Rachel have an intimate moment where Chloe enters Rachel's dressing room to hand her a belt. Rachel is without her top on, and instead of seeming uncomfortable in the situation, she coquettishly asks Chloe if she brought flowers to her dressing room. After having finished changing out of her costume, Rachel tells Chloe how much she enjoyed herself last night and how she "went to bed last night wishing it never had to end", she then proceeds to invite Chloe to skip school so they can go on a field trip together (Deck Nine).

Chloe accepts Rachel's invitation, and they jump a train, which they ride to a nearby state park where they use a viewfinder to spy on people while they make up bizarre dialogues and invent stories about the people they see. When they observe a couple kissing, Rachel acts upset and tells Chloe she needs to get drunk, so the two collaborate to steal a bottle of wine from a couple in the park. The girls come upon a junkyard and Rachel continues to seem upset, acting, as Chloe describes it, "kind of standoffish" (Deck Nine). Rachel's mood leads to a discussion between the two where the player at one point must choose whether what is going on between the two is friendship, or "something more" (Deck Nine). Regardless of the player's choice, Rachel will leave, and Chloe will react to her leaving by breaking things around her with a baseball bat. During her rampage, Chloe sees William's damaged car which she finds even more upsetting. Later, after waking up from another dream about her father, Chloe finds Rachel who explains her previous change in behaviour by telling Chloe that the couple kissing was her father, James Amber, cheating on

her mother with another woman. The two girls make plans to run away from Arcadia Bay together. Rachel then proceeds to burn a picture of her and James and she starts a wildfire by kicking the trash bin with the burning picture over, screaming in rage as the fire intensifies. It is unclear whether there is a correlation between Rachel's screams and the fire burning stronger.

The following day Chloe and Rachel and their parents are in Principal Wells' office for skipping school the previous day. Principal Wells unjustly assumes Chloe has influenced Rachel to misbehave, but Rachel intervenes and assumes responsibility. The player must choose between going along with Rachel's story or Chloe taking full responsibility. If Chloe lets Rachel take the blame Rachel loses her role as Prospero in *The Tempest* and Chloe is suspended, if Chloe on the other hand claims full responsibility Rachel will keep her role and Chloe will be expelled. How far Joyce will go to defend Chloe will depend on the player's choices in the game, but Joyce will still react to Principal Wells being harder on Chloe and asks if his behaviour is biased "because she's on financial aid" (Deck Nine).

Outside the school Chloe will run into Eliot, who shows her sympathy for being either expelled or suspended and offers her a hug. Chloe then walks over to Joyce and David who are waiting for her in the car park. While Joyce is more sympathetic towards Chloe after the meeting, David gives her a hard time and asks Chloe to empty her pockets to prove she does not have any drugs. During the same conversation David reveals he will be moving in with them, claiming that the household needs "a firmer hand steering this ship" (Deck Nine). Chloe storms off upon hearing the news and decides to stay at the junkyard instead of going home. At the junkyard she finds an old inoperative truck which she tries to fix so she and Rachel may use it to leave town, but fails and falls asleep while resting in the front seat. Again, Chloe dreams of William. Rachel wakes Chloe up as she arrives with a bag of clothes and the two have a pretend-therapy session to talk about their problems.

Later Chloe leaves the junkyard to seek out Frank, and as she approaches his caravan, she sees the woman whom Rachel's father had kissed the day before getting out of the vehicle. Chloe may later learn that the woman's name is Sera and that she's "causing all kinds of trouble" from Frank if the player makes the right choices (Deck Nine). Frank also reveals that Drew is selling drugs for his associate, Damon Merrick, and prompts Chloe to go to the dormitories of Blackwell Academy to retrieve money Drew owes Damon. Chloe is caught in the act of taking the money by Drew and his younger brother, Mikey, and shortly after Damon arrives. Drew steps outside to talk to Damon who turns violent, leaving the player with the choice of either intervening or staying in the room with Mikey. If the player

intervenes, Mikey is injured and Chloe gives Damon the money Drew owes him, and if the player does not intervene Drew is injured and Chloe may choose whether to return the money to Drew or keep them.

In the next scene Chloe finds herself by the stage of *The Tempest.* There, Chloe overhears Nathan's father, Sean Prescott, scolding Nathan for tarnishing the Prescott name by showing weakness because Nathan feels anxious about going on stage. Chloe heads backstage to meet up with Rachel, and there is a situation involving Rachel's understudy Victoria which varies depending on if Rachel kept her role as Prospero in the play or not. If Rachel is still in the play, Victoria will drug Rachel's tea in an attempt to take over, an attempt that Chloe intercepts and stops either by switching the cups or by telling Rachel about it. If Rachel lost her role in the play, on the other hand, one possible outcome is that Chloe talks Victoria out of performing, should the player fail to reinstate Rachel in her role, however, Rachel will take matters into her own hands and be the one who drugs Victoria's tea.

Moments later, the Drama teacher reveals that the actor portraying Ariel is unable to get to Blackwell in time, due to the ongoing wildfire Rachel started the night before. Rachel convinces Chloe to step in though she is both unprepared and uninterested in being on stage, and the two of them start improvising parts of the dialogue between their two characters. In the original *The Tempest* Prospero gives Ariel his freedom after the conflict is resolved and Ariel has done his part, while Chloe as Ariel, on the other hand, expresses concerns about being alone in the world once regaining freedom, and Rachel as Prospero gives Ariel his freedom while promising that they will be together once Prospero's obligations are fulfilled (Shakespeare, 1564-1616/2015, p. 97; Deck Nine).

Later that night Rachel and Chloe talk excitedly about their plans of running away together, and when Rachel asks Chloe what it would take to convince Chloe to leave immediately the player can choose to ask Rachel for a kiss, which she will gladly give Chloe. They go to Rachel's house to secretly pack a bag and run away, but there they encounter James who invites them to stay for dinner. During dinner Rachel becomes upset with James as he talks about the importance of family and an argument ensues. Eventually, James reveals that the woman he kissed was not his mistress, but rather Rachel's birthmother, Sera Gearhardt. James reveals that Sera became a drug addict when Rachel was an infant and that he has paid her to stay away from them for fifteen years.

Rachel goes to her room to process the news and Chloe follows her and improvises a starry sky in the ceiling to try to cheer Rachel up. They lie in bed hugging each other while they watch the starry sky and talk. As they talk Rachel tells Chloe she is the only

person whom Rachel feels she can trust. Further, Rachel shares that she would like to meet Sera but does not know how to find her, or how to get to her if she discovers her location and Chloe offers to help out with both issues. Chloe then falls asleep, and again she dreams of William.

The following morning Chloe goes home to shower and change clothes. She then contacts Frank in order to try to find Sera, and he agrees to meeting Chloe at the junkyard. As she attempts to sneak out of the house, Chloe notices Joyce and David being flirtatious and happy together as David cooks Joyce breakfast. Joyce and David notice Chloe and in a heartfelt moment David apologises for making her empty her pockets the day before and opens up about losing a friend from his army unit while deployed overseas, saying he knows a lot about grief and that he knows what Chloe is going through if she ever wants to talk. Chloe then heads to the garage to pick up William's toolbox and heads over to the junkyard to try to fix the truck again, this time succeeding. David sends her a text message asking if she was working on a project as he saw the toolbox missing and commends her for committing to a project. Rachel joins Chloe at the junkyard, and Frank arrives together with Damon shortly after. Damon acts threatening towards the girls and asks them to stop asking about Sera. Damon also deduces that Rachel is James Amber's daughter after hearing Chloe calling her name, and during an argument between them Rachel attacks Damon who draws a knife and stabs Rachel in the arm. Again, Frank comes to the girls' rescue and holds Damon back as Chloe rushes Rachel to hospital in the truck she had just fixed.

In the hospital's waiting room Chloe tells James what happened, and divulges that Damon knew Rachel was James' daughter. James assures Chloe that she is not to blame for what happened to Rachel and that Rachel will recover from the injury. In the hospital the player may choose to have a conversation with several people, including Drew and Mikey's father, Anthony North, who will reveal that his financial situation since becoming unemployed is dire and that Drew has been helping him. Eventually, Chloe enters Rachel's room, where Rachel asks Chloe to help her find Sera by breaking into James' office. On her way out of the hospital, Chloe runs into Eliot in the hallway who expresses concern for Chloe's wellbeing and safety when he learns about Rachel's injury and also comments on how Rachel and Chloe spend a lot of time together.

At James' office Chloe finds a stack of letters from Sera to Rachel about how Sera regrets not being part of Rachel's life and that she would like to resume contact after having been sober a year, as well as a letter to James from Sera's lawyer saying he is not allowed to deny Sera of having contact with her daughter. Chloe also finds evidence that

James contacted Damon to "help [him] with [his] problem" and that Damon now has Sera (Deck Nine). Chloe uses James' disposable cell phone to contact Damon, pretending that she is James, to uncover Sera's location. After having to destroy evidence from a case against Damon, give up an informant that testified against him and sending him a picture of a stack of money she finds in the office, Damon sends a photo of a restrained Sera being kept in the old mill. Before getting the chance to leave the Ambers' house, Eliot, who has followed Chloe from the hospital, enters the office. Eliot talks about how Rachel exploits Chloe and how it is time Chloe stopped "thinking about Rachel and pay attention to [him]" while he acts threatening towards Chloe, refusing to take a step back or leave when asked to (Deck Nine). The situation may be resolved in three different ways; Chloe calming him, in which case he will smash something in frustration, Chloe walking past him, which will lead to him pushing Chloe so she hurts her arm, or by Chloe secretly calling the police so he ends up being arrested for breaking and entering.

At the old mill, Chloe confronts Damon who admits to having been hired by James to kill Sera. Chloe then, depending on the player's choice, tries to pay Damon to release Sera, using the money from James' office, or talk Damon out of it. Chloe's attempt fails, and Damon knocks Chloe to the ground before he injects Sera with a needle, rendering her unconscious. Then Frank enters the room to try to stop Damon, and the last thing we see before Chloe also becomes unconscious is Frank and Damon fighting. A while later, Chloe comes to and sees Sera sitting in front of her, smoking a cigarette. The two of them talk, and Sera tells Chloe she has changed her mind about meeting Rachel now that she is once again addicted to drugs after Damon had injected her regularly while she was in captivity. However, if the player makes the right choices Chloe may talk Sera into meeting Rachel once. Further, Sera says James was right to deem her unfit to be a part of Rachel's life and that Rachel must never know what James had done, as it would just take one more parent away from her. Chloe then returns to the hospital and the player has to decide whether Chloe reveals the truth about James to Rachel or not. If Chloe reveals the truth, Rachel's relationship with James and Rose becomes very problematic, and if Chloe lies the family is seen happily spending time together. Either way, Chloe and Rachel remain friends, and in the cinematics at the end of the game they are seen being very close and flirty. But the game ends on a depressing note, with the very last clip being of Chloe's call to Rachel's phone going unanswered in what players of the first game, *Life Is Strange*, will recognise as Mr. Jefferson's basement, while the sound of a camera flash is heard in the background, which implies that Rachel is currently drugged and being photographed by Nathan or Mr. Jefferson.

4.3   Themes and literary analysis

In the process of portraying the lives of Chloe Price and Rachel Amber and their budding relationship, *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* sheds light on some of the complexities of topics such as class, coming of age, loss, family, teenage romance, and gender which will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapter.

Many of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*'s central characters come from different socioeconomic class backgrounds: the materialistically wealthy Amber and Prescott family are juxtaposed with the financially challenged Price and North family. Chloe is on a limited scholarship which does not include a room in the dormitories, so she lives with her mother Joyce who has a low-income job as a waitress at a local diner and is, after her husband William's passing, the sole owner of a large house, with the financial obligations that entails. Chloe shows concern for her family's financial situation both in her interior monologue and in dialogues. The North family's economic situation is even more challenging, and the root of all of Drew's trouble is his father Anthony's recent lack of income, and Drew's criminal activity is partly justified by his situation.

The socioeconomic standings of the different characters affect the power dynamics in several of the interpersonal relationships depicted in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*. There is much tension between Drew and Nathan Prescott as Nathan's father, Sean, is the owner of the company that had to let Anthony go, which is evident from Drew and Nathan's fight by the school's entrance in episode one. In Chloe's case her class background is seen affecting many relationships, she receives items and money from other characters, as well as a scholarship from Blackwell Academy. Chloe is thereby in debt, either explicitly by owing money or implicitly by being in a debt of gratitude. Chloe does, for example, feel compelled to break into Drew North's dorm to retrieve money for Frank since she owes Frank money, and even if the player has managed to pay Chloe's debts, she will still do it for payment. The relationship between Chloe and Rachel is also affected by their class backgrounds. While Chloe often acts recklessly, she cannot do so without considering the material and financial implications. Rachel, on the other hand, expresses little concern for money. When the two of them discuss running away together, for instance, Rachel wants to leave right away without having a solid plan, while Chloe, who does not have money to spare

or a safety net to fall back on if all fails, is feeling conflicted about it and once she caves in, quickly tries to arrange a vehicle and save up money for the trip.

Though the hardships of belonging to lower socioeconomic classes are depicted through the Prices and Norths, the financially well-off Ambers and Prescotts are not without their class-related conflicts. Sean's expectations for Nathan are very high, and Sean reprimands his son for not living up to them, afraid that their family will lose their high standing. In Sean's behaviour towards his son lies a criticism of how material ambition may lead to a lack of acceptance of flaws in one's children and how children may end up feeling inadequate. Rachel's popularity and academic achievements are likely, in part, also due to pressure from her family to succeed, and she points out that she is "tired of living up to the perfect image everybody expects out of [her]" (Deck Nine, 2017).

The main conflict the Amber family experiences, which has to do with Sera Gearhardt's reappearance, is closely related to the class differences between Sera and the Ambers as the whole reason Sera stayed away from the family for 15 years was due to James' ability to pay her off and Sera's desperate need for that money. Though the family's wealth had provided Rachel with a safe environment to grow up in, it came at the cost of knowing her true identity. And, eventually, the truth, or parts of it, surfaced proving that money could not protect Rachel from all the world's harm.

Chloe is, at first glance, an obnoxious and rebellious teenager who keeps people at a distance by breaking norms and using offensive language. However, Chloe's behaviour is provided with more context as the story progresses and we learn of her father William's passing and her resultant grief and feelings of abandonment. Her surroundings constantly remind Chloe of William's death: his belongings are seen packed up in boxes standing around the house and garage, his portraits have been removed from several locations leaving an empty space where they used to be, and the car he was in during the fatal accident is located at the junkyard where Chloe spends much of her time. The loss of her father also haunts Chloe's dreams, with dream sequences where she talks with her father appearing frequently throughout the game, and to make matters worse each dream ends with William dying or being visibly dead. However, Chloe also treasures these dreams because there she may still talk to her father and she admits to Rachel that these dreams "used to be the only part [of her life] that mattered" (Deck Nine, 2017).

In addition to the loss of her father, Chloe laments the loss of her best friend Max who moved away and stopped responding to her texts.

Chloe also feels she is losing her mother, Joyce, and thus some of William's memory, to her new stepfather, David Madsen, a sentiment that is reflected by the general resentment she demonstrates towards David and her reactions to Joyce making changes to accommodate him. In addition, there are some direct examples of Chloe's fears of David taking her father's place such as when Chloe utters the phrase "If you want to rip a family apart it's important to bring the proper tools – fuck you, David," before smashing a toolbox in a rage fit, and in a later scene, when David has replaced William in an old family portrait in one of Chloe's dreams (Deck Nine, 2017).

The feeling of loss and betrayal Chloe experiences manifests itself in destructive behaviour such as substance abuse and detachment from connecting with others. As the story progresses, however, Chloe becomes increasingly willing to open up about her trauma. Chloe for instance talks to Rachel about her father, but she also talks about her grief with minor characters such as Sera, Rachel's biological mother, whom Chloe either tells about losing her father or her best friend.

Chloe's recent loss and abandonment issues add extra profundity and suspense to the intricate relationship forming between her and Rachel. Though Chloe seems to keep most people in her life at arm's length, neither the game nor Rachel gives the player, as Chloe, any choice regarding whether she and Rachel should develop a close relationship. Rachel just enters Chloe's life and immediately asserts herself as a friend, taking Chloe by the hand and dragging her along both at the concert in the opening scene and at school the next day. The fact that someone as guarded as Chloe succumbs to Rachel's approaches, although a bit hesitantly at first, suggests that Chloe's feelings for Rachel are very strong. This claim is also supported by how Chloe is around Rachel: she acts nervously, struggles to find the right words and her inner monologue keeps reminding her to "play it cool" (Deck Nine, 2017). However, having a new significant person in her life means Chloe is vulnerable to yet another loss. A loss that someone familiar with the first game, *Life Is Strange*, knows is forthcoming (Dontnod, 2015).

Chloe and Rachel's relationship is the main focus of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*, and the game continuously tests how far the player is willing to go for Rachel, whom, to be frank, Chloe has only just met. During the game's short timeline of four days, the sacrifices Chloe has to make for Rachel evolve from minor transgressions such as skipping school, to committing felonies like evidence tampering and stealing a considerable sum of money while breaking and entering. It is as Chloe herself puts it in a conversation with Rachel: "In fact, anything you could come up with, I'll handle it" (Deck Nine, 2017). Though

it may seem unlikely that one would go to such lengths for a four-day acquaintance, the speed with which the relationship between Chloe and Rachel intensifies is reminiscent of a teenage romance. Chloe and Rachel's forming relationship is all-encompassing to Chloe and everything happening that involves Rachel feels very profound and important to her, which makes her behave recklessly (Fake Geek Girls, 2018).

One of the many sacrifices Chloe makes in order to please Rachel, is to perform the role of Ariel in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* when one of Rachel's co-actors is unable to make it to the play in time. In *The Tempest,* the magician Prospero, played by Rachel in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm,* holds the spirit Ariel captive and coerces him to summon a tempest and set fire to the mast of a ship so it sinks and leaves all its passengers stranded on an island (Shakespeare, 1564-1616/2015). After performing the task, Ariel reminds Prospero that he was promised his freedom if he did Prospero's bidding compliantly, whereupon Prospero scolds him and reminds Ariel of the torment he was rescued from, referring to him as a "slave" (Shakespeare, 1564-1616/2015, 1.2.323). In the original play, Prospero tells Ariel he has to do Prospero's bidding for two more days before earning his freedom, and Ariel takes the form of a sea nymph in order to deceive people on Prospero's command. While acting as Prospero and Ariel, Rachel and Chloe show a deep connection to one another and since Chloe has not practiced the lines for her character, they start improvising and the story takes a romantic turn. In Chloe and Rachel's improvised version of *The Tempest*, however, Rachel, as Prospero, promises Ariel his freedom right away, as long as they go together. By including the scene where Rachel and Chloe act and improvise together, the writers of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* have highlighted the romantic connection between the two, and their newfound dependence on each other. *The Tempest* is however a peculiar choice of play for merely accentuating a love story, which some of Shakespeare's more romantic plays such as for example *Much Ado About Nothing* or *Romeo and Juliet* could do more effectively. Besides, Rachel and Chloe are not cast as the play's two romantically involved characters, Ferdinand and Miranda, but rather as the master, Prospero, and his spirit servant Ariel.

The reason for featuring *The Tempest* in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* might therefore be something quite other than to enhance Chloe and Rachel's romantic connection: its purpose may be allegorical – a warning of the imminent destruction and grief linked to Rachel's character. One example is how the tempest that gave the play its title is likely a reference to the storm in *Life Is Strange* (Dontnod, 2015). The storm in *Life Is Strange* slowly builds up every time the protagonist Max uses her time rewinding powers, something she often does to protect Chloe or save her life, and at the end of the game the player has to decide

whether to rewind time one last time and not save Chloe's life, or to let the storm destroy Arcadia Bay, taking many lives in the process. In other words, the storm in *The Tempest* is a foreboding of the storm that is to destroy either Chloe or the town. There was already a connection between the storm in *Life Is Strange* and Rachel seeing as it was her disappearance that made Chloe put herself in danger. However, the scene in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* where Rachel screams and the flames and wind increase in strength suggests that Rachel may be even more directly linked to the storm in the sequel, that the power may somehow have come from her. Casting Rachel as Prospero, a magician that can control wind and weather in *The Tempest,* may thus be to create an allegory for Rachel as having a part in conjuring up the storm. Further, there is a resemblance between the power dynamics between Chloe and Rachel and that of the characters they play in *The Tempest*, just like Ariel with Prospero, Chloe is under Rachel's sway and is willing to do just about anything. Though Chloe is not literally held captive by Rachel, she is figuratively a slave to her feelings for Rachel.

4.4   Representation of gender

Considering video games' tendency for an infrequent and biased representation of women, a recent increase in games with strong female leads and narratives aiming for female empowerment is like a breath of inclusive fresh air (Butt & Dunne, 2017, p. 1). Through protagonist Chloe Price, *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* contributes to the trend by letting a voice that is often ignored in gaming contexts be heard – the voice of a gender nonconforming queer female teenager.

While the first game in the series, *Life Is Strange*, only implies that three of its characters might be queer, *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* directly confronts its players with queerness throughout the game (Dontnod, 2015; Deck Nine, 2017). Granted, in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* the player may choose not to pursue Rachel romantically, which in turn would make queerness a less important part of the narrative. However, not pursuing Rachel romantically would not alter Chloe's sexual orientation seeing as her interest for the same sex is displayed in several other ways, for example in her diary where you can read about her sexual attraction to one of the female characters in the movie *Blade Runner* or when Steph Gingrich asks Chloe whether she and Rachel are dating and none of Chloe's possible responses invalidate Steph's assumption that dating a girl is an option (Deck Nine). Besides,

the relationship between Chloe and Rachel appears to be both intimate and flirty, suggesting that whether the player wants the relationship to evolve or not, there are still romantic feelings and physical attraction between the two.

In addition to Chloe, both Steph and Rachel are queer. Steph openly admits to being interested in Rachel several times, while Rachel, depending on the player's choices may kiss Chloe and tell Chloe things like "Steph's so cute, but not as cute as you" or that Chloe "is a knockout in the looks department" (Deck Nine). Even if the player were to make choices that did not reveal these comments and this behaviour from Rachel, it would still be within the scope of her character.

Not only are queer characters well-represented in number in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*, being queer is also presented as effortless and the romance forming between Rachel and Chloe is arguably genuine. That being queer is hard is not a theme that emerges, and not once are the characters confronted with homophobia. Thus, *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* does not feed into the stereotype of being queer as a constant struggle for society's acceptance.

On a different note, however, *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* may be criticised for reproducing tropes of queer relationships as unhappy and doomed to fail. The lives of both Chloe and Rachel are riddled with adversity, which influences their relationship and prevents them from fully enjoying and exploring their love for one another. This lost potential is taken to extremes when in the final cinematics of the game several clips of Rachel and Chloe happily enjoying their time together is followed by a clip which foreshadows a great tragedy. Even if the player is not familiar with the first game, *Life Is Strange,* where the disappearance and, as it turns out, murder of Rachel Amber is the main focus, the clip from Mr. Jefferson's basement is still quite clearly an omen that something that will affect Rachel and Chloe's relationship negatively is about to occur. These aspects of Chloe and Rachel's love story therefore bear resemblance to the "Bury Your Gays" trope and the common portrayal of queer characters as suffering: the story of two queer girls planning and dreaming about the future they will never have together.

Life Is Strange: Before the Storm's portrayal of queer characters is not its only aspect that relates to the topic of gendered stereotypes. The two most central characters in the game are female, which is a step towards more equal representation of genders in video games, especially seeing as one of them is the only playable character in the game. Not only are female characters well represented in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*, they are also

diverse in that they do not conform to the gendered stereotypes associated with their assigned gender on many accounts.

The protagonist Chloe, for instance, defies gendered stereotypes in many more ways than being queer. Chloe is a wilful anti-establishment punk rocker, who appears to be wielding so much strength and conviction that she at times comes across as inconsiderate or bullying – traits which are not typically assigned female characters, who are often assigned more passive roles. Nor is Chloe particularly concerned with male acceptance. On the contrary, Chloe repeatedly insults and alienates most male characters, except for her close friends and her deceased father when she interacts with him in her visions.

Although Chloe is not preoccupied with male acceptance, her most important motivation in the game is winning the affection of a love interest, which is quite a stereotypical thing for a female character to be driven by. Granted, her love interest is not male, but had Rachel been replaced by a male character this game would barely have survived the "Bechdel test", a test jokingly mentioned by a character in a comic strip from 1985 that has since become an actual litmus test for measuring female representation in literature and film, at least in informal settings: does the work contain at least two women who talk to each other about something other than a man (Bechdel, 1985/2016)? In other words, Chloe's character, like many other female characters in literature, films and video games, may be interpreted as being primarily concerned with finding a partner and maintaining a relationship. But still, even though Rachel proves more important to Chloe than anything or anyone else time and again, the scope of Chloe's concerns is much broader than her pursuit of Rachel, and to simply dismiss her as a stereotypical character would be to not do the complexity of her character justice.

Another way one may interpret Chloe's pursuit of Rachel is, however, as catering to the motivations of the imagined heterosexual, white, cisgender male player. Though Chloe never directly rescues Rachel from physical danger, shielding her from tragedy and harm is what drives Chloe to commit felonies and take major risks in the game – it is the main source of conflict in Chloe's story arch. Game developers tend to cater to the male audience, one might therefore suggest that Deck Nine is catering to the socially prescribed male need to shelter and protect women – even though Chloe is the protagonist, the player is ultimately the one making the choices and experiencing feelings of failure or accomplishment based on those choices. Rachel, though she is not portrayed as a helpless individual, is time and again used as a Damsel in Distress in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* and must be rescued by the player on many occasions. The need to protect Rachel is the plot's key

ingredient and it is strengthened by Chloe and Rachel's evolving relationship. Rachel's role as Damsel in Distress resembles the traits of a Euthanised Damsel, due to the suspicions of Rachel being in great danger in the game's final cinematics – a suspicion which is confirmed in the sequel *Life Is Strange*. By converting tough female characters such as Rachel into Damsels in Distress, *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* discredits their toughness and feeds into the stereotype of women as frail creatures in need of protecting, even though they might appear strong, which stands in contrast to the progressive character gallery of the game.

As discussed in sub-chapter 4.3, the inclusion of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* may be seen as allegorical – a warning about Rachel's power over Chloe and the tragedy their relationship will cause. In the play, Rachel is cast as slave master Prospero and Chloe as her slave Ariel, an exaggerated example of the skewed power dynamic that is seen between the two outside of the play. Rachel is the popular and successful one out of the two, and she may have nearly whomever and whatever she desires. Chloe on the other hand is a social outcast who does poorly in school, and among her best friends is her drug dealer, Frank, and her childhood friend Max who has moved away and no longer bothers to answer Chloe's texts. If Chloe were to lose Rachel it is apparent that Chloe would be the one to struggle to find love again. Rachel seems aware of the power this gives her, and she uses it to her advantage by making Chloe do things for her that Chloe otherwise would not have done. For instance, when Rachel is upset from having witnessed her father commit adultery, she pressures Chloe into stealing a bottle of wine in order to feel better, and similarly, Rachel put pressure on Chloe to agree to leave town together because she was unhappy with her situation, without regard for Chloe's well-founded concerns. Rachel's lacking sense of responsibility and her disregard for others is also made apparent by the way she reacts to having started a forest fire in an act of rage: she shows no remorse, and when Chloe confronts Rachel with her actions, she appears unperturbed and reminds Chloe that not having reported her actions makes Chloe an accomplice. In addition, if the choices the player made in the game results in Victoria still having the role as Prospero shortly before the play starts, Rachel shows that she is willing to go to extremes in order to get what she wants as she poisons Victoria, rendering her unfit to perform.

The exploitative nature of Rachel bears resemblance to the hostile stereotype of women as Manipulative Temptresses, where Rachel would be the temptress unscrupulously using her sexual allure to trick her subject, Chloe, into doing things she would otherwise not have done. On a more positive note, Rachel also pushes Chloe into doing things that liberate her, such as daring to share her emotions and acting on stage, something she does successfully

despite having reservations against it beforehand. That does however not disprove Rachel's manipulative nature.

David is a character that at first glance could pass as an archetype of the male stereotype. Despite having just entered Joyce and Chloe's life he asserts himself as the patriarch, announcing that "We need a firmer hand steering this ship" when talking about his moving in (Deck Nine). David continuously demands more from Chloe than their relationship is ready for, and he often transgresses her boundaries. In addition, David's sexist and patronising remarks are plentiful, including utterances such as "Why does it always take you women forever to get ready?" and "If you were a man, I'd…", the latter implying that he would react to Chloe's behaviour with violence had she been male, but that the fragility of her sex would make the act dishonourable (Deck Nine). David's indirect threat of violence also speaks to his conflict resolution abilities, or lack thereof: he sees conflict as something that may be resolved by asserting dominance – he often uses harsh language and makes uncompromising demands and threats. David's insensitivity and harshness make it hard for him to relate to an emotionally complex character such as Chloe.

