



Unlocking the Magic of Motivation

Exploring House Sorting and Its Impact on Student Engagement

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Abstract

The world of Harry Potter continues to grow in popularity around the world and an increasing number of schools are introducing house systems similar to those found in the books to increase students' motivation. This research explores how the introduction of a Harry Potter-inspired house system affects students' motivation. Our pilot study took place in a prestigious Hungarian high school among 11th grade students during our teaching practice. We used a variety of data collection instruments to assess the effectiveness of the system. First, we used classroom observation to learn how students interact with each other and the teacher and to learn which tasks they find most engaging. Secondly, after the two-week long practice, we asked the students to fill out a feedback questionnaire. Finally, in order to triangulate the findings, we also conducted an interview with the teacher of the group, so we can interpret their professional input as well. Since the students were required to work individually and in groups as well, we saw major changes in their engagement; we saw that most of the students were engaged in participating and felt motivated by the house system to work harder and better in and out of class. Based on the findings, we can infer that the house system helped to motivate students, and had a positive effect on their school experience. Furthermore, conclusions can be drawn about concrete material development and further usage of the house system.

Keywords: Harry Potter, house system, motivation, gamification, storification, point system, EFL

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the potential benefits and challenges of implementing a house system into an educational setting. By examining existing models, such as the *Ron Clark Academy*, an American school, which has already implemented the house system with great success, and researching the impact on student performance, this study aims to prove that a house system can be successfully implemented into Hungarian schools and can achieve change in student engagement and in education itself.

Hudgens (2024, February 7) in her article: *Why Every School Should Have a House System Like Hogwarts* (<https://www.boredteachers.com/post/school-houses-like-hogwarts>), suggests a few positive effect of implementing the Harry Potter house systems in schools, such as allowing each and every students to feel a sense of belonging, contributing in something together, expressing identity and values, etc. In our research, we explored the idea of a gamified classroom and what changes it holds. While the *Ron Clark Academy* successfully implemented the house system, we learned that there are many successful implementations of gamification as well; most importantly, Gressick and Langston (2017, p.117) found that it resulted in a high level of participation, positive perception of peers and strong sense of community.

Although we found many unsuccessful attempts in previous research, we intend to find an answer to whether the house and rewards system impacts students' motivation, how competitive tasks require collaboration and what changes do we need to focus on for a long-term integration. Unlike previous studies that primarily concentrate on a specific educational level, we set a goal to find answers during our short teaching practice, in a prestigious high school in Pécs with 11th-grade students.

With this exploratory research, we aim to help educational administrators by giving an insight into implementing a house system, and understanding the specific challenges and advances associated with the house system. And also the school staff, by giving them a base on fostering a more supportive and collaborative school environment, and enhancing both student and teacher engagement.

2. Literature review

Supporting the needs of all students is crucial in creating a working and safe educational environment. This is possible in many ways such as integrating self-efficacy, and self-determination theory (SDT), implementing an Individual Education Plan (IEP), or creating a safe environment in itself or by using gamification items. This paper addresses a variety of approaches beneficial for modern education. Examples include addressing how students' performance is impacted by their beliefs about their abilities, examining the competitive side of self-efficacy within the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), exploring SDT and the differences between SDT and Invitational Education Theory (IET) and how are students' engagement is affected. Furthermore, the exploration of the impact of academic flow on learning experiences, supported by constructivist theories and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP), which emphasize the importance of social interactions and guided learning also represent key variables in this gamified learning frame. Lastly, the research compares and contrasts traditional and constructivist classroom environments. When integrating a house system into a school setting, gamification can be an important tool to boost student motivation. By turning educational tasks into gamified challenges and competitive activities and giving out rewards can enhance students' motivation to participate in class, work with their classmates, and enjoy lessons, while also fostering individual and team motivation. It is crucial to give out immediate feedback to keep students engaged with their tasks and with the house system as well, since earning points is not limited to their academic work, but can be awarded for individual and teamwork, contribution and good behavior as well.

This paper focuses on a *Harry Potter* series inspired house system mixed with gamification in enhancing student motivation in a school environment. This section explores defining psychological backgrounds to motivation, discussing concepts like, intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, gamification and storification in EFL context and other motivational factors. In the following, we will also analyze examples of gamification in educational settings, how the combination of the house system and gamification fosters the sense of belonging and the potential effects on students' engagement. Finally, the potential challenges for implementing the gamified house system effectively are also addressed.

2.1. Underlying psychological frameworks

According to the social cognitive theory (SCT), self-efficacy depends on the task and the confidence of completing it successfully. As Montgomery et al. (2023, p. 216) address it, “the level of self-efficacy is based on four major sources of information: performance accomplishment, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states” (Montgomery et al., 2023, p. 216). These sources are crucial because they shape how students develop essential skills. They also focus on the students’ experiences, teamwork and observation skills, their ability to take and give feedback as well as their emotional control. Furthermore, these factors influence students’ motivation to learn and to perform better because they impact their views on their abilities. When students experience these factors, they can build confidence in their capabilities. This increased self-efficacy boosts their motivation to engage more with their lessons and their classmates.

On the other hand, Montgomery et al. (2023, p. 219) state that to get a full view on self-efficacy we need to consider Deci and Ryan’s (2000) view on the difference between self-efficacy and competence. Montgomery et al. (2023, p. 219) further explain that “self-efficacy focuses on the level of behavior, whereas perceived competence is unlikely to be associated with behavioral outcomes unless the need for autonomy is also met”. Believing in one’s autonomy to complete a task successfully, however, does not mean students will do it automatically. Therefore, once a student is confident and motivated enough to do a task by their own choice, they are more likely to do so to the best of their ability. While making sure that intrinsic motivation (completing tasks out of enjoyment, and not because of pressure) is stimulated, focus on helping the learners so that they have the ability and the desire to successfully complete the given tasks is also needed (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 189). Thus, by addressing motivation and self-efficacy, an environment can be created where students are more likely to engage and perform according to their strengths. As a result, when students feel intrinsically motivated and confident in their language skills, they are more likely to participate in competitive activities.

Bailey et al. (2023) prioritize the competitive side of self-efficacy in the setting of learning English as a foreign language (EFL). As they highlight, competition self-efficacy requires cognitive engagement which in the context of education can be defined as a student’s level of participation, involvement, and motivation within a competitive environment (Bailey et al., 2023, p. 4). This engagement is dependent on improvement, behavioral engagement,

growth and mental effort made by the learners in order to succeed in a competitive situation. Therefore, in learning EFL, competitive self-efficacy plays a crucial role since this is one factor that makes students want to outperform their peers. Thus, a healthy competitive environment can help students find their confidence in social interactions and it also pushes them to perform these social interactions correctly.

Contrarily, it is also crucial to notice how the students' engagement changes in this environment over time. As Bailey et al. (2023, p. 9) address, how engaged students are depends on "interest, relevance, the level of challenge, or supportive elements, which are not influenced by competition self-efficacy". In their study it was proven that competition self-efficacy has a great effect on engagement, and also, that competitive engagement and competition self-efficacy are both influencing participation in the learning EFL environment (Bailey et al., 2023, p. 23). However, it is important to take into account that this study was limited to one university in South Korea, therefore these findings could differ in other cultural settings (Bailey et al., 2023, p. 23).

While self-efficacy theory focuses on the direction of behavior that leads to the outcome, self-determination theory (SDT), as Montgomery et al. (2023, p. 216) explain, is concerned with the direction of behavior and also the reason for the outcome. According to researchers such as Montgomery, et al. (2023), Moss (2018) and Graham et al. (2022), motivation is based on three psychological needs: competency, autonomy and relatedness. SDT suggests that these needs that are supported by social contexts promote intrinsic motivation (Montgomery, et al., 2023, p. 216; Moss, 2018, pp. 17-19, Graham et al., 2022, p. 135). Other than that, motivation in education is another important factor of SDT. When motivation meets the needs of competency, autonomy and relatedness it makes students feel more skilled and in control. When these needs are addressed in a safe and supportive environment, it can enhance intrinsic motivation, leading to a more engaging and satisfaction-filled performance.

Montgomery et al. (2023, p. 217) highlighted the role teachers play in developing students' mindsets. These include providing constructive feedback, setting high expectations, creating a supportive and safe environment, promoting autonomy, encouraging a love of learning and even demonstrating a growth mindset (believing in getting better at something by making an effort and practicing) themselves. According to Lukács-Nagy and Fodor (2018, p. 64) (quotes were translated to English by the authors of this study) praise and positive

feedback are important forms of reward that can have a motivating factor to increase the occurrence of the target behavior. It is crucial for students to receive appropriate praise, because failing to reward their efforts and leave them unmotivated for the learning process. In their research, Lukács-Nagy and Fodor (2018) examined 69 elementary school students to determine how praise influences students' behavior in various task situations. They explained, that the type of praise determines the difficulty level of tasks children choose to undertake (Lukács-Nagy and Fodor, 2018, p. 69). While their results did not reveal significant differences among the groups on task choices, it is important to emphasize that determination and dedication are key factors in achieving good performance (Lukács-Nagy and Fodor, 2018, p. 72). As Montgomery et al. (2023, p. 217) suggest, there are some ways to encourage teacher practices that promote students' growth mindsets, such as: setting learning goals, praising for efforts, and highlighting the learning/process-oriented practices, therefore as Lukács-Nagy and Fodor (2018, p. 73) highlights growth mindset and the feedback encourages and collectively helps to enhance students' performance, allowing them to have a more successful and productive use of their abilities.

Moss (2018) calls attention to the similarities between Invitational Education Theory (IET) and SDT. IET is based on the idea that teachers manage their classrooms with respect, dignity, and empathy (Moss, 2018, p. 19) and while SDT stresses the students' behavior, IET focuses on the educators. Both theories share focal points including how people treat each other, behaviorism, teacher-student support, autonomy, and relatedness. Furthermore, they are both based on concepts that motivation comes from inside each person and also what people do is shaped by the environment surrounding them (Moss, 2018, p. 24). Just as Bailey et al. (2023, p. 9), Moss (2018, p. 25) also highlights that intrinsically motivated students may lose interest due to many factors, such as negative feedback, pressure, or lack of autonomy. However, as SDT and IET explain, each student can interpret perceptions in their own realities.

Graham et al. (2022) tried to find out if there is a relationship between SDT and satisfaction of life in college as a first-year student and also if they could provide some specific strategies for a higher educational setting. As a result of their research, SDT accounted for "more than half (60%) of the variance in students' satisfaction with life in college", which according to Graham et al. (2022, p. 139) aligns with the assertion that "satisfying the basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness can positively influence

an individual's affect and well-being". What follows is that students are happier when they experience relatedness (having friends), competence (being good in what they do) and autonomy (having the ability to make their own choices). It was also proven that adding SDT to an academic curriculum may have various positive effects, including "providing students with more opportunities to establish their own level of competency while feeling a stronger sense of belonging and the self-efficacy around their decisions to fully engage in the college experience" (Graham et al., 2022, p. 139). Through Graham et al.'s (2022) study, increasing students' motivation can be done by helping them understand how certain activities are related to them achieving their goals. After all, integrating STD into the academic curriculum supports students to take ownership of their learning journey, this leads to improvement in motivation and creating a greater college experience.

As a teacher, it is also important to have a great understanding of academic flow, constructivism and co-constructivism, since we constantly influence our students' learning by giving out certain tasks and activities. This means our choices in these activities play a crucial role in shaping our students' engagement and have an impact on their educational journey and development. As stated by Csikszentmihályi (1990, p. 3), during flow "attention is freely invested to achieve a person's goals because there is no disorder to strengthen out or no threat for the self to defend against". This means flow is a mental state of being completely focused on what a person is doing. It also entails that they often lose track of time which can improve productivity, although, based on Olcar et al. (2021, p. 913), this state can have many consequences on an individual's well-being, like making them feel sick, among others.

Olcar et al.'s (2021, p. 923) research shows that flow is a beneficial state if it happens in various domains other than focusing on the frequency of it. Flow is not only important because it happens frequently, but because it has a positive impact. They also prove that flow contributes to well-being but it is not focused on the academic setting, but everyday experiences. On the other hand, Dalton et al. (2014) focused on the description of the flow feeling. In their study, it is also stated that the feeling of flow is often related to real-life experiences and is in-sync with personal needs (Dalton et al., 2014, pp. 6-7). This is supported by Csikszentmihalyi's (1990, p. 3) assertion that says, "to improve the quality of life, we can try to make external conditions match our goals and also change how to experience external conditions." By managing our feelings toward the world around us and making it also fit our needs we can make our lives better. Both studies state the same outcome, as per Dalton et al. (2014, p. 8) "flow is not simply a randomly occurring phenomenon in classrooms", instead it

is influenced by how personal experiences and needs are met. This highlights that the ability to experience flow is connected to intrinsic motivation and personal strength. Furthermore, it can become a highly motivating factor in language classrooms, especially with a constructivist approach.

The constructivist theory claims that when learners are attempting to make sense of their experiences, their knowledge is constructed, and all knowledge is constructed, regardless of how one is thought (Shah & Kumar, 2019, pp. 3-4). Constructivism helps students become active participants in the learning process and also creates an environment where teamwork and relying on each other are crucial for a beneficial learning experience which is also similar to student-centered teaching. Working with others has many benefits and is the foundation for constructivism. This collaborative aspect, according to Ahn and Class (2011, p. 271), benefits “learning and cognitive maturation” as our learning and thinking skills constantly develop when interacting with others (sharing ideas, participating in debates, talking, etc.). On the other hand, Shah and Kumar (2019, p. 1) state that constructivism “is a person’s approach towards education that determines his/her performance and practice inside or outside the classroom”. For example, to be successful academically, a student needs to put effort into their work and have a positive attitude. This means that their idea of constructivism means success is dependent on the person's mindset and approach. Therefore, it is also important, as Szabó and Csépes (2023, p. 407) declare, that “theorists agree that there are interactions between individuals, even from a group dynamic perspective, that can affect each other’s cognitive and emotional structures”. Thus, the EFL classroom presents a meaningful context where constructivism can be developed.

