eMysteries
Detective Stories to Engage Students in Close Reading with the Use of Mobile Devices

eMysteries Toolbox Overview

The eMysteries Toolbox on Close Reading Mystery Detective Stories offers stand-alone modules on the different instructional aspects of mystery detective stories. The Toolbox was designed and developed based on a participatory approach which encouraged greater participation and involvement of the project's stakeholders. In particular, the content was informed by data which were collected from 26 upper secondary school teachers from 5 European countries (Germany, Spain, Ireland, Portugal, and Cyprus) who took part in an online survey and a focus group discussion. The project's consortium would like to thank them all for their valuable contributions.

The Modules of the Toolbox can be read as a sequence of suggestions for teachers on how to work with mystery detective stories through close reading in an entertaining, interactive way for students. Specifically, the Toolbox provides teachers with ideas, resources, practices, and some examples that they can explore in class with secondary school students. The fictional examples in the e-Mysteries Toolbox are drawn from contemporary multimodal mystery detective novels. The multimodal channels of such texts are an example of what young students may find appealing today. Moreover, they reinforce the use of several media for learning, explore types across a range of disciplines and promote students' engagement with several forms of art.

The Toolbox is available in an interactive flipbook format to the project's website in English, German, Greek, Spanish, and Portuguese. It can be downloaded or viewed online here:
http://flipbooks.emysteries.eu/toolbox/en/

eMysteries Toolbox Modules

Module 1 explores the narrative concept of the mystery detective story across several media (in narrative, comics, graphic novels, digital multimodal text). It demonstrates why mystery detective stories may be potentially engaging for secondary school readers aged 15 to 19: plot, characters, clues and evidence (factual knowledge) are stimuli to catch the curiosity of readers and a challenge for deductive minds in mystery fiction.

Module 2 highlights teaching methods that are student-centered, collaborative, interactive, creative, and cooperative in connection to reading. All these methods make use of the popular digital practices of young people outside the formal educational setting and extend them to meaningful learning and reading promotion through active engagement with reading.

Module 3 focuses on the concept of close reading in association with reading mystery detective stories. Close reading is used to develop more complex reading skills in secondary school students on the one hand, while on the other hand close reading mystery detective stories may also promote deep reading comprehension skills among students who lack them or are reluctant readers. In this regard, the emphasis is placed on the mode of reading that builds critical, analytical processes, and promotes slower modes of reading that contradict superficial skimming over texts.

Module 4 includes the steps to guide secondary school students from reading mystery detective novels to creating their own: Finding good ideas to develop in their writing, following suggestions from stories, coming up with mystery plots, suspects, clues, and mystery resolutions. It also highlights the importance of collaborative writing by suggesting activities that students can carry out together as well as digital apps that can assist them.

2nd Online Project Meeting

The eMysteries project partners held their 2nd project meeting online, on May 14th, 2020. During the meeting there was a thorough discussion about the finalization of the Teacher's Toolbox which will form the basis for the design and development of the mobile-device-supported interactive environment. In particular, partners discussed the critical elements of the environment and their alignment to the learning and instructional objectives. They also provided useful insights and suggestions about the elements of the detective stories and their multimedia aspects.

What Comes Next

During the next months partners will wok on the development of the interactive environment. The environment will be fully aligned to support the creation of detective stories and will allow students to create various stories using different characters and plots from a rich- media resources.

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