One may say that limiting David's character by making him adhere to so many of the common male stereotypes the developers are limiting David's potential, that he is a victim of gendered stereotypes as much as he is an advocate for them. However, a video game portraying sexist structures and stereotypical behaviour is not automatically a sexist game. A game should also reflect real life, and real life is full of it. Had all male characters in the game been as stereotypical as David, however, that would have contributed to an image of men as insensitive brutes, incapable of properly communicating their feelings. Worse yet, *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* could have painted stereotypical male characters such as David's as the only heroic and desirable male characters, and glorified his resolution, willingness to lead and ability to suppress emotions, which is the case in many other video games. Instead, his way of being and his attitudes towards gender come off as archaic and borderline ridiculous, as well as restrictive to his own character. There are parts of the game where David's potential to be a less stereotypical and more sympathetic character surface, such as when he opens up to Chloe about his loss of a friend during his military service. *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* thus does not merely paint David as a bad guy, but a guy whose potential is restrained by society's expectations towards his gender.

Further, the male character Eliot fits into the typical "Nice Guy" stereotype. Time and again Eliot reaches out to Chloe, who either rejects him gently or makes promises that she later does not keep, depending on player choice, which eventually leads Eliot to act

threatening towards her, and in two possible outcomes become violent. Eliot considers himself to care for Chloe more than anyone else, and by looking out for her and warning her about her bad decisions and infatuation with Rachel, he sees himself as deserving of her attention. By including this gendered stereotype in this way, *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* does not invoke pity for the male character, who does not receive the response he feels his niceness entitles him to, but rather visualises how difficult it can be for women to relate to men who have the expectation of being rewarded for protecting them, an expectation which is arguably a by-product of the Damsel in Distress trope.

5 TEACHING PROJECT

There are many ways a teacher may explore the topic of gendered stereotypes using the video game *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm.* The following teaching project was developed with the aims of this thesis in mind.

5.1   Learning aims

Many of the competence aims in the English subject curriculum for Norway's first year students of Upper Secondary School are relevant in a teaching project focusing on gendered stereotypes in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm.* In the teaching plan developed in this thesis, the primary focus is on four of them, namely: to enable students to "discuss and reflect on form, content and language features and literary devices in different cultural forms of expression from different media in the English-language world, including music, film and gaming", to "explore and reflect on diversity and social conditions in the English-speaking world based on historical contexts", to "read, analyse and interpret fictional texts in English", and to "write different types of formal and informal texts, including multimedia texts with structure and coherence that describe, discuss, reason and reflect adapted to the purpose, receiver and situation" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 10).

To be more specific, the students will investigate how popular culture, including video games, impacts society by critically reviewing the video game *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* both from a personal perspective and in a broader context where they focus on the connection between gendered stereotypes and queer tropes in the game and gender issues in society in general (cf. Sarkeesian, 2013a). The aim is that the students, by participating in this teaching project, will recognise how video games are affected by gendered stereotypes, and be better able to apply strategies for evaluating video games critically while at the same time having a personally enriching literary experience. They will also experience how video games may be an aid in their own language learning process, both due to the authentic language input from the game itself and because it creates an opportunity for students to share and exchange opinions and ideas both orally and through written responses.

Furthermore, during the lesson plan's frequently scheduled oral discussions several competence aims become relevant, among them being able to "use appropriate digital

resources and other aids in […] interaction", "listen to, understand and use academic language in working on own oral and written texts", and "explain the reasoning of others and use and follow up input from others during conversations and discussions on various topics" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 10). And though little to no special attention is dedicated to them, the following competence aims will also be of relevance: to be able to "use appropriate strategies for […] communication", "use pronunciation patterns in communication", to "express himself or herself in a nuanced and precise manner with fluency and coherence, using idiomatic expressions and varied sentence structures adapted to the purpose, receiver and situation" and to "use knowledge of grammar […] in working on own oral […] texts" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training). The project will allow the students to practice their oral language and communication strategies as they discuss and analyse each episode of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* with each other. Through sharing their ideas, the students will also improve their ability to analyse fictional texts as they are presented to new ways of interpreting the story and its literary devices, and may expand and elaborate on each other's ideas together.

During classroom discussions students improve their ability to share ideas and express opinions orally in spontaneous conversation about *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* and gendered stereotypes. And through taking notes in the gaming guide as they play each episode, students will be better prepared to introduce, maintain and terminate conversations and discussions about them in class.

When it comes to written communication, the teaching project enables students to "use own notes to write texts related to one's education programme", "write different types of texts with structure and coherence suited to the purpose and situation" and "produce different kinds of texts suited to formal digital requirements for different digital media" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 10). They will become familiar with taking frequent pauses while, and right after, playing through an episode of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*, as they stop and take notes of important developments, thoughts and questions as they emerge. Later, they will use those notes as an aid in both oral discussions and when answering written assignments. Through writing short blog posts and game reviews, the students will also become familiar with the requirements for these types of digital texts, and they will be aware of the different requirements regarding structure and content between those genres and a critical essay.

Though elements such as vocabulary, grammar, orthography, pronunciation and intonation are not explicitly taught in this teaching project, the lessons will still benefit the

students when it comes to these topics through informal language learning processes while playing, listening, speaking and writing.

5.2   Lesson plan

The lesson plan that was executed in the three classes of this study focuses on the topic of gendered stereotypes in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*. It consists of three parts, where the first part focuses on laying a theoretical foundation concerning gendered stereotypes, the second part consists of playing through the game while discussing its content and processing the experience, and the third part combines the theory of the first part with the students' observations about gender in the game in an analytical written task.

Prior to initiating this lesson plan a copy of the game should already be available on each student's computer. This should be done some weeks in advance. First, the students need to register on the video game platform Steam, and in order to do this they need a functioning email address. Once they have registered, they get a unique code for adding them as a friend on the platform. The teacher then has to add the students one by one by entering their codes in the "add a friend"-section of the platform. Since one has to do this with one code at a time it takes a while, it is therefore a good idea to combine this process with another activity, so the teacher can move around the classroom adding each student while they work on something else. After having sent the students a friend request they all have to log back in to Steam to accept the teacher's friend request. Now that the teacher has befriended all the students on the platform she will be able to buy games as gifts for them, and the teacher then proceeds to buy the game *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* for all the students. This is an even more time-consuming process, seeing as one can only buy the game for one student at a time. In addition, Steam does not allow its users to make more than five purchases within a time frame of approximately three hours, the buying process therefore has to be spread out throughout several workdays. After having purchased a copy for every student, the students have to log back into Steam to accept the gift. *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* is regularly on sale, and by starting this process early the teacher will be able to wait for the game to be on sale, making the project a more affordable endeavour for their school. Additionally, this creates a lot of anticipation amongst the students which may increase their motivation for the project.

The first lesson, the students will keep their computers on in order to

download and install the game in the background. Each student also needs their own e-mail address in order to register on the video game platform Steam.

In what follows I have chosen to report on what took place in the classrooms as procedures in the present tense, for the text to function as a blueprint for other teachers to use, adapt and develop further. The teaching materials developed as a part of the teaching project may be found in Appendices 1, 4 and 6.

5.2.1 Part one: Introduce the project and theme

Duration: 90 minutes

Additional materials: An internet connection, projector, and blank sheets of paper.

Procedure:

Before instruction starts, the students open their computers and start downloading and installing the game if they have not done so already. The class is then divided into small groups or pairs. Each group is given two blank sheets of paper and asked to draw a "hero" on one, and "someone who has been saved by the hero" on the other. The students are not to be given any additional information or instructions as to what these roles entail or how they are typically portrayed, but are rather to use their imagination freely and without being influenced by the teacher. They are encouraged to work together in order to have a cohesive duo and if they are in a group, they have to make sure everyone contributes with their ideas for the drawings. They have 15 minutes to complete this assignment, and once the time is up the students hang their drawings on the wall for all to see and have a look at all the other contributions. Then they make up their minds about which combination of superhero and person being saved by the superhero is their favourite and the teacher conducts a vote.

The teacher then proceeds to introduce the plan for the weeks to come making sure the students take notes of important deadlines for finishing the episodes and the final written task (see Appendix 1). The teacher explains the purpose of the project and then proceeds to introduce the subject of gendered stereotypes by defining the term. To ensure that the students pay attention, the teacher should ask questions and encourage the listeners to share their thoughts and experiences.

After the teacher having explained what is meant by gendered stereotypes the students are asked to go back in their groups or pairs from the drawing challenge, to discuss the societal expectations we have for men and women by considering what the expressions

"Act like a man!" and "Be more ladylike" typically mean. They are urged to consider what they think society in general associates with these two expressions and not what they would like them to mean. They are asked to consider the following aspects: interpersonal relationships, emotions, behaviour, abilities, appearance, hobbies, and interests. To keep track of their answers they are each given a blank sheet of paper and asked to note down important keywords from their discussion. The groups share their findings with the rest of the class and if necessary the teacher supplies with the examples of women as being expected to be emotional, passive and nurturing, and the hostile stereotype of women as Manipulative Temptresses, while men often are expected to show less emotions, be assertive and violent. The teacher then moves on to present gendered stereotypes and queer tropes as they emerge in video games: male characters often have big and muscular body types, are violent and willing to kill, do not express emotions, have a military background and have a power or revenge fantasy, while female characters are rarely the only playable character and are often thin, sexualised, in need of saving and used as a reward, for both genders heterosexuality is almost always implied and if a game features any queer characters at all these are often portrayed either as suffering or as jokes, their relationships are more likely to end in tragedy and they are more likely to die (see Appendix 1).

5.2.2 Part two: Play *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*

Duration: Four lessons of 90 minutes.

Additional materials: *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* installed on each student's laptop and headphones.

Procedure: The teacher starts the first lesson by digitally sharing a copy of the *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* gaming guide with the students and then briefly reviews the questions with them to make sure that they understand them (see Appendix 4). The students then start playing episode 1: Awake. Two lessons are dedicated to playing through the first episode. Each episode of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* should take approximately two to three hours to play through which means some of the students might have finished the first episode either before or during the second lesson, in which case they may spend some time filling out the gaming guide for episode one and proceed with playing episode 2: Brave New World (see Appendix 4).

The third lesson of part two starts with a 15-minute discussion of the questions for episode one found in the gaming guide (see Appendix 4). First, the students discuss the questions for ten minutes in smaller groups before sharing their answers with the teacher and the rest of the class. After discussing, they continue with playing episode 2: Brave New World. At the start of the fourth lesson, the first fifteen minutes are spent discussing the questions in the gaming guide for episode 2: Brave New World, and the students then move on to play episode 3: Hell Is Empty. Those who have finished early are urged to download and install the first episode of the original game, *Life Is Strange*, which is available for free and will provide students with more material for their final essays.

5.2.3 Part three: Write a five-paragraph essay

Duration: Four lessons of 90 minutes.

Work prior to this part: Students must have finished all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm.*

Procedure: In this part of the teaching project it is time for the students to combine what they learned about gendered stereotypes and queer tropes in the first part with their gaming experience from the second part as they are to write an essay about the representation of gender in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*, or more if they continued playing *Life Is Strange*.

At the beginning of the first lesson of part three, fifteen minutes are spent discussing the questions for the third episode found in the gaming guide (see Appendix 4). Then, the teacher shares a list over the students' answers to the "Act like a man!"/"Be more ladylike"-activity during part one, and asks them to form groups and look for descriptions that fit either Chloe or David, to investigate whether they have been portrayed stereotypically or not (see Appendix 3). The students are then to work on writing a critical essay where they deconstruct and analyse *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* for its representation of gender (see Appendix 6).

6 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As has been explored in chapter four, there are many features and themes from *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* that may engage the students and serve as a basis for discussions, literary analysis, and analysis of gendered stereotypes. However, whether the students actually find the story and literary quality of the game to be engaging is quite another case, and the same goes for how accessible the examples of gendered stereotypes are to them. In order to raise students' awareness of gendered stereotypes it is elemental that students are able to recognise when common gendered stereotypes and tropes are in play in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*. This will be investigated and discussed in this chapter, by looking at the material gathered during the process of conducting the teaching project.

6.1   Factors that may have impacted the results of this research project

As mentioned in the introduction, many students are spending a lot of their time playing digital games, and by the time they start Upper Secondary School most of them already have some experience with games. An already extensive experience with video games could have an impact on the experience of participating in this project. To uncover the previous experience with video games of the students participating in this study, they were therefore asked "What are your previous experiences with video games?" as the first question in the final survey of this project, and a summary of the findings may be found in figure 1.
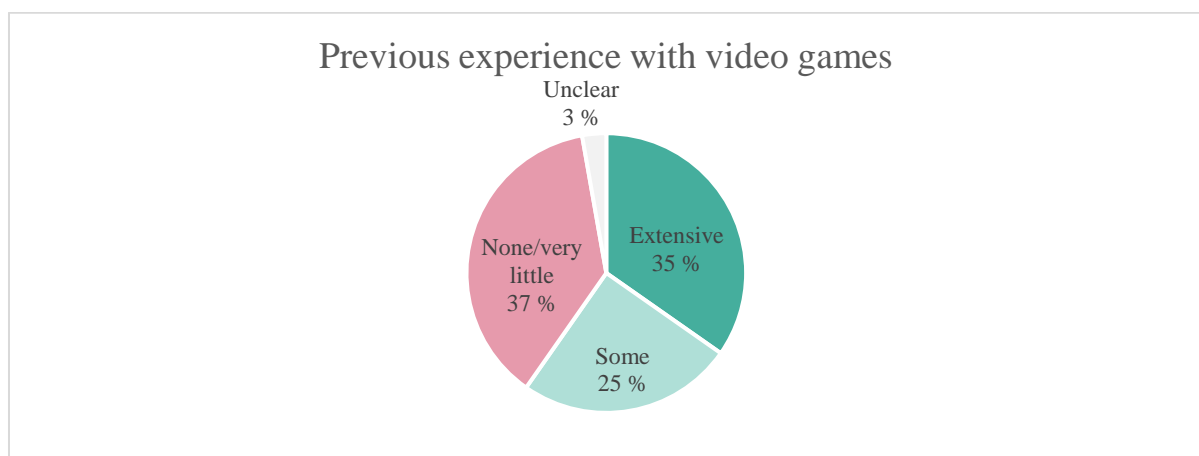
Fig. 1 How the students in this study described their previous experience with video games (see Appendix 8).

Figure 1 shows that among the students participating in this study only 35% answered that they have extensive experience with video games, which includes students that mentioned playing video games daily. In other words, the participants in this project are well below the national average for their age group 16 to 24 years, where 59% reported that they played digital games daily in 2018 (Statistics Norway, 2019b). With as many as 37% claiming they have little to no experience with video games, many of the participants in this study had little knowledge about video game mechanics before starting this project.

In addition to commenting on the frequency and time they spent playing, the participants were encouraged to specify which video games and video game genres they had previous experience with as a part of their answer to question one. Figure 2 is a table displaying their answers by category. The colour red represents action-filled video game genres, while the greener the columns are, the less action-filled the genres typically are.
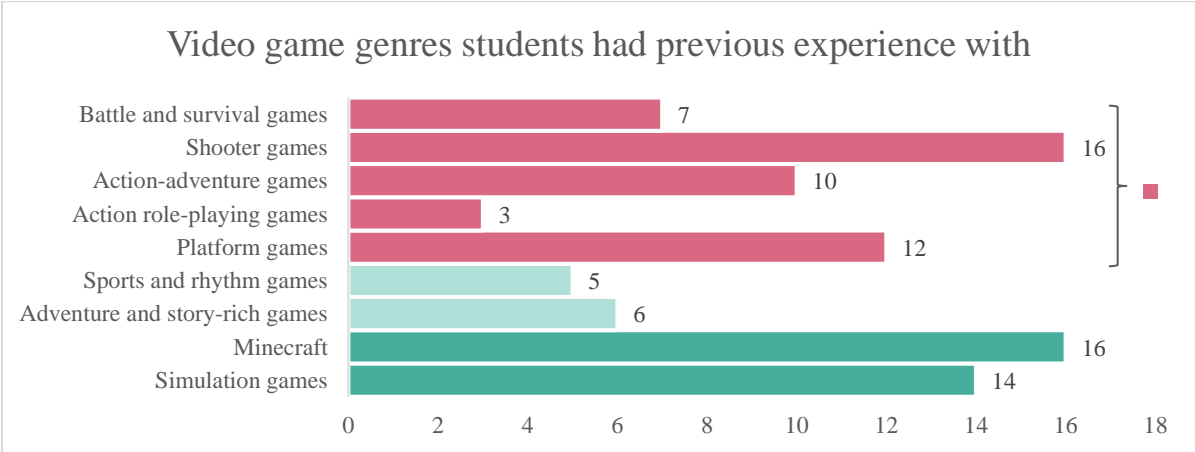
Fig. 2 Video game genres students mentioned having experience with (see Appendix 8).

As may be seen in figure 2, only six students reported having experience with adventure and story-rich games, which is the category *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* falls into. Out of those six students, three mentioned having experience with games from the *Life Is Strange*-series, and two of them had even played *Before the Storm* previously. Though adventure and story-rich games are the only ones that primarily focus on a story, there are also often complex stories in action-adventure and action role-playing games, if one counts those games as well, a total of twelve students mentioned having experience with games where they emerged themselves in a story (some respondents have overlapping answers). Most of the

video games or genres mentioned by students, however, were games and genres where the story is peripheral. And considering how action-filled and focused on skill the games in the action-adventure and action role-playing genres are, most of the participants are unlikely to associate a video game with literature.

The participants were also encouraged to mention if they had ever worked with a video game before as a school project, something that none of them did. Therefore, it is safe to assume that for all the students involved in this teaching project, this was a new experience.

The very first activity of the teaching project, the drawing exercise, was included both because it would be a motivating and creative way to start things off, but also because it might have revealed whether the participants already had a preconceived notion about the gender of a video game hero and a person being saved by that hero, then serve as a starting point for the discussion of gendered stereotypes. The participants' choice of gender for either character type is stated in figure 3 below.
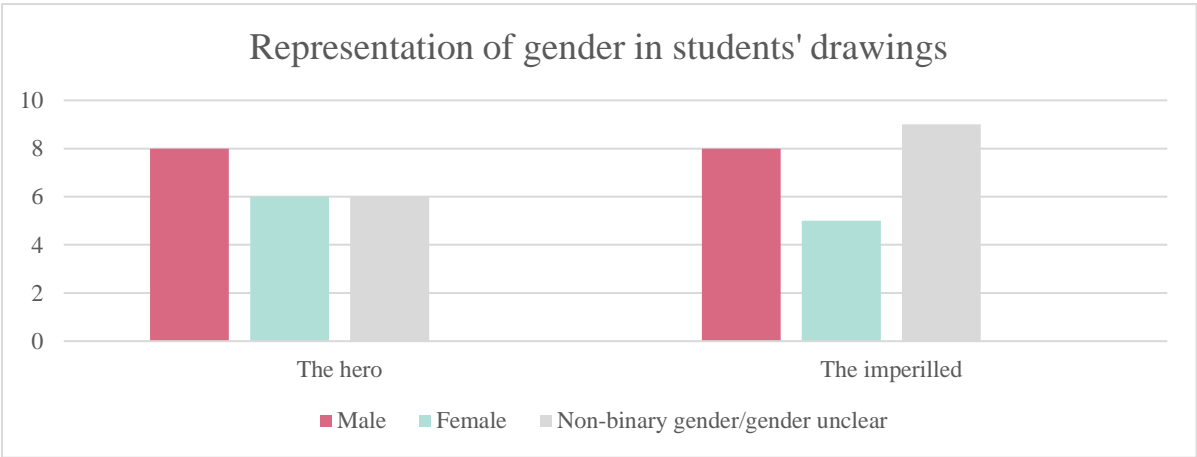
Fig. 3 The representation of gender among the characters from the drawing task in part one of the teaching project (see Appendix 2).

However, judging the drawn characters' genders proved difficult, as the students in most cases did not take great pains with clearly stating their characters' genders. If anything can be read from figure 3, it is that the participants had few preconceived notions about which gender each of the roles are likely to have, and that they were just as likely to draw them with an ambiguous gender expression as they were to draw them with clearly female or male character traits.

As mentioned in sub-chapter 3.2, the participants should have had at least some idea of what gendered stereotypes are, seeing as they had previously worked with the topic with

other teachers, which became apparent in the second activity of the project's first lesson, where they were asked to take notes about what they thought the expressions to "be ladylike" and to "act like a man" typically means. The students were able to mention many important stereotypical views, such as the view of women as being passive, emotional and in need of protection and men as being dominant, unemotional and protective, as well as the different expectations for their appearance (see Appendix 3). In other words, many of the participants were already aware of the structures behind several of the stereotypical tropes commonly used in video games: the Damsel in Distress and the strong heroic male. The participants did however not mention anything related to the stereotype of the Manipulative Temptress, but that could be due to the phrasing of the question – the Manipulative Temptress is incompatible with the stereotypical view on what it means to be ladylike. The same could be said about queer tropes.

Though the difference in study programmes did not influence the lesson plan, group three did receive an extra lesson to complete the game and an extended deadline on the written task due to scheduled rehearsals for a concert taking up some of their spare time, which prevented them from catching up on the episodes and essay at home. In addition, one of the lessons in group three was briefly disrupted by a non-curricular event. Therefore, although group three had ten lessons of 90 minutes to complete the plan, where the other two groups had nine, the time the students had at their disposal to work on this project should have amounted to the same.

English teachers, like all teachers, have a lot of topics and learning aims to cover during a school year, and a limited number of hours to do so. The intention was therefore to dedicate exactly as much time as needed to work with the topic, finish the game and conduct a brief, written analysis, and not more than would be necessary, so as not to steal much-needed time from other important topics. To assess whether the scheduled time was sufficient the students were, among other things, asked whether they finished the game in the second question of the final survey, and they were encouraged to specify whether they used other means to access the rest of the story and how far they got if they did not finish it. A summary of their responses to that question is found below, in figure 4.
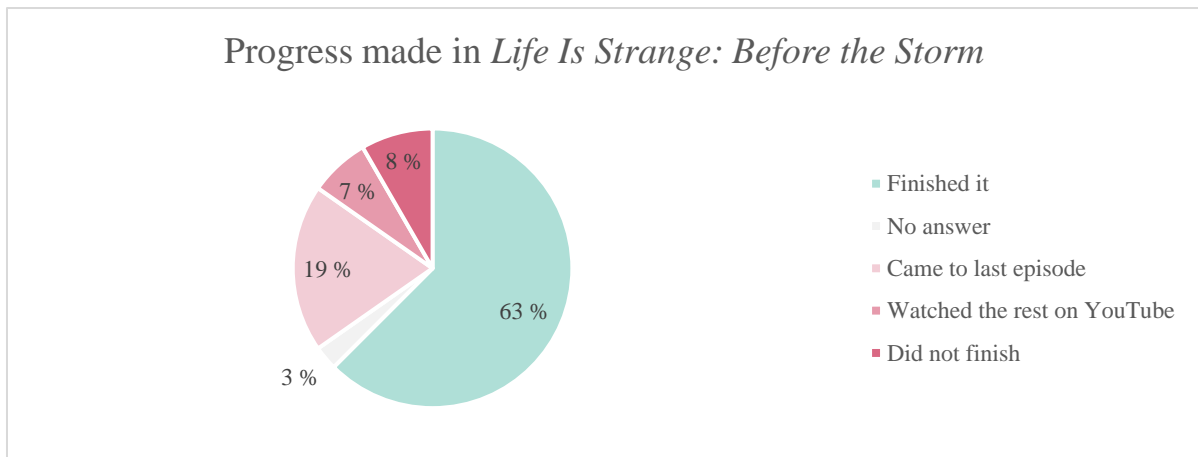
Fig. 4 Progress made in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*. The students' responses when asked if they finished the game (see Appendix 8).

As figure 4 shows, over half of the students in this study were able to finish the game within the scheduled time, while a considerable percentage of the participants, 35%, did not finish all the episodes, which indicates that the time scheduled for playing the game in this project may not have been sufficient. The fact that none of the students mention having started playing episode 1 of the original *Life Is Strange* supports this claim, as this was something they were encouraged to do in order to get more material to write about in the final essay. One student even adds "if I had better time I would also play the first episode of *Life Is Strange*" to their answer to question 2 of the final survey (see Student response 3.05, Appendix 8).

To further support the claim that the scheduled time for this project was scarce, one may have a look at the respondents' answers to the question about what could have been done differently to improve the project, found in figure 5.

Fig. 5 Students' suggestions for improvements for this project (see Appendix 8).

Two students do however specifically mention that they had "enough time" for the project (see Student responses 2.17 and 2.23, Appendix 8). Yet, considering the number of students stating the opposite, as one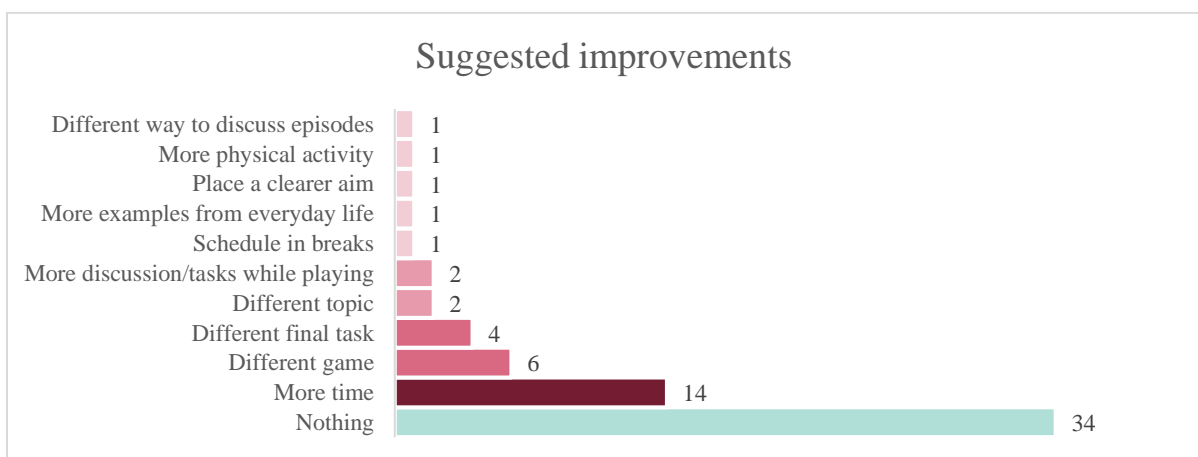 may see from figure 5, and no one mentioning time as being excessive, it is still safe to assume that dedicating more time for this project would have affected the outcome positively.

Something which may also have had an impact on the students' process of analysing the gendered stereotypes found in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*'s was whether they enjoyed the game or not. The students having positive thoughts on the game would arguably lead to a more positive outcome and better the chances of succeeding with this project's mission. The participants were therefore asked what their thoughts on *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* were, and their answers have then been interpreted as being either negative, mixed or positive and displayed in figure 6 below.
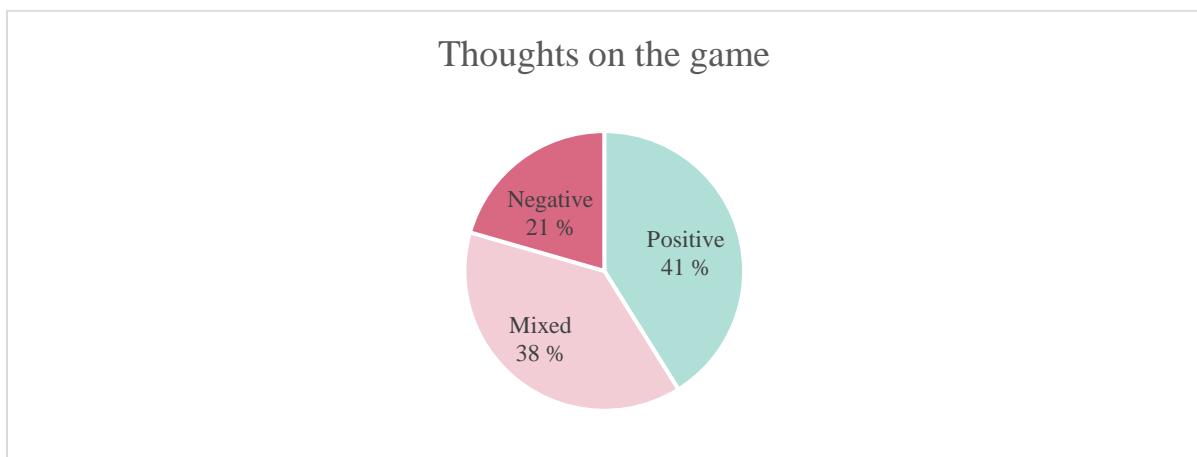
Fig. 6 Students' thoughts on *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* (see Appendix 8).