Shah and Kumar (2019, p. 7) describe key features of constructivist learning environments as “one in which there is a balance between teacher- and student-directed learning and requires teachers to take an active role in the learning process, including formal teaching”. To achieve this, the classroom needs a mixture of teacher-instructed activities (the teacher gives the instructions) and student-instructed activities (the students are responsible for their learning). It is important that the teacher plays an important role in both activities by giving the right support, which is the main idea of social constructivism. These activities are guiding the lecture, giving constructive feedback, and encouraging students in their work, etc.

Both Ahn and Class (2011) as well as Shah and Kumar (2019) find that social constructivism has essential features in shaping knowledge. Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal

Development (ZPD) is a central concept of social constructivism. ZPD “represents work which learners are capable of accomplishing, through extending their capacities just enough with guidance from an appropriate mentor or teacher” (Ahn & Class, 2011 p. 271) and it “is a view of mind which extends beyond the skills, which does not stimulate the thinking in the confined spaces of the individual brain or mind” (Shah & Kumar, 2019 p. 7). Thus, when a student is not capable of achieving a goal without guidance, they get support from their teacher, this allows the students to be challenged but it does not create a frustrating environment for them. Ahn and Class (2011) state that ZPD involves the students pushing their limits with guidance, however, Shah and Kumar (2019) add that ZPD is not only about individual skills, but more about the nature of learning.

Based on Szabó and Csépes’s (2023, p. 408) discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn. While the traditional classroom focuses on the textbook materials to be taught by the teacher and on the student’s individual and independent work, the constructivist approach in a classroom helps develop the students’ needs, in an environment where cooperation is primary while also allowing them to discover their own needs and become more independent. It is important to note that the traditional classroom environment is based on following the core curriculum, being standardized towards the learning material while depending on textbooks, focusing on the teacher-centered approach (putting the teachers as the primary source of information), and limiting students' work to be individual. On the other hand, the constructivist classroom environment fosters curiosity in the classroom, supports using curriculum-related materials, focuses on a mixed teaching environment (teacher- and student-instructed lessons), incorporates formative assessment, and emphasizes group work and collaboration in the classroom. This shift between the two classroom environment types highlights a move towards a more dynamic, and personalized learning experience that can be realized in various forms. In the following, two of these are explored through gamification and storification.

2.2. Gamification

Educational games, realized through gamification or storification, could provide ways to support the needs of learners and differentiated learning. Furthermore, these approaches could serve as responses for the increasing classroom diversity and to students’ decreased attention

span (Aura et al., 2021, p. 1). Nowadays, there is an increased use of and a growing interest in these games. Many researchers have concentrated on these concepts, focusing on their effect on academic achievement. In the following, gamification as a concept as well its benefits and limitations are explored.

Gamification involves “applying game-based elements to non-game environments” (Gressick & Langston, 2017, p. 1) and includes elements like badges, leaderboards and points (Majuri et al., 2018, p. 16) as well as avatars, game levels and reputation levels (Furdu et al., 2017, p. 2). As Fridrich (2023) put it, “the purpose of any interactive learning experience is to provide learners with a more immersive and meaningful learning process” (p.13). This is particularly true to gamification, as its aim is to meaningfully change the learning process in order to “achieve positive outcomes” (Sanchez et al., 2019, p. 5), such as a better understanding of the material or increased motivation and/or interest in the subject. Gressick and Langston (2017) also add collaborative work as an important component of gamification. Psychological frameworks (e.g., constructivism, co-constructivism) identify teamwork as an important factor of successful learning as well. Sanchez et al. (2019, p.8) also list the four main elements of gamification such as instructional content, characteristics, behaviour/attitudes and learning outcomes. According to existing research, gamification has a positive effect on student engagement as Gressick and Langston (2017, p.1) found that students will be more engaged in learning something they find interesting and exciting, and it will be easier to maintain their motivation as well. In order to achieve such results, key aspects of the learning process need to be changed to suit the approach.

Fridrich (2020) compared constructivist pedagogy with the currently used gamified learning models in order to identify the weaknesses of the latter. The main problem he identified is that the gamification models used in Hungary are not problem-centred, but are organised as a knowledge transfer process (p.8). According to Fridrich (2020), there is a need for a gamification model that is flexible and adapts the learning process to the needs of the learners. At the same time, he mentions that the PBL (points, badges, leaderboards) system used in gamification, motivates learners to develop their own competences and knowledge. (p.9) This is in line with the below mentioned findings of Gressick and Langston (2017), Syed (2018), the success of the RCA house system, and also the ones of Demirbilek et al. (2022), who looked at possible limitations of gamification.

In a later study, Fridrich (2023) writes about complex educational gamification based on a new gamification model he created. This model aims to emphasize the learning components he identified (e.g. social constructivism, cooperative paradigm). When applying the model, he takes into account "the interrelationship between learning components, context and elements of the gamification structure"(p.12) and uses gamified elements to change the structure and content of the learning process. In his research, Fridrich (2023, p. 12) highlights the importance of the interaction between the context, the learning components and the gamification structure for effective gamification. This new model could serve as a response to the previously mentioned weaknesses of the currently used gamification models.

Gressick and Langston (2017) concentrated on storytelling as a primary component of gamification. They conducted a case study of a *General Educational Psychology* course, taken by all teacher education candidates at a public regional state university campus. It was important for students to understand the course concepts and to be able to apply them later on during their field experience. The instructors, however, started to worry that students concentrated on "memorizing rather than understanding" (Gressick & Langston, 2017, p. 112). Thus, they created the *EdPsych World* in order to help students interact with the course material and scaffold their initial learning. The map included three distinct regions, through which the students traveled during the semester: (1) Growing Plains, (2) Progress Mountain and Innovation Island, and (3) Pinnacle of Success. In this world, learners could meet theorists and interact with course concepts (p. 112). Gressick and Langston (2017) also used immersive and collaborative activities (e.g., QR Code Scavenger Hunt, film analysis, etc.). They also involved guilds in their research; these were groups of five to six students that remained together during the semester. The guilds were based on common interests and each had a course-related theorist (e.g., Piaget) as a mascot. There was constant competition between the guilds and from time to time, they were assessed with Guild Reports, proving that they were active during the activities (p.113).

Gressick and Langston (2017) found that gamification resulted in high levels of participation, positive perception of other guild members and strong sense of community (p. 117). Students received better grades in the gamified section of the *General Educational Psychology* course, than in the traditionally taught ones. Students gave positive feedback on the course in the form of guild progress evaluations, questionnaires, and emails to the professor. These feedbacks suggested that gamification had a significant and positive impact

on their learning, as well as on the course atmosphere (Gressick & Langston, 2017, pp. 118-120). These findings are in line with Majuri et al. (2018) who provided a literature review of 128 empirical research papers on gamification. They highlight the thematic gaps in existing research and that researchers should pay “more attention to the contextual factors affecting the gamification as potential source for the varying results” (p.18). They also emphasize that further studies should focus on the individuals’ different learning styles (p.18). For this reason, it is important to explore gamification not only in terms of its advantages but also its possible limitations.

Furdu et al. (2017) discussed both the benefits and disadvantages of gamification. In their research, they used *Moodle* for gamifying content that included: quizzes, badges and a progress bar plugin at the end of the second semester. Furdu et al. (2017) found that gamification did not have the expected motivational effect. Students accessed *Moodle* more in the first month than in the rest of the semester. They also noticed that the four best students were far ahead of their peers, which could explain the decrease in group motivation (pp. 59-60). Sanchez et al. (2019) also concentrated on quizzes as gamification. They involved 473 university students in their research. They prepared two different quiz formats; a traditional and a gamified format that included game elements. The gamified quizzes differed only in three aspects from the traditional quiz; a faded section was added to the progress bar, they could request a hint which took away two of the possible responses, and an encouraging message was added to the end of the quiz (pp. 20-22). However, it should be noted that the above examples do not necessarily qualify as gamification. As it was addressed previously, gamification contains deliberate educational use of game-like elements. In the case of the gamified quizzes of Sanchez et al. (2019) that was only partially adapted. Contrary to the *Moodle* quizzes of Furdu et al. (2017), aspects of gamification like leaderboards, badges, or even avatars were missing. The limited or missing implementation of gamification could be a factor for not achieving the expected results. This point is further supported by how Sanchez et al. (2019) found that those who completed the gamified quizzes (including both quiz formats) had better scores at the end of the semester, however the difference in test results between the two groups of students were only significant in the case of the first test (p. 24). Thus, a possible conclusion can be how gamification needs more purposeful uses and integration.

In the EFL context, many teachers use gamification as a way to “make the class fun, activate students, and ensure their participation in the class” (Demirbilek et al., 2022, p. 661).

Demirbilek et al. (2022) found in their study that teachers use digital gamification tools such as *Kahoot!*, *Plickers*, *Duolingo*, *Voki*, *Padlet*, *Quizizz*, and *Hangman*. Teachers also prefer those activities that are interactive and include group work. Demirbilek et al. (2022) also identified various barriers of gamification, among which the top three were lack of technology, disciplinary problems, and lack of motivation. However, gamification is not the only constructivist frame that can be used to restructure the learning process with collaboration and flow in mind.

2.3. Storification

Similarly to gamification, storification can have a positive effect on students' learning and academic achievement. The usage of storification is "often aligned with constructivist learning" in order to make learning active (Aura et al., 2021, p. 2), and it has the potential to make learning more enjoyable, enhance students' learning and foster positive student behavior (Parker & Lepper, 1992, p. 1; Aura et al., 2021, p. 3). Storification can be a component of the environment as well as a feature of pedagogical activities. Storification often involves redesigning classrooms to reflect fictional or nonfictional worlds (e.g., *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*, Grand Canyon) and may also involve changes to the curriculum or applying a modifiable and flexible learning environment instead of the traditional one (like in the case of Aura et al., 2021).

Although research has shown that both gamification and storification are beneficial pedagogical approaches, researchers also drew attention to the disadvantages of the methods. Majuri et al. (2018, p. 16) highlighted in their overview of empirical research papers that while gamification can be motivating for some students, others may see it as demotivating. This can be more the case for students with special educational needs. Aura et al. (2021, p. 7) used flexible seating in the classrooms which was beneficial for most students, however, one student with ADHD preferred the assigned seating, which helped her to focus better and gave her the opportunity to ask for help from his peers. In many storified or gamified classrooms the physical aspects, such as furniture or aesthetics, are changed (Aura et al., 2021, p. 2; Gressick & Langston, 2017), and Sanchez et al. (2019, p. 4) call attention to the fact that "restructuring classes are not always possible due to logistical issues and limited resources".

In a later study, Aura et al. (2023) applied the *Harry Potter* (HP) theme in a primary school context. They redesigned one hallway and four classrooms to match the HP theme, including paintings, furniture, objects, props, etc. The *Harry Potter* theme was involved during the lessons, in forms of the books, group projects or discussions, or even part of explanations. They even involved the Hogwarts house sorting quiz; however it did not have any effect on the students' academic performance (p.8). As a result of the *Harry Potter* theme, the school community got stronger, and, according to a teacher, there was “no bullying in the school at the moment” (p.11). This shows well the effect the HP series may have on students; we should not forget that the world of Harry Potter contains many different characters, which can help students understand others, and as a result they can become more recipient and understanding towards their peers.

The *Harry Potter* series has worldwide popularity. In the U.S., university and college students have the chance to participate in HP-themed courses, seminars or extracurricular events (Yager, 2015, p. 2). According to Yager (2015), the popularity of Harry Potter is no surprise, because once you read the whole series, you are inevitably absorbed by the world where learning is an important part of the story (p. 4); let us not forget, that in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Hermione was more scared of being expelled than of dying (Rowling, 2017, p. 173). Yet, the story of Harry Potter is not only significant because of the role of academics, but also of the similarities that can be drawn between the life of Harry and that of the reader (Yager, 2015, p. 2). The study of Aura et al. (2023) is a perfect example of this; after the study, a teacher stated that the involvement of the *Harry Potter* theme was successful because “a lot of their kids live in a situation similar to Privet Drive” (p.9). Thus, students' familiarity and the potential motivating factor of using the Harry Potter universe for educational goals makes it a great candidate for gamification.

Perhaps one of the most distinctive features of the *Harry Potter* stories is the house system. At Hogwarts (the wizarding school of the stories), the new students are assigned to one of four houses (Slytherin, Gryffindor, Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw) on the first day of each school year. The students' later academic results are all added to their house's points, and “at the end of the year, the house with the most points is awarded the house cup, a great honour” (Rowling, 2017, p. 122). In the world of Harry Potter, each student has an equal chance to contribute to the success of their house which can be an additional motivational factor for the students. Students quickly realise that their successes and possible failures have a big impact on the performance and perception of their house, which can encourage them to work harder

and more persistently, while also learning to take responsibility for their house and their performance. Moreover, their motivation can be increased by the fact that at the end of the year, not only certain students are honoured, but all students. Last but not least, the fact that each student's performance counts towards their house points can encourage them to help each other, which can lead to closer cooperation and collaboration.

