Do we exist?

Previous compulsory steps / Prior students' knowledge	None
Learning objectives	Develop a basic understanding of philosophical questions. Introduction to the philosophy of Alan Watts. Develop an understanding of various philosophical concepts; consciousness, existence, happiness, the matter, metaphysics.
Subjects	Philosophy, Arts
Recommended Age	10 – 14
Material needed	Videos and trailers of the game
Sequence duration	60 – 90
Individual or group activity	Group activity (all the students should work together on the final project).
Expected production	Students should choose one of the topics raised in the game and create a group project.
Skills developed (after learning objectives)	Critical thinking, creativity
Price range of the game	Free videos, game price on Steam <20€
Extension / differentiation activities (at the end of the sequence)	This sequence could be used in a Philosophy Class. The video game used is based on the work of Alan Watts. The sequence could be used in specific Philosophy modules as well, such as Philosophy of

	the Mind, Philosophy of Religion, Metaphysics, etc. This sequence could also be used as a basic introduction to Descartes, tackling the question of existence (to use this sequence for more specific Philosophy classes, it might be useful to apply it to students 15-18 years old). In addition, it could be used in class to promote environmental consciousness. This sequence could be used in Art class as well to raise issues about the different points of view of the same things, questions of perception in art, etc.

Step by step: how to implement the sequence

- **Step 1 – Introduction of the video game to the class (10 minutes)**

This sequence uses Everything, a video game developed by David O'Reilly in 2017. This sequence aims to provide students an introduction to Philosophy and some of the most famous philosophical questions. This game is based on the philosophical work of Alan Watts. Watts' main philosophical work is concerned with life and existence (Popova, n.d.).

For more information on the work of Alan Watts you could use these links:

- https://alanwatts.org/ - use this to find his written work and audio recording.
- https://www.brainpickings.org/2014/01/27/alan-watts-taboo/ - use this for a summary of his main work.

Everything:

Everything is a simulation game, in which the player does whatever they want. There is no right or wrong move in this game. When playing Everything, the player will travel through the universe and they will be able to see everything from different points of view (Everything, n.d.). Everything aims to help the player discover the nature of their existence and the existence of everything around them at the same time (McWhertor, 2017).

- **Step 2 – Discussion about the different philosophical questions raised in the game (25 minutes)**

Everything raises several philosophical questions. In the game, the existence of everything, and ultimately our existence, are questioned and the player has the chance to become 'everything' and see the universe from different points of view. You should show the official trailer to your students to enable them to think of different philosophical questions. If possible, allow your students to play the game for 10 minutes to get a better understanding of the meaning of existence and the philosophical questions raised in the game.

Here is the video you should show to your students:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYHp8LwBUzo: Everything – Gameplay Trailer (10:44, show the full video with audio on)

Before showing the video to your students, ask them some questions and tell them to try and find answers in the videos. You should note that in Philosophy there is no right or wrong answer and the students should use their creativity and imagination when answering the questions.

Here are some questions you could ask your students:

- What is a human being?

- What is consciousness?

- How many points of you are there in the world?

- Can the same person experience different points of view? To discuss this, you can also ask your students to walk around in the class, step on a chair and describe the same object. The description of the object will change each time and your students will get an understanding of the meaning of 'point of view'.

- What is the 'I'?

- How do you understand harmony and chaos?

- Is there harmony in our world?

- What is the meaning of 'matter'?

- What matters to you?

- Can you describe an illusion?

- Can you define 'existence'?

- **Step 3 – Developing a student project using inspiration from the game (45 minutes)**

At this stage, students should use their notes from the previous questions and use inspiration from the game to develop a classroom project. This project could be a collection of drawings, a painting, or even a short video. You should ask your students to express the emotions they felt when playing the game (or watching the video) when developing the project. They can also use images of characters from the game.

When developing their projects students should decide if they want to create drawings, a painting or if they prefer to create a digital video. If the students prefer to create a video, they could use online tools like Canva or Animoto.

- Canva tutorial: https://www.canva.com/create/videos/, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nIq8VEixEc
- Animoto tutorial: https://animoto.com/, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GX9bGx2T2w

Once your students decide what type of project they will develop, they can start thinking about the title of the project and decide which philosophical topics raised in the game, they want to cover. For example, one student might want to focus entirely on the question of existence and develop a project about the universe and life. Another example would be developing a project about the different points of view. In this case, students could create a drawing of the same object, but from different points of view. In an arts class, this could be an interesting introduction to perspective drawing techniques. Everything is a game that provides countless philosophical questions, therefore the students should be free to use their creativity and imagination to develop their project.

- **Step 4 – Reflection and Conclusion (10 minutes)**

At this final stage, students should be able to describe their project and be able to discuss basic philosophical questions. You can ask your students to share what they liked about the game as well as what they have learned about Philosophy and the work of Alan Watts.

References

Alan Watts Organization. Alanwatts.org. https://alanwatts.org/

Animoto. Animoto.com. https://animoto.com/

Canva. Canva.com. https://www.canva.com/create/videos/

Everything. (2017). Everything-game.com. http://www.everything-game.com/features

Popova Maria. 'The Ego and the Universe: Alan Watts on Becoming Who You Really Are'. Breinpickings.org. https://www.brainpickings.org/2014/01/27/alan-watts-taboo/

McWhertor Michael. (2017). 'Confused about Everything? This 11-minute trailer might help'. Polygon.com. https://www.polygon.com/2017/3/14/14926684/everything-ps4-trailer-alan-watts

Videos

[Canva]. (2020, December). 'Create EASY VIDEOS with Canva' [video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nIq8VEixEc

[PlayStation]. (2017, March). 'EVERYTHING - Gameplay Trailer | PS4' [video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYHp8LwBUzo

[Animoto], (2020, April). 'How to Create A Video With Animoto' [video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GX9bGx2T2w