As is evident from figure 6, many students had conflicting or directly negative thoughts on the game *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*. Though many in the mixed category of the diagram recognised some of its value or potential, they did not seem to view the experience of having played it as an enriching one. However, 41% of the participants being overtly positive in their response is not insignificant, and they constitute nearly double as many as those who were overtly negative.

Further, the students' sentiments considering the chosen methodology could also have impacted the outcome, and they were therefore asked to share their opinions on the instruction, activities and tasks that were a part of this project. Figure 7 shows a summary of the responses.
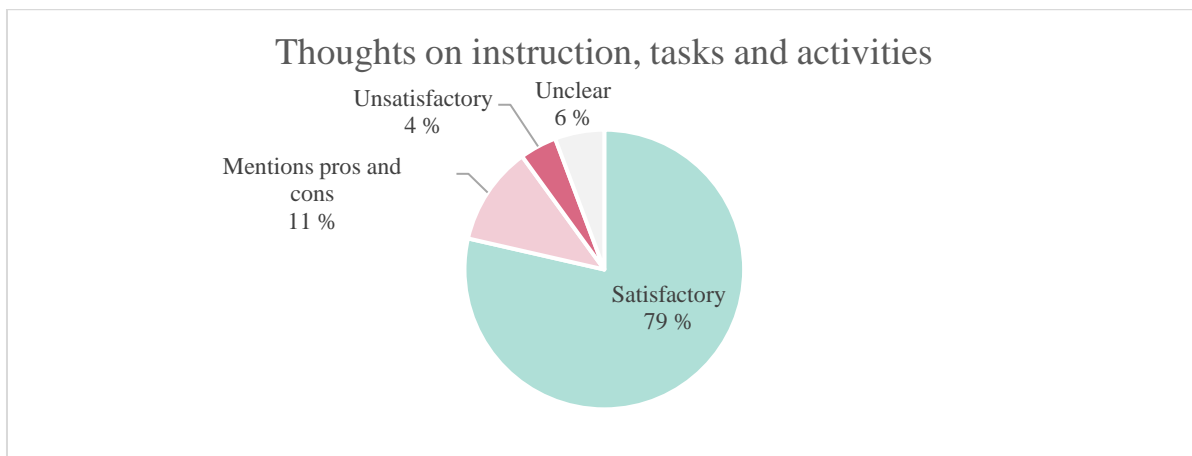
Fig. 7 Students' thoughts on the instruction, tasks and activities in this project (see Appendix 8).

As shown in figure 7, a majority of 79% of the participants found the instruction and work methods to be satisfactory, and a mere 4%, which represents three participants, were openly critical of the methods used. In other words, it is unlikely that the methodology applied in the teaching project has greatly impaired this research project's ability to uncover *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*'s potential to promote students' awareness of gendered stereotypes.

As previously mentioned, there were significant differences to the students' answers in the final survey on only two accounts: their feedback regarding time and their thoughts on the game. While group 1 and 3 had more or less similar answers to the questions, group 2 deviated from the other two groups when it came to these two aspects. Figure 10 demonstrates how many of the participants from the different groups responded that they did not finish the game and how many suggested more time as an improvement.
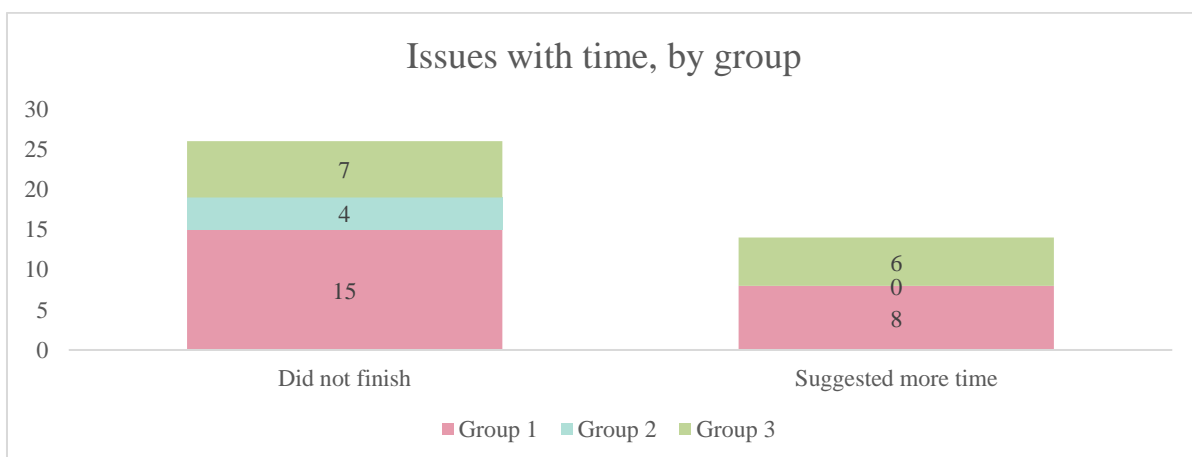
Fig. 10 Students who did not finish *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* and suggested more time as an improvement, by group (see Appendix 8).

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In figure 11 below, one may also see the differences between the participants from group 2 and those from group 1 and 3, regarding their thoughts on the game.
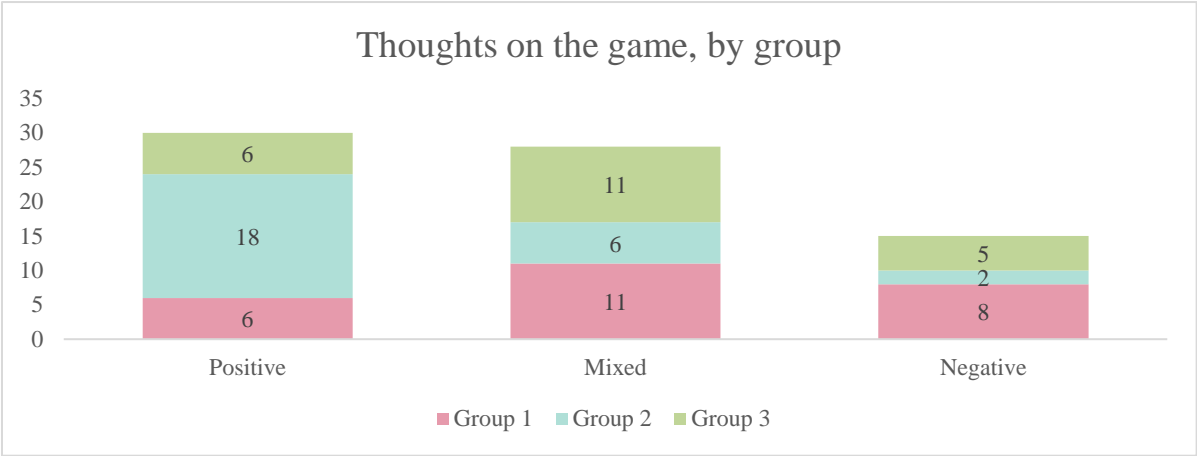
Fig. 11 Students' thoughts on *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* by group (see Appendix 8).

Figure 11 shows that while as many as 69% of the participants in group 2 spoke of the game in positive terms, only 25% of the participants in group 1 and 3 did the same. Had this research been conducted in my own class, group 2, alone, the outcome would be slightly different, and likewise had it only been conducted in group 1 and 3.

6.2   To what extent did *Life Is Strange: Before the* Storm raise the participants' awareness of gendered stereotypes during this research project?

One indicator that *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* has the potential to raise students' awareness of gendered stereotypes stems from the students' own statements. As a part of the final survey, the students were asked how effective they thought the project had been for exploring the topic of gendered stereotypes, and their answers have been summarised in figure 8.

Perceived effectiveness of project

6 % 9 %

13 %

72 %

- Effective
- To some degree
- Not very effective
- Unclear/no response
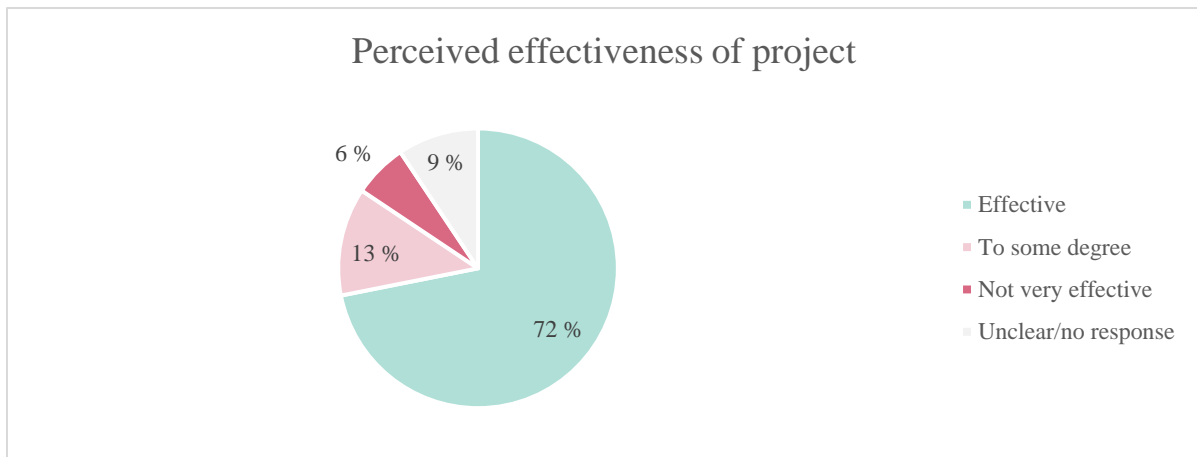
Fig. 8 Students' responses to the question: How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'? (see Appendix 8).

As may be seen from figure 8, over two thirds of the participants found the project and *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* to be effective for exploring the topic of gendered stereotypes. Theirs is an important opinion seeing as they are the recipients of the abovementioned awareness. In addition, when asked the question "What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?" 44 of the respondents answered that they had learned more about gendered stereotypes (see Appendix 8).

Sub-chapter 4.4 revealed that *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* contains many examples of gendered stereotypes and common gendered and queer tropes, and therefore that the game, at least in theory, could be used in a teaching project involving gendered stereotypes. That the majority of the participants in this study reviewed the teaching project and *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* as effective for exploring the topic of gendered stereotypes and over half of them specifically mentioned gendered stereotypes as a learning outcome after participating, shows that the game raised most of the participants' awareness of gendered stereotypes to a degree where the participants themselves recognised it. Yet, to properly investigate to what extent *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* raised the participants' gender awareness it is also necessary to examine the material they produced while participating in this research project. As a start, the characters mentioned as either maintaining or defying gendered stereotypes in the students' essays will be looked at (see Appendix 2). An overview of the characters that were most frequently mentioned in the students' texts are displayed in figure 9.
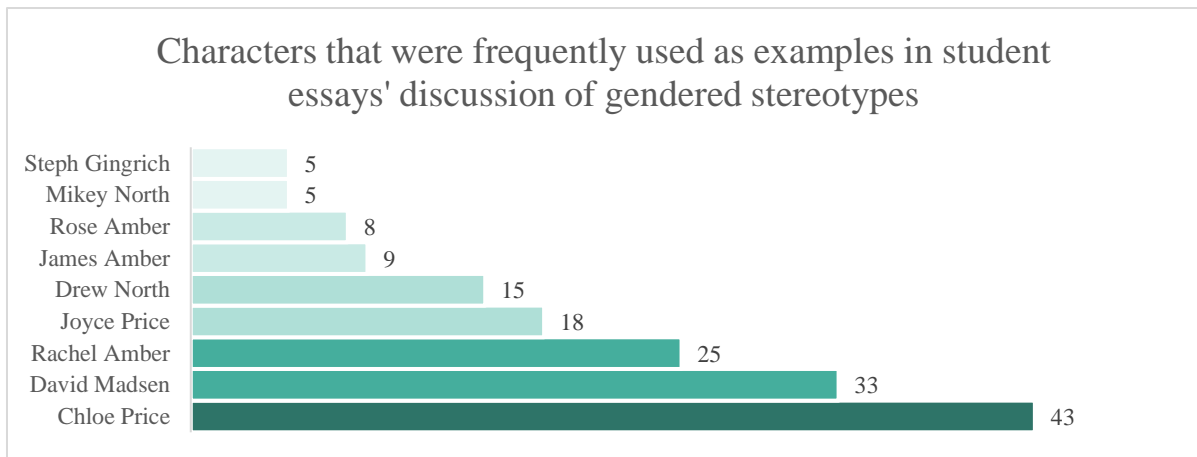
Fig. 9 The number of times characters from *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* were mentioned in connection with a discussion of gendered stereotypes in the participants' essays from part three (see Appendix 2).

The character from *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* that was mentioned most frequently in connection with gendered stereotypes in the students' essays was quite unsurprisingly its protagonist Chloe Price. As may be seen from figure 9, she was used as an example in 43 of the 45 reviewed responses. Chloe is a character that defies gendered stereotypes blatantly both in appearance, demeanour and speech, something nearly all participants noticed – as one of the participants put it, Chloe's gender nonconformity "was painfully obvious" (see Student essay quote 2.09, Appendix 2).

Chloe is mostly described by the participants as someone defying gendered stereotypes, and in general they have referred to *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* as a game where few of the female characters follow gendered stereotypes. Four of the essays specifically mentioned how having a female character as the game's only playable character went against gendered stereotypes, and another four highlighted how the game refrained from sexualising its female and queer character (see Appendix 2). Comments along the lines of "the girls in the game stand out by not doing what's expected of them" were found in many of the essays, with several also adding how "the male stereotypes in the game are easy to see" (see Student essay quotes 1.13 and 3.06, Appendix 2). Similar observations were also shared by many students during the group discussions, with several groups writing it down in their notes as early as during the discussion of the first episode, in the words of one of those groups: "males are big, have beards and portray as very manly and are sterio-typical" while "[t]he females are a bit different" (see Appendix 5).

Though the criticism *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* received from the students regarding its portrayal of female characters was limited, some problematic aspects were brought up. One of them was the game's lack of different body types, which was shed light on in four essays, as one of them rightly stated: "[t]here are no different body types for the girls in this game", "[t]hey are all skinny with thin thighs and legs, no stomach fat and small waist" (see Student essay quote 1.05, Appendix 2). Further, as shown in figure 9, many drew attention to the submissive and sacrificial roles of Joyce Price and Rose Amber, who are both seen in the kitchen preparing food while their partner does something which is considered stereotypically male like fixing a car or reading the newspaper.

Rachel Amber is also mentioned as complying with the gendered stereotypes on some accounts, yet the examples that mention her often do so vaguely and with different takes on how her character relates to gendered stereotypes. Seeing as the protagonist of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* was the most frequently mentioned example of the game's portrayal of gendered stereotypes, one would think that its deuteragonist, Rachel, were the runner-up. That was however not the case; as shown in figure 9, only 25 out of the 45 essays sampled in my observations mentioned Rachel in connection with gendered stereotypes, and out of those 25 only 17 included comments related to Rachel's actions or behaviour. Rachel's appearance, on the other hand, was referenced in 21 of the cases. In addition, the examples would often classify her appearance and behaviour as gender stereotypical, though the majority referred to her as non-stereotypical, at least after her character starts evolving further into the game.

The low frequency with which the students mentioned Rachel's inner qualities compared to how important her character is to the developments in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*, as well as their indecisiveness about how her character compares to gendered stereotypes, indicates that Rachel's character may have been difficult for the students to analyse from a gender perspective. This is despite Rachel's character having traits that resemble several common gendered stereotypes and tropes as she indirectly plays the role of the Damsel in Distress by constantly requiring Chloe's protection as well as her actions being reminiscent of the Manipulative Temptress stereotype. Rachel's manipulative side was however only mentioned in two of the texts, and of the two only one of them connected it to the hostile stereotype of women as being seen as Manipulative Temptresses, though the respondent did not specifically use that term: "[t]he manipulative trait is maybe stereotypic for a female, because [females] control men and tend to get what [they] want by taking advantage" (see Student essay quote 1.06, Appendix 2).

The Damsel in Distress trope was however addressed by as many as ten students, though with different interpretations. Eight texts mentioned how the game did not use the Damsel in Distress trope in its traditional form, since the role of the saviour was assigned to a female character, or characters of different genders, as the following quote is an example of:

> The trope is used generously regardless of gender, and even having the majority of major saves done, directly or not, by a female character. This shows a direct rejection of *Damsel in Distress* as gender-specific plot-point, and feeds into the games general equalizing of gender roles and stereotypes. (See Student essay quote 2.20, Appendix 2)

The two remaining texts that mentioned this trope, either directly or indirectly, both recognised that the hero being female is a deviation from the original Damsel in Distress trope, yet they criticised how the person in need of saving was always female and one of them even stated that "the woman is manufactured as a type of "reward"" (see Student essay quote 1.08, Appendix 2).

As mentioned above, many of the participants were critical of the portrayal of male characters in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*. David Madsen, who is a central character in the game, was frequently mentioned as being a misogynistic and dominant "big strong alpha male" (see Student essay quote 2.20, Appendix 2). Many of the other male characters were also spoken of in ill terms, with only Mikey North's character receiving some credit for straying from the gendered stereotype of men as big and strong. This shows that the participants, who mostly spoke of the game's portrayal of female characters in positive terms, were not blinded by the diversity of the female characters, but rather still able to recognise its lack of diverse and gender non-conforming male characters.

Even though *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* is marketed as a queer game, many of the participants did not perceive Chloe and Rachel's relationship as romantic. This became apparent during the group discussions in all three groups, when many participants reacted with surprise when others in the group mentioned how the two girls had kissed in their version of the story or referred to them as being in love. Despite this being a topic of discussion in class, the girls' queerness was omitted from many of the essays. Under half of the essays mentioned the inclusion of queer characters as being a non-stereotypical trait of the game, and most of them only did so briefly. The reason why over half of the participants did

not mention Chloe and Rachel being queer is likely due to the subtlety with which their relationship is stated. Even though the students knew from other players of the game that they were in fact queer, that was not relevant to their version of the story. One student saw the subtlety of the two girls' relationship as critique worthy in itself:

> …it felt like there was a different reason for the briefness of their relationship. Like the relationship was as simple as it was so that straight people could play the game and interpret their relationship as platonic. (…) …the fact that their relationship was so barely established just maintains the "queer women are just confused straight women who kiss each other for the male gaze" narrative. (See Student essay quote 2.09, Appendix 2)

The rest of the participants to bring up queer representation were less critical of how the game did it. As an example, two participants brought up the fact that though Chloe and Rachel were in an unhappy relationship, this was due to reasons besides them being queer, and thus the game had not applied the common trope of queer relationships as unhappy. Further, in three essays, the Bury Your Gays trope was mentioned, but in all three cases this was only to state that the trope was not used due to all the queer characters' survival. It is true that none of the characters' deaths are revealed directly in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*, and the statements therefore ring true. However, the final cut scene features a shot from Rachel's murder, and it is obvious that something terrible has happened to her. Yet, it is possible that someone playing this game without any pre-existing knowledge of *Life Is Strange* does not easily recognise the situation as possibly lethal, and considering a fair amount of the participants did not finish the game, it is equally possible that they did not see the final scene.

Another interesting result of this research project was that many of the participants focused more on the outer qualities of the characters, such as clothing and physical appearance, rather than the inner qualities, interactions, and power dynamics between characters, in their analysis of gendered stereotypes in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*. This tendency was first noticed during the observation of the students' writing process in part three, where several struggled to think of examples that were not related to how the characters looked. The material produced by the participants indicates the same thing, at least to some degree, for although the participants were more likely to comment on other character traits than those related to appearance for most characters, characters' appearance was nearly as frequently commented, with characters' appearance being described as a part of the essays'

discussion of gendered stereotypes a total of 119 times, and characters' other characteristics being brought up 148 times. Seeing as appearance represents such a small area of gendered expectations it would be fair to claim that the frequency with which the participants comment on appearance is disproportionate to its importance. That is not to say that the examples themselves are not important, but rather that the number of examples of inner qualities and actions should have been increased. It could be that the way gendered stereotypes that do not have to do with appearance are portrayed in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* is too vague for some students, and that they therefore have a hard time spotting them.

7 CONCLUSIONS

For far too long teachers have been passive spectators of our students' gaming habits. Instead of embracing video games as art, teachers have condemned them for their poor influence on their often-young practitioners and for standing in the way of learning. However, by joining the debate and bringing video games into their classrooms, teachers can help students engage critically with the content of the video games they play and make them more aware of the problematic stereotypes and tropes they often feature, such as limiting gendered stereotypes.

In this master's thesis the video game *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*'s potential to raise students' awareness of gendered stereotypes has been researched. Many gendered stereotypes and tropes that are commonly found in society in general, and video games in particular, are present in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm.* The way the protagonist, Chloe Price constantly saves and protects other female characters is reminiscent of the popular trope of the Damsel in Distress. Though the hero in this case is female, the person being victimised is also female. Besides, one may also take into consideration that video games are prone to cater to white heterosexual cisgender males. *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* also portrays its deuteragonist, Rachel Amber, as a Manipulative Mistress, and the male characters are mostly portrayed stereotypically – with many of them exerting dominant and violent behaviour.

On the other hand, *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* features a female character as its only playable character, which is rare. And to add to it, Chloe and Rachel are both queer and break the gendered stereotypes of their assigned gender in many ways. Though having queer characters as the main characters of a game is a rare phenomenon, their relationship is unhappy and ends with tragedy, which resembles the Bury Your Gays trope and the common trope of all queer relationships as unhappy.

To investigate *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*'s potential, a teaching project meant to raise students' awareness of gendered stereotypes was conducted in three classes in a Norwegian Upper Secondary School. During the instruction in part one of the teaching project the researcher directed the students' attention to some common gendered stereotypes and tropes often used in video games, some of which are featured in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*. Further, as the students played the game, three group discussions where the events and gendered stereotypes of each episode were scheduled. In the last part of the project the students wrote essays where they conducted a gender analysis of the game. The participants

were able to recognise many prominent examples of how the game both maintained and defied gendered stereotypes. However, some of the stereotypes and tropes brought up during that part of the first lesson were scarcely mentioned in the students' essays, such as the queer tropes and Damsel in Distress. Also, many had a significant focus on the characters' appearance, and there is a possibility that the game's portrayal of gendered stereotypes was not explicit enough for some to recognise its use of them. Though *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* proved difficult for some students to analyse, it still gave many students an insight into how video games can be made more inclusive and it was successful in raising students' awareness of gendered stereotypes in many areas.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Power Point presentation (part one)
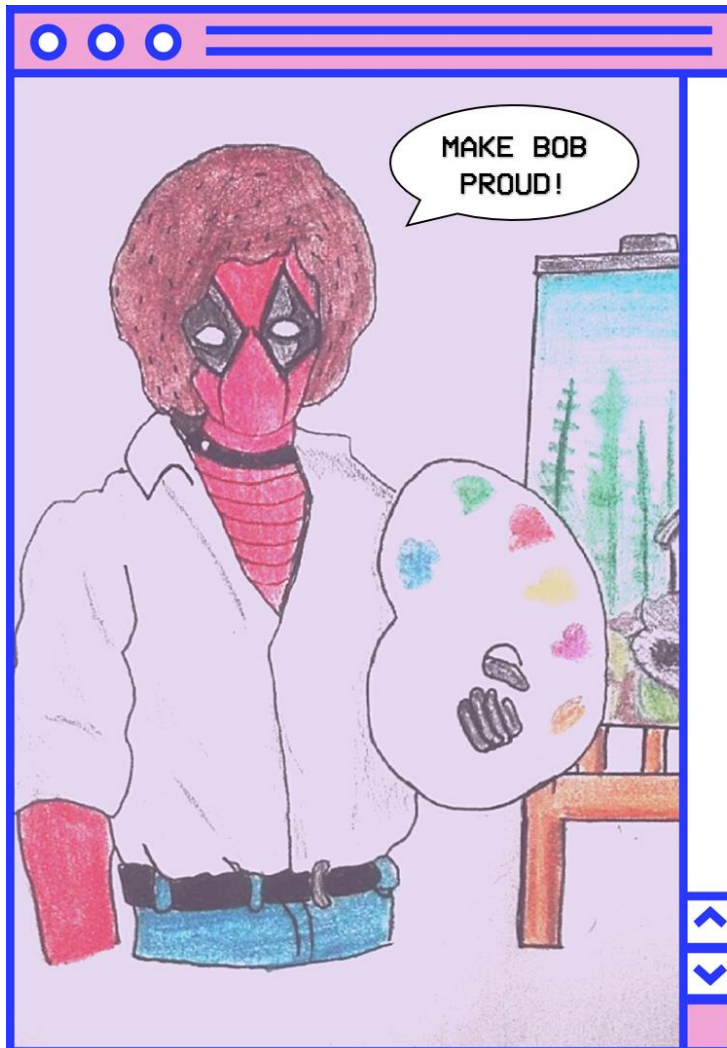
DRAWING CHALLENGE

We will start this project off with a challenge:

1) Form groups of two to four students. Each group receives two blank sheets of paper and has to draw a 'hero' on one, and 'someone who has been saved by the hero' on the other. You only have 15 minutes to complete this task, so be efficient!

2) After drawing, the groups will quickly present their products to the rest of the class before hanging them on the wall.

3) I'll share a link with you so you may vote for your favorite drawings. Do not vote for your own group!

ABOUT THE PROJECT

PLAN:

Part one: introduce the project and theme
- Duration: one lesson (today's lesson)
- Instruction and discussion of gendered stereotypes

Part two: play *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*
- Duration: four lessons
- I recommend bringing a mouse and headset to school for this part (not obligatory)
- Download and take notes in the guide on *ItsLearning* as you play
- If you finish the game quickly you are encouraged to also play through the first episode of *Life Is Strange*

Part three: write a five-paragraph essay
- Duration: three lessons

GROUP 1

WEEK	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
3	Introduction.	Play episode one.	
4	Finish episode one and start playing episode two.	**Discuss episode one** first 15 minutes of class. Finish episode two and start playing episode three.	**Discuss episode two** first 15 minutes of class. Finish episode three and start playing episode one of *Life Is Strange* (the original game) if you have time.
5	**Discuss episode three** first 15 minutes of class. Start writing essay.	Writing.	
6	Writing.	Writing.	

GROUP 2

WEEK	MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
3			Introduction.
4	Play episode one.	Finish episode one and start playing episode two.	**Discuss episode one** first 15 minutes of class. Finish episode two and start playing episode three.
5	**Discuss episode two** first 15 minutes of class. Finish episode three and start playing episode one of *Life Is Strange* (the original game) if you have time.		**Discuss episode three** first 15 minutes of class. Start writing essay.
6	Writing.	Writing.	

GROUP 3

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
4	Introduction.		Play episode one.
5	Finish episode one and start playing episode two.	**Discuss episode one** first 15 minutes of class. Finish episode two and start playing episode three.	Play episode two-three. This class ends after half an hour due to a visit from the school photographer.
6	**Discuss episode two** first 15 minutes of class. Finish episode three and start playing episode one of *Life Is Strange* (the original game) if you have time. Start writing essay.		**Discuss episode three** first 15 minutes of class. Writing.
7	Writing.	Writing.	Writing.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

PURPOSE:

"The pupil is expected to be able to

• read, **analyse** and interpret fictional texts in English
• **explore and reflect on diversity and social conditions** in the English-speaking world…
• **discuss and reflect on form, content and language features and literary devices** in different cultural forms of expression from different media in the English-language world, including music, film and **gaming,**
• write different types of formal and informal texts, including multimedia texts with structure and coherence that describe, discuss, reason and reflect adapted to the purpose, receiver and situation"

(Udir, 2020).

WHAT ARE STEREOTYPES?

SOCIETAL DIFFERENCES:

The differences caused by the pressures that societal gender roles exert on individuals of a given gender. Gender roles are the attitudes, behaviours, rights and responsibilities associated with each sex – **gendered stereotypes.**

BIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES:

The ways in which males and females differ on a genetical and anatomical level - **physical sex.**

Gendered stereotypes

Which societal expectations do we have for girls/women and boys/men?