The house system, however, is not only part of Hogwarts and Harry Potter's world, but can also be applicable for school contexts. As mentioned above, Gressick and Langston (2017) have already tried a system similar to Hogwarts houses in the form of the guilds. Their system did not only resemble Hogwarts' houses in dividing students with similar interest in groups, but their guilds also had mascots just like the houses in Harry Potter. In his study, Syed (2018) writes about the *MS Creative Schools*. As addressed in this study, house systems are not a new phenomenon and its origins can be connected to English boarding schools. Syed (2018, p. 1) defines current house systems as “a way of organizing students into groups or houses vertically across the grade levels” in which they “are expected to work together to achieve common goals”. Similarly to Hogwarts, *MS Creative Schools* have four houses: Motivators, Inspirers, Leaders and Challengers. In each class there are students from all houses and there's a mentor in each class for each house and while in Hogwarts the houses have prefects, the *MS Creative Schools* have house captains. Syed (2018, p. 2) wrote that the house system “provides the positive competition between students” and “helps the new staff and students to adapt to the culture of the school”. Both of these aspects are highly significant, since the way students and staff adapt to their new school will highly affect their later school experience, while positive competition will help to maintain students' motivation.

Maybe one of the most successful examples of the house system is the Ron Clark Academy (RCA) [<https://rcahousesystem.com/>]. Originally consisting of four houses, this house system has now expanded to eight houses (the original four houses were Altruismo, Amistad, Isibindi and Rêveur, to which Sollevare, Nukumori, Onraka and Protos were later added). Students and teachers can both feel fully part of the school. Each house has a chant and a house sign, and even teachers choose the house they want to belong to. RCA and the *MS Creative Schools* are proof that house systems can work in the long-run and on a school-level. RCA also found a highly efficient way to follow the points of each student and the houses: they designed an app which helps students, teachers and even parents keep track of the points. We can say that what happens at RCA is a school-level gamification, from the

first day sorting ceremony to everyday school life. Furthermore, RCA has influence over more than twenty-six countries around the world.

Even though both gamification and storification are effective ways to improve students' learning experience, one should keep in mind that both approaches “entail extensive effort” (Aura et al., 2021, p.8) both from the teachers' and the students' part. Teachers have to invest a lot of time, energy and sometimes also financial resources in order to realize gamification and storification in their classrooms, while students have to stay open to new approaches.

In order to see how recognition and a rewards system affects students' motivation in language learning context we explored several key sources. The review revealed that focusing on collaboration and individual needs increase students' motivation and engagement while building confidence and encouraging a sense of belonging in the classroom, however exploration is still needed for long-term results. This literature review also focuses on competition self-efficacy, SDT and the flow feeling to ensure a thorough base for creating a working house system, where students can work to their best abilities, and also compares the traditional and constructivist classroom, to ensure the best chances of creating a motivating and safe environment. In the following, a short, exploratory project is explored that utilized the house system to increase EFL students' motivation. We also explored the possible application of gamification and ratification, as well as their positive weaknesses and drawbacks. We analyzed multiple cases (Gressick & Langston, 2017; Syed, 2018; RCA) where a system similar to the one known from the Harry Potter books is applied.

3. Methods

3.1. Context

The research was conducted in a prestigious high school in Pécs, where we spent two weeks with the students (approximately nine lessons) for our practice teaching. The school provides high-quality education for students for specialized classes which includes biology-physics, math-digital culture, etc. majors. This school aims to participate and place highly in English academic competitions, therefore their willpower caught our attention while considering our options for this study.

3.2. Participants

The participants consisted of thirteen Hungarian 11th-grade students, with four male (30.8%) and nine female students (69.2%), aged approximately 16-17-year-olds. These students have been learning English since their first grade in primary school. Unfortunately, one student completely missed our research, while another only participated in two sessions. These two students were removed from the sample. In the last two sessions, more than half of the group was unable to participate, therefore we do not have data on some of their feedback. The students have B2-C1 proficiency level. Many of them have recently passed their intermediate school-leaving exam or C1 level language exam.

Our research took place in a practice school. For this reason, we did not have to ask the students to fill out a consent form. They were informed during the data collection process that their identity would be kept confidential in the research and their data would be treated confidentially. For anonymity purposes we used pseudonyms inspired by the *Harry Potter* universe for our mentor teacher (e.g., Professor Garlick) and the students.

3.3. Research Questions

The goal of our study is to investigate the effectiveness of a house system, inspired by the *Harry Potter* series, on the intrinsic motivation of 11th-grade high school students. As such, the research questions we ask as follows:

- **RQ1:** How does the recognition and rewards system impact students' motivation in English studies based on available data?
- **RQ2:** How do competitive tasks that require collaboration, reinforced through the collection of house points within the house system, affect students' intrinsic motivation to learn English in the classroom?
- **RQ3:** Based on the results of the exploratory study, what changes are needed for the long-term integration of the house system in the high-school English classroom?

3.4. Data collection instruments

We looked at gamification and storification, two increasingly popular educational approaches. These approaches are used to increase student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. Gamification applies game-based elements, such as badges, leaderboards, and points, to non-game contexts. Its aim is to develop a more interactive and collaborative learning environment. Studies, like those by Gressick and Langston (2017), demonstrate that gamification has a significant effect on student engagement and on school community as well. However, as highlighted in the research of Majuri et al. (2018), gamification will not have the same effect on each student. We have also seen in the case of Furdu et al (2017) and Sanchez et al (2019). that it is important for teachers to find the right way to apply gamification, or its motivational effect may be lost.

Storification involves creating learning environments where students feel immersed in a specific theme (such as *Harry Potter* or the Grand Canyon). As seen in Aura et al. 's (2023) study, storification can have a positive effect on the school community: their *Harry Potter*-themed classroom fostered a strong school community and eliminated bullying. Finally, we looked at the guilds of Gressick and Langston (2017) and the house systems of RCA and the *MS Creative schools*. These systems enhanced student motivation as well as the sense of community and belonging.

Despite the benefits, both gamification and storification require effort from teachers, including time, energy, and (financial) resources. When applying these methods we also have to take into consideration special needs students, as for them, these approaches may be more counterproductive. A few studies suggested limitations in the motivating factor of a house system as well as the context and environment where the house system is used. This research aims to find and answer some of these limitations, and to find if implementing a house system into the Hungarian high-school educational system is possible. Further research could explore a broader impact of this system.

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of a house system in motivating students within a classroom setting. We adopted a mixed-method approach that allowed us to effectively evaluate this system. The classroom observation gave us an insight into the engagement of students in real-time. An interview (see Appendix J) with our mentor teacher gave us an insight into the professional view of the system's impact. Lastly, two types of questionnaires were used: one to put students into different houses (see Appendix A) and

another to collect feedback on their experiences (see Appendix I). Using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods enabled us to assess the effectiveness of the pilot house system from both educator and student perspectives. In the following, the various data collections instruments are discussed individually.

3.4.1. Sorting questions

A personality-based sorting quiz is a psychometric assessment tool designed to sort students into different houses based on their personality traits. This type of quiz used in the study consisted of a series of multiple-choice questions and one open-ended question, in which the students were asked to write about their most important traits. We aimed to use questions to evaluate various sides of personality such as thinking styles, introversion vs. extroversion, preferred hobby styles (e.g., logical, creative, or physical), independence vs. teamwork, and other questions that match the characteristics of the houses.

We have also adapted questions from the [Pottermore sorting quiz](https://www.wizardingworld.com/sorting-hat) (<https://www.wizardingworld.com/sorting-hat>) which served as the primary inspiration for the personality quiz. During this process we either completed or modified some questions (Q9-11, 15) and even used the same original statement to create new questions. For example, the original item states “Which road tempts you most?” the modified item states “Which one would you choose?”. We also modified the answers to fit our houses more, therefore in the original item it says “The wide, sunny, grassy lane; The narrow, dark, lantern-lit alley; The twisting, leaf-strewn path through woods; The cobbled street lined with ancient buildings”, the modified item is “forest; beach; mountains; meadow”. In Q9 we only used three of the possible answers mentioned in the *Pottermore* quiz, and we chose to add the “ability to fly” as a fourth option. In the case of Q10, the four original answers were “violin, piano, drums and trumpet”, while in our questionnaire these were “violin, piano, drums and flute”. Similarly, in the case of Q11, the original four possible answers were “love, glory, knowledge, and power”, while in our questionnaire the answers were “love, glory, happiness and power”. This questionnaire helped us to sort the students into their designated houses, and to see which house they prefer based on their names (Q15) (while answering this question, they did not know anything about the houses). “Faith should decide” was the most chosen answer by the students, and only one student got sorted to the house they chose.

This quiz was administered online, using *Google Forms*. Students were given clear instructions on how to complete the quiz, which takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Figure 1

Sorting Quiz instructions in Google Forms

The screenshot shows a Google Form titled "Sorting Quiz". At the top, there are tabs for "Kérdések", "Válaszok" (with a count of 14), and "Beállítások". A message at the top states "A válaszok nem szerkeszthetők". The main content of the form is as follows:

Sorting Quiz

Dear all,

As you already know we're trying a new innovative way to create a more motivating environment in the classroom.

We're asking you to fill out this form as honest as you can so you can be sorted into your houses.

We are very excited to see your answers and to see where will you belong for the next few weeks.

May the best house win!

Best of luck,
-Ms. Kitti and Ms. Zsófi

Based on the results, firstly we both assigned each student to a house individually, and then we shared our results. We then briefly discussed the students we did not agree on (approximately three) and we tried to assign them to a house they fit the most. We ended up with three students in Drakonis, Gryphonia, and Pixorin, and four students in Lunaris (see Appendix A).

3.4.2. Classroom observation

The research also used observation to get a more accurate picture of the changes in the group. Kitti Szrész and the mentor teacher were present in the lessons in order to minimise the effect of the observer's paradox. After the observed lessons, we compiled a written record of the observations, which were later compared with the results of the questionnaire and the interview. Our goal was to focus on how students' behavior and engagement changed by implementing the house system and providing a point system. This method provides us with evidence of these changes and valuable insights into the daily interactions and dynamics among the students. We also focused on the student's specific behavior and interactions with

each other, and we paid attention to how they interacted with each other in and outside their houses. We also paid close attention to how students' motivation and approach changed when it came to giving out points for the tasks. Our observation is an important aspect, since this can give us insights into our practical challenges and successes, and it could help us identify what changes we need to make for a long-term integration. Our notes also help us identify how the elements influence students' intrinsic motivation, as in if they were more motivated and how they reacted when it came to competing for house points.

3.4.3. Feedback questions

The feedback questionnaire (see Appendix I) enabled us to gather systematic qualitative data on students' perceptions and experiences with the house system, thereby enhancing our understanding of them. In this questionnaire, we inquired about students' experiences and thoughts regarding the events that occurred during our program (Q1-5; Q9-14) and their feedback on their participation in the house system concept (Q6-8). Based on the gathered information, we can implement future improvements and adjustments to our house and point system. The feedback questionnaire consisted of several open-ended questions focusing on the general idea of the system, the students' motivational level, and their experiences, and also if they would like to see more of the system in their class or developed it into a whole-school system. This questionnaire was administered in paper and pen format during the last lesson of the pilot phase. Students were given clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire, which took approximately 10-20 minutes to complete, although some students did not take it seriously. Responses were collected anonymously and were coded as S1 (Student 1) and so on for further analysis. The responses were collected and analysed using *Microsoft Excel*.

3.4.4. Interview

As a final step in the research, we conducted an interview with the mentor teacher after the end of the house system. The purpose of the interview was to get a more accurate picture of the lessons and the effectiveness of the house system, as the mentor teacher, as an external observer, could observe the lessons from a different perspective. We asked them about their thoughts, feelings, and reflections on how our house system worked and what changes it made. Our 26-minute-long virtual recorded interview was held on *MS Teams*, with our mentor's consent to record and transcribe it. We asked similar questions as in the feedback

questionnaire (which she also completed for us), such as asking about the point system, the motivation level after the house system, and their overall opinion on the system as well (see Appendix J. Q6,9,12-15; Appendix I. Q4,5,8,11), and additionally, we asked her about the life of the group before and after the house system and also her professional input (Appendix J Q1-5,7-8,10-11). The findings of the interview were compared to the results of the Final questionnaire and the classroom observation. Based on her interview we were able to get information about practical challenges we might face, we got an overview of her insight about the competition and collaboration among students, and what impact the house system had on these. We were also able to get a professional perspective on the input of the students' motivational change.

3.5. Procedures

Inspired by the *Harry Potter* series, our goal was to investigate the effectiveness of an exploratory house system implemented in an English-learning 11th-year high school group. We found it important to sort the students into the right houses since competition and collaboration are crucial parts of our research. Over the time of our research, we gave attention if we were able to match the students to their houses rightfully, since if the students feel too mismatched, we might need to change our sorting method in the future to ensure a more righteous sorting. On the other hand, we also paid attention to each house having a good variety of students, so they could complete each other while working on different types of tasks, potentially increasing each other's motivation, this was also important to see how each student and house responds to the rewards and point system and if they are motivating each other to reach this goal. Even though the pilot phase was only two weeks long, assessing the potential impact of the sorting system was of key importance as it is a defining feature of the frame. In this section, we outline our selection of the participants, our development of system design and tasks, and our data collection methods in their separate subsections.

3.5.1. Preparation

After we arrived at our practice school, we immediately noticed that the school is full of chatter and positive attitude. We observed our classroom as well where we noted that the English groups we had our practice with seemed disconnected from their peers and they had

some separation among each other, mostly because they have the need to academically challenge each other. We found the house system to be the perfect foundation for keeping these friendly fights intact by using competitive tasks. This has many benefits, such as: allowing the students to feel a sense of belonging, fostering teamwork, and improving the group's spirit (Bailey et al., 2023, p. 4; Graham et al., 2022, p. 135). We asked our mentor teacher for permission to start our research, and they were very helpful throughout the study. We had the chance to be a part of three classes (9th, 10th, and 11th grades) during our group teaching practice. We also asked our chosen group (11th-grade) if they liked the *Harry Potter* series. Nine students (81.82%) said they were fans of the series, two students (18.18%) disliked it, and one (9.09%) did not state their opinion.