Consider the terms "Act like a man!" and "be more ladylike". What do they typically mean?

Consider the following aspects:

- Interpersonal relationships
- Emotions and behaviour
- Abilities
- Appearance
- Hobbies and interests
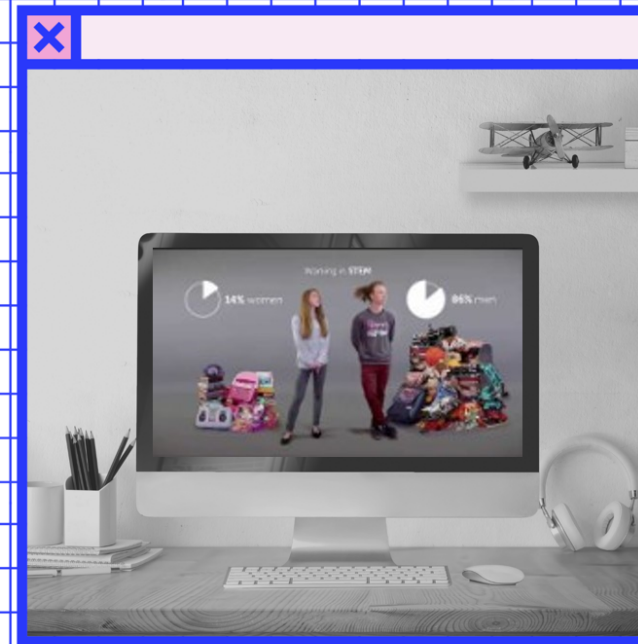
WHO PLAY VIDEO GAMES?

12947: Use of different media, by sex and age. Digital games, Percentage of the population, 2019.
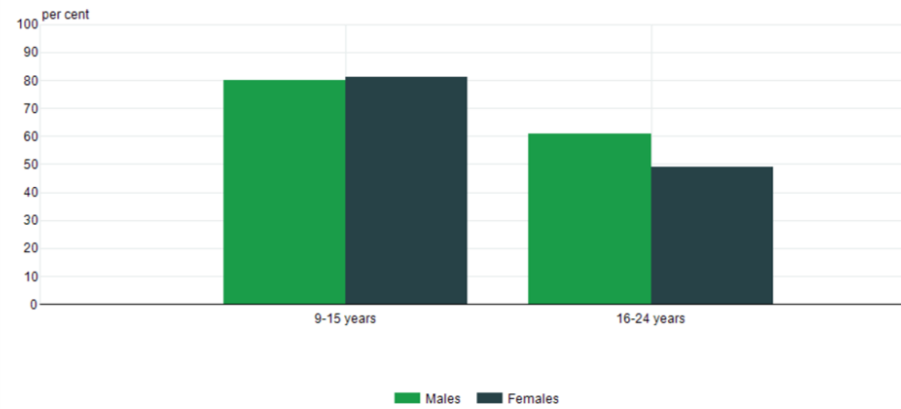
Statistics Norway [SSB], 2020.

GENDERED STEREOTYPES IN VIDEO GAMES

Media has an important role in generating and perpetuating gendered stereotypes, and video games are no exception.

Since video games make up an increasingly important part of our lives, it is important to discuss the ways in which many video games contribute to upholding gendered stereotypes.

How are male and female characters portrayed in video games?
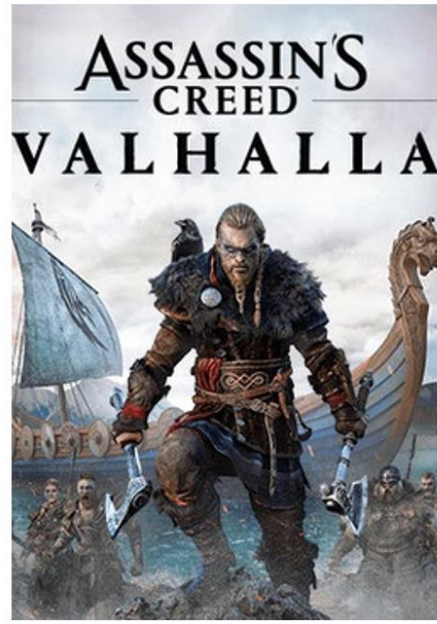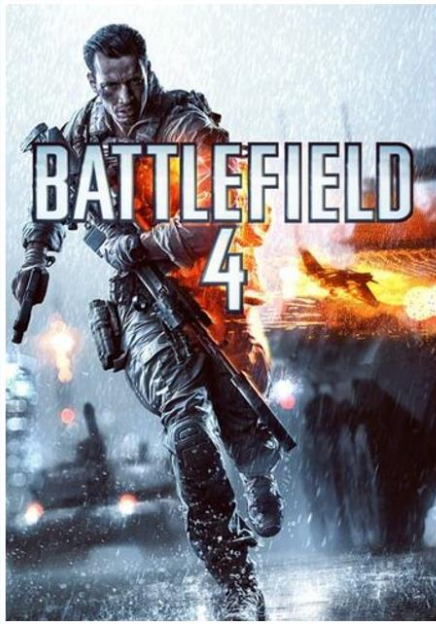
Male characters in video games:

- Big and muscular body type
- Aggressive and violent, are also more often victims of violence
- Inabililty to express emotions
- Military background

- Power fantasy
- Willing to kill
- Revenge: They killed my wife/child/family! I'll make them pay.
- Heterosexual
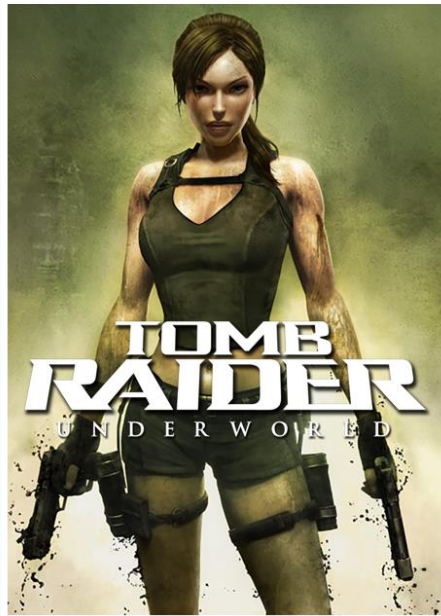
Female characters in video games:

- Rarely the only playable character in the game
- "Damsels in distress": in need of saving
- Thin
- Sexualised
- Rewards

Queer characters in video games:

- Queer characters are rare
- Stereotypically gay characters sometimes used as jokes
- "Bury your gays": queer characters are more likely to die
- Suffering
- Relationships ending in tragedy

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Appendix 2: A summary of the observations made while conducting the teaching project

Observations made during the lessons of this research project

Observations during part one of the teaching project

During part 1, the participants seemed engaged when they took part in the drawing exercise, and they listened attentively to the instruction. In all groups, the discussions of gendered stereotypes were lively, and the students seemed to already have a lot of knowledge and many thoughts about the subject. Their comments during the discussions are summarised in the list in appendix 3. Many of the participants seemed eager to start playing, and were disappointed to learn that we would not start playing the game until next lesson. In group 2 one student had stayed up late the night before the first lesson of the project in order to finish *Life Is Strange*, with several other students in the class watching it on live stream, because they thought we were going to start *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* the next day and they wanted to finish the first game before starting on the second.

During the drawing exercise in part one of the teaching project, the groups drew heroes and a person being saved by a hero with the following gender traits:

	Hero	Saved by hero
Gender normative male	6	8
Male, but…	1: Male torso and head – gender normative. Horse's body. 2: Marshmallow with face, arms and legs. No apparent gender, but group has named it "Marshmallow Man".	

Gender normative female	5	5
Female, but…	1: Female with octopus arms.	
Non-conforming/queer	5	2
No gender/gender unclear (stick people, animals etc.)	1	7 (2 possibly male: short hair)

Observations during part two of the teaching project

During the first lesson of part two, which was the students' first interaction with the game the following observations were made:

In group 1 two students lost between 30 and 60 minutes of game time because the game had not been pre-installed, and in the case of the student who lost most time the computer, which was of a different make and model than the rest of the student laptops, the computer kept overheating and shutting down during the download. Once the students started playing on their own, most of them were intensely focused on the game, and few asked the teacher for help. In group 1 and 2 three-four students sought help from the teacher or a classmate, while in group 3 the only one who sought help was the group's English teacher, who does not consider herself to be a digital native. Apart from those incidents, the classrooms were completely quiet, and the students seemed to be focused on the game. In all three groups over half the students were observed as sitting in a forward-leaning posture, intensely focused on the game.

At the end of the first lesson of part two, after having played the game for the first time the following observations were made:

Once told that the lesson was coming to an end, one student in group 1 commented "Has it been an hour and a half already?" And when asked about their first impressions of the game around half the class of all three groups gave a thumbs up and the following comments were made: "It's a bit weird", "It's a bit shocking", "The game mechanics were more or less okay to figure out", "I thought the game seemed very complicated and I didn't really see the point", "I didn't quite like it, but it's not the worst game I have played", "It's nice with varied learning", "I liked that it's something you would not expect or what you are used to from American movies", "It seemed like the choices you made didn't really matter that much", "I

think the dialogues are too long" and "The game takes a long time to play, and I am worried about whether I will be able to finish".

During the discussions of each episodes the students were asked to take notes when discussing in groups. These notes are included in appendix 5. One general observation of the discussions was that the participants spent more time discussing the game's content than its portrayal of gendered stereotypes, which many of the groups read out loud from their lists rather than discussed. Also, several students from each group acted surprised when someone in their group commented that the relationship forming between Rachel and Chloe was romantic in nature. Below are further comments made by the participants during these discussions. Observations that overlap with the findings in appendix 5 have been omitted:

"Chloe and Rachel meet at the concert. Apart from the fact that they are both doing something they're not supposed to be doing, they immediately have a strong bond because Rachel saves Chloe from an inconvenient situation" (Anonymous student from group 2).

"Many of the characters rely on stereotypes. Not just gendered stereotypes but stereotypes that are typically seen in media in general. You for instance have Victoria who is the typical popular high school "bitch", that instantly dislikes anyone. Then you have Drew who is a stereotypical jock, who picks on Nathan for no apparent reason. Or rather, the reason has to do with something revealed in the second game I think, but to the player that's not necessarily obvious" (Anonymous student from group 2).

"Chloe does not fit into any of the typical gendered stereotypes. She just wants everyone and everything to "fuck off"" (Anonymous student from group 3).

During part two some additional observations were made:
The researcher/teacher(s) was(were) not once reminded of or asked about approaching breaks during any of the gaming lessons. The researcher overheard students from group 2 and 3 discuss the game during breaks between classes on several occasions. Due to where the researcher's office and regularly visited classrooms were located during this project, observations of group 1 during breaks were fewer.

As we were about to embark on part three of the project in group 1, one frustrated participant made the following comments:
"We thought the game was really boring! I hope you write this down. I looked forward to this all year because someone told me the game was really cool, but it was so boring, I almost fell

asleep… Then again, we have a very demanding class right before every English class, so we are really tired. We don't even get a break in between classes. Maybe short breaks while playing would have helped" (Anonymous student from group 1).

Observations during part three of the teaching project

During part three many of the participants from the three groups sought assistance from the researcher/teachers. Most of the questions they had were related to language, structure and referencing, but quite many also needed some inspiration when it came to examples of gendered stereotypes from *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm.* It was the general observation of the researcher and the English teacher of group 3 that of the students seeking help to find examples of gendered stereotypes, most were quite focused on the appearance and clothing of the characters.

Here follows excerpts from student texts relevant to the problem statement of this thesis: To what extent does the video game *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* have the potential to promote students' awareness of gendered stereotypes in Upper Secondary School? The excerpts have been collected during part three of the project, the writing of the essay, and have been observed and stored anonymously by the researcher. The excerpts have been numbered, the first number represents the group, and the second number represents the respondent. Though the excerpts have been numbered in the same way as the responses from the final survey, there is no correlation between the number assigned to the final survey responses and the excerpts, seeing as all collection and storage of data in this project was anonymous. Also, there are fewer excerpts from part three than there are final survey responses, seeing as 49 of the 72 participants consented to the researcher observing this part of the research project, and 45 out of the consenting participants finished the essay.

1.01: "In the game Life is strange: Before the storm we can see that they have used a lot of gendered stereotypes on the different characters in the game which we also can find in the real world. For example, we see that they have used the typical stereotypes for both men and females as well as the different stereotypes that we see in our society for people using drugs, people that are queer, people raised in better families and people living in the suburbs. So, the conclusion is that the game has a lot of similarities to the real world and we should all be

aware of the influence this kind of games can have on younger people, which can be thought to see people in a stereotype mindset."

1.02: "When it comes to the game, I experienced that only the men were maintaining the usual stereotypes. For example, Choles stepdad David. He was a former military who always spoke in a loud and dark voice, a way of demonstrating that he was in charge. He had broad shoulders, short hair, and a bushy moustache. The same was for Drew, a jock from her school. He had the "typical" jock attitude, cocky and short tempered, and jock style with his football jacket. However, Chole is also a stereotype, for lesbians. She wore boyish clothes, had short hair, and talked in a way to make her seem cool and tough. (…)

Lastly, I would like to look at how *Life is strange: before the storm* defies stereotypes. This was something that made the game stand out to me, since they went against the typical stereotypes that we usually see in modern video games. On the other hand, it was almost a little to extreme. For example, how Chole and Rachel did not have any body curves, whatsoever. When they were in the school play, they had on tight fitting clothes, and you saw their body shapes. It was almost a little unnaturally exaggerated, compared to normal stereotypes, in contrast it made a statement.
If you imagine a scale, where on the left you have extreme stereotypes, the middle is neutral, on the right, you get something I would call anti-stereotypes. It is where you try to go so hard against the typical stereotypes, that it becomes unnatural. If I dare say, I believe that *Life is strange: Before the storm* is tilted a little more to the right, than the middle. For instance, how Chole acted and behaved, it was so extreme how she tried to play cool and tough it became "cringe". This was for Rachel as well, though not as bad."

1.03: "The videogame *Life is strange: Before the storm* was published in 2017 and does in many ways challenge the gendered stereotypes and defy a great number of them. Some of the female characters that we get to know through the game, like Chloe and Rachel, go against the superficial ideas of how a girl should be. They are not only included in the game, but in fact they are the main characters. (…) Now if we take a look at Chloe, she is a very tough girl that hides her emotions, she does not show that she cares so much, she does a lot of bad things and is not so innocent, and she has short hair and use more "boyish" clothes. Rachel on the other side, acts more innocent to impress at school and home, but she has her rebellious sides too, just like Chloe. The two girls develop a romantic relationship together, so this does also

go against the expectations. To sum it up, the game introduces tough, strong, and not heterosexual female characters and does in this way defy some of the gendered stereotypes, especially on the girl side of it.

On the other side, the game does maintain some of the stereotypes as well, especially the male related stereotypes. The game does not have a male main character, so that defies the typical video game story line, but there are male side characters presented, and they fit quite well into the list of (…). If we look at the male characters from the videogame like, David, Drew, Mr. Amber and Frank, we can conclude with that the game did not in any dramatic way defy these generalizing expectations of how boys and men should act, look, and be like."

1.04: "One of the main characters in the video game, Rachel Amber, is framed as "ladylike". Her face is clean, she has long hair, wears make-up and colorful clothes and earrings. She also has a skinny and shaped body, as well as all the other female characters in the video game. The male characters are characterized as most male characters in video games. Rachel's father James and Chloe's stepfather David are perfect examples. The two men have muscular body types, short hair, and bushy eyebrows. They also have strict personalities, which are typical for men. These examples demonstrate that the video game maintains stereotypes between the two sexes.

Life is Strange: Before the Storm, defies gendered stereotypes. The main character in the video game, Chloe Price, is an example of a female who stands out of the typical female frame. In all episodes, she takes care of herself, has an interest in fixing cars, and stands up for herself or others, whenever someone is treated unfairly. This shows that Chloe is independent, and her exterior is androgen. Chloe's appearance also stands out from the typical female. She has short hair, wears dark-colored clothes and ripped jeans. This kind of clothing can be considered emo and is not "ladylike". It is apparent that Chloe wants to stand out from the crowd, based on her personality and appearance. As a result of how Chloe dresses, her interests and personality, and her close relation to Rachel, she might be homosexual. (…)

Video games in general, often sexualize female characters. They regularly wear thigh-sitting clothes and have skinny and shaped bodies, and some are often portrayed with large breasts. In Life is Strange: Before the Storm, every female character has skinny body types, however,

they are not portrayed with large breasts. This shows Life is Strange: Before the Storm defies gendered stereotypes.”

1.05: “The football player Drew is built up with wide shoulders, quite tall and he has a football jacket with his name on it, a shirt under that and dark pants. With other words his using stereotyping men's clothes and are built up like a stereotyping football player. The young girls are also stereotyping in one way. They are all skinny with thin thighs and legs, no stomach fat and small waist. There are no different body types for the girls in this game. I would call this body shaming.

On the other side the girls do not have stereotyping clothes. Both Chole and Rachel are not wearing stereotyping girl clothes like skirts and dresses. They are wearing pants, skull t-shirts with an open shirt over or a sweater under. Chloe is also wearing a hat over her short hair, that she coloured in the latest episode. The effect of this is that we get an impression that both Chloe and Rachel are badasses. Chloe also has a behaviour that's not really acceptable. Girls are perceived that they should be kind, sweet and a “good girl”. Chloe on the other hand is not like that. She is mean to her family, doesn't really care about others and does not listen to her mother. This is not very stereotypical behaviour.

Finally, I can conclude that the game Life is strange: Before the storm continues both stereotypes and non-stereotypes. The body shape to the young girls in this game is quite stereotypical, but the clothes they wear are not. Social media and video games also shows what stereotypical boys and girls look like which can contribute to body pressure and things like that. Chloe's behavior is one example of that the video game defied the stereotypes.”

1.06: “Chloe Price has a mother and a stepdad, who both amplifies the stereotypes. Her mother Joyce cooks and cleans while her boyfriend (Chloe's stepdad), David, is out working and provides for the family, and he fixes his car on his own. David is dominant, rude and strong. These two characters shows us that some of the people in the game maintains the gender stereotypes. Drew, Mikes big brother is a big cocky jock. He was someone that really represented the teenage boys' stereotypes. He was good at football, loves to train and he bullies.

(…) Rachel Amber is Chloe's best friend. I think she deifies and amplifies the stereotypes. First, we get to know her as the popular girl, golden child, good student and very "girly". As we get to know her throughout the story we get to see more of her differences. She is not how I imagined her to be. Rachel wears more gothic clothes. She is a bit rough, manipulative and gets easily angered. We get to see her steal wine and she lashes out on people. When she does all this, the players get the sense she is not like any other popular girl. The manipulative trait is maybe stereotypic for a female, because we control men and tend to get what we want by taking advantage. Mostly, I feel she goes against the stereotypes. The person who defied the stereotypes the most is the main character Chloe Price. She is mentally and physically different from the gendered female stereotypes in video games. Chloe has short hair, wears the typical boy clothes, she is vulgar, fierce, she is very tall for her age and gender and she has a lot of attitude."

1.07: "Chloe, who is the female character, are skinny and have smaller body compared to the male characters. The male character had stronger and bigger body that Chloe, he has broad shoulders and has not so friendly face. Beside the male character here, this is what almost any male character look and behave in other games. (…) We could see that David was not so nice while they talked, and he talked very directly to Chloe. David did also behave like he is the owner of the house and that Chloe must do everything he want. This shows that David is trying to show Chloe that he is the boss, and he can decide over her. Another thing David did was to say something when Chloe took so long time trying to find David's keys. He said, "You women take so long time getting ready". Here David clearly divided the male from the females by saying "you women" and even tough Chloe was only taking to much time to find his own keys. Furthermore this is something women get said to a lot today in our society and now it has been normal in games too."

1.08: "A female character is rarely the only playable character in a game, but in this game, you only get to play as Chloe Price, a queer sixteen-year-old girl. I find this character interesting because she is not like most other girls and I see her as a good example from the game to illustrate this. She is a rebellious and stubborn punk-rocker, expressed in her style and taste in music. She likes to get high, drink, and is very outgoing and bold. Most times Chloe seems very ignorant and shows little interest in what people say to her, especially adults. An example from the game is when her stepfather David is talking to her. She seems like she does not care at all and shows dislike towards him. Chloe is not afraid to take space

or say what she has in mind to other people. In the game, she confronts Rachel for switching moods and gets very angry. She gets extremely angry and smashes the stuff around her with a baseball bat. Other than aggression and ignorance, she sometimes feels sad while thinking of her dad. We also get to see that Chloe is a person that cares about the people she loves.

Chloe has friends of both genders, but typically in games when playing as a girl, the girl has a group of girlfriends. Not only does she have friends, but she falls in love with a person of the same gender, which is what makes her queer. Queer means sexual and gender identities other than straight like being lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people may all identify as queer (Teigen & Svartdal, 2020). Chloe obviously has feelings for Rachel, however, they never said anything about having feelings for each other. You are more likely to come across a gay couple of two girls rather than two boys in video games, but queer characters are rare. Stereotypically gay characters are sometimes used as jokes in videogames, where the relationships end in tragedy. Because of that, we have the phrase: "bury your gays". Queer characters are more likely to die and are somehow suffering in the games. In *Life is Strange: Before the Storm*, there were no tragedies related to the gay relationship between Chloe and Rachel. There are gendered stereotypes in most games where someone is in danger. There is always a man or a prince saving a girl in danger, but in this game, Rachel saves Chloe when she conflicts with two men. That way, the woman is manufactured as a type of "reward". An example is Princess Peach in Super Mario that gets saved by Mario, and she is portraited as the reward. Another typical story in games and movies is that the girl being saved falls in love with the guy saving her, as well as falling in love with him and living happily ever after.

In society, there are high standards on body image and appearance. Some images are considered prettier or more handsome and tell us something about what we should look like. These ideals can be for example height, weight, or size, and apply to both men and. I would not say that Chloe has a typical appearance that is pleasing to men due to her tomboy look. Her characteristics and interests also seem to be more of what boys are like stereotypically rather than girls. She defies the gendered stereotypes well. She has short dark hair and does not wear makeup or nail polish unless it is for a play. However, she does dye a piece of her hair blue, and at the very end her whole hair light blue. She is often wearing dark tight-fitting clothes with accessories and a jacket, which is not revealing or sexualizing her in anyways. She has a skinny body with subtle curves, and so do the other girls in the game look like. I did not see any overweight girls or boys throughout the game. Chloe likes trucks, cars, and

motorcycles. An example from the game is at the very beginning when she sees the bouncer's bike and her passion for repairing the truck at the scrapyard. If we look at stereotypes for girls in video games, we get to see that this is very un-ladylike. Girls are often portraited with long hair and makeup. They are dressed in colorful revealing clothes and have curves with larger hips, breasts, butt, and a flat stomach with a tiny waist. This body type is called "slim thick". It is also more common for girls to stay on the quieter side rather than speaking up for themselves, and violent or illegal actions are rarer. With this in mind, we can see the contrast between the main character and her gendered stereotypes. Chloe finds out that her classmate Drew owes Frank a large sum of money, and Frank wants her to steal the money for him. While stealing the money, she witnesses Drew getting beat up by Frank`s boss, Damon Merrick who wanted the money. It is not usual for girls to do these actions in most video games.

The men in the video game have what I see as typical manly characteristics such as being aggressive and violent, with features like being tall, sharp jawline, beards, bushy brows, masculine looks, and being tough. some of them even got scars on their faces and tattoos on their bodies that make them look more masculine. It does not look like the men groom themselves or put much effort into looking good. The men in the video game maintain the gendered stereotypes. An example of a male character from the game is David, Chloe's stepdad. He seems very disciplined and stern with a background in the military. This shows him off as a tough guy. He is caring and shows love to Joyce, Chloe's mom, and is trying to fit into the family and protecting them. However, he does come off as mean and prickly sometimes, especially when Chloe is being disrespectful towards him. He is an average-looking white man with the typical manly features I mentioned earlier. He is tall, muscular, and has facial hair. David has a soft side where he shows feelings and emotions. This is when he tells Chloe about his friend that passed away in a war. He gets sad, and Chloe shows understanding because it reminds her of her dad that she has lost in a car accident. In the game *Life is Strange: Before the Storm*, we get to see a violent thug named Damon Merrick. He was threatening Chloe while holding her wrist and then Rachel pushed him away from her saying he must stop touching her. Damon then says: "why is it that chicks think it's okay to hit me, but if I lay a single finger on them, suddenly it's a whole other thing?". This is also a gendered stereotype maintaining because it is more accepted for a woman to be violent against a man. Later on, in the game, he kicks Chloe that was lying on the floor. This is not a

typical scene we get to see in videogames or movies because it is not accepted for a man to be violent against women."

1.09: "You have Rachel Amber that are a very clever girl she has good grades and stuff like that, but the one thing that separates her from others is that she is wearing more typical boy clothes. Its more the same thing whit Chloe Price, but the difference between those two is that Chloe do not care about school. This is also a gender stereotype because most people like to think that girls are good at school and wear skirts and stuff like that. The game does not follow these gender stereotypes like girls only wearing girl clothes, because they want to show that girls can wear boy clothes. So, we can se that girls can wear the same things as boys without getting judged by that. (…)

The game Life is Strange they maintain gender stereotypes and, they don't follow them. Lets se on the girls, most of them follow the typical gender stereotypes but not all. Steph Gingrich follow the typical way girls dressed in games and in real life. She dressed in a more clothes that can be remined of girl clothes, and Chloe Price does not follow this type of style, she follows her own style. Chloe dressed more in boy clothes and she has shorter hair that we expected, and she do not use makeup as much ether. This is not following the gender stereotypes that we know, but this is more normal now versus a few years back in time, because our society is evolving to a more respected place and people don't judges as much as they did before. So, we see that both Life in strange and in real life there are similarities.

After all we can see that Chloe and Rachel does not follow the typical stereotypes with dressing in other ways then the most girls do. There are so many ways of breaking the stereotypes, but I only saw the girls breaking it. All the men have most of the stereotypes, because we see the love of the mother to Chloe. He was big and strong and handsome in some way. So, we can conclude that there are people that is breaking it, there are this in games and in real life."

1.10: "The first impression I get from Rachel is that she is the stereotypical popular girl at school. She has long hair and wears typical "girl clothes". She has wealthy parents and behaves at school. But when we get to know her, she might not be as stereotypical as I thought. (…)

As for the male characters in the game, they are pretty basic. Most of them are big and muscular, for example Drew North he is the typical high school boy, he is big, cocky and plays football. Characters like this is exactly what creates stereotypes. When I think of the typical high school boy in America, I think of someone like Drew. But you have some exceptions like Michael North or better known as Mikey. He is the typical nerdy boy in school. But almost every other man in the game is very stereotypical. This create a very big contrast to the main characters.

One question many parents may ask themselves is "does all these games and movies have a negative effect on my kid's self-esteem?". And the answer is pretty easy, yes it has. But it can be discussed how much it affect them. But one thing it definitely does is to create stereotypes. In almost every game you play, the main character is a strong handsome man who either save lives or is out to take revenge on someone. And the female characters are wearing tight clothes and is curvy."

1.11: "The way the game presented the different stereotypes, is not the most common in videogames. Chloe, the main character, is more manly than girly. She is very handy and likes to fix cars. The outfits that she wears is a little tight for a man but the style she has is more like a boy than a girl. She has short hair and does not wear any makeup. If we compare her to another character, Rachel Amber who is a close friend, Rachel is more like the typical female stereotype. She has long hair, dresses a bit more nicely and girly than Chloe and she wears makeup. The boys in the game is more like what we expect. There is one boy who is popular, big, and strong, and one who is more of the opposite. There are many other male characters, but they are two are the ones we hear about the most in the game.
(…)
They represented the main character as the opposite of what most people would expect her to be like. The boys are mostly the same as in every game. There is not much of a difference. The game defines and maintains the different stereotypes very good. Is not that common that the main character sticks out like that in a game. It is good to have a change, especially in the society that we live in. Normalizing that we do not have to be like the stereotype that we "need" to be."