After getting to know each group, we found the 11th-grade particular group the most engaging and suitable for our project. The 11th-grade group (B2-C1 level) was the most advanced group out of the three, since the other two groups were on A1–A2 and B1-B2 levels. We found that the 9th-grade students lacked confidence in their English and they were very shy when it came to speaking activities, therefore we could not incorporate them into our research. We also found the 10th-grade students less serious, we had a hard time earning their respect, and since we did not have much time to proceed with our research, we could not incorporate this group either. We asked our mentor about the students, their group dynamic and also about their traditions in the classroom, where we learnt the group works well together although sometimes they have some competitive fights among them, she also told us, they do not have any specific traditions, but they often use online sources for revising their materials.

To make the research possible, we had to create an environment for the students where they could feel comfortable. We opted for the creation of a house system, since during previous studies they had a positive effect on students' learning experience (Gressick & Langston, 2017; Syed, 2018). Similarly to previous examples (Syed, 2018; Rowling, 2017; RCA) we created four houses: Drakonis, Gryphonia, Pixorin, and Lunariss (see Appendix A). First, we researched the different meanings of colors, animals/beings, things, and traits, then we chose four and assigned a different one to each house. After looking for and discussing our options, we chose the Amaro to be the symbolic animal of the house Lunariss. The Amaro symbolizes glory, nobility and protection. The Lunariss house crest has the moon and a crown as its symbol as well, which also represents glory, nobility and intuition. For the house color we used maroon, since this color is the color of passion, ambition, responsibility and

confidence. Therefore, the Lunarix has got the title: House of Leadership, since the fellows in this house have every trait to guide and help their classmates in anything they might need. For the house Gryphonia, we chose the Hippogriff as the symbolic animal, since it has the meaning of grace, love and loyalty. Their crest has the symbol of keys and a lotus, both representing grace, purity and teamwork. The color of this house was easy to find, since peace, loyalty, softness and inspiration is the color light blue. The members of this house are the ones who have the ability to keep the competition friendly among the houses, they can make sure everyone feels included, therefore this house is the House of Unity. Pixorin is the house of nature, joy and appreciation represented by the mischievous Pixie. Just as the symbols dragonfly and the Tree of Life, the color green means energy, balance, nature, harmony, and playfulness. This house's members have the ability to bring joy into the life of the other houses, and also to bring some mischief into everyday life. This house is the House of Mischief. Last but not least, house Drakonix, has the symbolic animal Dragon, representing intelligence, creativity and bravery. The crest of this house has a book and crossed swords as a symbol, as well as the color indigo, these all mean justice, devotion, wisdom, knowledge and intuition. As the House of Creation, members of this house have the ability to motivate and help their classmates.

Our next task was to create a crest for each house and one for all the houses together. We used CoaMaker [<https://coamaker.com/>] and Canva [https://www.canva.com/hu_hu/] to put together everything we found and create the individual crests, lastly we mixed the four separate crests into one. We also created a point system (see Appendix B) so we could motivate the students to participate actively in the lessons. We gave one or two points for arriving on time and being ready to start the lesson, leaving the classroom tidy, greeting their housemates with the house sign they created, and also completing and showing the day's *Wordle* answer to us before the lessons starts. Three or four points were given if they answered a hard question correctly and if they finished second or third on the leaderboard for a given online task. They were able to receive five points if they finished first on the leaderboard and also if someone finished a task first and correctly. Ten points for having the most points on an exam and creating a house chant and presenting it to us in text. Lastly they were able to receive 25 points if they performed the house chant (see Appendix D). We divided the students with the help of the personality-based sorting questionnaire (see Appendix C) in which we asked questions about themselves (Q1,4,14). These included questions about their thinking styles (Q5), introversion vs. extroversion (Q7), preferred hobby

styles (e.g., logical, creative, or physical) (Q6), independence vs. teamwork (Q8), and other questions that match the characteristics of the houses (Q3, 9-13).

In class, we aimed to make many textbook tasks more engaging by giving points as rewards, making the tasks competitive, or modifying them. We used gamification elements, such as giving points as rewards, in order to make the textbook tasks more engaging and to generate positive competition between the houses. We expected these changes and the more competitive environment to increase student motivation, just as we have seen in the case of *MS Creative Schools* (2018) and the guilds of Gressick and Langston (2017). Also we considered Bailey et al.'s (2023, p. 9) and Moss's (2018, p. 25) study, where they state that by giving positive feedback and taking pressure off of individual responsibilities we can ensure intrinsically motivated students' interests.

3.5.2. Introduction of the House System

Firstly, we asked our mentor teacher for permission to start our research, to which they agreed and were excited about our progress through our whole practice. We asked them about the students and their group dynamic and also about their traditions in the classroom. We learned that the group is very close-knit, but they have cliques and groups among each other. There are some competitive fights between them. They also told us about some closer relationships between students, which helped us avoid conflicts in pair works, although two students with a past were sorted into the same house.

Arriving at our first teaching session, we introduced our ideas and asked the students to complete the *Google Forms* sorting quiz (see Appendix C). In this session, we observed how students collaborate, the tasks they prefer, and their needs during a lesson. We found that this 11th-grade group was very talkative and creative, and also enjoyed competitive tasks (e.g., tasks that were timed or the results were based on leaderboards). After our session, we evaluated the data from the sorting quiz and we sorted the students into their houses: Drakonis, Gryphonia, and Pixorin- three-three-three people, and Lunariss- four people. Our observation of this lesson had a slight influence on the sorting ceremony, in which we had to make sure the houses included various types of students, but we also had to make sure they belonged to the houses based on their answers.

There were a few unexpected limitations that we faced in the implementation phases. During the research, one of the houses (Pixorin) only had one person in their house, because of the absence of their housemates. Due to sickness or completing competency tests (a few students missed taking their tests which were made up during these classes), many students had to miss classes, which had a significant impact on two of the houses (Pixorin and Gryhonia). This caused a smaller outrage among the students of the mentioned houses, but they were ensured that with enough work they could still stay in the running for the winning title or a podium place, which was later proved by one of these houses. In the second lesson, students learned about the houses, and the point system, and were sorted into their houses. In the following lessons (except the sixth and the ninth) we followed our plan and the curriculum with added materials; our theme was based on animals.

3.5.3. *Materials*

We used the *Pioneer C1/C1+* textbook by Mitchell and Malkogianni (2017), and the topics taught from this book were based on animal-related vocabulary and animal cruelty, animal idioms, and collocations. We also included tasks developed by us to help students acquire this knowledge and to help student engagement with more interesting tasks. For this, we used websites such as *Wordwall*, *Quizlet* and *Quizizz*. These tasks included putting words into categories, completing anagrams, introducing or revising material, etc. We also used *PosterMyWall* to create a chosen campaign against animal cruelty (see Appendix J) and we created paper-based posters about fantasy animals (see Appendix E) We often used extra materials that required students to do presentations, and we integrated many speaking activities into our sessions.

Our classes were structured consistently with specific phases that are addressed in the following. In the beginning of each lesson, students submitted their *Wordle* for points, then we completed textbook tasks, which was followed by some of our developed tasks, and we closed our sessions also with textbook tasks. For most of these activities, students were able to gain points which was one of our primary goals in order to keep their attention and engagement. During these lessons students had to work individually in pairs (see Appendix E), and with their houses, thus, they were able to get points for their hard work in both. In the sixth lesson, students had a written exam created by us. This exam followed the structure of the

school-leaving exam; they had to write an essay discussing the topic of factory farming and its impact on animal welfare (see Appendix H). They were also able to get points on this if they had the highest point on the test. We kept count of these points ourselves during the lessons and shared them by the end of the day with the students on a leaderboard (see Appendix G) form in their *Ms Teams* group. This leaderboard was also shown at the beginning of every lesson (except the last three), to motivate them into wanting to earn more points and win.

3.5.4. Closing the House System

In the last session, we announced the winner (all the members got a mark of five for their work, and the title “The House of Victory”), and they were asked to give brief feedback (see Appendix I) on the house system on paper. Finally, we requested an online interview (see Appendix J) with our mentor teacher who supervised us during our teaching practice, this gave us a more professional insight into our system's progress.

4. Findings and discussion

The aim of this study was to explore how the introduction of a Harry Potter-inspired house system affects students' school experience. In our study we adopted a mixed-method approach in order to evaluate the system. First, we used classroom observation to gain a real-time insight on student engagement. Secondly we used two types of questionnaires: the first one was used to sort students into the four houses (Drakonis, Gryphonia, Pixorin and Lunaris), while the second one was used to collect feedback on the students' experience and on their opinion on the house system. Finally we conducted an interview with the mentor teacher, which gave us an insight on the professional view of the system's impact. In this section we are going to address our research questions. Each research question will be treated and answered in their own subsection. Furthermore, at the end of this section, we are going to reflect on the results from a pedagogical perspective as well.

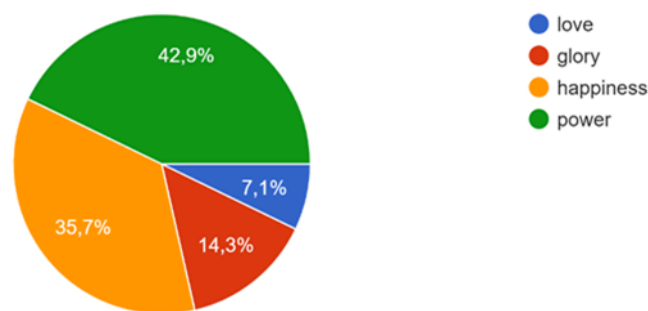
4.1..Effect of recognition and rewards on student motivation

As a first step of our research, we asked the students to fill out an online questionnaire on *Google Forms* (see Appendix C) created by us so we can sort them into their houses. We asked the students questions based on their personality, preferences and interests (Figure 2), and some personal questions that included the topics of favourite animal, subject, hobbies and about themselves as well. We used multiple choice questions and one open-ended item.

Figure 2

Multiple Choice Question about Students' Preferences

If you could make a potion that would grantee you one thing, what would it be?
14 válasz



Similarly to the guilds of Gressick and Langston (2017) we tried to sort the students into houses based on their common interest and similar personalities. However, in the short answer question some students were less willing to answer in a usable way: a student, for example, just answered “I have no idea”. Based on their answers given to the quiz the students seemed interested in this new kind of activity we presented to them. After evaluating the answers, we were able to sort the students into houses that were the most fitting for them, and we ended up with three people in Drakonis, three people in Gryphonia, three people in Pixorin and four people in Lunaris.

During our classroom observation we paid attention to and took notes about students' engagement with each other and in different tasks. In the beginning we saw that the students were excited about the new concept. They seemed interested in how the house system

worked, they also asked questions about the sorting, the point system and the houses. This excitement was kept in our following sessions. The sorting was one of the high points of our practice, the students were interested about the results of the questionnaire. During the sorting the students rooted for each other, they were happy for each other, although some students were disappointed. Later they told us, their disappointment did not lie in the house they were sorted into, but in their housemates, they were sorted with. Unfortunately we could not solve the rivalry and bad relationship between the students with the help of our system, and even with the small number of the students, there were some cliques in one of the houses. Thankfully most of the houses were able to put their disagreement aside and they worked well together.

There were two female students who usually motivated the others to participate, most of the students were active during the tasks, while three of the male students were stubborn, and one of them did not want to participate at all. The students seemed to be most engaged with tasks where they could be competitive with each other and where they could earn a lot of house points. For example, we did not give out points for basic textbook tasks, but we did for harder ones in the workbook. Students seemed to finish tasks faster and more correctly when they got points for being the first to finish. They also asked in tasks that were not point based, if we could modify the tasks so they could earn points. In the meanwhile, during other, point-based tasks, they tried to negotiate for more points. These kinds of modifications were not allowed to keep the house system neutral and consistent. Students also tried to get more points which was not allowed either.

The students showed the least interest in creating a house chant and sign, even though they could earn ten points (and an additional 25 if they performed the chant); therefore we changed this task from homework to an in-class activity, which made the students more interested in the task: one house performed the chant, two houses gave it in as a written assignment, however one house did not want to participate at all. Sadly, at this point we were close to finishing our practice and most of the students were absent for different reasons. There was a male student who did not have any housemates in his house at that point, which resulted in a lack of motivation to participate in class, and after many tries, he did not wish to take part anymore, which made the house in last place move up to the second-to-last position. This made most students realize how much the points matter, this also made them more motivated to earn some last-minute points. We believe that this experience was a turning point for the students which changed their view on the house system, and it would have had a

profound impact on their learning and motivation. Overall, taking into account the shortness of the project, the students kept the motivation rate on the same scale for most of the time.

4.2. Impact of competitive collaboration on intrinsic motivation

Most of the findings matched our initial expectations. 63% of students (n=7) found the house system motivating, and thought that it would work better in the long run. Luckily 54% (n=6) were at least somewhat satisfied with their house members, while the vast majority (81%, n=9) was satisfied with their house, however there was one student who stated that she wanted to ‘undercut’ her team because of her teammates. The results are a good indicator of students' openness to the house system and they also give us insight on how much depends on the members of the houses, as students who did not get on well with their house members gave the most negative answers.