1.12: ""Life is strange" includes a lot of the stereotypes, but not all of them. The men are those who follows the stereotypes the most, and the women follows some of them. Chloe

shows that she cares much about Rachel, and she often think about her father who died in a car-crash. She wears tight clothes sometimes, she is very skinny and sometimes she wears accessories. If we talk about Rachel, she "follows" more of the gendered stereotypes than Chloe does. Rachel has long hair, wears a little bit of make-up, accessories, tight clothes, she is skinny and she is doing wonderful at school. Rachel shows that she cares about Chloe, and she is caring against her family most of the time, in contrast to how Chloe is against her mother and stepdad. The mothers in the game follows the stereotypes, both Rachels; Rose and Chloe's; Joyce. They cook, care a lot about their daughters and family, wears more or less tight clothes, some accessories and they show emotions. Assuming the men in the game, mostly of them follows the stereotypes. They are tall, have (and shows) muscles, does not show a lot of emotions, wears clothes in dark colours and acts confident and tough. David, Chloe's stepdad, is handy, not afraid to take up space, does not cook, has a beard and a moustache, drives the car, is attracted to women and he has male friends. Both Rachel and Chloe's father/stepfathers acts like "the boss" in the family, and they does not do much work at home, except from working with the car or fixing broken stuff. An example is when David is fixing the car, and another example is when Rachels dad is relaxing while her mom is cooking dinner. They whole family follow the stereotypes as they was some years ago, because it seems like the fathers are the ones with a job, and the money they get, is the money the family has to live on. It looks like the mothers stay at home, cooks and does things in the house, like cleaning and washing. The other guys in the game, Frank, Drew and Nathan, also follow the stereotypes. They are acting tough, independent, not that caring and strong. They dress manly; chains, sagging jeans, hats and loose clothes. Some of them has a beard, all of them have short hair and they all are taller than the girls, as far as I could tell.

The game mostly goes against the stereotypes, and If you ask me Chloe is the person who "breaks" them the most. She acts unconcerned, wears dark clothes, not tons of accessories, no makeup and she does not cook. She is thin and does not have any curves, and she acts confident and tough. Most of the girls we use to see in movies/social medias etc. has curves, no "extra" fat and often a flat and defined stomach as I said before. We often see girls that use light-coloured clothes, tight jeans, a bunch of makeup, and they often are afraid of taking space, or being in someone's way. Chloe is not afraid of that, and she is not afraid of telling others what she thinks eighter. Chloe has both female and male friends, and usually girls in movies etc. only have female friends, and date/get interested in males, and does not have that many male friends. If we move on to the relationship between Chloe and Rachel, Chloe falls

in love with Rachel, as well as Rachel falls in love with Chloe. We are not used to see two persons of the same gender that falls in love with each other, because most of the games/films etc. Is really conservative when it comes to love. "Life is strange", can make people feel better about themselves, and people maybe think that it is a little bit easier to be themselves, dress like they want, wear as much makeup as they want, act like they want and love who they want to, after playing this game. I think that other games have a lot to learn from this game, and also that the people in our society hopefully get some thoughts about being more including in general."

1.13: "We came to the conclusion that the parents of Chloe and the parents of Rachel are the characters in the game who maintain the stereotypes the most. Examples of this, are that the mothers clean, cook, wearing a dress or skirt, have long hair, are nice, kind and caring. Rachel's father and Chloe's stepfather both maintain the gendered stereotypes, but in different ways. They both behave male and have a very masculine physique. Rachel's father is the type that sits in his chair and reads the newspaper while his wife makes dinner, but Chloe's stepfather is the type who is often in the garage working on his car, is the alpha in the family, are determined and know how he wants thing to be.

Thirdly, how does the game defy gendered stereotypes? The first thing that comes to mind, is that the main character, Chloe, has short hair and does not dress like the other girls in the game and like most teenager girls in general. In addition, she has an attitude or behavior that is not typically girly. It is a type of anger and I personally think that this anger come from her father's death and that her mother got a new boyfriend that Chloe hates. Even though Chloe has an attitude and does not care so much about anything, she becomes a little "weak" and soft for Rachel, because Chloe is in love with her. Rachel maintains and defy the gendered stereotypes. She has long hair and dress like most girl, but her behavior is manipulative, she gets angry easily and that is a behavior that defy the gendered stereotypes. Most of the girls in the game stand out by not doing what's expected of them in accordance with the gender roles."

1.14: "Like most games, *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* is full of gendered stereotypes, however, this affects the boys more than the girls. Dominance is a stereotype that can be found in many of the males in the game. A dominant character likes to have authority and power over others, and they make themselves the bigger person (Koenig, 2018). This can be

seen in David when he tries to be a father role for Chloe. He takes the role from Chloe's deceased father without asking if she is okay and ready for it. He shows authority with his actions, for example when he tells Chloe to empty her pockets to search her for drugs. In the first episode, David says to Chloe: "You need to shape up, get your act together and put someone else first for a damn change. Am I making myself clear?" This shows that David thinks he has authority over Chloe. Dominant behavior can also be seen in the character Eliot Hampden. In the last episode, he shows it by demanding that Chloe give him attention. He says: "When will you have time? For me? You have all the time in the world for—for Rachel. I'm so sick of you not seeing who Rachel really is. When will you realize what she's doing to you?" In a way, Eliot tries to manipulate Chloe for his benefit, and he thinks he deserves to demand attention from her. This shows that he is dominant and wants things his way in the same way as David.

Masculine bodies and clothing are other examples of gendered stereotypes. A lot of the males in this game have the same body type and characteristics: tall, muscular, broad shoulders, short hair, beard, and "manly" clothes. The character David is a good example of these gendered stereotypes. He can be described with all the manly features. He is tall and strong, dark hair with a slight beard, full mustache, and he wears dark flannels and shirts. All the boys you get to know in the game have some of these characteristics, and not even one of them has long hair. This shows how apparent the stereotypical male appearance is in this game.

Chloe Price and other girls from *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* defies the gendered stereotypes for appearance and behavior, but like the boys, their bodies are still not there yet. Chloe has shorter hair, a punk clothing style, and she's far from weak and soft. In many ways, she breaks the stereotypes. In my eyes, she could even be considered a part of the "Lara phenomenon." The only thing that stops the game from absolutely demolishing the female stereotypes is that they all have the same small and thin body. The game lacks a diversity of different bodies. For this reason, the stereotype that girls should have short and thin bodies has not been broken.

(…) *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* has LGBT-representation, and therefore the game goes against the first norm about only having heterosexual characters. Depending on the choices you make, Chloe and Rachel share a kiss outside in the snow, and in the end scenes it can be

presumed at they have become more than friends. Another openly queer person in the game is Steph Gingrich. It is not directly stated, but she asks Chloe if Rachel is single, and it is assumed Steph has a crush on her. The game has broken the heterosexual stereotype, but has "bury the gays" also been defied? From our perspective, Steph is happy and alive, and the answer is therefore yes. She is only a minor side character, but she has defied the stereotype. Chloe and Rachel do not have it as well as Steph. Both characters have been through a lot, and I think they know suffering well. However, the suffering does not come from being gay. Chloe and Rachel are alive and well, and that is why I do not think "bury the gays" is present in *Life is Strange: Before the Storm*."

1.15: "Now by going more into the game and how they maintain the stereotypes. The game does not have those big differences between girls and boys. Girls in the game wear normal fitting clothes and do not wear make-up or nail polish. They have a good number of accessories. On them, that is the only thing you do not see boys wearing. They do not really maintain the typical stereotypes, only the men maintain them the most, they wear normal boy clothes and do boy things. The girls are way more on the boy ish side, but they act and do things that girls do. Rachel is probably the one girl that maintains the girly stereotype the best, she wears make up and dresses up a lot. The game maintains them in a good way, its not like that girls are super girls and boys are super boys. They keep those things stable.
The women in the game define the game the most, like Chloe is way more manly than girly. Chloe wears more manly clothes and is way more on the manly side, she is super handy and can-do things a lot of manly things women cannot or are not interested in. the men in the game do not really define the stereotypes. Drews little brother is more feminine, he kind of has this caring and lovely personality. The way they push all these stereotypes out of the game is very great. Also, the way Chloe acts and always stand up for herself in a very tuff way. And mostly in video games its always a girl and a boy, and the boy is always the saviour, they ether get saved from a fire or her being chased by a monster. But in the game its different, the girls save each other in a way its not obvious.

(…) There is of course good thing about it to, the way they don't make this game really gender stereotyped is a good example for other games. Mostly if there are gay people or boy/girl who is more feminine/masculine die first."

1.16: "In the video game *Live is Strange: Before the Storm* there are many scenes where we can se stereotypes. For example, when David fixes the car, he brings his own toolbox. Because Chloe and her mother, two women, live alone in the house, he expected there is no in the garage. This is a stereotype because in the old gender roles men were the ones who are responsible for the car. Another scene, where the game maintains stereotypes is in front of the school. Drew is about to begin a fight with Nathan. A girl passing by sees it and ask Chloe to help. She does not have the self-confidence to help Nathan, because Drew scares her. The issue here is that men are pictured as stronger as women, another stereotype. Linked to that is the common presence of man as strong, muscular, and broad-shouldered. Even though it is biological assessed, that men have broader shoulders than woman (Capellen Damm, 2011), not all men are so muscular in their upper part of the body. For example, David, Drew, and Frank all three have the typical triangular inches. This let them look more masculine because we assume muscles etc. with men.

Chloe Price, the protagonist of the game is the best example how one can resist stereotypes. The first thing is her look. She has short hair, wears dark clothes and is not using make-up. These three things are more assumed with men than with women. The next point are her behaviour and her skills. Early the gamer gets to known that she has a dealer and buys hush, criminal action is often related to men and so not expected that a "brave girl" does such things. Later at the Junk Yard Chloe fixes a car, or at least try to. As in the second paragraph mentioned, the stereotype that cares are interests of boys and men is here defied with an example from the opposite.

Maybe the biggest step out of role models is the relation between Rachel and Chloe. They get close friends verry fast, but it becomes more, they kiss each other and have later a relationship. The stereotype would be that girls love boys and the other way round. But here it is clear that they are not straight and fall in love with a girl."

1.17: "The game breaks the normal gendered stereotypes in many ways, and one of the categories are emotions and behavior. Usually, the boy is the hero and he is saving the girl in need. In the game, Chloe protects her family and loved ones in the game when she saves Rachel. (Deck Nine, 2017) This gives us a feel that the good girl falls in love with the bad boy, just that there are two girls in this case. Chloe is quite rude and cocky in the game; this is another break from the gendered stereotype. Chloe both drinks and smokes in the game, this

as well is not gendered stereotypical for girls. Moreover, girls are not supposed to be violent and throw punches. Here as well does Chloe break the gendered stereotype. The effect on how we see Chloe changes when we see her acting differently than other girls in the game. We think of her as rougher just because she does not act "lady like".

The second category of gendered stereotypes the game breaks gendered stereotypes is by appearance. The gendered stereotypical girl is supposed to wear makeup, have long hair and wear dresses and skirts. Chloe does not follow any of these gendered stereotypes. She does not wear makeup or dresses, and she almost looks like a boy if you did not know her name. (Deck Nine, 2017) Rachel on the other hand, follows a lot more of the gendered stereotypes. Rachel has long hair and dress more girly than Chloe. At the same time, does not Rachel wear dresses, have on heavy makeup or have the gendered stereotypical body of a girl. The other girls in the game does not have a sexualized appearance either, but they do look a little more girly than Chloe does.This shows that you can follow a few gendered stereotypical rules and at the same time break them down. In that way, we get a contrast in both the main characters and the characters alone.

The third category of gendered stereotype that the game breaks are school and smarts. In the game, Chloe gets in a lot of trouble at school. Furthermore, she gets kicked out of school after she takes the blame for Rachel. When she does this, she breaks not one, but two gendered stereotypes. This is because she both protects Rachel and gets kicked out of school, at the same time. Here as well do we get a feeling like it is a hero saving the girl. The gendered stereotypical girl is supposed to be in school and be school smart. Even though Chloe gets kicked out of school, she is quite smart. For example, in the game we get to know that she loves science and that she got a scholarship. This way she both follows and breaks the gendered stereotypes. The effect on that is that we start to feel bad for Chloe because she could have been doing a lot better in school."

1.18: "The way *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* maintains their gendered stereotype. The first character that follows the normal gendered stereotype is for example is David Madsen. He follows the typical male stereotype. Throughout the three episodes of the game, he does not show much emotion. However, we cannot be certain of it since we are seeing him through Chloe Price's eyes. If it was Joyce Price, perhaps we can see a different side of David Madsen and his emotions because Joyce and David are in a relationship. Furthermore, David does not

show any weaknesses, or you can say he is "though". this can be due to the fact of the other stereotype that he served in the military. It seems that the military and his bond to the friend he lost in the military shaped David into what he is today. Another stereotype of David Mason is his appearance. He has short hair, bushy eyebrows, looks masculine, dark hair, and lastly handsome, but that is debatable. The other men in *Life are Strange: Before the Storm* also follows this stereotype formula. Now to the other side of the spectrum, the women. There are not many that follow but there is one that shows it clearly, and her name is Victoria Chase. Her behavior is "bitchy", and she has blond hair, is thin, not tall either and she uses tight-fitting clothes with vibrant colors as pink and so forth. This is the one person that follows the female stereotype most. To conclude there is a lot of gendered stereotype for the men in-game, while the female is only a few.

Now to how *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* defies the gendered stereotypes. As I had said in the last paragraph there were not many females that follow the gender stereotype, or at least break apart from it as time passes. The one that we see first that had rarely followed it was Chloe Price. In relationships, she is independent of her family since we see her sleep in a junkyard and making that her home, and she is sexually attracted towards women. This shows how she does not follow the normal gender stereotype. Her appearance is the opposite of the gender stereotype too. Her hair is short, and she wears bland-looking clothes with dark colors, and lastly, she does not use makeup. One of her hobbies is also boyish and that is cars and mechanics. In the game, she reluctantly helps David with his car and in the junkyard, she fixes the old truck. All of it now shows how she does not bend to female stereotypes, nevertheless, she still possesses some traits that cater to the gendered stereotypes. For instance, her hobby of art. She loves to draw in her notebook and like to graffiti with her marker. Or how she shows her emotions to Rachel Amber. The second character that bends the female stereotype is Rachel Amber. She is similar to the stereotype. The family has expectations, acts calm and collected, good social skills, follow rules, has long hair, and use makeup. However, as we progress in the game, she split from the gender stereotype like Chloe. The reason for this was mostly because of the situation with her family. In short Chloe and Rachel defies the gendered stereotype with their relationships, behavior, and their appearance."

1.19: "Life Is Strange maintains gendered stereotypes. Especially when it came to the men in the game. Every guy was muscular and had broad shoulders. David, for example, had broad

shoulders, was tall and had beard. He came into Chloe's life when she had a hard time and thought he could control her like she was his own daughter. For example, after Chloe was expelled from school, he and her mother stood by the car ready to yell at her. You would have thought it was her mother that was going to yell at her, but it was David. He even demanded her to take out everything she had in her pockets to see if there were any drugs. Just because he was a man, he believed he could say and do whatever to Chloe. He was going to move in with them so he could provide them and help Chloe's mother more, which is a very manly stereotype. Demon is also an example on a manly stereotype. He was confident, had an angry personality and it looked like he did not have any weaknesses, all this is often how the men is represented in a video game. He was willing to beat up and kill both Drew and Chloe for his drug money. He had weapons that he was not afraid to use, he among other things stabbed Rachel and Frank. Damon is the character that sticks the most to the gendered stereotypes. The game also defies a lot of gendered stereotypes. Especially when it came to Chloe. She was almost the opposite of everything a girl is "supposed" to look and act like. Chloe had short hair, did not go in any girly clothes like skirts or dresses, but dressed in more dark clothes. She had good grades and a scholarship but was not often at school. This is not how a girl would have been if the producer had followed the stereotypes that is for girls. She would then go in a dress or skirt, been very focused on school and not talk as much as she did. In another game you would have the opportunity to choose a boy to be the person you control, but in this game was Chloe the only one to choose. Chloe was an independent woman, who did not need anyone, for example how she fixed a broken car at the junkyard all by herself. The way Chloe was presented, is a good thing. The producers showed that it does not always have to be a boy that saves the day, or that a girl can not dress in dark clothes and be independent. In another video game the person who "saves" the day would probably be a boy, but in this game, I get the impression that Chloe is the one that "saves" the day. When Rachel was in the hospital, Chloe went to her house to find out if Rachels father knew where her real mother was. She put her life in danger to give Damon the money Rachels father owned him, and to save Sera. David showed a lot of emotions when he told Chloe about how he lost a friend in the war. Boys showing emotions is not common, so this defied the gendered stereotypes. This is a good thing because is should not be that girls have to show emotions while the boys do not."

2.01: "In which way does *Life Is Strange* maintain gendered stereotypes? David and Joyce complement each other in maintaining gendered stereotypes. For example, David is pictured

as a masculine male. He has been to the military, and he also likes to work with the car. These are traditional male activities. Chloe`s mom Joyce is a typical feminine woman. She works as a waiter, and she`s seen a lot in the kitchen making food.

How does the game defy gendered stereotypes? Chloe is not a "typical girl". She smokes and takes drugs. Chloe also does a lot of graffiti and she dresses edgier than typical feminine girls. Rachel is known as a top student, a typical good girl. But when she gets together with Chloe and we get to know her better, she seems to defy the stereotypes more. She skips class and when they skip class Rachel has an idea of stealing a bottle of wine, which they end up doing. It's also implied that Chloe has a crush on Rachel, by various comments. Whether or not it is mutual we don't know. These two girls defy the traditional gender roles in various ways.

(…) If you reflect on *Life Is Strange* or other video games, you get aware of how they sneak in gendered stereotypes. I have shown this by reading into the character`s behavior. When it comes to *Life Is Strange* it`s shown that the adults in the game maintain the traditional stereotypes. Meanwhile, the teenagers challenge them. After working on this specific topic, I have come to ask myself. Does focusing so much on gendered stereotypes do the opposite than the intention originally was? Because the more we talk about it, the more we notice it. As a consequence, this might be engraving the gendered stereotypes even more."

2.02: "*Life is strange* is defying gendered stereotypes by using characters that stand out from what is expected of a woman or man in reality. One of the characters in the game, named Chloe, isn't like the "ordinary" girls we see in today`s society. She expresses herself as more manly if you know what I mean. She is a passionate girl filled with rage, who needs love at the same time. Just as women should be in a certain way, so should men. As I said earlier, girls should be kind and conscientious, but Chloe isn't that kind of person.

The first impression wasn't that good, because it all started when she tried to get into this house concert. It gave me the impression that she was a typical bad girl. The way she dresses and acts, make her seem tough. She appears brave, because of the way she stands up for the guy who were bullied by the big boys at school. Chloe isn't the kind of person who shows emotion or that she cares, but she does exactly what she wants without thinking of any consequences. (…)

The gendered stereotypes isn't just defying, but the game maintains also stereotypes. If we look at Chloe's mother and stepdad for example, we could see that they are more like a "normal" female and male. When I say that, I mean that they have more male and female characteristics that are among the expectations of today's generation. Her stepfather acts dominant, brave, and strong. He does what we women see as male tasks, such as being in the garage to fix the car, something that makes him handy. He could also be a bit cocky and rude to Chloe, when she doesn't listen to her mom and being superior. Chloe's stepfather looks and dresses in a manly way. He is tall, has short dark hair and a beard, wears dark baggy clothes that is a bit sweaty. Her mother does the female tasks such as standing in the kitchen cooking, as well as cleaning. Only that shows that she satisfies others needs before her own, and that she is kind and caring. She has a family, that is among the expectations to a female. Chloe's mother uses bright tight-fitting clothes that in a way is pleasing to men, she uses make up and is not to tall. She is a "typical women" that lives by the requirements we set."

2.03: "Some examples where the game braked gendered stereotypes are when Chloe fixed a car, that Chloe "protected" Rachel and basically all with Chloe, her attitude would not be considered ladylike and how she dresses would either be considered ladylike. There are more times the game break gendered stereotypes, but these are the ones I noticed the most. Although the game breaks several gendered stereotypes, but they also have some stereotypical traits on someone of the characters. The remarkable time they followed gendered stereotypes are Davide, his whole attitude and just the way he is and talks. He is very tough and a dominated man, just like the gendered stereotypes says a man should be. A different person that I noticed had stereotypical traits to them was Chloe`s mother, she is the one standing in the kitchen cooking food to David and it seems like she lets David "control" her and tries to be polite any time. I think they have done this with purpose, they have some gendered stereotypical traits to the characters, and other characters break them. The reason I think they have decided to do this is to get the players get more aware that women can fix a car, boys can cry and try to normalize these things, but they also want to have stereotypes to some of the characters to have a contrast between them.

(…) It is important that games like *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* exist and more games like this gets made. People need to be learned that they can do what they want and act like they want, and we need to push stereotypes out of our way to develop our society to something better and more openminded."

2.04: "In the game we do not see much difference between boys and girls. Boys are wearing boys' clothes, they are strong, tall, and athletic. Boys in the game are not good at school and they are brave. Chloe's stepfather was one of the typical boys in the game. He worked and one of his hobbies was fixing his car. Another character that was typical boy in the game was, Drew North. He was always tough and bully others. The way that Drew North was had much to do with his father.

The girls in the game are a bit different from each other. Some of them act like boy and other like to act like girl. One of the girls that acted like boys and were boy closes where, Chloe and Rachel. These both girls where similar to etch other. Chloe and Rachel were tough at doing things, like going to parties and skipping school. Rachel was good at school as a typical girl, but she was also not bothered to care about what others thinks of her. Chloe's mother was like a lady, she worked in the kitchen and at home. She wore ladies' clothes, such as skirts and high heels."

2.05: "The game includes different gendered stereotypes just like other videogames do. Certain male characters such as David and Drew, both lean far towards the idealistic male. David has a military background and does physical and handy work, for example when he is working on the car. He is also more of a traditional type and doesn't mind that the woman stays more at home while the man is working. Drew is tall and strong, plays football and has a bit of an attitude to him. He doesn't mind starting a fight when he feels like it, and he enjoys being in control. Chloe´s mom is also kind of stereotypical as she is often seen cooking in the kitchen and dressing more feminine. Late out in the game, Rachel´s biological mom Sera needs help, which is another case of a woman in need of saving.

But although the game contains some gendered stereotypes, this is for a fact a pretty inclusive game that breaks many gender norms. The main character Chloe is not a stereotypical female. She dresses kind of tomboyish and is not afraid to use her language freely. She can also work on cars and listens to rock music, which are both traits that would be heavier associated with men. Rachel also breaks several gender norms. When both Rachel and Chloe decide to skip class, they both do something that will cause them consequences. This could also more likely be a decision expected from a boy. Neither Rachel nor Chloe are straight, which is a big norm-breaker when it comes to stereotypes, as sexuality is something that can often be

portrayed as a simplistic thing. As mentioned earlier, Rachel´s mom is in trouble and needs saving. This still isn't a typical *Damsel in Distress* situation, as the person coming to rescue her is Chloe. In the end Chloe ends up needing help as well, which in this case she gets from a man, Frank. The situation therefore becomes a woman being saved by a woman, being saved by a man from a stereotypical man."

2.06: "David is Chole's stepfather and I see him as the stereotypical man. He likes to fix his car himself and he seems to have the need to make the decisions himself. He wants to be the alfa at all time and want to do what he thinks is best for his family. He is also the "strong arm" in the family. He is strict and clear about his decisions.
(…)
The game has lots of stereotypes and includes many different types of them. I think that the stereotypes are a little bit exaggerated, but I guess that's the point."

2.07: "I noticed some characters were very gender stereotypical, like David and Joyce. Let us start with David, Chloe's soon-to-be stepdad. A buff looking man with a big moustache, who is interested in cars and has a big toolbox. David was in the military and is focused on discipline. He also feels a responsibility over his family and think he needs to control them. This is very stereotypical man traits. Then if we look at Joyce, we will see that she too is very stereotypical. She is always wearing a skirt and she is often found in the kitchen, making food. Making food has been seen as a "woman's task" in centuries. Joyce is also very caring when it comes to Chloe and David. She often gets emotional because of their fighting. These traits are very stereotypical for women.

How does the game *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* defy gendered stereotypes? First of all, the main character, Chloe, have no stereotypical girl traits except being emotional. She also is not obsessing over boys, something that is very normal among teenage girls. Chloe could also be together with Rachel as more than friends, depending on which choices you made in the game. I think Chloe and David share a lot of traits, like knowledge about cars, protecting their family and wanting Joyce to be happy. Furthermore, Steph, one of Chloe's few friends, is not that "girly" either. She enjoys playing tabletop games with her friends Mikey and she is openly queer, we get to know this when she starts asking questions about Rachel and Mikey pops in saying she has got a crush on her. Steph also dresses like Chloe, just with a beanie on top. The last person we will look into is Rachel. she may seem like a stereotypical girl at first,

but I could see that she is trying to challenge the stereotypes and try new things. Especially when she suddenly wanted to be friends with Chloe, who is not even a bit stereotypical."

2.08: "In the game *Life is strange: before the storm* there is some gendered stereotypes that get followed one example of that is that you can see that David is a leader and likes to be a leader. He feels like he is the boss in some situations, he takes many decisions for Chloe's mother and he says what she should say. He has an angry side and he is not afraid to show them. David gets angry fast and he lets Chloe recieve it a lot of the time. David also is much like a stereotypical man, he has short hair, beard, he is tall, he has a lot of muscles and he takes initiative romantically and physically (sex).

Chloe's mother follows some gender stereotypes. Almost always when we get to see her, she is at the kitchen and making food or doing the dishes. She is most at home and she is not with anybody else than Chloe and David.

In the game they defy some gendered stereotypes one example of that is Chloe, she doesn't wear typically girl colors. She has long hair, that is a typical girly thing, but she doesn't wear other things than jeans and a t-shirt, all her clothes are dark. Her room is full of rock band posters and she doesn't have a typically girly room. She doesn't have a light room with a big bed with a lot of pillows and a makeup table with a lot of makeup. Chloe is very independent and handsome, that is more typically for men.

There is two places were someone get saved in the game, the first was when Chloe got into a fight at the concert, then it was a girl that saved her and there should it stereotypically be a man. A man that saves a woman is the stereotype. At the second time it was Frank that saved Sera and Chloe, here it was more gender stereotypical."

2.09: "The parents in this game are very stereotypically their gender. Chloe´s mom Joyce, works at a diner. She has long blond hair, wears heels and a short skirt. Throughout the game she stated that she only took the diner job so that Chloe could succeed, she sacrificed her career for her family. When Chloe´s behaviour got worse, her boyfriend was the person who was going to take care of it. Joyce´s boyfriend David is a dirtbag with a saviour complex. He swoops in like a knight in shining armour, to save the family of two women. He is depicted as this strong, handyman with an army background. He is very stereotypical except for the one time in the game where he cooks for Joyce. Rachels parents are no better. James Amber is the

highly successful and awarded DA of Arcadia bay. He looks stereotypically male, and speaks like a stereotypical male with an academic background. James also has a saviour complex, and not only tried to save Rachels biological mother when she was in his life, but he also sheltered Rachel from knowing about her mom. Rose Amber followed along with anything her husband said. Her character was very flat, she felt more like a trophy wife than the well-developed character that she could have been.

The protagonist of *Life is Strange: Before the Storm,* is a queer rebellious girl called Chloe Price. Chloe is coarse, cocky, loud, brave and strong. She is a female character with stereotypical male personality traits. The way she seeks attention is through rebellion and destruction is a very common male stereotype. In episode one, she was upset and decided to smash up stuff in a junkyard, instead of crying silently like a stereotypical female. When she got expelled from Blackwell, she tagged an entire bathroom, after yelling and insulting the principal. In this situation a stereotypical female character would have been the living embodiment of innocence, and cried to the principal and begged for forgiveness. She is very individual, which is often a trait prescribed to the male characters. How she only ever does things because she wants to. That does not mean that she never does things for others, but that she only does it if she really wants to. Chloe's way of dressing is not particularly feminine nor masculine. She does not wear any makeup or even brush her hair. A kind of unkept and carefree self-expression, which we do not get to see a lot of in female characters. Chloe is the character in *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* who breaks away from the gender stereotypes most.

Rachel and Chloe are blueprint queer wlw characters. A relationship between the "Little miss perfect"-esque character like Rachel, and a rebel without a clue like Chloe is slightly overdone. We see it in *Riverdale, Orange is the new black, Atypical, Batwoman, Gentlemen Jack, Killing Eve, Legends of Tomorrow,* and pretty much every other piece of queer wlw media. So, this dynamic is not exactly new, you could call it stereotypical. Though I enjoyed the characters and their relationship, I am on the fence about whether this is good wlw representation. I feel like their relationship was very brief. One positive thing about this was that their relationship was not sexualised. Fetishization (of both gay men and women) is often used as a gateway to acceptance. The lack of sexualisation could have emphasized that their love is so much deeper than some of the queer f/f relationships in media. However, it felt like there was a different reason for the briefness of their relationship. Like the relationship was as

simple as it was so that straight people could play the game and interpret their relationship as platonic. According to my knowledge *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* is a prequel made to establish the connection between Rachel Amber and Chloe Price. Seems strange to me that there was so little voiced romance between them. Except if the romance between Rachel and Chloe was not intended. So why is this labelled as a queer game? Maybe I am being harsh because I feel a little bit queer baited, but the fact that their relationship was so barely established just maintains the "queer women are just confused straight women who kiss each other for the male gaze" narrative.

Life is Strange: Before the Storm had the opportunity to make a nonbinary character, and an established f/f relationship, but did not take the chance. This game could have had so much good representation of non-stereotypical characters. They could have deepened Mikey and Drews story. Showed more of the corruptness of James Amber, and given more space in the story for Sera, Rachels biological mother. All these things that they chose not to do, made the characters more gender obedient. Leaving external identity and the chips of personality that we can grasp through monologue, to give the player a clear image. Chloe was the only character with enough depth to serve gender nonconformity, and it was painfully obvious."

2.10: "We can clearly se that the typical expectations of a boy or a man is showed in the game. Football, baggy clothes, and big muscles are something you easily notice that is aimed at the boys/men. An episode in the game shows the football player Drew North (Fandom, n.d) had committed an act which resulted in him being in danger and in the process of being beaten up. In this scene he ordered them to stay in the room while he fought, as if he were the "hero." Chloe Price and Mikey North (Fandom, n.d) were then seen as the weak and had to be protected from the fight that was about to start. This maintains the gendered stereotypes for boys and men.

On the other hand, the video game shows some typical girl things and doings. Who performs the cooking in the game is an example here. Chloe's mother, Joyce Price (Fandom, n.d), is making breakfast in the morning when Chloe wakes up, while the father figure, David Madsen (Fandom, n.d), was outside working on a car. Another example was at the end of the game, when Chloe was at Rachels house, was given the task of preparing the dinner table for eating. Chloe did the preparing and Rachels mom did the cooking, while Rachels dad sat in the living room, relaxing.

Nevertheless, the game also refers to the opposite as well. It is not usual in games that two girls are falling in love, but this happens in "Life is strange". Chloe and Rachel's fresh friendship quickly leads to romance, and in the middle of the game there is a scene where Chloe and Rachel kiss. Typical ladies' bodies in video games is curvy, small, and "sweet". Yet, Chloe and Rachel's bodies do not meet these requirements. They are tall, thin, do not have particularly prominent body parts and do not dress "girly".

To sum up, the video game "Life is strange" is a game with good variety, especially when it comes to the typical looks, behaviors, body shapes and actions of a game."

2.11: "In the game we meet Rachel and Chloe's parents who are very good examples on gendered stereotypes. Choles mum are often cooking and fixing things in the house. She is very worry about chole and her behaviour. She uses make up and have long hair. Choles mom is dating David and when we saw him, he was fixing the car, he was tough, had short hair, so he fits the gendered stereotypes good. Rachel dad was a police/detective. He had short hair, was working a lot, he showed some emotional but was still trying to be brave and tough. Rachels mom was cooking dinner and fixing the house, she had long hair and use makeup. (Deck Nine, 2017). These people are perfect examples of gendered stereotypes and how we expect them to be.

There are a people in the game that do not fits the gendered stereotypes two of them is Rachel and Chloe. Chloe skips school sometimes, she does not wear girls' clothes, she is tough, are a little bit rude, do drugs, and she has short hair. Chloe can also fix cars. Rachel skips school but she is good in school, she does drugs, does not wear girl clothes, she is tough and a little bit rude. (Deck Nine, 2017). Rachel and Chloe are very similar in the way they act, dresses and speak and I think that is why they gets so good friends in the game. They are examples to show that not everybody follows how the gendered stereotypes says about how to act, be and speak. I like that the game has done this because it shows that not everybody is like their gender are."

2.12: "*Life Is Strange: Before the storm* conforms to the societal and media induced gender norms in several ways. An example of this is Chloe's cold attitude, and her general sort of whiny and snarky way of speaking. Both her and Rachel have a sort of stereotypical design, where they are both quite skinny and Rachel has long hair. Chloe's stepdad is one of the most stereotypical characters in the game, he fits into the arrogant, cocky, dominant and muscular

male role. To add onto this, he has also been in the military, which has always been a typical male work field. Another stereotypic role in the game is both girls' mothers, not including Sera, they are both quite submissive, puts their families first and takes care of their children, for their husbands/ boyfriends.

Contrary to the previous paragraph, the game also defies a lot of gender stereotypes. Though Chloe follows the gender stereotype of having a smaller body frame, she goes against a lot of other typical female character design tropes. She has short hair, is slightly tall and wears darker clothes, which all contributes to her more gender-neutral look. This also slightly applies to other characters, like for example how Rachel also wears darker clothes and less "typical" makeup. Chloe's general attitude defies some of the most distinct gender roles, especially the ones about how women should not take up a lot of space in social settings. She is easily the center of attention and does things regardless of expectations. Rachel and Stephanie Gingrich also have this general attitude. Steph (Stephanie) is also, like Rachel and Chloe, written as an openly queer character, which is a great representation for the LGBTQ community and overall, the defying of heteronormativity.

To conclude this astonishing game, it is a great game with complex character, that have both good and bad sides. Both Chloe and Rachel are the "heroines" of the game, but they also have some of the typical attitudes the media expects. The father figures in the game are all generally similar, especially in the dominant and "family provider" attitude. In these ways the game reassigns gender roles or stereotypes. However, even though the game does follow these tropes, it is definitely a step in the right direction for the videogame industry. Having a female-centric game grow this big, with such a dedicated fanbase, is something that will hopefully influence the industry into defying more of the typical gender stereotypes, and maybe even eventually abandoning them completely."

2.13: "In many games the boys are portrayed as heroes who help the girls. An example from the game we have played is when Sera is rescued by Chloe. There we can see a girl being the hero, but at the same time is Frank saving both of them in the end. So, in the hero example its going both ways in this game. (…)

Life is strange: before the storm defies the gendered stereotypes in the way Chloe dressed, the way she acts and the way she talks. An example is when Chloe is fixing the car, and the way

she talks and act in front of her parents and in front of Rachels parents. Its not so normal today that a girl is fixing the car. She also dressed like a typical teenage boy. She's not wearing dresses and girly stuff. The way she acts at school is not a typical girl thing, like when she skips school with Rachel. Chloe is also attracted to girls instead of males. She's not spending time to clean and cook. And she's not showing her emotions all the time. Chloe has short hair and she's not interested in fashion and shopping. Rachel is also not a "typical" girl. She doesn't dress like one, but she has long hair. She is not spending her time cleaning and she doesn't wear that much makeup. Rachel is not blond, and she doesn't wear a lot of accessories. Chloe listen to different kind of music that girls "normally" do."

2.14: "Chloe is a girl who tends to shut others out by cursing at them and being rude in some way. She often curses in her sentences and does not care what others think or say. This is a very good example of someone who is breaking gendered stereotypes. She also breaks the visual stereotypes for genders, such as females often have long hair, sits prettily, wear feminine clothes etc. as I mentioned before. Chloe has short hair, wears more masculine clothes, and does not sit "prettily".

Not to forget to mention these other characters who do not fit the gendered stereotypes. Mikey and Steph, where Mikey is more like a nerdy student, and keeps close to his friends and his big brother. And Steph, who makes it clear when Chloe approaches Steph and Mikey outside the school building. Steph greets Chloe and asks about her and Rachels relationship. Chloe asks why Steph was wondering about that, and Mikey goes "Steph has a cru-ush" (Nine, 2017), teasing Steph. She does not get angry, and that gives the impression that she might be lesbian and is open about it.

Many of the guys in this game do maintain most of the gendered stereotypes. Like Drew for example, who is that big-shouldered bully who plays football, but most of the guys do defy the stereotypes. By the way many of them are not big and muscular and gets all the girls. Most of the guys look very realistic and have various body shapes. They are not all skinny or overweight, just all the characters looking like what real life people would look like. Also, David maintains many of the stereotypes. Like for example, he has big arms and shoulders, he has a military background, and he is trying to protect Chloe and her mother by taking control of the family. So, I would say he fits more of the masculine stereotypes and only a few of the feminine stereotypes.

Usually, other action videogames that contains violence, also contains male characters who all fit the masculine stereotypes perfectly. *Life Is Strange: Before The Storm* can only be

played with one character, Chloe Price, and in *Life Is Strange* you can only play as Max Caulfield. This makes the game different because usually in videogames you can play the game with male characters and sometimes a few females are playable. What I think Deck Nine has tried to do by developing this videogame is to in some way normalize women defying these gender stereotypes in videogames."

2.15: "Chloe Price who is the main character in this game dose have a little more boy like clothing stile, like jeans, t-shirt's whit pictures on, and a hat/huddie. Her hair is short like not shoulder short but wherry short har. She is maybe that we call a bruhgirl, that is a girl who is a girl, but more boy like in the behaviour. Rachel is Chloe's best friend and not wherry like Chloe in the behaviour, Rachel do act and is a wherry kind girl according to the other people we meet in the game. Her clothing style is a little more like girly and she have long hair. So basically, the gender stereotypes in the game are wherry neutral and not a typical "boy" or "girl" colour.

Some of the things that stands out different in this game is that how every character is dressing, acting and speaking. The producer of this game did not make Chloe a typical girl character, like he made her look a little more like a boy, whit short hair, typical boy style and her behavior. Every character in this game have natural colored clothing like white, blue, red, grey, green, brown and black. Its many girls in the game whit short hair. The producer did not make a gender difference between the genders, he tried to make the genders so much natural as possible. The characters acting are a little more turned to the gender the character is. The boys are acting like boys and some of the girls are acting like girls, but some of the girls are acting a little more like boys in their behaviors."

2.16: "*Chloe Price* is a girl that have both male and female traits in her, she does not dress like a girl and the way she talks is very different from a girl that have actually girly feelings. She acts very strong and does not share her feelings to anyone exist those who are close to her. She has male friends more than female, they are not normal male friends though, they deal with drugs and selling of drugs to do, also criminality. (…) *David Madsen* that is *Chloe Price's* stepfather, the way he behaves is rude and aggressive, he wants to control and protect *Chloe* as a father, but he doesn't know how to do it in the right way. *Chloe* doesn't like her stepfather because of the way he trying to control her, that's why she is very rude to him."

2.17: "We also meet a lot of typical stereotypes in the game. For example, Victoria Chase, that is a typical girl we often expect to meet in the society. She is very girly and polite, dress nice and behave good. We also meet Drew North in the game, and he is also an example of a typical stereotype. He plays football and cares a lot for sports. He is very masculine and behave very cocky and rude. He does not care so much about school, and he is not afraid to take up space. He is tall, strong and have a lot of muscles. We can tell that Drew lives up to the expectations we have for a boy at his age, and we can clearly see that the game maintains some gendered stereotypes. On the other hand, they also deny stereotypes too.

The game *Life is strange: Before the storm* do take distance from the typical gender stereotypes. The game, as told, is about Chloe Price that is the reason why the game defies stereotypes. Chloe stands out from the expectation we have for a girl, and she lives more up to the expectations we have for a boy. Chole dress in dark colours, have short hair and she acts different from what other girls in the game do. She can be very rude and cocky, and she says what she means. Chole is not the only one that stands out, Rachel dose to. Rachel is Chloe's friend. They met in the start of the game when Rachel showed up at a concert Chloe was at. At that time Chloe and Rachel was not friends, but they knew each other from school. Chloe saw Rachel as the popular girl that everyone wanted to be friend with. Rachel is pretty and have good grades and is liked by everyone. She is the typical sixteen-year old we could expect to meet in a real-life, but Rachel gets more alike Chloe through the game. Rachel and Chloe hang out a lot, and Rachel change more with the time. She dresses in more darker clothes, and she gets tougher. She ditches school and say what she really means. Therefore, are Rachel also taking distance from the gendered roles expectations.

The game *Life Is Strange: before the storm* is a game that stands out from other videogames. We live in a world where we have lot of gender roles expectations, and they follow us everywhere. By taking all the expectation with us everywhere makes it more difficult for people to be themselves, and stereotypes have caused a lot of problems. In the game we meet the two girls Chole and Rachel that take a distance from the typical gendered role expectation we have. The society in the game are fine with Chole and Rachel being different, and they are not judging them. By not judging Chloe and Rachels way to behave and dress are helping our society to take more distance from the gendered stereotypes. It makes it easier to be ourselves, and to forget about the reaction we will get by behave and dress different. The game has a lot of typical stereotypes, but by placing to girls like Chloe and Rachel in the game really mark a point. The game makes it normal to be «different» in a

society, and that is a smart way to fight stereotypes. Not only just smart, but also very important."

2.18: "*Life is strange: Before the storm* on the other hand, is a game where they have "broken some rules". They show both good examples of characters who are maintaining the gendered stereotypes, but also a few examples where they defy the gendered stereotypes. The first example is Chloe`s stepfather, David. He is a perfect example of how male stereotypes is supposed to be in today's society. Dominant, cocky and rude. David do not show many emotions, and acts like he doesn't care. Handywork and cars are hobbies that interested David, so as it should interest all men. How grown up female gets promoted in the game, is how female should listen and get controlled by the male characters. For example, the way both Rose (Rachel's "mother") and Chloe's mother are controlled by their partners is a good example of how women, especially in other societies where they disregard gender equality, where they should only listen and do as men say. Another thing that is easy to get an eye on, is that most people in the game is skinny. This can affect both genders, by only promoting the skinny part of the society, and not including the people with a little more bodyfat. Extra bodyfat gets therefore seen as a thing to be ashamed of, and something that isn't normal on human bodies.

Some of the most important from the game are the examples where they are defining gendered stereotypes. Chloe and Rachel, the two main characters, who dresses in a more "manly' way, in terms of the use of dark, "rock and roll" style. Chloe don't let herself be controlled by nobody, something that is most often unnormal in a society, since men have been seen as the most powerful sex in several years. Rachel behavior out through the game became a little less innocent after the whole situation with her father and Sera. It is not very normal of girls to go against their father in that way, but a very good example of defining females' stereotypes. Throughout the game, you see a big development of Chloe and Rachel`s relationship. They become more inclusive and developed a love relationship between them two. This is something, according to the stereotypes, a strange and unnormal thing. According to the society`s stereotypes, should a relationship between the same gender just be friendship."

2.19: "Rachel and Chloe are exceptional examples of how they defy gendered stereotypes. The way the producer has decided to dress them and the way they are, is the opposite of the

expectation. A girl with short hair and "boy`s clothes" is not the standard girl. They talk and behaves with an attitude. Chloe fixes a car, sneaks into concert, smoke, ditch school and drink. Rachel is more like a "girl boy". She dresses up like a boy, but she uses makeup and she has long hair. She does great in school and love acting, but she steals alcohol and runs away. The way the game maintains the stereotypes to, is very obviously. Drew North is the perfect example of this. He is tall, muscular and plays soccer. This is the way a boy is supposed to be, according to the society."

2.20: "Chloe Price is an above adequate protagonist. She fills the stereotype of "punk kid from a broken home" well, but strays in certain important parts. For one, she does not necessarily retain a bad relationship with her parents. (…) Another place she somewhat breaks the mould is regarding her choice of partner. According to statistics, almost all players decided the relationship between Chloe and Rachel was romantic in nature. Most media tend to show purely, or at least mostly, straight relationships, making this a good example of a difficult relationship between same-sex characters. Imperfect, but flawed as all humans are. (…)
Mikey and Drew, brothers who go to Blackwell, fill the stereotypical "Jock" and "Nerd" roles incredibly well. Drew is a large, muscular and aggressive guy, with an extreme interest in American Football. His brother, Mikey, is fragile and small, but fairly intelligent. He doesn't care much for sports but holds great interest in fantasy and table-top RPGs. These are incredibly common stereotypes, often applied to males. The Jock in these cases is often also a bully, which further aligns with how we see Drew. Mikey also breaks his arm at some point in the game, showing clearly his fragility and lack of muscle. However, this is used somewhat cleverly, as Drew only seemed to "bully" another student due to said student's father causing Drew's father to lose his job. Similarly, he seems to draw most of his strength from Mikey as a whole, showing he cares greatly. This shows a nice use of stereotypes without making completely flat characters.

Another character in this category is David, Chloe's stepfather. David is a military veteran, traditional, strict and fatherly, and an absolute *hardass*. In early parts of the game he makes a misogynistic comment regarding Chloe being slow. David is shown to presume Chloe was not knowledgeable about cars, likely due to her gender. He also disapproves of her behaviour and goes through Chloe's room without her permission later in the game. All this lines fairly well up to stereotypical "big strong alpha male", a concept spawned from misunderstood social

structure among wolves. This starts breaking down later in the game, when he opens up about his past, and may even show a positive attitude towards Chloe working on a car afterwards. This is another example of a classic American stereotype, given reasoning and/or redemption.

Another character painted in accordance with stereotype, is Victoria. She is a whiny, self-centred nuisance, happily ruining others for her own gain. (…)

The final stereotype of this segment is shown through Chloe's mother, Joyce Price. She takes the "parent who can't connect with their child" and the classic 1950s style diner waitress. She works almost constantly in the kitchen, be it at home or at work, and most of Chloe's face-to-face interactions with her are in the kitchen or dining area. She also tries very hard to connect to Chloe but doesn't always do well in her attempts. She does not stray or differ from classic portrayals of similar characters by any noticeable margin, but fills the parental role well regardless. She is incredibly "standard" by gender roles and stereotypes, being blonde, working in the kitchen and marrying a larger strong man.

While many games fall into the trap of copying stereotypical character traits onto characters based on gender, this is not always objectively bad. Sometimes this works, other times it does not. However, many such traits are being pushed away from their gendered roots or erased entirely. An example of such a stereotypical idea, the "damsel in distress", is rapidly straying from a female-specific role to a more general concept of "person is saved by another". We even see this in the game with Chloe saving both Sera and Rachel, while only being saved by Frank. This is just when thinking of life-threatening danger. The trope is used generously regardless of gender, and even having the majority of major saves done, directly or not, by a female character. This shows a direct rejection of *Damsel in Distress* as gender-specific plot-point, and feeds into the games general equalizing of gender roles and stereotypes. Another clear example of this is Chloe's strength. While several characters are physically stronger than Chloe, she may be the character in the game with the strongest will. She shows an extreme dedication to pursuing her goals and is willing to risk her life to keep her promise to Rachel. The only thing stronger than her willingness to keep fighting for what she believes in, is the player. At the end of the day, the player has supreme control over Chloe. For a character to be stopped only by a near-omniscient being, shows a resolve most the other characters, male and female alike, lack. It's shown how, regardless of gender, anyone can be strong in their own way.

(…) Throughout most of the early game, your choices are affected by Chloe's gender. When you get deeper into it, that starts to fade away. Chloe is still herself, but people start treating her less as simply a *girl character* and more like a *character who happens to be a girl.* It shows clearly how lack of respect is a driving force in the formation of stereotypes, and the perpetuation of gendered viewpoints. As characters learn respect and humility, these barriers forged of prejudice start to vain, giving vital views of them both as a stereotype of society and as a person trapped within it."

3.01: "*Life is Strange: Before the Storm* maintains some gendered stereotypes. For example, David has muscles, he is tall and has dark hair. The male grownups are very stereotypical, they are all tall, mostly has dark hair, and mostly have muscles. Also, the female grownups are also very stereotypical, they are not too tall, they cook and are also often weak. The grownups are the most stereotypical. Most of the boys are also stereotypical, you have the sport jock, the rich blond kid and the ones who loves games. The boys also never cry in the game, so that is also very typical. The game maintains the gendered stereotypes mostly due to the guys, they haven't changed much. Also, some of the girls is thin, pretty and some are blond.

Life is Strange: Before the Storm. Defies gendered stereotypes due to the girls. For example, Chloe wears dark clothes, she has dark hair and are doing bad in school. She has no make up and has short hair which is not very common in videogames. She is also strong, cocky, rude, and brave. This is defying gendered stereotypes much, cause often the female characters it mostly opposite of Chloe."

3.02: "In addition, how the society are affected by the gendered stereotypes has also affected other things. Such as movies, tv-shows and video games. In *Life Is Strange Before the Storm* they clearly have put in gendered stereotypes. An example from the game is Mrs. amber, Rachel's mom, who is represented as a typical kitchen wife. She does all the cooking and cleaning. When Rachel broke a glass table Mrs. amber was the one to clean up. Another example is David, Chloe's stepfather. He has been in the military and shows very little to no emotion unless its anger and irritation. He is very masculine and kind of takes the "responsibility" of the family he has entered. Drew north is also an example. He is a typical

jock who only seem to care about himself. Confident, strong and have no problem with the consciences he causes others. These three characters represents the gendered stereotypes.

However, as the society changes so does the stereotypes. Today we are more including of everyone despite how they do or do not fit in the social and gendered stereotypes. Girls who have short hair and boys who wear make-up are examples of how we have begun little by little to break the stereotypes. Despite David and Mrs. Amber in *Life Is Strange Before the Storm* there are many characters who is the complete opposite from the gendered stereotypes. One clear example is the main character, Chloe, who has short hair and does not act very ladylike. She is good with cars and very rebellious. She goes her own way and does not put up with people she dislikes. Her confidents in herself shines through the whole game. It is her look, abilities and her strength that do not fit a stereotypical woman."

3.03: "The game *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* maintains many gendered stereotypes. Some characters in the game that is very stereotypical is for example David, Rachel, and Chloe's family in general. David is tough and does not show vulnerability. He is interested in cars and acts like a very typical "man of the house." Rachel is the popular girl in school that is long haired and "girly" in her actions. She has perfect grades and does not do anything wrong until she meets Chloe. Chloe's family is a very typical old-fashioned family where the mother does the cooking and the cleaning, and the father figure does all the practical things like fixing cars and such. Some of the characters changes a lot throughout the game. For example, David who is very bossy and tough in the beginning, shows some vulnerability when telling about his dead friend in the last part of the game. Rachel also becomes less "girly" and skips school with Chloe when they meet.

Not only does this game maintain gendered stereotypes. It also defies them in many ways. This is not a typical game where the muscular men save the innocent beautiful girls in need. This game has a homosexual girl with car interests as the main character. Chloe is not a stereotypical female and defies the expectations we have for her as a girl. She has short hair and stands up for herself and others. For example, when she stood up against Drew when he was bullying another boy in school and when she refused to do what her stepfather told her to. On the other side Chloe is a very stereotypical "tomboy." There is not only one type of gendered stereotype for each gender but "tomboy" lays on the other side than the "girlygirl.""

3.04: "Joyce is an ordinary woman, she works as a waitress and when she comes home, she does the regular housework. David on the other hand is more of a stereotypical man. Enjoys working on the car, appreciate good tools and is being this strong and respected man, that rarely is humble. This is a very normal stereotype where women are the ones opening up for each other, sharing their emotions while men are strong and tough.

Beside Joyce and David you can find stereotypes within the other characters as well, like t he North brothers. The oldest brother Drew is a classical talented football player, popular at school, experiencing lots of pressure from coaches, team players, family and school mates. (Sullivan, M. 2016). His younger brother Mikey and Stephanie is both quintessential youths who is interested in plays, movies, games and fictional characters, or where we in the modern society would use the term nerds. This stereotype is often a male, but Stephanie is an example on where the game defies the typical stereotypes.

The game contains situations and characters that defies the ordinary gendered stereotypes. Chloe is maybe the most obvious example on defying the stereotypes. She isn't worried about how she looks, nor using any long time on makeup and hair, she isn't opening up for anyone else than Rachel and she is queer. All these examples prove that Deck Nine has made their characters defy some stereotypes."

3.05: "Chloe for example is not stereotypical. She wears little more different clothes, has short hair and is very tough. She shows little emotion and she likes girls. David, for example, is stereotypical. He seems very tough and concerned about taking care of the family. He dresses masculine and likes cars and tools."

3.06: "Two characters in the game that defies the norm of female stereotypes is Chloe and Rachel. Rachel is a girl with good grades and is seen as a nice girl who does not do anything bad. Her dad works in the DA`s, so she gets good opportunities because of her dad and her good grades. Chloe would not be defined as a stereotypical girl. She has a punk like style and is gay. She also has short hair and does drugs, so she is pretty much the quite opposite of a typical girl.

Some of the male stereotypes in the game are easy to see. Drew for example is very good at football and gets a lot of scholarships because of how good he is at football, even though he is not very good at school. He has muscles, plays sports and is being protective toward someone he loves. Another example of a stereotypical man is David. He is a man who likes cars and

likes to do and fix things that is typical for a man to like. David is stereotypical because he does the things we often think of when we think of a man, like being interested in cars or build or repairs stuff. He said in the first episode "every house needs a good toolbox" to Chloe as he fixed the car. The game also uses stereotyped genders when Chloe and Mikey play`s a board game with characters and Chloe plays the character of a female elf while Mikey plays the character of a male wizard."

Appendix 3: Findings from group discussions about gendered stereotypes (part one)

	Female stereotypes	Male stereotypes
Interpersonal relationships		
	Satisfies others' needs before her own	Protects family/love interest from danger
	Spends more time at home: cleans, cooks and takes care of kids	Provides family with money/food
	Needs help all the time	Pays for stuff for the woman
	Passive	Dominant, authoritative
	Romantically and sexually attracted to men	Romantically and sexually attracted to women
	Has female friends	Has male friends
	Not supposed to have sex with many different partners, is often shamed if she does	Expected to have sex with many different partners, gains status from doing so
	Waits for the other to take initiative romantically and physically (sex)	Takes initiative romantically and physically (sex)
	Dependent. Having a family and partner is an important goal in life	Independent. Does fine without family/partner.
	Kind and caring	Does not show that he cares
	Family has expectations for you	You have more freedom
Emotions and behaviour		
	Shows emotions	Does not show emotions

	Whines/is dramatical/"bitchy"	Brave
	Weak	Tough, no weakness or cowardice
	Cries	Never cries
	Acts calm and collected, pretends to be happy around others	Not afraid to take up space, doesn't care what others think
	Innocent	Brutality
	Gentle, acts properly, follows rules, doesn't disturb anyone	Cocky, rude
	Insecure	Confident, doesn't fidget
Abilities		
	Weak	Strong
	Good social skills	Be able to throw some punches
	Good with kids	Be handy, have a good work ethic
	Smart, does well in school, mature	Immature
Appearance		
	Long hair	Short hair
	Thin, curvy	Muscles
	Not too tall	Tall (taller than girlfriend)
	No body hair	Beard
	Bright colours such as pink	Darker colours such as blue
	Pristine, pretty, clean	Scruffy, bushy eyebrows, not too elegant, sweaty

	Petite	Look masculine: broad shoulders and jaw
	Make-up, nail polish, accessories	No nail polish or make-up
	Tight-fitting clothes, dresses, skirts, but don't reveal too much skin, high heels	Baggy clothes, pants
	Blonde	Dark hair
	Appearance should be pleasing to men	Handsome
Hobbies and interests		
	Shopping, fashion, clothes	Cars, big trucks, motorcycles, machinery or mechanics
	Dance, ballet	Sports, football, fishing, golf or woodworking
	Working out, staying fit	Working out, building muscles
	No manual labour	Physical/hard work
	Sewing, knitting	Alcohol (beer, whisky…) and tobacco
	Cooking, kids	Not being in the kitchen
	Barbie dolls (as kids)	Weapons
	Arts	Games/video games
	Pop music	Rap music

Appendix 4: Gaming guide (part two)

Gaming project, January 2021

Episode 1: Awake

- How does Chloe first meet Rachel?

- What do you learn about Chloe in this episode?

- Two people have recently left Chloe's life. Who were they and what happened? How does that affect her?

- How would you describe Chloe's relationship to her mother and stepfather?

- What do you learn about Rachel in this episode?

- How are female and male characters portrayed in this episode? How do they dress, talk and act?

Episode 2: Brave New World

- How has Chloe and Rachel's relationship evolved since they first met in episode 1?

- Why does Chloe decide to stay at the junkyard?

- What kind of trouble is Drew North in? Why did he get involved?

- How are female and male characters portrayed in this episode? How do they dress, talk and act?

Episode 3: Hell Is Empty

- What do you learn about Rachel's family in this episode?

- How does Chloe find Sera? What happens when she does?

- Towards the end of the episode you have to decide whether you want to tell Rachel everything or hold back on some of the details. What would be the consequence of either choice? What did you choose?

- How are female and male characters portrayed in this episode? How do they dress, talk and act?