While working with the students we observed that they worked more effectively and were more engaged with tasks where they could be competitive. They finished those tasks quicker and more precisely where they could earn points. We also asked them in the form of a questionnaire to tell us what they liked or disliked about the house system. It was interesting to see how some of the results contradicted each other. For example, while three students stated that they liked working with other people, two students answered that they didn't like teamwork. We saw the same in the case of sorting: while some students mentioned that they liked the sorting quiz others did not like it, one student even mentioned that they thought it was “unfair”.

A recurring problem was the unequal number of team members. This could be related to the fact that, as we have mentioned above, some team members were absent during classes. On the other hand, a student mentioned that they like that the teams did not have many members. We also had a house, Lunarix (see Appendix A), in which two out of four members did not like the other members of the team, one said they liked the other members, and one only liked some of the members. One student mentioned that they did not like inappropriate jokes coming from their housemates, and another one suspected that a team member had lied during the sorting quiz, which we should state is not possible, since they did not know about the house traits before their sorting ceremony. Contrary to the results of Gressick and Langston (2017), the positive perception of peers was not present in this case. We think that

the system would work better with a higher number of students. In this case there were only four people together which made the differences in the students' thinking and/or personality more striking than it would have been in a bigger team. We would also try to be more severe about working as a team, while also making sure that we do not turn teamwork into a demotivating factor.

Figure 3

Participants' Preferences Regarding the House System

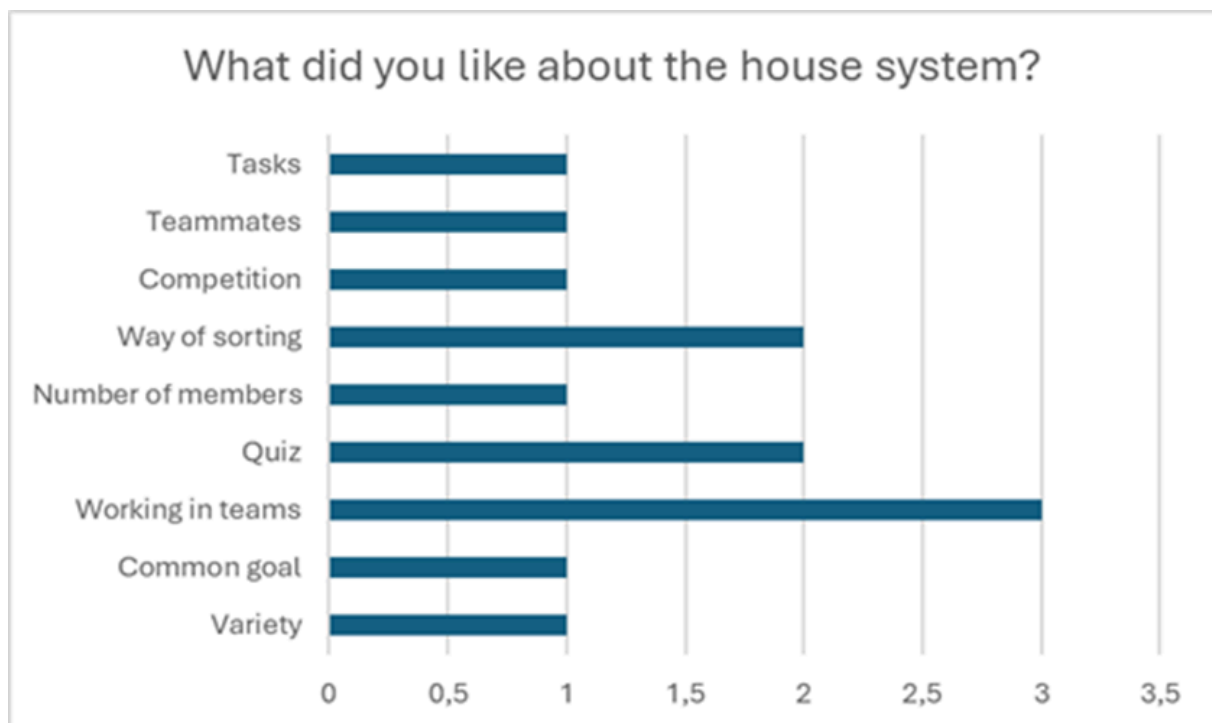
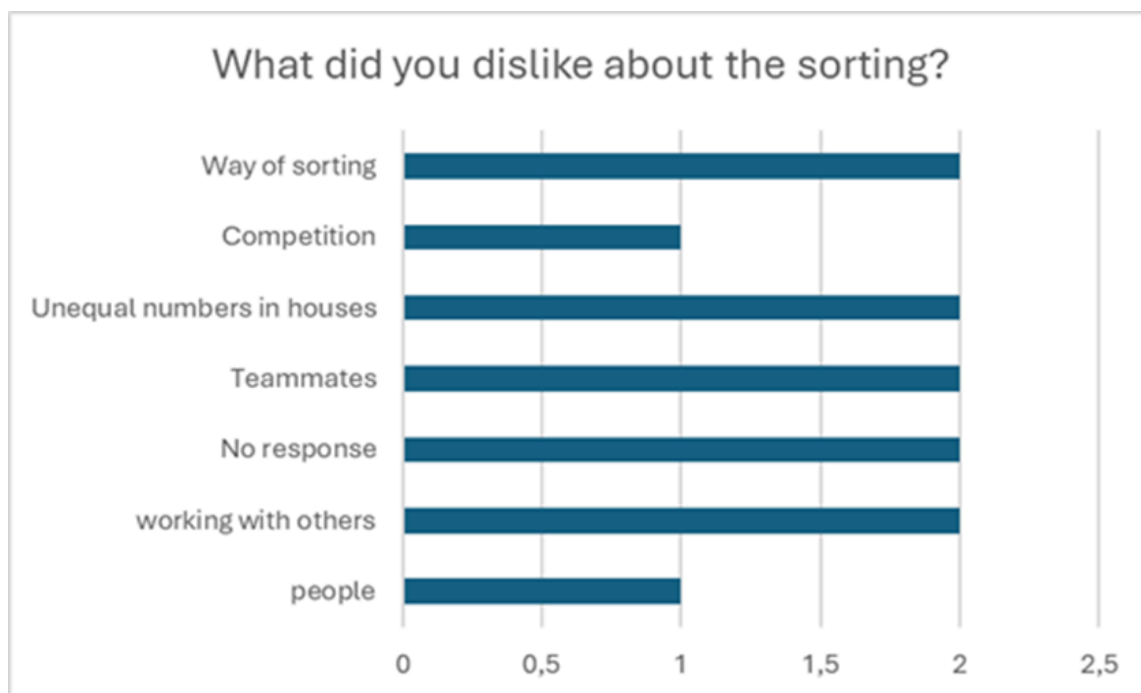


Figure 4

Participants' Criticisms Regarding the House System



During the interview (see Appendix J) with our mentor teacher we asked them about their experiences and thoughts regarding the events that occurred before and during our program, their feedback on the student's participation in the house system concept. Our mentor always talked respectfully of the students; they did mention names but here we are going to use pseudonyms inspired by the *Harry Potter* universe in order to ensure their anonymity.

Firstly, we asked them about the dynamics of the students before the introduction of the house system, including the atmosphere in the classroom, to which our mentor answered that *"in general they [the students] are a motivated group of people who like learning English, and absolutely enjoy sharing their opinions"*. Then we wanted to know about how the students relate to each other. According to our mentor there was *"... a kind of a gap [pause] mental and emotional, uh, when it comes to boys and girls in this group. So, boys seem to be a bit reluctant to accept ideas whenever that's coming from girls."* These aspects matched our observations of group dynamics, prior to the teaching practice. Unfortunately the problem of the forming cliques and the in-class rivalries occurred during the teaching practice as well. The mentor teacher reflected on this aspect as well: *"... they were working quite well*

together apart, there was only one group that was where the 2 girls and the 2 boys who seemed not to cooperate together so well, [...]. So, there was Remus and Cedric and Bella and Luna, like two sub teams within the team.” It was obvious for the mentor and later to us, that our Lunar house (as already mentioned in the feedback section) was not working the best, because of the past of certain students in this house, and although they put aside most of their differences, they mostly did not want to work together. When asked about the bullying, the mentor teacher said that there had been some verbal bullying in the group, but she preferred to describe it as “pulling each other’s leg”. This form of bullying, however, was not present during the teaching practice, while the cliques and rivalries stayed the same. This suggests that the house system had a positive impact on group dynamics to some extent: in order to work together effectively, students changed their ways of communication.

As mentioned above, there were students who were more motivated than the others and helped our work by passing on their motivation to the others. This did not escape the attention of our mentor teacher: “... *But Rita is the one [pause] who would always verbally express right? [...] the one who wants people to work that well right?*”. When asked about the students' motivation, they confirmed the ideas we had observed during the practice: the students were eager about how the system worked, and they were excited to participate as well. Finally, we also asked her about our main focus, how the students' motivation changed during the use of the house system. According to our mentor “*they put their heads together. They came up with ideas that they sort of worked out together. So yeah, I think their motivation was different. [...] It's not only that. It's also their willingness to cooperate. That was also apparently different, it's quite obvious to see.*”. This shows that the house system can lead to changes in group dynamics, even in a short time.

The mentor teacher also highlighted some useful points as an external observer: they told us that the “suspense” (not telling the students what the sorting quiz will be used for) and the daily Wordle were highly motivating factors. They also reflected on the tasks that were given as homework (sometimes the groups were asked to work on these tasks together): the mentor teacher told us that the students usually did not get homework, and most of them did not have any contact outside the classroom. This pointed out why the (points-based) homeworks did not work. They also said that they noticed some change in the student behaviour: as they put it, the students “*did take it into their personal tasks, or their personal quest to add to the team*”. This change demonstrates the effect of positive competition on the

group: since their house's victory also depended on how many points each student earned, their motivation to earn points increased.

Finally, we also asked them about the future implementation of the house system. The mentor teacher had a positive reaction to it and answered that she would “absolutely” use it in the future. They had a positive reaction to the points system, and said that it was an effective way of assessment. They were also supportive of extending the house system to the whole school, however, they noted that it would involve a lot of work (eg. converting the points system to other subjects' requirements). This is in line with the findings of Aura et al. (2021), which said that proper ratification entails effort from the part of the teachers.

Overall, we can say that competitive collaboration had a positive effect on the students' intrinsic motivation. We got positive feedback both from the mentor teacher and from the students. Even in Lunaris house the students managed to put aside some of their disagreements when the houses had to work together.

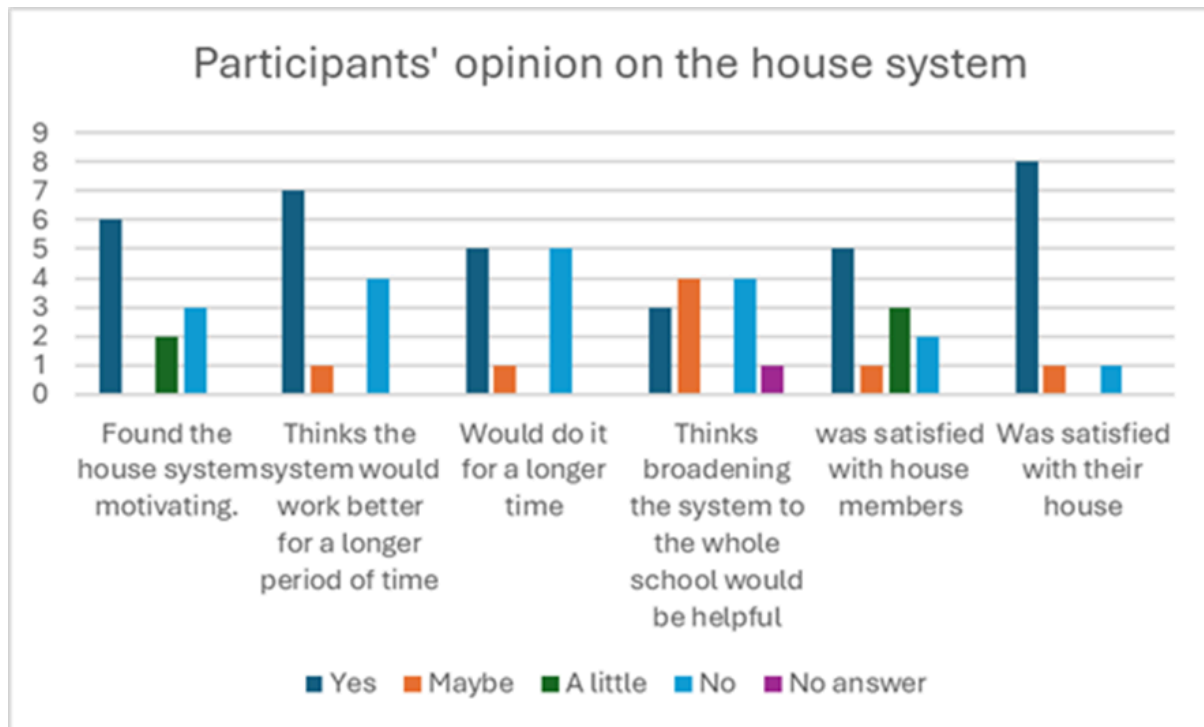
4.3. Key changes needed for the long-term implementation of house systems

Finally, we had a closer look at the following six questions:

1. Do you think the house system helped motivate you or your class?
2. Do you think the house system would've worked better, if it were done for a longer period of time?
3. If there would be the possibility to continue the house system, would you like to participate in it?
4. If there would be the possibility to broaden the house system to the whole school, would you think it would be helpful with anything?
5. Were you satisfied with the house you were sorted into? Were you satisfied with the members of your house? (Figure 5)

Figure 5

Participants' opinion on the house system



The results indicate that the number of those who would want to participate in the house system during a longer period of time and of those who would not was equal, 63% of students ($n=7$) would not broaden the system to the whole school or was not sure about it, but it is also clear that students do not think it could be implemented as much as in the case of Hogwarts or the RCA. Despite these answers 54% of the students ($n=6$) found the system motivating, and 63% of those who responded thought that it would work during a longer period of time ($n=7$), however, 45% of the students ($n=5$) would actually try it for a longer period of time, and one was not sure about it. The fact that some students (18%, $n=2$) were not satisfied with their group members (with one stating that her group members made her want to “undercut” her team) and some being only somewhat satisfied with them (36%, $n=4$) may have caused the uncertainty in whether they would want to resume and broaden the application of the house system or not. Luckily, 72% of the students ($n=8$) were satisfied with the house they were sorted into, which indicates that the problems related to their houses could be linked to their house members.