Appendix 5: Findings from the group discussions of the gaming guide (part two)

Notes taken by the groups during the discussions of each episode of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*:

Episode 1: Awake

- **How does Chloe first meet Rachel?**

Party/consert

after she "spilled" the beer on the man, and two men was about to attack her. And then Rachel came to save her.

Chloe meet Rachel at the party/concert
Rachel saved Chloe from to angry men

At the concert, while she gets assaulted by the two men

At the firewalk concert.

Concert at the old mill

At the concert, when she ended up in a "fight" with 2 boys

See meets her at the consert first

Concert at old mill

At a party when Chloe got into a fight with a dud, and Rachel helped her.

They meet at a concert in the start of episode 1.

Chloe first meets Rachel at the firewalk concert.

Chloe and Rachel met at a Firewalk concert at the old mill, where Rachel got Chloe out of a fight.

On the concert

They met for the first time at the firewalk.

Firewalk – Old Mill.

At the concert

They met at a concert, when Chloe got some problems with the wrong guys. Rachel saved her.

at the concert

At a consert, where Chloe nearly got beaten up by two dudes

- **What do you learn about Chloe in this episode?**

Angry, Emo, depressed, independent, trauma, dad issues, hates life

She is depressed, angry, angry with her stepfather, lesbian, few friends.

She is gay, she is angry, hate her stepfather
relationship to her mother is complicated

Her father died in a car crash, she has a bad relationship with her mother and step-father

She love science, her father is dead, her mother has a new boyfriend. She is a teen rebell.

Her father is dead

She is tough and badass

Sad and lonely

Max

Tough on the outside, but soft on the inside

She is a bit of a loner, and at school she's known for being a bit "bitchy".

She likes rock

She doesn't like school

She has a soft side

She is rebellius, tries to hide her feelings, is "tough"

few friends, bff left

Dead dad

Rebellious

Hates stepdad

Good in science

She is though, stubborn, brave and emotional.

She has a badass fazade, but is actually soft on the inside and hides her feelings. Few friends

In the first episode we learn that Chloe is a rebel who does whatever she wants.

She has an attitude problem

She misses her dad

She's a shitkid

She is a troublemaker with problems. She's having a hard time coping with reality and opening up to other people.

Shes edgy

Bad relationship with mom and stepdad

Shes immature

Her father is dead

Delinquent – tired of school – GAY!!!

She seems pissed off about everything. She got daddy issues. A lot of built up emotions

Chloe is aggressive, unstable and a little Psycho

- **Two people have recently left Chloe's life. Who were they and what happened? How does that affect her?**

Max – Friend, left her

Dad – Died

→ Trust issues, Sad, angry

Her father and Max (changed schools)

Father died in a car accident, she got angry and sad

Her best friend Max moved to an other place

she felt left alone.

Her father and Max, her only friend. She gets flash backs, and is fragile

Father, car accident.

Max moved away

Max and her father

The father died, and Max moved away

She feels alone, abandoned

Her dad died, and her best friend Max moved away

She becomes more closed off.

Her dad died in a car accident

→ At first she was angry

→ She halucination about her father

Her father and her ex-bestfriend Max. Her father died in a traficaccident. Max moved. She is bothered from it, she gets enclosed, and do not show her feelings

Bff, dad

Dad – car accident

Friend – moved with her parents

Chloe goes emo and stops giving a f

Her friend Max and her dad. Her father died, and Max moved. Shes sad, and miss them a lot.

Max, her friend that moved. Her dad, that died in a car crash.

She is confused, halusinations, sad and mad.

She lives with her mom, and her dad died 2 years ago. She doesn't have a lot of friends, so she writes letters to her friend Max, who moved away, but never sends the letters. She is very lonely, and misses both her dad and her friend very much.

Max and her dad

Her father died and her friend max moved and cut contact

Max (girlfriend? friend?) & Her father – Left a 'stray (abandoned)

Chloe's dad died in a car crash and her only friend Max left. She is careless with her life.

Max (moved) and her father (died). Very bad

Max moved away and her dad died. It makes her angry and sad, and she might feel abandoned.

Father and Max

Father died and Max moved

Shes not doing well

Shes often angry

Shes acting out

- **How would you describe Chloe's relationship to her mother and stepfather?**

Mother → Kind of bad and a little okay

Stepfather → Not good, he's toxic, no bond

Toxic and not that good.

Not god. Doesn't exept him as a family member

Angry at her for beeing with her stepfather.

Terrible. They argue all the time, because she is stubborn

She hate the stepfather (David).

Bad communication

They don't respect each other

Not good. Bad communication.

Mother: - Dosn't talk so much together

      -   She loves her, but argues with her alot

Stepfather: Dosn't like him

Its not great. Its tens.

Bad

Better w mom

Hates david

It's bad. They often fight, and they have a lot of trustissues in their reliesionship.

She loves her mom, but don't show it that much. She hates her stepdad and don't like the thought of a new "father"

Chloe's relationship with her mom is not very good, they love each other, but aren't that close.

Its tense and complicated. She does not like her stepdad very much.

Not good

Bad

Her and her mom had a good relationship but chloe's being mean to her.
Shes angry her mom found a new boyfriend.

Theres a "communication-error" between Chloe and her mother. – She hates David.

She dislikes her stephfather and avoids her mother because of it.

Bad

- **What do you learn about Rachel in this episode?**

Rachel is not as perfect as we thought, deals with her own problems. Dad cheats

Lesbian, father = cheated, had a "nice" life but in real life she did not.

Parents are reach
She have god grades in school

Her father is a cheater, she is an actress and she wanted to leave her town

popular, cheating dad.

Good student

anger

Her parents are rich. She is tired of her "normal" life and wants to run away.

Anger issues

Good at school

She is fearless, and spontanious

Dad – cheater

Not as perfect as u might think

god actor

Rachel also feels lonely, and she is though as Chloe. She also have a bad relesionship with her father

She acts perfect and everybody likes her.

Rachel is a popular girl and a perfect student. In this episode we learn that Rachels dad was kissing a woman in the park. And is cheating on Rachels mom.

Popular, likes Chloe and a Rebel

She is rebelling because her father is cheating on her mother

Spontanious – direct – sly

Shes edgy.

Good characters and parants

Bad influence on Chloe.

Her father cheated.

She gives the image of a good kid.

She's a bitch and a shitkid. Brat
has problems at home

She is under a lot of pressure and wants to stand against it. She is very angry at her dad.

- **How are female and male characters portrayed in this episode? How do they dress, talk and act?**

Male characters are betrayed as bad and shitty. curses and acts "badass". Females are independent

the girls dress a little "boyish", a little emo. they act like "rebels", depressed, though and "no feelings". Crazy, does not care about what others think.

Chloe is not "girly" she has short hair
The mans have bart and big muscels.
All persons are scinny.

The males are big, have beards and portray as very manly and are sterio-typical
The females are a bit different. The main charecters are not the "usual" female type. They all dress in a different way.

Boys and girls dress very simular

The girls were skinny
The boys had wider shoulders
All the bodies were similar
different clothing styles

A few more stereotypical female and male characters, but also non-stereotypical characters.
For example Chloe dresses more masculine than a typical girl main character.

The way they dress isnt very "girly" or very "manly", booth genders dress a bit mixed. But yes girls dressed more like a female and boys dressed more manly. Chloe and Rachel does not dress really "girly".

Not stereotypical

Chloe and Rachel dress very manly, and talk/act "badass". They try to make people look at them as though.

Many main characters dress in a mix of female and male clothes, and dress in a rock-style. They talk in a very direct way and says what they mean.

The female characters don't dress particularly feminine. They all have their own way of talking, and acting. Nothing about the female characters screams gender conforming. When it comes to the male characters David and Drew are very toxically masculine. Such as when Drew uttered that football players could not be involved in the arts program. All the male characters dress masculinely.

The boys are tough and rough except from Michael.
Most of the girls are longhaired and very "lady like". Chloe is not one of them.

Boys were portrayed as normal and being nice and the girls were portrayed as bitches and being mean

Male: Big muscles, rude, though, aggressive
Female: weak, in need of help, rude, nerdy, troubled.

Not stereotype
She talks diarectly and have opinions
Male characters is steraotyped
Chloe has short hair

very stereotypical with identity

females: Rachel and chloe has a punk kind of style. the other girls has a feminin style.

male: Kind of basic Male

Episode 2: Brave New World

- **How has Chloe and Rachel's relationship evolved since they first met in episode 1?**

They went from friends to lover.

Have gotten more friendly and Chloe has started getting feelings.

They have become better friends, but no relationship/romance yet

They became come closer and know each oter better.

they are closer, they trust each other more

acting more like their dating

Closer, stronger, more than friends

Better. More honest with eachother

More comfortable with each other
Developing a "romantic" relationship
Became closer friends

Chloe and Rachel have gotten closer.

They have become closer in a different way than just friends.

- **Why does Chloe decide to stay at the junkyard?**

The step dad is moving in with her mother.

She was thrown out of school and her home didn't feel like home.

Because her step dad was moving in

She does not want to go home to her parents.
She found a car she want to fix

Because she argued with her parents

She did not want to go home, because David moved in.
She don't want to go home when David is there

She doesn't want to go home

She feels like she doesn't belong home anymore because of David

To meet Frank. Because David was moving in.

Because she is waiting for rachel, and dosent wanna go home to her mom.

- **What kind of trouble is Drew North in? Why did he get involved?**

He owed the dealers money

He owed money.

He didn't give the money back that he got from selling drugs, trying to help his father

He owes the drugguy money.

money trouble

He had not paid for drugs.

Drug selling, owns money, because he owns money is because ha wants to help his homeless father

He ownes drug dealers money

Drug dealing trouble
He didn't pay for his drugs, he kept the money for his dad

Drug selling. Truble with the druglord. He got involved becuese his dad could not pay his bills anymore

He owns frank money, and he cant pay it back.

- **How are female and male characters portrayed in this episode? How do they dress, talk and act?**

female: some had short hair, no ass, small titties, boyish behaivor
male: some were big/muscular, had an angry attitude.

The same as in episode 1, but the costumes in the play a girl played a typical "boy role".

A little more stereotypes in this episodes.
They makes people more soft and show their feelings
They dress the same

Drew showes a more soft side
Rachels father is very arrogant

Chloe does not dress or act feminine, but Victoria for example does it.

They are portrayed as more soft, because we get to know them and their stories more.
Character development!

The girls dress more masculine. So do the males. Both female and male characters use slang. Drew is softer in this episode.

Chloe and Rachel stands out from the others. They are not like the typical girls. They don't dress well

Episode 3: Hell Is Empty

- **What do you learn about Rachel's family in this episode?**

Sera is her birth mother and Rachel's father tried to kill her.

They lied to her. Rachel learns that she has another mother. And her dad worked together with damon.

That she have a crack-head mom (brith mom).
Her father was texting with the dealer.

Her mother wasn't really her mother and her real father was planning on killing her mother.

Her dad had criminal work together with Damon.

Rose is not Rachel's mother, her father has sent someone (Damon) to scare Sera (Rachels real mother)

- **How does Chloe find Sera? What happens when she does?**

In DA's office was a phone.
She got knocked out by Damon

She breaks into Rachel's dads office and texts Damon with his phone. When she gets there Damon is about to kill Rachels mom

She went through the office and found a phone and started texting with the dealer who had Sera.

She found her at The Old Mill by talking to Damon.

Chloe found Sara by pretending she was Rachel's dad.

Chloe goes to Rachel's fathers office and finds a phone, she then meets up with Damon at the pub, where she finds Sera tiered up to a cheer. Damon starts kicking and hitting Chloe.

- **Towards the end of the episode you have to decide whether you want to tell Rachel everything or hold back on some of the details. What would be the consequence of either choice? What did you choose?**

If you tell the truth the family will be destroyed and i chose instead to lie to Rachel

I chose to dont tell her, and it seemed like that worked out well.

We lied, because we thought that if Rachel knew the sannheta she would be running aways forever.

The consequence of telling her everything: The family gets ruined.
The consequence of not telling her: She never gets to know her mother and she would get mad at her.

I chose to hold back some of the details, and the ending was a happy ending.

The consequences would be that Rachel would not know the truth and had to live with her father.

- **How are female and male characters portrayed in this episode? How do they dress, talk and act?**

Like in the other episodes.
The girls dressed kinda "boyish"

Chloe: handy, boyish style, stereotype boy.

Rachel: rebellian homosexual, im the middle of boy and girl.

Quite the same.
- Mrs. Amber wears kind of a suit
- Chloe colours her hair.
- Sera wears a dress.

The girls are not really girly dressed, but at the same time the boys dress a little manly.

It's the same as last episode. The females had long and short hair and the males had muscular body and had a bad temper.

In the junkyard, Damon and Rachel gets in an argument and Rachel pushed Damon. And then Damon said something like "It's okay for you women to hit us men, but it's not okay for us men to hit you womens."

At the junkyard said Damon to the girls that why was it okay for girls to hit a guy, but when a boy rais his hand it is asualt.

Most of the girls was skinny, while the boys was big and masculine.

Elliot became very aggressive when Chloe did not want to listen to him

Appendix 6: Essay task (part three)

Gendered stereotypes in the video game *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*

Consider the male, female and queer stereotypes we discussed in the first lesson and write a five-paragraph essay where you discuss the following question: In which ways does the video game *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* maintain gendered stereotypes and in which ways does the game defy them?

You will find a list of the highlights from our discussion of gendered stereotypes and my PowerPoint from the first lesson on ItsLearning. In addition, I want you to use relevant information from other credible sources.

Include:

- A suitable title.
- An introduction.
- A brief summary of the game.
- Examples and discussion of gendered stereotypes in our society (including in media/video games).
- Examples and discussion of how *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* maintains gendered stereotypes.
- Examples and discussion of how *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* defies gendered stereotypes.
- A conclusion.

Formal requirements:

- Use the font Times New Roman, size 12, with 1,5 line spacing.
- Your essay should be 1-3 pages (title and reference list do not count) long and must consist of at least five paragraphs.
- You must refer to at least two credible sources in your essay. Sources must be cited correctly in the text and in the reference list using the APA 6th referencing style. The video game and some of the sources I used in my preparation for this project are cited in the APA 6th system below as examples.

- The deadline for handing in your essay is specified in the hand-in folder on Itslearning.

Reference list (example):

Deck Nine. (2017). *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm* [Video game]. Tokyo: Square Enix.

Sarkeesian, A. (2013a, March 07). *Damsel in Distress: Part 1* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://feministfrequency.com/video/damsel-in-distress-part-1/

Shaw, A. (2014). *Gaming at the edge: Sexuality and gender at the margins of gamer culture.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Statistics Norway. (2019a, April 25) 04517: Andel fjernsynsseere og minutter brukt til fjernsynsseeing en gjennomsnittsdag, etter befolkningsgruppe, statistikkvariabel og år. Retrieved from https://www.ssb.no/statbank/table/04517/tableViewLayout1/

The four reference list entries above show how to cite a video game (Deck Nine), an online video (Sarkeesian, A.), a book (Shaw, A.) and an online article (Statistics Norway). The video game example is the correct citation for *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*, you may copy it for your own reference list (PS: this reference only takes up one line - Sarkeesian, A. is not a part of the game reference).

Appendix 7: Final survey

Your answers to these questions may be published in my master's thesis and by handing them in you are agreeing to let me use them. The survey is anonymous, so please **do not write your name** or any personal details that may reveal your identity. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, and I urge you to be truthful and to explain yourself as thoroughly as you can.

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

3. What did you think of the game?

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

Thank you for answering my questions and for taking part in my research!

Appendix 8: Final survey responses

1.01

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

I haven't played games that much. I have played Sims, Minecraft and fornite. If i play games its usually because im REALY bored ☺

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?**

I did not play through all three episodes. I stoped at the very end of episode 2

3. **What did you think of the game?**

i liked the "heilheit" of the game.

i think the "budskap" is good. i really wished they did something about the graffic in the game… its also "lagging" alot.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

i think Julie was a great teacher during the little time she had with us while she was working on her master.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

that games can be fun, but not over a long time

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

im sorry because i know u want feedback but u where great!

1.02

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

Yes, I play videogames every day.

Nowadays i play mostly League of legends (with my friends always), some of my favourite
are: The Witcher 3, Cyberpunk 2077, Hollowknight, Rainbow 6 siege. (not league tho)

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If
not, how far did you come?**

Lmao no i only got to finish 2 i think

3. **What did you think of the game?**

Honestly not the best. my experience was kinda ruined by the horrible performance of the
school pcs though.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part
of this project?**

It was interesting, wish we analysed something other than gender stereotypes.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring
and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

decent, yeah.

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

perhaps, can't think of anything though.

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

same as 4… gender stereotypes are hard.

1.03

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I have played a lot of games,

I have for the most part played combat games and car games. I have not looked at an game like this before.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I played everything except the last half of episode three.

3. What did you think of the game?

Time went by fast when I played, so it was good enough to take 100% of your attention.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

The instructions was very good, at all times i knew what i nedeed to do. The task at the end (Text) was not the best task I think, but it really got you to reflect over the game.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I didn't think of the topic while playing the game, but when I started to write the text all the flashbacks came rushing to me.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

For the most part I have learned about the topic, but I also learned about different types of games.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

Played the whole game.

1.04

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

i have good expiriences with video games. because i have playd video games as far as i remember

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

i did not play all three episodes, i playd to mid episode 2, and then i saw the rest of the game on YouTube.

3. What did you think of the game?

The game was boring and long

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

They where ok

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

i feel that the project was a good form of learning

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

i have: genderd stereotypes

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

nothing ☺

1.05

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I have previous experiences with video games, but not on PC. I have always had a Nintendo consol, and now I have a Nintendo Switch. My favorite game is Zelda breath of the wild, and every Mario game.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I played through all three episodes, and if I had better time I would also play the first episode of Life Is Strange

3. What did you think of the game?

I really liked the story and feel of the game, and I loved the music. One thing I didn't like as much was the actual game play, and I thought the ending was a bit boring.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think the instructions, activities and tasks have been good, and the power-point was really pretty.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I think the project has been effectiv, and since we already have had about stereotypes in social studies.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have learned a lot more about stereotypes in video games because that's something I haven't thought about before.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

1.06

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I have not played that many video games before, I have played moviestar planet, some fashion games and splix.io, paper.io etc.

I have not played any games resently, and I have never played GTA, Fifa, Call of duty etc.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes I did play through all three episodes of the game

3. What did you think of the game?

I liked the thought ~~behind~~ back the game, and the whole consept of the game. Some of the things went to slow for me, and it become a little boring for me, at some points.

But I liked that we could choose between a lot of options, and that the game changed because of our choices.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I liked the instructions, and we got a lot of info before playing the game. I also liked that we wrote down some thoughts about a "typical" girl and a "typical" man. I got a lot of inspiration from the discussions we had in our groups. I also think that it was great to write the five-paragraph essay! I like to write down my thoughts, so I think this was really nice to do!

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I think the game was really effective! We got to see and learn a lot about how we pretend people to be. We learned and saw that we have more stereotypes in our world than we may think we have.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have learned that I have a stereotypic mind, and that our society only shows the same stereotypes. We are more judjing than we think we are.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I don't know.

1.07

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I had never ever played any computer game before this one. But my brother did play sometimes when he was younger, I do not know if he got to play it because family expected him to be a typically boy.

However, I did play some girly, or netural (eithe boy or girl typical plays), on my I pad when I were younger.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes I did, but it was hard to sit down for so long.

3. What did you think of the game?

I think it was cringe, but it had a few quotes I liked. I think the game took the teen rebellion too far. Also, I did not like the mess in Chloe's room, I got very stressed out when I wasn't able to clean it.

But I liked writing a essay "about" it.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I liked it, and I learned a lot about stereotypes and how to play on computer.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

Very effective, because we had the chance to see things (gendered stereotypes) from different perspectives.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I think I have expanded my view of the society. Therefore, I think I have learned more about the society.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

Maby consider upgraded to a game that is made later. (since this were made in 2010 I think.

1.08

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I have played different types of videogames. Mostly online shooter games with my friends, but i have played story-based games before to.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I played through the 1 episode and half of the 2 episode. I watched the rest on Youtube, and even watched some gameplay from the first game.

3. What did you think of the game?

I think the game was fun and interesting

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

They were good and helped me think.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I think it was really effective. I like new types of learning and this was a fun way to learn.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I've learned a lot about stereotypes in games and the media.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

A little more time at school to play the game, but other than that it was really good.

1.09

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I have not played a lot of video games. Maybe just for example games at the internet. When I was a little younger I also played the sims.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes I played through all three of the episodes.

3. What did you think of the game?

The game was really interesting, but could sometimes get a little boring because it was a lot of hearing what they said and not much "deciding" what to do next.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think the instruction was interesting and fun. Espexelly the drewing we had to do. The discussion we had after every episode was very helpful to remember what had happened in the episode.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I have learned a lot after this project about gendered stereotypes.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have learned that even if we are in 2021 there are still a lot of gendered stereotypes.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I think the project was a sucsess and everything was done perfect.

1.10

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I do not have much previous experiences with video games in the past. I haven't playd anything exept mincraft and the bacics that almost every kid has played atleast once.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes, I played all of the episodes.

3. What did you think of the game?

For me it was a little bit boring, the plot wasn't anything for me.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I liked the way we got the instructions. I liked that we talked about the episode that we just had played.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I didn't really think of gender steriotypes this much before I played the game.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have learned that is not often that videogames have a maincharacter who are the opposite of the gender steriotye that most people expect.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I would like to have little bit better time to talk about the episodes so we could get some new tougts before we started writing.

1.11

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I played more videogames when I was a child than now. I played games like Super Mario and minecraft etc. I still play those games now and then if someone wants me to join, but its not too often.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I played through all the episodes of the game.

3. What did you think of the game?

I thought it was interesting to play, and I liked the storyline. But some parts of the game took a long time to get through because things were hidden.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I liked the activities we did, and it game me some thoughts that I could use later in the essay. Pluss, they were fun ☺

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I felt like it was effective and a little more fun than just reading and writing would have been. I learned a lot, or refreshed what I already knew.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have learned more about how many videogames are full of stereotypes. And that almost no games has a female main character.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

Maybe given us more time to play, because it was a little bit stressful to finish the episodes in time.

1.12

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

I play a lot of video games. On for example call of duty you can only choose your character as a man. A lot of men, and one women. I think there is a lot of stereotypes. This task has made me realize that.

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?**

I did come to the middel of ep 3.

3. **What did you think of the game?**

I think it is a good game! I am more interessted in games with lots of action and shooting, so not quite up my alley tho.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

Everything we did was really helpfull for our writingtask.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

Very effective.

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

More about genderd stereotypes within games and such.

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

Maybe some few minutes breaks while playing and writing!

1.13

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

I play video games minimum once a week, and more often in the holidays.

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?**

Yes, I finished the game.

3. **What did you think of the game?**

I liked the game. It was interesting to play.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

Instructions was clear. Did not like the writing part.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

The only relevant character for discussing un-normal stereotypes was Chloe. I feel like we got little time.

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

That women game more than men in average.

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

We could have done an oral presentation or "fagsamtale" instead of writing an essay

1.14

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I don't really play video games, but I would say that this game was really good.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes, I did play every episode.

3. What did you think of the game?

Like I said in task 1, I really liked the game. There was not any killing and playing the game was almost like watching an episode of a TV show.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think they were really fun! You got to go on an iligeal conceart and skip school.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

It is very effective in my opinion. Even though I don't really play video games, I know how they sexualised both girls and boys. This game is not sexualised at all!

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have not really learned anything new, but it was a good way of repeating it in this way.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I don't think you could have done anything different. You have been helping us all the way.

1.15

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

My previous experiences are not very spesial, I have playd like blackops and fortnite, and in those games there are a lot of steriotypes.

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of** *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm***? If not, how far did you come?**

I came to the place where she was driving away with the money to deliver to drew.

3. **What did you think of the game?**

It was a nice game, I dident find it very funny or exsiting.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

The instructions where nice and the way we just play an episode and then sum it up.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

It was very effectiv on steriotypes, and I got to se another perspective on them.

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

I learn the trouth about video games and the way they sexualise the women and make the men with unreal muskles.

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

I think the project was nice, but mabby give more time to the class to play the game.

♥♥♥

1.16

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I have played like Sims 3 and 4, minecraft, Black OPS and so on, but not more than like once or twice a month with friends.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I did play through all the episodes.

3. What did you think of the game?

I did not like it. I am not a big fan of video games, so this did not suit me.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

They were fine

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

It was a good example, but I feel like it was very one sided

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

That I still don't like video games, but that it needs more varriation

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I liked the project, but not the game it self. You did great ♥

1.17

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

My experiences with video games are very good because I play games a lot. The type of games I like is shooter games. I play games daily, but not so many hours, it comes to what I have to do.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I did not finnish the game, but I don't have much left of episode 3. I stopt when they was in the hospital

3. What did you think of the game?

I think it was a good game, but there was something in it that I did not like. The cutscenes were to long so it became boring

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think the task was good and I lerned a lot from it

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I think it was a effective way to lerned

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have learned much about gender stereotypes

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I don't think of anything that could be dune differently

1.18

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I don't play games a lot.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I did not play through all three episodes, but I came to the begining of the last episode

3. What did you think of the game?

I think the game is not for me. It's too much talking and too litle of playing the game. The episodes were too long, so it should have been more episodes that last shorter.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think that this is something really different from what we normaly would do in English, but at the same time did not I like it so much. It was because the essey we had to write after. It was so hard to find out what to write about, but the hardest part was to not repeat the word "gendered stereotypes"

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

not so much actually, just that gendered stereotypes and gender roles are not the same

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

nothing, actually

1.19

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

i am pretty experienced with games. i usually play almost everyday. i play a wide range from relaxing sandbox like Minecraft and all the way to the FPS shooters like Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege and Battlefield V. i am also experienced with adventure games and Rhythm games.

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of** *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? **If not, how far did you come?**

yes i did play all three episodes.

3. **What did you think of the game?**

I thought it was somewhat fun. The reason for it was i was a tiny bit invested into the story.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

The instruction and activities were fine. Only the task were a bit too much since we had to write an essay.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

I feel it was really effective since we talked about the subject first and then used a video game as an example.

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

I learned how prominent gendered stereotypes is in our games.

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

well I wasn't really a fan of that essay.

1.20

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

alot, too much in fact.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I did not, I maybe did half of the third episode.

3. What did you think of the game?

good consept but I wish you had more to do when play.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

It was alright, I wish we got maybe a littel more time.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

Pretty much everything we learned I already knew

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I dont realy know if i have learned anything

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

no clue

1.21

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I rearly play video games. I used to play Minecraft whenever I visited my cousin as a kid.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I almost finished all three episodes. I think I came to the part where Chloe and Elliot argued in James' office, before rescuing Sera.

3. What did you think of the game?

I think the game was a bit boring and cringe/klisjé.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think the instructions, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project has been fun! We talked more english to each other than we normally do.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

Really effective, even though it was not a new topic for me.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I think I have learned and gotten aware of how video games stereotype sexes.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I don't know. U did great!

1.22

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I rearly play video games almost every day, but the games I play at home is FPS games.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

No I did not play through all the episodes. I came to the end of episode three.

3. What did you think of the game?

It was a bit different to what I normally play, but I still think it was interesting.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think everything was good except for when we had to discuss the episodes and answer the questions because everyone was at a different stage of the game so many times 2 or maybe 3 people couldn't answer the questions

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

The activities has been good but I wouldn't say that the game itself was effective for exploring gendered stereotypes

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have most likely learnt something but I cant think of anything right now.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

different way to discuss the episodes.

1.23

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I don't usually play videogames. But the game I have played is "Battle field". "Battle field" take place in world war II, at tungtvannsfabric. If we compare "Life is strang: Before the storm" and the game I've played before, they are quite different.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I played through episode 1, 2 and half of episode 3.

3. What did you think of the game?

I think the game was ok. Sometimes it was really boring because of all the talking in the game. Because of all the talking the episodes took a long time to get thru. That was a bad thing I think. But over all the content was good.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think both the instruction, tasks and activities that's been a part of this project was great. I liked that we discussed the episodes after playing them.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I think the project helped me explore genderd stereotypes in a really effective way.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

During this process I have learend how to play this game, and different stereotypes.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

The only thing that could have been done different is that we could be more fysisk active.

1.24

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I am the type that dosn't play games I daily life, before I used to play games 4 times a week, And now I do not play games even twice a week.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes, I have played through all three episodes and I am glad I did it because it was worth it.

3. What did you think of the game?

Even tough I am not use to play games, I must say that Life is Strange is a good and lærerikt game to play. Some of the episode was a little bit dificult, because you have to know some rare words on things that you have to find.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think it was all god, espesially the first activitis. And the taskes we got was relevant to the game.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I think that the game and the teacher has explained really well about gendered stereotypes.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have learned that games, for example Life is Strange, can be rally lærerikt. And during this process I have learned more about gendered stereotypes.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

Maybe have more time to play the game, so that everyone get to be finish as the others.

1.25

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I had nearly no experiences at all with videogames before. I just played maybe two-three times at a friends place.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

No I don't played through all episodes. I ended the game after the scene play in episode 2.

3. What did you think of the game?

My first impression was very negative. Chloe was not sympathic to me. During the episodes it got better and I found a way to make decisions that seemed not too far away from my own opinion.

The issue that I do not like videogames at all, because I think there are thousand other, better activities kids kan do in their freetime, influence my impression in a negativ way.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

The idea to play a videogame at school was very new for me. It was great to do something other than reading, listening and writing. It was a little bit difficult to me to find the aim of this project, maybe Julie could have told us a little bit about her master.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I do not think gender stereotypes are the main issue of the game. But the essay and the research for it were very interesting for me.

In general I think gender stereotypes are a important topic today. I wish we would discuss it more in everyday life.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I learnd how videogames influence the way of thinking when you always just have two or three possibilitys to choose.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

You could have placed a clearer aim, why we do this.

But all in all it was a great experience.

Thank you!!!

2.01

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

I Love playing videogames and has done it in many years. I have pretty good experience, but not with all types of games. Life is Strange: Before the Storm was a different game than the ones i usually play. However it was easy to learn how to play and how it goes. I really enjoyed playing it!

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?**

Unfortunately, I didn't play all the way to the end, but I got to know what happened.

3. **What did you think of the game?**

I think it was a fun and cool game. the episode were very long but it was okay.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

I think it was good to have tasks and activities in the class to discuss the game, especially regarding the essay we were writing. The essay was okay. it was a hard topic, but I learned a lot about gendered stereotypes.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

Ive learned a lot more than i knew before the project.

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

More about the society and the big role that stereotypes actyally have.

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

=)

2.02

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I used to play a game called ROBLOX a lot when I was younger, and I played a lot of Minecraft on my phone, tablet and on playstation. I started to play nintendo games such as Zelda, Mariocart, Animal Crossing:New Horizons at the beginning of last year on a Nintendo switch lite that I bought. And spent too many hours on playing. I also used to play some GTA and some other violent games so I have a good amount of experience.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I did play all three of the episodes, yes

3. What did you think of the game?

As a fan of this game series, I loved it. I think it was very entertaining and interesting to play because I have not played many games similar to these games(Life is strange series)

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I enjoyed all of it. I like discussing gendered stereotypes and seeing someone or something defying them.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

Very effective. It was a fun way to learn more about them

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I learned a lot about gendered stereotypes in videogames which I have not thougt about before

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I don't know, I think it was great :)

2.03

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I have no experienses with video games, other than I know that my boy friends play them

2.   Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes, I did play through all three episodes of Life Is Strange: Before The Storm

3. What did you think of the game?

I think the game was really fun, a bit "long", it took some time to get to the point, but overall; a well made game

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I thought they were really fun. Not too easy but not to hard eather

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

The project has been wonderfull for exploring and discussing the topic of "gendered stereotypes".

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

That videogames could be very fun, actually. And that life does not always go as planned.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

Honestly, nothing!

2.04

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I have plenty of experience with games, perhaps even too much. I generally play either story-focused games, fighting or shooting, and games about resource collecting.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I played though all three main episodes of Life is Strange Before the Storm, but not the bonus episode.

3. What did you think of the game?

I enjoyed the game, even if it was somewhat short

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I feel the related tasks were fitting for both the game and subsequent essay.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I feel the game may have helped some think through how they view gender in media, although I feel most articles regarding the subject were quite biased. Finding relevant articles that actually discussed the topic coherently was difficult.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I personally may not have learned much, but I have previously worked with the subject in school.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I don't think much could have been improved, but i don't know much about teaching either

2.05

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I dont play as mutch videogames besides sims 4. I have some periodes where i play it everyday but then i hav like a break from it in like 5 months. sims is about building houses and a createing a family

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I didn't play the whole game finished, i played episode 1&2 but watchéd episode 3 on youtube

3. What did you think of the game?

my thouts of the game. this is not a game i would choose to play. but i didn't hate it. some parts were kinda cheesy.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

i think the essey was kinda hard to write beacuse the game was like not a "typical" sterio types game, soi kinda run out of things to whrite

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

yeah,i deffenitly have thougt more aboute genners and steriotypes after and while play ing the game

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

i feel like im more aware and know much more of, that type of steriotypes we have

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

maybe "knytta" opp mot verkeligheta, like that we chould whrite about how we see differend steriotypes in our evryday life

2.06

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I play relaxing mobile games, but apart from that I don't play a lot of games.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I played all of the episode, as well as I watched videos on youtube that explained the plot and alternative endings.

3. What did you think of the game?

I enjoyed the game. It was entertaining and fun to play.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

The activities were fun, the instructions were easy to follow, and I really enjoyed writing the essay.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

The project only brushed the surface of the topic of gender stereotypes, but was a good introduction.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I learned that everyone has a very different relation to the gender stereotypes. And they effect us in different ways.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I think the project did what it was supposed to and was done in a very good way.

2.07

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

I never play video-games

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?**

Yes

3. **What did you think of the game?**

I personally thought it was a little boring. I'm not used to doing stuff like this and did not really enjoy it.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

2.08

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

<3

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of** *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? **If not, how far did you come?**

yes.

3. **What did you think of the game?**

it was boring but not too boring

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

i think it was great

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

his was fun i felt the project was best

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

some new words

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

may a nother game, whit more action

2.09

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I have played a lot of games. My experience with games are good, have played games om playstation and Pc. Played a lot more before. Played games like: The last of us, Skyrim, CS, COD, minecraft and fortnite

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes I did

3. What did you think of the game?

I think the game is a fun and exciting game. It was fun too play. Was sometime hard to understand

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think the instruction was good, and clear. The task was also good, but maybe have group dicussions

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I feel we have discussed stereotypes in the society alot, but miss talking more about the stereotypes in the game. Maybe also talk more about the consequenses they bring.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

Learend more about stereotypes, and beeing diffrent in a society. Also learned new words

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

Maybe have more discussion on about what the game was really about.

I think you have done a good job, and you are making the english subject so much fun! Keep up the hard work you do!

2.10

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

My previous experiences with videogames are very positive. I've played several video games before, but I don't pay regurally

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I didn't finish the game, but I played through episode one and two and mostly episode 3

3. What did you think of the game?

I had a positive experience with the game. The game was clear an precise and waas therefore easy to implement.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think the instruction activities and tasks had a clear connection. The instruction was cler and leading throughout the game.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

2.11

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

I've always loved playing video games, especially nintendo. I've had a DS, Wii, Wii U and Switch. I play daily on my Switch, at the moment I play mostly fortnite, but i also love Zelda and Mario games.

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?**

I got through all three episodes, but did not play the bonus episode.

3. **What did you think of the game?**

I liked the game and thought it was interesting. I did not like the quality of the video game, like the picture was bad because it was so old.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

They were okay. I didn't really like the essay task because i thought it was hard to write about.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

I think the project helped many explore this topic and i think that's great.

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

I don't think I've learned anything I didn't know before.

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

Found something else than a essay task.

2.12

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I don't play video games, but sometimes I use to watch my brothers playing video games. I think video games are funny and the same time educational.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I did play through all three episodes

3. What did you think of the game?

I think it was clear about the theme we had(gendered stereotypes)

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I liked it, it was easy to work with.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

As I said it was a very easy way to discuss about the theme we had

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I learned much more about the other side of the gendered stereotypes that I couldn't anything about before.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I would like to do more tasks along the way. That would do it easier to write the essay. Else so it was great.

2.13

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I've watched a lot of YouTube gameplay, and I also play a lot of games on my Switch and my iPad. For example minecraft, Legend of Zelda BOTW and animal crossing.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I did not play though the whole game, but I got to the first episode, I am planning on playing thoug the whole game.

3. What did you think of the game?

I really liked the game. It was a very interesting game and i loved the different game mechanics

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

They were great! :)

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

Verry good. It was an amazing portrayal of gendered stereotypes

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

Not a lot, I already know a lot about stereotypes.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

Nothing. I think this project was absolutely amazing.

2.14

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

The only games i have played is Sims. But I don't play so much anymore.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes i played through all the episodes.

3. What did you think of the game?

I have mixed feelings about the game, but I think the reason i didn't liked the game so much is because i dont usally play video games and because it felt like it took forever for the game to end and to get answares on that had happend.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think you did a very good job on the activitates and the essay we wrote

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

After the game I though more about stereotypes and got more reflective about it

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have learned that you can't avoide stereotypes and more about gendered stereotypes

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I think you did a good job on this project and i can't think of anything you should have done different.

2.15

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I have played several types of video games, and I consider it as one of my hobbies. Ive played games such as Mario, Zelda, Sims, Pokemon, minecraft, the sims and more.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I played through all episodes.

3. What did you think of the game?

I think it was a great game, and i loved the graphics It also had an amazingly made story. However some of the game mechanics were a bit slow, for example when using a mouse pad.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

Very good and clear instructions, fun activities(especially the drawing one) and good tasks.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

The project itself was great for gendered stereotypes, but it the game didn't really explore gender stereotypes intentionally, so there couldve been a more suitable game. There are probably games that explore gender stereotypes more thoroughly than LiS:BTS.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

A bit more english, and more about analyzing stories.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I am not sure. The project was very well made and fun to be a part of.

2.16

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I used to play video games with my siblings all the time, mostly minecraft but also Roblox. Now a days I do not play that much.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I played through all three episode

3. What did you think of the game?

I think the game was interesting. I didn't think it was about what it was about if you know what I mean, but it was a good game.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think they have been good. First get to know what gendered stereotypes, then play the game and write an essay about it.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I think it has been very effective.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have learned what a stereotype is

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I don't think you could have done something different.

2.17

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

The videogame have been a positive experience for me. I have learned a lot more english and something about stereotypes.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I played through all the episodes.

3. What did you think of the game?

The beginning of the game was a bit boring, but after a while it became funnier. All the talking and waiting was boring, but the choices, reactions and the rest of the game was fun.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think the prosess with the game has been really great, and we got enough time to finish the tasks.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

This way to learn, by playing the game, has been good. You are really good to keep it various, that made me look forward to the english class.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have learned that its a lot of expectations and demands out there, about how we should be. At the same time I have learned more english and I have become a better english writer.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I think everything was perfect! =)

2.18

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I game almost everyday, i love video games.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes

3. What did you think of the game?

I loved it!

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

They were nice, and easy to understand.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

10/10

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have learned alot about gendered stereotypes.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

Nothing, i loved this project.

2.19

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I have played some video games, but not so many.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes, I played through all three episodes

3. What did you think of the game?

I liked it, it felt like it was a movie but I choose many parts.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

It was okay, but i didnt feel i learned so much before the last task - the essay. About the gender stereotypes.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

The project has been good to learn about the gendered stereotypes.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

All with the gender stereotypes and what it is

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I dont know

2.20

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

i have just played minecraft and ive played fortnite one time.

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of** *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm***? If not, how far did you come?**

yes i played through all the episodes.

3. **What did you think of the game?**

i think it was very innteresting to do something new. I liked the game

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

I think it was good, the tasks "matched" the game. The instuction was okey.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

i think it was very effective. It a new type of learning.

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

The topic of gendered stereotypes in games.

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

Nothing.

2.21

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I do not have so much previous experiences with video games. I do not play so much but I liked this game.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I played through all three episodes.

3. What did you think of the game?

I liked the game it shows the theme very good I also thik it was a littel bit boring it took very long time and some places i did not know what to do.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I liked it becacuse it was good variation in the school day

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

i think the game has exploring and discussing the topick very good

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

i have learned about the gendered stereotypes more.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

Nothing.

2.22

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

I haven't played so much videogames in the past but i think it is fun.

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of** *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm***? If not, how far did you come?**

Yes i played it all

3. **What did you think of the game?**

i really liked the game even if it dosen't fit my personality or interest. i really liked how you where suposed to play it

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

i didn't do the pre tasks or the tasks you could do while you played the game but i think that the game was explained good.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

i think it was a little bit hard but we got a lot of help.

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

i have learned a lot more of gendered steriotypes and how much it acually is of it

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

i can't think of anything that could have been done differently

2.23

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I haven't played that much videogames before exept Fifa and GTA

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I played through all the episodes, without the bonus episode

3. What did you think of the game?

I think the videogame was a great way to learn about stereotypes. It was a bit different from other ways to learn.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think the whole project was good, the questions and the gaming. The essay i think is needed in a task like this, it was just a bit difficult to write.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I think we used enough time to learn about the theme, including getting through the whole game, it we personal was effective

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have learned a lot about gendered stereotypes and how it gets used in the society also how it effects.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

Nothing, you made it perfect

2.24

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

i have played the game life is strange before the storm a few years ago, so i already knew quite alot about this game that we played now. other than that, i dont really play a lot of games now

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

yes, i played through all the three episodes

3. What did you think of the game?

the game is quite interesting, i like the storyline. at times the game can get a bit slow and almost boring, but i like how theres alway an event or spesific scenerio happening, that leads to the end of the game. the characters of the game are pretty interesting too, i like how u c can aelly feel each characters personality.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

the project has been good overall. i noticed that even tho i like the game, it was kind of a bit demotivating to play knowing that i have to write an essay about it later. i was not the biggest fan of having to focus on the gendered stereotypes. but i get why we did it.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

i don't know if i think it has been that affective really, i feel like when i focus on the stereotypes it makes them a lot more obvious to see in real life too. and personally i like looking past the stereotypes

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

since i've played this before, i dont think i've learned a lot new, but also i am a lot older now then since last time i played it, so i definetly look at the game different now then the first time i played.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

i dont think there is anything that had to be done different

3.01

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

I haven't really played many video games previouslie, I have of course played some n my phone like minecraft PE and other timewasting games

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?**

I played nearly through every episode, but I didn't finish the last episode entirely becuse of bad time

3. **What did you think of the game?**

I think the game is boring. It takes to long to play and most of it is videoes where you don't even control the character.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

OK

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

Some, but not very much.

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

Learned somethings about gendered stereotype and some about wasting my time

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

I don't know, maybe a less boring game

3.02

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

I haven't played the game before so i didn't have any experience

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?**

yes i did

3. **What did you think of the game?**

i didn't really like the game. It took a long time to play and i didn't like the story, I often got mad at chloe and how she acted.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

they were fine, made me think about the game a little more

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

very effectiv

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

i learned more about gendered stereotypes

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

choose another game maybe. But you were great, and made the game better for me

3.03

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

Its very little play for the most football game and farming simulator

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?**

Yes I do

3. **What did you think of the game?**

I think the game has been more fun if it not was playd on the school but home

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

3.04

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I have not played much videogames in the past. Only a few times. feks. Minecraft

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I played through them all.

3. What did you think of the game?

I think it was boring because it took to long time and there was not much to do than to talk

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

The tasks were alright

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

The game was related to the topic in a good way

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

Not so much i didnt know before

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

Give us more time to finish the game so we didnt have to stress so much. The stress made the game something negative and it could be something positive without the stress.

3.05

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

I dont have much expirience with video games

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of** *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? **If not, how far did you come?**

i played through 2 eps and saw the last one on youtube

3. **What did you think of the game?**

The game was interesting and i liked the plot. but i thought it took too much time

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

I liked this whole project, its diffrent from what we have normaly done

The rest I don't know how to answer

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

3.06

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I haven't played a lot of video games before, at least not in this tempo. Also, i haven't been used to play this type of games. Some weekends, i play a bit with my siblings, but the typical games we play are more "childish" as for example "Disney Infinity" or "Little big planet". I guess I am lying a bit when i say i don't use to play a lot of video games. At the time i can't stop playing the phone games "Design Home" and "Hay Day"

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes, I played all three episodes of "Life is Strange: Before the Storm".

3. What did you think of the game?

At first, i was not very impressed by the game. I liked the characters and the story, and almost loved the beautiful animation, especially of the nature, but because i am not used to play video games on a laptop, i went through the game very slowly. I think i became a bit stressed, and it ruined a bit for the experience of the game. However, I noticed, when i started to write the essay, that the game started to grow on me. I think it was because I started to try to understand the characters and their stories which were very interesting.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think the instructions have been really good, and it has been easy to understand what we were going to do in every lesson.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

Yes, it was very effective

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I have learned that video games aren't just killing and blood, because i have had that impression before. They can tell important stories. Also, i have learned a lot about gendered sterotypes.

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

I think we could have gotten a bit more time for playing the game.

3.07

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

My previous experiences with video games are nonexisting. The closest thing to a video game that I have played would be online games hahaha

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I did not play through all three episodes, but I got as far as halfway throug the third episode

3. What did you think of the game?

I did enjoy the game, but because we had a dead line, I didn't quite get to do it in my own tempo. And while playing I felt like I needed to rush throug and just get it done, and I also felt stressed while playing because it felt like I had to play close attention to everything since we were going to write an essay.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

As mentioned previouslyI felt stressed about the essay, but the tasks we had inbetween helped alot, Like the tasks where we sat and talked and discuss with eachoter

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

It has been fasinating

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

How certain videogames work

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

3.08

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

My previous experiences with video games are good. I've played Fortnite, Apex, Rocket League, Minecraft and Disney Infinity. I've used to play on my PS2. Games like Spyro and Batman. So, gaming have been a weekend activity since i was 8 years old. All of the games im playing now, have at some point been advertised on either tv or other places on the internet.

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?**

Yes, i was one of the students that did finish all three episodes before the time limit.

3. **What did you think of the game?**

I think the game got a little more boring because it was a school project. But, i kinda liked it. It just took me 8 hours to finish. That's more on me than the game.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

It was repetitive, you often had the same options. And i realized that it really didn't matter what i choose. That sucks, i wish the choises i took did affet the next happenings. But that's on my video game preference.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

It was effective.

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

That english is a lot more included in our every day life, that i don't even notice it.

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

I don't know, i think the project was good.

3.09

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

To be a little actionfilled

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?**

I got to the middle of the third episode.

3. **What did you think of the game?**

It was OK. Not my favorite, but ok

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

They were good.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

Very effective.

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

More about that type of game and more stereotypes.

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

I don't think you could have done it a better way, even tho I didn't enjoy the game that much

3.10

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I've grown up playing games.It started off with Pokémon White, Smash Bros Brawl, and Super Mario Galaxy. I am a huge fan of Nintendo games, but also games for PlayStation. I have recently discovered my favorite game series, which is the Yakuza franchise. All in all, I've played quite a lot of games over the years, but not as much as some of my siblings.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I did not get to finish the game. I had gotten to the 3rd episode, but not far.

3. What did you think of the game?

It was decent. The voice acting was sloppy at times, to the point where it was difficult to become submerged in the game. Not being able to skip dialogue and cutscenes was probably the biggest let-down of the game, especially with the long cutscenes.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think they were decent. I struggled with the gender norms, as they were not my main point of focus when playing.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

More than learning, I got to put my thoughts on the topic into words

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I am not so sure, actually.

3.11

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

Videogames have been an outlet for me for many years. So it has kinda taken a personality for itself. So a reflective prosess through gaming is natural thing for me to do.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes i played through all 3 episodes

3. What did you think of the game?

The game was good at showing how the life of an occupied/trapped mind.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I feel like there was good potential to understand and maybe keep the stereotypical mindset in the past.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

My understanding of the project was that stereotypes are relevant, and it felt more like we were trying to point out, identify and categorizing stereotypes, which is a stereotypical mindset.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

Be more critical to first impressions.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

^^^ (feel like i summed up everything in task 4&5)

3.12

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I haven't played a lot of video games, except for "The Sims 4"and those game websites for children, but I have played a tiny bit of CS:GO, Counter Strike

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I didn't play through all three but I came to maybe halfway through the third episode.

3. What did you think of the game?

I think it was okay, though i was easily distracted or sidetracked because of the longer periods of time where I couldn't play myself and there were videos instead of gameplay(?)

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

I think they were fine, I don't really remember.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I think it has been relatively effective.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

During this process I think I have learnt a little more of what other people think about gendered stereotypes.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I don't really know, I don't think there is something you could have done differently that I can think of

3.13

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

I have no previous experiences with video games. Never been so big of a fan of it.

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of** *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm***? If not, how far did you come?**

I didn't manage to play all three episodes. I got to the start of episode two and hat to cheat a bit by watching a youtube video of someone else playing it.

3. **What did you think of the game?**

I think the game was pretty interesting. Especially the story itself. I found it a bit difficult sometimes to understand what I was supposed to do to get further in the game but I think I would've enjoyed it more if it hadn't been for a school-project and if I hadn't had a timelimit on finishing it.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

The tasks were cool.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

I didn't really find it very instructive actually. I would rather just discuss it without the game. THe game was indeed relevant to the topic, but I didn't find it much effective.

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

I have learned more about how the videogame works. I don't know what else to say.

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

I don't know actually, sorry… I didn't hate it because the game was pretty fun and the theme here is important to talk about.

- Really good teacher though. Julie, it was very nice having you here and a thousand thanks for this nice and tasty end of the project <3

3.14

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I play a lot of different games. Games like Apex of COD, Roblox with my siblings and games on my telephone when I'm bored.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I finished the game even before we had to.

3. What did you think of the game?

The game was kinda fun but at the same time not, that's because the story was "set in stone", we made choices, but the story would still have the same storyline as the one who took a different choice.

+ I couldn't decide how i wanted chloe to turn out as a person, which i wanted to.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

It didn't feel like the tasks or the activities helped and it was boring to do.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

The game helped us discuss the topic but it didn't change or game me any new info or perspective about it. "we only discussed the topic when we had to write the essay"

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

Nothing that I already knew, but it's become clearer that stereotypes gets presented in games and not only gender related.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I don't know, it was fine, mabey other game or the actual game.

3.15

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

I have played some video games before. Mostly on my phone but I enjoy playing video games on a computer too.

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?**

I did play all three episodes.

3. **What did you think of the game?**

I enjoyed playing the game. I have been playing the original life is strange long time ago, so it was fun to play the prequel. Some parts of the game were slow, especially when you needed to find objects.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

The questions we were asked made it easier to reflect on the things that had happened. The essay were hard to write, because we had such a short time to gather information.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

I think that the game made me realise more of the gendered stereotypes that I didn't think of earlier, when it comes to discuss queer stereotypes and "bury your gays".

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

I learned that there are many gendered stereotypes in media and videogames. That I were not aware of before.

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

I think that I should have paid attention to when each episode should be finished. I hade some stuff to catch up on at the end of the project.

3.16

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I played a lot in my childhood but not when i got older

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

yes

3. What did you think of the game?

the plot was intresting but it went a little slow

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

Good and fun

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

Very effective and I've learned a lot

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

More about what stereotypes is

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

3.17

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I haven't realy had any previous experiences with video games before this project. I've only played some games on my phone, like for example subway surfers etc.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes, I've played through all three episodes

3. What did you think of the game?

I honestly liked this game a lot. The ending made me really want to continue playing it. Even though I've struggled with some of the missions sometimes, it was still very interesting.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

As i named before, I've struggled a little bit with some of the tasks where i had to find things etc, but after all when i've struggled for some time i got help from "Chloe" so it was all fine

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I'm sorry but i don't really know how to answer.

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I've learned a lot more about video games! I've learned how they can picture different genders etc.

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I honestly think the project was very interesting and i liked it. It was hard to write the essay but i can't really tell why.

3.18

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

My experiences with videogames is that I have played a lot of difrent types of games. From simulator games to action games. I play almost every day and the game I play now is Valheim

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?**

I played through all the three episodes

3. **What did you think of the game?**

I thought the game was a little bit boring. It went to slow for me, and there were way to much cutscenes. Also I did not like some of the characters.

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

I think the instruction were quite clear and the tasks were good.

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

I don't really think it was very effective.

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

No, I didn't learn anything new

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

I think you could have given us more time to play the game

3.19

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

My previows expierience with video games can be said with 15000 hours and all of my [incomprehensible] education i Skyrim, Terraria, Minecraft and 200+ more (games

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?**

Got all the way through

3. **What did you think of the game?**

Mechanics wise the game got worse than the original Life is Strange, and the characters had lost a bit of charm along with the "arguing mechanic

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

The activities in this project were confusing

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

I wish i knew but I understand gendered stereotypes

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

That Julie is fun

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

No clue

3.20

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

I've played a lot of games when i was younger on iPad, pc and other divices. I love playing good games, but nowadays I dont usually have time.

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

I did play through all episodes

3. What did you think of the game?

I liked the game and the storyline was interesting.

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

We got very little time to play the game so it felt a bit rushed. If we had more time I think I would've enjoyed it more with the activitys.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

I think it was a good way of learning and discussing gendered stereotypes

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

I think this process has made me more aware of how people act and if its stereotypes

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

More time would have been greate **:)**

3.21

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

i have played minecraft and mario cart before

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of** *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm***? If not, how far did you come?**

yes i did play through all three episodes of life is strange Before the storm

3. **What did you think of the game?**

I think the game was fun to play. I liked that I could control the actions of the main character

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

it was okay

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

3.22

1. **What are your previous experiences with video games?**

i don't play that much, but i sometimes play on the PS4

2. **Did you play through all three episodes of** *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm***? If not, how far did you come?**

yes i played all three episodes

3. **What did you think of the game?**

I think the first episode was fun, but then it became boring

4. **What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?**

i think it has been really fun

5. **How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?**

i think that it was important for us to talk about

6. **What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?**

what gendered stereotypes is.

7. **What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?**

nothing really, i think we had a great time

3.23

1. What are your previous experiences with video games?

No, i don't play games

2. Did you play through all three episodes of *Life Is Strange: Before the Storm*? If not, how far did you come?

Yes, I play all three episods.

3. What did you think of the game?

The game was so (spennende)

4. What did you think of the instruction, activities and tasks that have been a part of this project?

Good.

5. How effective do you feel the project (including the game) has been for exploring and discussing the topic of 'gendered stereotypes'?

Fun, and I learned more about other, how it feel and how it is

6. What, if anything, do you think you have learned during this process?

You can be who you want

7. What do you think I could have done differently to improve the project?

I think all think it was good

Appendix 9: Consent form

Observasjon i forbindelse med masterutdanning

Jeg ønsker med dette din deltagelse i et prosjekt der jeg skal forske på bruk av dataspill i engelskundervisningen. Du får denne forespørselen fordi du er elev i en av de tre klassene på Sortland videregående skole der undervisningsopplegget mitt skal prøves ut. Prosjektet vil være en del av min masteroppgave i fremmedspråk i skolen ved Høgskolen i Østfold.

Hva vil deltagelse innebære?

I løpet av undervisningsopplegget vil jeg ha en rolle som både medlærer/lærer og forsker, og vil observere og samle inn anonymiserte data mens undervisningen pågår. Jeg vil observere hvordan klassene jobber med temaet, dataspillet og oppgavene. Ellers ønsker jeg at elevene gjennomfører en anonym spørreundersøkelse etter prosjektets slutt der de deler sine erfaringer og tilbakemeldinger om opplegget. Svarene vil publiseres som vedlegg til masteroppgaven. Alle deltagere vil anonymiseres i det som publiseres i masteroppgaven, og vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes. Jeg kommer ikke til å lagre personopplysninger om noen av elevene i forbindelse med forskningsprosjektet, hverken i egne notater eller i sammenheng med spørreundersøkelsen.

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet og hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke deg uten å oppgi noen grunn. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg. Det vil ikke påvirke ditt forhold til læreren eller dine karakterer.

Dersom du har spørsmål eller andre henvendelser kan du ta kontakt med meg per telefon/SMS (415 54 819) eller e-post (julves@vgs.nfk.no).

Mvh. Julie Therese Berge Vestå.

Jeg samtykker herved til å delta i prosjektet:

……………………………………   ……………………………………
(underskrift elev)   (underskrift foresatt)

Reflection note:

This project has taught me a lot. I would definitely have found a better way to gather data had I set out on this journey again. A part of me also wishes I had a different game, as my impression was that the students found it hard to analyse for gendered stereotypes. However, I am also glad that they got to see an alternative to many of the games they are used to playing. And there is some beauty in having to conduct an analysis that does not "just write itself". I think what could have made the process easier for the students would be for them to focus on a smaller area – like, say, the Damsel in Distress trope, or to share their findings with each other in an oral presentations so they all got to hear each other's findings.

I am very happy to finally deliver this master's degree. It has been a challenge combining this with work and motherhood. But it is an experience I am glad to have had.