In another questionnaire, mentioned above, three people said that they liked working in teams, two others said that they did not like it. In the questionnaire as an answer to Q7 one

student stated that it meant too much stress for them, and another stated that it was too much out of their comfort zone. This feedback is similar to the findings of Majuri et al. (2018), which says that gamification does not have the same effect on every student. We think that here we should have thought about the student's zone of proximal development (Vigotsky, 1978) when designing the tasks and the structure of the system. Also, we could have paid greater attention to diversification in the class, making sure that everyone feels comfortable about working with their groups. At the same time, we think that if the students could work together for a longer period of time, they could settle in with their teammates, which would facilitate their work as a group. In the future, we will have to pay more attention to ensuring a balance between group and individual work, so that all students feel as comfortable as possible in class.

Although, as we have mentioned above, it was sometimes hard to work with the questionnaires, we still got some constructive criticism and positive feedback which we could implement in later studies (such as improving our points system, making a more detailed sorting quiz or improving our communicative competence). According to the student's feedback, the house system made the lessons less boring and more exciting. This shows well the students' need for new and interesting teaching methods.

Lastly, we asked our mentor teacher for professional feedback about further exploration of the house system. They said that they would love to use this system themselves, and also it would be a great and effective idea to expand it to the whole school. We also asked them about the effects of our system after we left, unfortunately they couldn't give us a usable answer, since there was only one session without the system since then, and another student teacher started their practice, therefore it is not possible to talk about a noticeable and honest change.

Just as we have seen in previous examples (the RCA system, Aura et al., 2021;2022), apart from Lunar House (see Appendix A), our system had a positive effect on the classroom's atmosphere, and the students' community. Most of them enjoyed working with each other and classmates that would not have worked together otherwise, got to work with each other, mostly with a positive outcome. Overall, our research shows that although our house system is still in development, and it has many aspects that need tuning, it does have a future in education.

4.4. Pedagogical implications

Our research shows that house systems do have a role in education, however these systems need to be well-structured and detailed, and these findings are underlined with previous studies and already existing systems (Syed, 2018; Gressic & Langston, 2017; Ron Clark Academy). Designing a system even for a few students requires a lot of energy from the teacher's part, and students need to be open to this new and barely used system.

House systems have the possibility to enable better student engagement and to better the teacher-student relationship, as well as school experience itself. A well-developed system can also help develop the communication between students and teacher (or students and other students). However, we should always keep an eye on diversification and the needs of students as individuals.

Our findings from the short, exploratory project show that students are open to new approaches, specifically to the house system, and are willing to try them. This is underlined by the fact that students asked questions about the new system (e.g., about the houses, the points etc.), and that they rooted and were happy for their peers during the sorting ceremony. At the same time high school rivalry and cliques will affect the house system mostly in its early stages. Students were (naturally) disappointed when they got sorted into houses with people they did not like. Unfortunately these rivalries will always exist; even in Harry Potter's fantasy world there were cliques and rivalries in Hogwarts: here we can think about the infamous Slytherin-Gryffindor rivalry of which the best example are Draco Malfoy (Slytherin) and Harry Potter (Gryffindor) who were rivals ever since they have arrived to Hogwarts, or about Luna Lovegood who got pranked and nicknamed 'Loony' Lovegood (Rowling, 2020, p. 170) even by her own housemates. We therefore cannot hope to eliminate all rivalries, but can strive to lessen them as much as possible.

During our research we found that those tasks where students could earn house points were much more engaging for them. They solved these tasks quicker and more precisely, however, the house chant and sign creation was too much out of their comfort zone, and therefore not all houses were willing to complete it. This goes against what we have seen in the case of the Ron Clark Academy, where students were proudly using their house signs and singing their house chants, which proves the differences between student groups.

Finally, students' contradicting answers to the feedback questionnaire proves that each student has their preferences and therefore it is hard to create a system that every student will equally like. We would like to highlight that teachers should pay attention to classroom diversification even within the house system to ensure that all students feel comfortable during the lessons.

5. Conclusion and further research

In our research, we explored the possible integration of house systems into public education and its impact on students' intrinsic motivation. We focused on three primary questions: firstly, we wanted to know what changes would be needed to implement the system in the long term, secondly, we looked at the motivating factors of competition and collaboration fostered by the house system, and finally we examined how the recognition and rewards system contribute to the students' motivation.

Our results indicated that students are interested in this new approach and they were generally engaged in the lessons and the activities (RQ1). However, some students may be forced to step out of their comfort zone and some may see it as a barrier towards studying (RQ2). As we have seen, students had a positive reaction to the house system, however they were not sure about its use in the long run (RQ3). We also learnt that the mentor teacher was open to this approach, and was supportive towards the use of the system. They saw the use of the house system as a positive experience and noted that the students seemed more motivated than usual.

Despite the positive feedback, our study has its limitations. We conducted our study for a brief period of two weeks, which was not enough to make a profound or lasting impact on our students. Furthermore, our study only looked at thirteen students, many of whom were absent during lessons, consequently, the results cannot be generalized and further research is needed.

Further research should explore the longitudinal effects of the house system and involve a larger, more diverse group of students. During a longer period of time the study could explore whether student rivalries and cliques could be influenced in a positive way. Research should also examine the impact of the house system in lower-prestige schools as well as in primary schools, since the impact of the system may vary between different types of schools.

In conclusion, house systems have great potential for raising student interest and maintaining motivation. However, these systems need to be well structured and may require a lot of time and effort on the part of teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix A- House descriptions



Lunaris

- Symbolic animal:
The Amarak: glory, nobility and protection
- Title: The House of Leadership
- Symbol:
The Moon: intuition, nobility,
Crown: nobility, glory
- Color:
Maroon: passion, responsibility,
ambition, confidence



Gryphonia

- Symbolic animal:
Hippogriff: grace, love, freedom, loyalty
- Title: The House of Unity
- Symbol:
Lotus: grace, purity, teamwork
Keys: grace and loyalty
- Color:
Light blue: peace, inspiration, softness, loyalty



Pixorin

- Symbolic animal:
Pixie: nature, joy and appreciation
- Title: The House of Mischief
- Symbol:
Tree of life: nature, balance,
Dragonfly: positive energy, happiness,
- Color:
Green: growth, nature, harmony, mischief, playfulness



Drakonis

- Symbolic animal:
Dragon: bravery, intelligence, creativity,
- Title: The House of Creation
- Symbol:
Book: knowledge and wisdom
Crossed swords: justice, devotion
- Color:
Indigo: devotion, wisdom, and intuition

Appendix B- Point system



House Points Rules

1-2 points • Arriving to class on time AND having your books out • Completing the Wordle • Leaving the class tidy • Greeting with your house sign	3-4 points • Answering a hard question right • Finishing 2nd or 3rd on a leaderboard	5 points • Finishing 1st on a leaderboard • Finishing a task first and having all the answers right
10 points • Having the most points on the exam • Creating a chant for your house		25 points • Performing the chant

Appendix C- Sorting quiz

Sorting Quiz

Dear all,

As you already know we're trying a new innovative way to create a more motivating environment in the classroom.

We're asking you to fill out this form as honest as you can so you can be sorted into your houses.

We are very excited to see your answers and to see where will you belong for the next few weeks.

May the best house win!

Best of luck,

-Ms. Kitty and Ms. Zsófi

Please write your real name here *

Rövid szöveges válasz

What is your favourite subject? *

Rövid szöveges válasz

.....

What would you rather be? *

- ☐ trusted
- ☐ liked
- ☐ praised
- ☐ feared
- ☐ envied
- ☐ imitated

If you could choose any animal in the world what would you choose as a pet? *

Rövid szöveges válasz

.....

Are you more... *

- ☐ creative
- ☐ logical

I prefer...hobbies *

- ☐ logical
- ☐ physical
- ☐ creative

I am... *

- ☐ introverted
- ☐ extroverted
- ☐ ambivalent

I prefer... *

- ☐ teamwork
- ☐ working alone

If you could have a superpower, which one would you choose? *

- ☐ invisibility
- ☐ superstrength
- ☐ ability to talk to animals
- ☐ ability to fly

Which instrument do you find most pleasing to your ear? *

- ☐ flute
- ☐ drums
- ☐ violin
- ☐ piano

If you could make a potion that would grantee you one thing, what would it be? *

- ☐ love
- ☐ glory
- ☐ happiness
- ☐ power

What path do you take? *

- ☐ Twisting leafy path through the woods.
- ☐ A dark, lantern lit alley.
- ☐ A wide grassy path.
- ☐ A cobblestone street lined with ancient buildings.

Which one would you choose? *

- ☐ forest
- ☐ beach
- ☐ mountains
- ☐ meadow

What do you think is the most important thing about you? (write 1-3 sentences) *

Hosszú szöveges válasz

Appendix D- Chant with music attached

Lunaris House Chant: 6:07- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7eZ4mAfbp8>

“We ought to protect the weak

Everyone in need

The moon will show the way,

The Amarok will lead us to glory!

The noble must protect

It is our responsibility!

We are the house of Lunaris!”

Pixorin House Chant: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZctphHeQuA>

“We are the house of Pixorin

we are the house of mischief

our animal is the pixie

I have the nature with me

our symbol is the Tree of Life

and also the dragonfly

our color is green

the color of growth, nature and harmony”

Drakonis House Chant: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUCn4w-S2KM>

“God save Drakonis!

Glory, glory, glory Drakonis!

Glory, glory, glory Drakonis!

This is the house of creation

Our crossed swords symbolise devotion.

Hail Drakonis!

Hail Drakonis!

Hail Drakonis!

This is the house of creation

Our crossed swords symbolise devotion.

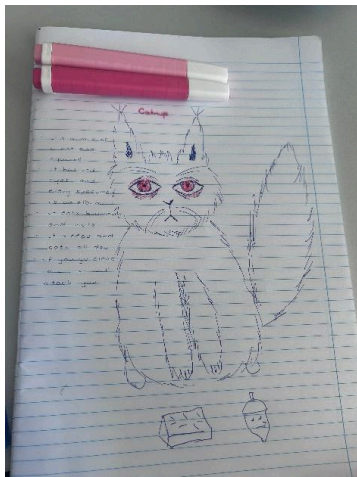
Hail Drakonis!

Hail Drakonis!

Hail Drakonis!”

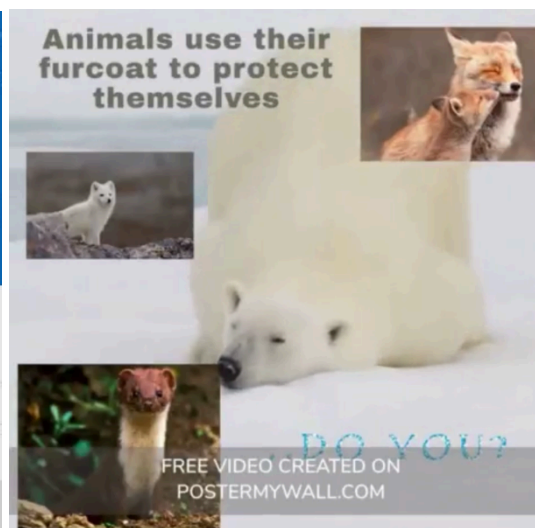
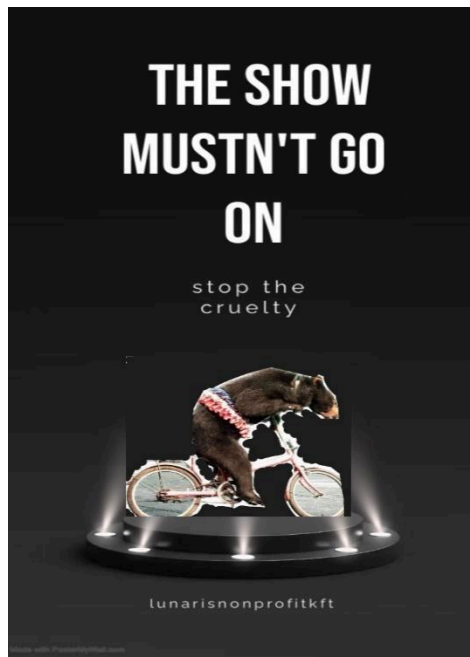
Appendix E- Pairwork: create fantasy animals

Pair 1- Catnup



Pair 2- The Romanian Blooddeer

Appendix F- Campaign against animal cruelty posters



Appendix G- Leaderboard

Leaderboard:

			
Lunaris	Gryphonia	Pixorin	Drakonis

Points:

LUNARIS	GRYPHONIA	PIXORIN	DRAKONIS

Appendix H- Essay task

Write an essay of **200-250 words** discussing the topic of *factory farming and its impact on animal welfare*. In your essay, please include both perspectives (producer and animal).

Make sure to include the following points:

- Environmental and economic impact
- Alternatives to factory farming
- Your own argument(s)



Appendix I- House System feedback questionnaire

Your House:

Please answer the following questions as honest as you can.

1. Did you like the design and themes of the crests? Why?
2. What did you like about the house system?
3. What did you dislike about the house system?
4. What is your opinion on the point system?
5. Do you think the house system helped with motivating you or your class?

6. Do you think the house system would've worked better, if it were done for longer time? Why?
7. If there would be the possibility to continue the house system, would you like to participate in it? Why?
8. If there would be the possibility to broaden the house system to the whole school, would you think it would be helpful with anything? Please explain your answer.
9. Were you satisfied with the house you were sorted into? Why?
10. Were you satisfied with the members of your house? Why?
11. In your opinion, what was the best part about the house system?
12. What would you change/ add to this house system? Please explain briefly.
13. What is your honest opinion on the full house system?
14. Do you want to add anything else or want us to know about something?

Appendix J- Interview with our mentor teacher transcript

-We will call our mentor Professor Garlick (PG) for anonymity purposes; red highlights represents our main questions-

Interviewer: This interview will be recorded.

PG: Okay, I give my consent to it.

I: So, let's talk about the house system interview. And I just want to jump on the questions if that's alright.

PG: Absolutely!

I: OK, thank you. In your opinion, how was the classroom atmosphere before the house system?

PG: Um, when they were working with you?

I: Yes.

PG: Um, I think they were somewhat expectant, they had no idea what was going to happen so they were just sort of like [pause] an open book, ready for anything. And [pause] I don't know I think they were just expecting something ordinary to happen right?

I: Yes, thank you. And what was it like before I came, so when they were working with you.

PG: Hmm, I think they are, in general they are a motivated group of people who like learning English, uh, absolutely enjoy sharing their opinions, uh be it speaking or writing and um well basically that.

I: OK, thank you. Um, how did students relate to each other before the house system was introduced?

PG: Well, actually I see, uh, a kind of a gap [pause] mental and emotional, uh when it comes to boys and girls in this group. So, boys seem to be a bit reluctant to accept ideas whenever that's coming from girls, I think it was uh, as far as uh group dynamics are concerned this was a brilliant idea, um to put them in teams of people where the members of the each team may not have been working together or may not have worked together at all previously. And now that they were set to belong to the same group based on a questionnaire and their answers to the questionnaire they were, they were, they were working quite well together apart, there was only one group that was where the 2 girls and the 2 boys who seemed not to cooperate together so well, there was Luna and Remus in the same team, okay, because if you remember they had this past that I told you about, right? So their group dynamic's did not work at all I think. So, there was Remus and Cedric and Bella and Luna, like two sub teams within the team. But otherwise, I think the groups worked quite fine, oh okay, when everyone was present of course.

I: And do you think before this house system was introduced how did they communicate with each other, like you said maybe the boys or the girls or even with each other (like boys with boys and girls with girls).

PG: Um I think when there was a specific task that they had to, like a role-play task for example and they were put together in pairs than they did work, I mean there was no problem because they put on their roles and uh and they just performed a task. However when it comes to for example expressing your opinion, so more a-a-a kind of frontal [pause] a task and they have to share their opinions, are you for or against or a you know just reflect on each other's

opinion [pause,] that's the situation where some boys and some girls in the group um prefer to uh um, prefer to emphasize their difference in opinion, okay, so they're sometimes it's more being [pause] somewhat personal, okay, they don't hurt each other it's not very offensive, but they do try to highlight their differences, some of them. Some people are just themselves the whole time, so they don't care about what the others say or think, they just share their opinion and um, ready to change some aspects of it need to be.

I: I see, I'm glad you mentioned that because I want to ask, have there been any examples of bullying among these students?

PG: Uh okay, there is this verbal bullying sometimes, but that's seems to be, okay, these are reoccurring sort of, uh sort of personal little uh, I wouldn't even call it bullying, they really are just pulling each other's legs. But sometimes if it wasn't an insider like someone who isn't being with them for quite a while you would think that its really, I mean this is rude, but they are not being rude with each other really, I mean they are, they are just teenagers. So, they know these games alright, and each party always reacts the way they are supposed to in the game, right?

I: Yes, I see, so like a friendly fight?

PG: Uh, yeah kind of, I wouldn't say friendly sometimes because they really are two different groups of people, but they can work very affectively together and really its just [pause] just yea I cannot put it in any other way, they are just pulling each other's legs, and whenever there is a reaction to somebody pulling the others leg the reaction that comes to that is always something predictable so people just, I mean other people who are just the listeners, audience would smile and say I know what's coming next. So yeah, it's like that its games really.

I: How motivated do you think the students were during an average lesson, did they actively participate or were they just motivated?

PG: In general, I would say they are quite motivated. As I told you in the school, I think when Rita was present the whole atmosphere was always different because it wasn't only her who was really motivated by the house system. I think also the girls in general were motivated by that. But Rita is the one [pause] who would always verbally express right? Who would hush the other people, who would tell them, all right, let's do this people or whatever. And the others are just the silent majority who would not actually say, okay let's do it. They would just go okay I do it. And whoever joins is not their concern. But Rita is very much the one who

wants people to work that well right? And anyways thorough all the lessons that you taught; we had a huge number of absent people. I'm so sorry about that, because it could have been so [pause] so different with all the people present all time.

I: Yes, but it still turned out fine, I think.

PG: Oh, yes. I understand it's a short time span that we had here. And also, the absences were kind of a misfortune in the whole procedure.

I: Right, okay. What did you notice about the students after the introduction of the house system?

PG: I think they were very eager to find out, like who they would be in the same house with. Is this what you mean? Like at the beginning?

I: Actually, the whole thing, you can go through it.

PG: Yeah, I think the first time was probably a bit hazy, so they didn't really see how it all was going. But they were given the questionnaire, they were looking forward to finding out the outcome, like who they would be in the same team with or which house they would be in, because they knew what kind of characteristics were associated with that house team. So [pause] I think that was very much a kind of element of suspense. And that was very motivating. I like that.

I: Were they more active during the lessons?

PG: Yes, I think they [pause] Yeah, I think they were. They were more active. I think they were playfully active. So, they were more eager to [pause] or more ready to join anything, to join a game, to do anything together. And that was nice. I think it just gave their motivation and cooperation a very nice framework, right?

I: How did their motivation change after this introduction? Do you think it changed at all?

PG: No, I think [pause] I think their motivation was kept quite high. So, like, you know, showing you the daily Wordle was also one thing that they were quite motivated to do. And anyways, anything that they had to prepare, they were really eager to prepare. There were always just one or two people who were not interested. They, yeah. So [pause] And there were [pause] Okay. Another thing is, yeah, told you that I hardly ever give them homework. So, when they are asked to do anything at home, that may not work. Plus, I think I told you about

this when you give a team of people homework, I don't think that's lifelike because, I mean, how would they do it? Would they just call each other on Teams in the afternoon? They may not be friends. One may have something to do in the afternoon, the other later in the evening. So, it's [pause] Sometimes not very manageable. So, whenever I give them something to prepare for next lesson, that's always individual. And then they might put these individual things together at the beginning of the lesson or any time during the lesson to make a team effort. Right? But I think giving homework to a group of people to work together is something not manageable. It's usually one or the other does it and then sort of presents it as if it was a team effort when it is not. This is one thing I saw with the chant. When Susan and Zacharias had their chant performed and it was quite obvious that was something that Zacharias had prepared and then gave some instructions to Susan right on the spot to follow and that's it. So, it was a nice idea to give them some preparation time at the beginning of the lesson. It's good to give them the task to think about at home. Okay, something more, I mean, a more specific instruction than just think about it. But the ideas should be put together when they are physically together again in the lesson.

I: I see, thank you. And do you think their motivation changed from before the house system and after?

PG: Oh, absolutely. Yeah, I think I made that clear earlier. Yes, absolutely. To me it was very nice to see that now kind of random groups of people worked together. They put their heads together. They came up with ideas that they sort of worked out together. So yeah, I think their motivation was different. And also, maybe not only the motivation, but as I told you earlier this playful kind of motivation. Yes, yes. It's not only that. It's also their willingness to cooperate. That was also apparently different, it's quite obvious to see.

I: We already discussed this, but maybe something new came up to your mind. Has there been any change in the classroom atmosphere?

PG: You mean due to the house system? Yes, I think they did take it into their personal tasks, or their personal quest to add to the team. So be it their work, their [pause] Yeah, in the lesson, anything. Yeah, it's like, Ernie made it quite clear that, yeah, he would not [pause] do the Wordles, for example. Because anything outside the lesson he's not willing to add. But that's okay. The others in the team said no problem we'll do that, you do this, so, I think they, yeah. [Pause] I think, absolutely. They were again, yeah, so it was a corporation that I [pause] that I found was-was-was, really-really nice and that kept them motivated so that they added

their own [pause] whatever they could. That's very specific but they all added something to the team

I: Wonderful, thank you. Now there has been a few lessons since the house system was closed. What do you think **how do the students relate to each other now?**

PG: I haven't actually had quite a few lessons ever since, because [pause] we've had [pause] we didn't have a lesson on Wednesday, so it was like the last time you taught was-was the 24-25th or ...

I: 20th.

PG: 20th. Yes, oh that was, oh, wait-wait. One sec, and then okay, and then Seamus started, yeah-yeah-yeah. So um, I don't know [pause] that's a good question. Wait one sec, let me think it over.

I: Of course, take your time.

PG: [to herself:] We didn't have a lesson that Thursday and Friday, um, [pause], yes Seamus had them on the 25th and 26th, so three lessons, um [pause] then we started the holiday, Wednesday was uh a DÖK day, the student government organized things, now let me think [big pause], yeah and then we had the test. [to me:] Oh, well no, I'm sorry I-I can't really, I can't really say, anything about that really, because we had progress test lesson on Tuesday and then there was just one lesson on Monday, which was the first lesson the new student teacher had, so that's always a different kettle of fish you know when students are trying sort of the boundaries, so uh I don't know. I really don't know if there's been any change since.

I: Okay thank you.

PG: But I'm sure they will ask Seamus "is there a house system or something with you". I'm sure they will, okay. [laughs]

I: Thank you, um, did the house system have any effect on the class? Was the effect negative or positive?

PG: Yeah, I think I've-I've I mean, I mean, I don't know how differently to answer.

I: Yeah, it's like a summary question.

PG: The motivation and the cooperation, and also the negative effects in one group and also in some other when there were very many people absent and then Ren had to work for, I think, a

whole week alone because her two housemates were absent, so yeah, those were kind of negative things. And then Ernie had to work alone in the last lesson, which simply meant he did not work at all or almost at all. So yeah, these were negative things, but I don't know how these could have been avoided or... or made any better.

I: Okay, now I just want to ask about your own opinion that... what is your opinion about the house system? Not looking at the students' view in this matter.

PG: Yeah, yeah, yeah, sure. I very much like any kind of system that-that's-that gives a framework to your [pause] okay. [pause] progress with students, so I think this is a brilliant idea. I also think the way you implemented it was brilliant because you were always very [pause] you were always very confident about it. You knew who was in which house. You knew what meant how many points for which house. You knew who was adding what to where- so you didn't need to [pause] to look them up. You never went like, oh, oh, wait a second, let me think. You [pause] you were there. You, yourself, were the house system. And I think that's-that's really- that was really impressive.

I: Thank you. Would you use this system in the future? And if yes, how? Or if not, why not?

PG: Yes, absolutely. As I pointed out earlier, I think any kind of system that guides you along your teaching process and gives you, like, how to evaluate, how to assess any means of... of... of assessment, really, or evaluation in the lesson, I think that's... that's very helpful, simply because the students know, because the teacher knows, because it's... it's... it's their sort of code that... they can decode together so yeah. I-I-I absolutely think this is something like I don't know if you [pause] okay, I think it's something that would be needed even even- even when we think teenagers are too old for such things, no they aren't, I think they also need a kind of structure and some sort of consequent [pause] again framework is the word I could use here, a consequent framework of-of evaluation and I think your-your house system was really-really a great example for that.

I: Great and what do you think about the point system in itself? Whether they were appropriate or was it effective to motivate students?

PG: Yeah, it seems very effective so they were always interested at the beginning of the lesson or whenever, to see how many points their team and the other teams have have had that far so yeah sure. I think the point system is great. And I also like the fact that it wasn't only English

that was taken into consideration, but also, you know, their environment and basically everything. And that's fine, that's nice.

I: We arrived to the last question. Do you think the house system could be used outside the classroom in a school-wide context?

PG: You mean like in other lessons and other, yeah?

I: Yes, for the whole school maybe, that even outside the classroom, not just for one class, but for the whole school. Or having project days?

PG: Yes. Yes, but of course that means a lot of work. I mean, like the points should be translated into... other subjects, their expectations, their requirements, but yeah, absolutely, something like that. So, any kind of system that makes it a bit... It's like anything that makes learning the process and teaching a wee bit more kind of playful and positive. I think... It would be nice to be used throughout a whole school or throughout education, yes, even with secondary school students.

I: Okay, thank you so much. Is there anything you would like to add?

PG: I guess no. No, I think I... I hope I've said everything I wanted to.

I: Yes, it was perfect. Thank you so much.

PG: Okay, thank you.

Appendix K- Magyar nyelvű összefoglaló

Szakirodalmi áttekintés

Dolgozatunk első fejezetében különféle, a korszerű oktatás számára hasznos megközelítésekkel foglalkoztunk. Az angol mint idegennyelv tanítása körében megvizsgáltuk az énhatékonyság (self-efficacy) versengő oldalát, valamint, hogy a diákok teljesítményét hogyan befolyásolja a képességeikről alkotott meggyőződésük. Ezenkívül, foglalkoztunk az öndeterminációs elmélettel és az Invitational Education Theoryval, illetve ezek, a diákok teljesítményére gyakorolt hatásával. Feltártuk, hogy a Flow milyen hatással van a tanulási tapasztalatokra, melyet konstruktivista elméletekkel és a Zone of Proximal Development-tel támasztottunk alá. Utóbbiak hangsúlyozzák a szociális interakciók és az irányított tanulás fontosságát. Végül a gamifikáció és a sztorifikáció tanulásra és tanításra gyakorolt hatását

vizsgáltuk, illetve azt, hogy a közoktatásban alkalmazható-e a Harry Potterből ismert házrendszer.

Kutatásunk alapjául többféle szakirodalommal ismerkedtünk meg ilyen például: a társas-kognitív elmélet (SCT), amely szerint az önhatékonyság az adott feladat és annak sikeres elvégzésébe vetett bizalom alapján alakul ki. Montgomery és mtsai. (2023) négy fő tényezőt azonosított, amelyek az önhatékonyságot befolyásolják: teljesítmény-eredmények, helyettesítő tapasztalatok, verbális megerősítés és fiziológiai állapotok. Ezek nemcsak a diákok készségeinek fejlődését segítik, hanem a motivációjukra és a tanulási eredményeikre is hatással vannak. Dörnyei (2007) szerint, miközben biztosítjuk a belső motiváció ösztönzését, fontos az is, hogy a tanulók rendelkezzenek a szükséges képességekkel és vágyakkal a feladatok sikeres teljesítéséhez. Az angol mint idegen nyelv (EFL) tanulásában a versengő önhatékonyság kulcsfontosságú tényező, mivel ez segíti a diákokat abban, hogy motiváltabbak és aktívabban legyenek a tanulási folyamatban (Bailey és mtsai. 2023). Az önhatékonyság elmélete a viselkedés irányát és annak eredményét hangsúlyozza, míg az önmeghatározás elmélete (SDT) a viselkedés irányára és az eredmény okára is fókuszál.

Montgomery és mtsai. (2023) kiemelik a tanárok szerepét a diákok szemléletének formálásában, például az építő jellegű visszajelzések adásában, magas elvárások megfogalmazásában, a támogató környezet megteremtésében, az autonómia ösztönzésében, a tanulás szeretetének elősegítésében és a növekedési szemlélet bemutatásában. Moss (2018) rámutat arra, hogy az IET hangsúlyozza, hogy a tanároknak tisztelettel és empátiával kell kezelniük a tantermet, míg az SDT a diákok viselkedésére fókuszál. Mindkét elmélet közös pontja a kapcsolatok, a támogatás és az autonómia fontossága, valamint az a felismerés, hogy a motiváció belülről fakad, de a környezet jelentősen befolyásolja. Az oktatásban, különösen nyelvi tanulás során, a flow élménye és a konstruktivista megközelítés jelentősen növelheti a diákok motivációját és tanulási élményét. Szabó és Csépes (2023) hangsúlyozzák, hogy a csoportdinamika is hatással lehet a tanulók kognitív és érzelmi struktúráira, ezért az angol mint idegen nyelv (EFL) osztályterme ideális helyszín a konstruktivizmus fejlesztésére, hiszen a konstruktivista osztályterem az együttműködésre, a tanulók felfedezésére és az önállóságra helyezi a hangsúlyt. A társas konstruktivizmus központi eleme Vygotsky Zóna a legközelebbi fejlődéshez (ZPD) elmélete, amely azt a tanulási területet jelöli, ahol a diákok tanári vagy mentorálási támogatással képesek elérni céljaikat.

A gamifikáció témakörében több kutatást is elolvastunk, melyek segítségével megpróbáltuk megfogalmazni a gamifikáció definícióját. Ezek alapján a gamifikáció „játékalapú elemek alkalmazását jelenti nem játékos környezetben” (Gressick & Langston, 2017, 1., saját fordítás), és olyan elemeket foglal magában, mint a jelvények, ranglisták és pontok (Majuri et al., 2018, 16.). A gamifikáció célja a tanulási folyamat lényegi megváltoztatása annak érdekében, hogy „pozitív eredményeket érjünk el” (Sanchez et al., 2019, 5.); ilyen lehet, például, a tananyag jobb megértése, a motiváció és/vagy a téma iránti érdeklődés növekedése. A meglévő kutatásokból azt is megtudtuk, hogy a gamifikáció pozitív hatással van a diákok órán való részvételére. Gressick és Langston (2017, 1.) megállapította, hogy a diákok szívesebben vesznek részt olyan tanulási folyamatban, amelyet érdekesnek és izgalmasnak találnak, és ilyenkor a motivációjukat is könnyebb fenntartani.

A gamifikáció után foglalkoztunk a sztorifikációval is. Az eddigi kutatások alapján, a sztorifikáció használata „gyakran összhangban van a konstruktivista tanulással” annak érdekében, hogy a tanulást aktívvá tegye (Aura et al., 2021, 2.), és alkalmas arra, hogy a tanulást élvezetesebbé tegye, fejlessze a diákok tanulásban való részvételét és elősegítse a diákok pozitív viselkedését (Parker & Lepper, 1992, 1.; Aura et al., 2021, 3.). A sztorifikáció lehet környezeti tényező, vagy a pedagógiai tevékenységek sajátossága. Gyakran magában foglalja az osztályterem átalakítását, hogy azok fiktív vagy nem fiktív világokat tükrözzenek (pl. Harry Potter, Star Wars, Grand Canyon), a tanterv módosítását, vagy a hagyományos helyett egy módosítható és rugalmas tanulási környezet alkalmazását is (például Aura et al., 2021).

Szakirodalmi áttekintésünk utolsó lépéseként olyan forrásokat kerestünk, melyek a házrendszerek alkalmazásáról adtak több információt. Syed (2018) az MS Kreatív Iskolákról ír, amelyek négy házzal rendelkeznek: Motiválók, Ösztönzők, Vezetők és Kihívók. Syed (2018, 2.) azt írja, hogy a házrendszer „biztosítja a diákok közötti pozitív versenyt”, és „segíti az új munkatársak és diákok alkalmazkodását az iskola kultúrájához”. Mindkét szempont nagy jelentőséggel bír, hiszen az, ahogyan a diákok és a személyzet alkalmazkodik az új iskolához, nagyban befolyásolja későbbi iskolai tapasztalataikat, a pozitív verseny pedig segít fenntartani a diákok motivációját.

A házrendszer talán egyik legsikeresebb példája a Ron Clark Academy (RCA) [<https://rcahousesystem.com/>]. Az eredetileg négy házból álló házrendszer mára nyolc házra bővült (Altruismo, Amistad, Isibindi, Rêveur, Sollevare, Nukumori, Onraka, Protos), és a világ több mint huszonhat országában gyakorol befolyást.

Módszertan

A kutatást egy neves pécsi gimnáziumban végeztük el egy kéthetes tanítási gyakorlat során, amely kilenc tanórát foglalt magában. A résztvevők 13 magyar, 11. évfolyamos tanulóból álltak (30,8% fiú, 69,2% lány), akik 16–17 évesek voltak, és angol nyelvtudásuk B2-C1 szinten mozgott. A kutatás célja az volt, hogy feltárja egy *Harry Potter* által inspirált házrendszer hatását a tanulók angol tanulás iránti belső motivációjára.

A kutatási kérdések a következők voltak:

1. Hogyan befolyásolja a jutalmazási rendszer a tanulók motivációját az angol tanulásban?
2. Hogyan hatnak a házpontok gyűjtésére épülő, versengést és együttműködést igénylő feladatok a tanulók belső motivációjára az angol órákon?
3. Milyen változtatások szükségesek a házrendszer hosszú távú integrálásához a középiskolai angolórákba?

A *Harry Potter* által inspirált házrendszer hatását vizsgáltuk magyar középiskolások motivációjára vegyes módszertannal, amely magában foglalta az órai megfigyelést, egy tanári interjút és két kérdőívet. A diákok házakba sorolását egy személyiségalapú teszt segítette, amelyet a Pottermore kvíz inspirált, de a kutatás kontextusához igazítottak. A Google Űrlapokon keresztül lebonyolított kvíz alapján a diákok személyiségjegyeik alapján kerültek házakba, miközben előzetes preferenciáikat is felmérték.

Az órák során rövid jegyzeteket készítettünk, hogy nyomon kövessük a diákok reakcióit. Célunk az volt, hogy feltárjuk, miként változott a diákok viselkedése és elköteleződése a házrendszer és a pontozási rendszer bevezetésével. Figyeltük a diákok egymás közti interakcióit, mind a házakon belül, mind azokon kívül, valamint azt, hogy miként hatott rájuk a pontokért való versenyzés. A visszajelző kérdőívben a kérdések arra irányultak, hogy a diákok hogyan élték meg a program eseményeit és a házrendszert. A projekt végén félig strukturált interjút készítettünk a mentor tanárunkkal. Az interjúban hasonló kérdéseket tettünk fel, mint a visszajelző kérdőívben, de külön kitértünk a csoport életére a rendszer előtt és után, valamint szakmai véleményére a diákok motivációs változásairól.

Fontosnak tartottuk, hogy a diákokat megfelelő házakba osszuk, mivel a versengés és az együttműködés kulcsfontosságú szerepet játszott a kutatásunkban. Figyeltük, hogy a diákok mennyire érzik magukat jól a házukban. Emellett ügyeltünk arra, hogy minden ház tagjai változatos képességekkel rendelkezzenek, hogy egymást motiválva és kiegészítve végezhessék a feladatokat. A házrendszert tökéletes alapnak találtuk arra, hogy a barátságos versengést strukturált módon fenntartsuk. A diákokat egy személyiségalapú kérdőív segítségével saját fejlesztésű házaikba osztottuk: Drakonis, Gryphonia, Pixorin és Lunaris. A házakhoz szimbolikus állatokat, színeket és jelképeket választottunk, amelyek a különböző házak jellemzőit tükrözik. Kialakítottunk egy pontozási rendszert is, amely különböző tevékenységekért juttatott pontokat a házaknak. Az órák során gamifikációs elemeket használtunk, például pontokat osztottunk a részvételért, feladatokért és teljesítményért. A diákok egyénileg, párosan és házban is dolgoztak, és pontokat szerezhettek a közös és egyéni munkáért is. Az órák struktúrája következetes volt: a diákok a Wordle feladatokkal kezdték az órákat, majd tankönyvi és saját készítésű feladatok következtek, melyek mind pontszerzési lehetőségeket biztosítottak. Később írásbeli vizsgát tartottunk, amely a házak közötti pontverseny fontos része volt. Az utolsó órán kihirdettük a győztes házat.

Eredmények

Dolgozatunk végén kiértékeljük a kérdőív, az órai megfigyelések és az interjú során kapott adatokat. Az eredmények többsége megfelelt az előzetes várakozásainknak. A diákok 63%-a ($n=7$) motiválónak találta a házrendszert, és úgy gondolták, hogy hosszú távon jobban működne. Szerencsére a diákok több mint a fele (54%, $n=6$) legalább valamennyire elégedett volt a saját háza tagjaival, míg 81% volt elégedett a házával, azonban volt olyan diák, aki azt állította, hogy a csapattársai miatt „alá szeretné ásni” a csapatát. A mentortanárunkkal készített interjú (lásd a J. mellékletet) során megkérdeztük őt a rendszerünk előtt és alatt történt eseményekkel kapcsolatos tapasztalatairól és gondolatairól, a diákok házrendszerben való részvételével kapcsolatos visszajelzéseiről. Az interjú során ugyanazok a szempontok kerültek elő, melyeket mi is láttunk a megfigyelés során: a Lunaris házban belüli klikkesedés, Rita motiváló magatartása, valamint ő maga is úgy látta, hogy a diákokat érdekelte a házrendszer, és a motivációjuk is változott a kutatás során.

A gyakorlat zárásakor kitöltöttünk egy kérdőívet a diákokkal, melyben arra kértük őket, hogy véleményezzék a rendszert. A kérdőív eredményéből az látszik, hogy a diákok többsége nem tudja elképzelni egy a Ron Clark Academy-hez hasonló rendszer megvalósítását. Ezzel párhuzamosan, a diákok 63%-a ($n=7$) nem szeretné az egész iskolára kiterjeszteni a rendszert.

Mindezek ellenére 54% (n=6) motiválónak találta a rendszert, és a válaszadók többsége úgy gondolta, hogy hosszabb időn keresztül is működne (63%, n=7), azonban a diákok kevesebb mint fele (45%, n=5) próbálná ki ténylegesen hosszabb időn keresztül, egy pedig nem volt biztos benne. Érdekes volt látni, hogy egyes eredmények mennyire ellentmondanak egymásnak. Például, míg három diák azt állította, hogy szeret másokkal együtt dolgozni, addig két diák azt válaszolta, hogy nem szereti a csapatmunkát. Ugyanezt láttuk a beosztás esetében is: míg néhány diák azt állította, hogy tetszett neki a kvíz, amivel beosztottuk őket, addig másoknak nem tetszett, sőt egy diák még azt is megemlítette, hogy szerinte ez „igazságtalan” volt.

Kutatásunk azt mutatja, hogy a házrendszereknek igenis van szerepük az oktatásban, azonban ezeknek a rendszereknek jól strukturálnak és részletesnek kell lenniük. Eredményeinket korábbi tanulmányok és már létező rendszerek is alátámasztják (Syed, 2018; Gressick & Langston, 2017; Ron Clark Academy). Egy rendszer kialakítása még néhány diák számára is sok energiát igényel a tanár részéről, a diákoknak pedig nyitottnak kell lenniük erre az új és alig használt rendszerre.