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Using Literature in the EFL Classroom to Foster Social and Emotional Learning

*Irodalmi művek használata az angolórán a szociális és érzelmi tanulás
fejlesztésére*

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1 Abstract

The following paper investigates the idea that Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is not only a substantial part of education but also of personality development (1). In school environments, most people agree that students should be raised to be "*knowledgeable, responsible and caring*" (Elias et al. 1997: 1). What is often forgotten is how SEL can enhance all these components. Through SEL, students can learn to understand and express the social and emotional states of their lives and manage them successfully (Elias et al. 1997). As McKay (1982) suggests, literature has many benefits in ESL classes. It is not only useful for developing linguistic skills, but it also increases students' motivation and cultural sensitivity. Based on this framework, the paper presents the findings of a classroom study, in which literary works were integrated into secondary school EFL lessons involving the principles of SEL. The overall aim of this research is to provide empirical evidence of the importance of SEL in teaching EFL, but this is to be executed in an unorthodox manner, so it shows how the world of literature incorporated into the classroom can cultivate students' emotions and world views.

In the classroom study conducted in the secondary context, involving eight groups of students, different pieces of literature were discussed, involving a multitude of poems discussing the topic of love, chapters from a book that dealt with autism spectrum disorder and a few extracts from another novel discussing the issue of racism. Students had the chance to deepen their emotional maturity and social responsibility, reflect on the discussed pieces, draw conclusions, and apply their findings to their own lives – including the classroom environment as well as their everyday existence.

The results of the study imply that students did find the implemented methods and pieces of literature beneficial in developing their social responsibility and emotional maturity. These findings suggest that students benefit from the use of literary works in the classroom when these practices are combined with the concepts of SEL.

Key terms: SEL, EFL, literature, emotional maturity, social responsibility

2 Introduction

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) has long been believed to be a useful tool in helping young people thrive, not only in personal matters but in academic ones as well (1). With the support of SEL, students can develop and possess positive relationships, acquire the skills to become lifelong learners and contribute to an attentive and even-handed world. The most widely accepted definition of SEL was coined by CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning), according to which Social and Emotional learning is

the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions (1).

According to CASEL (1), SEL is viewed as a vital part of education and human development. There are a few elements that are pivotal for SEL to become a reality: authentic relationships between the school, the family, and the community; supportive learning environments; trust-filled and collaborative relationships; a meaningful and thoroughly applied curriculum and continuous evaluation. SEL is particularly useful for addressing various instances of prejudice or injustice, and altogether it can empower students to contribute to the creation of safe and healthy communities.

It can easily be seen that SEL targets many 21st century skills and that its primary aim is to help develop students' social skills, empathy, and growth mindset (Jones et al. 2021). The development of these matters and concepts is especially important in today's forever changing and evolving climate. With the help of the internet, even small children can access a vast amount of information, a quantity considerably larger than they were able to access before. With this in mind, a part of the research question and focus of this paper was conceived: what aspects does SEL foster, and more importantly, what skills does SEL influence in young people? Additionally, there is an abundance of research papers, articles and books that discuss this very topic (CASEL 2003; Kress & Elias 2006; Payton et al. 2008; Mahoney et al. 2018; Pirzada 2018), thus the given paper intends to put this topic under the microscope, only in an entirely different light and from a completely distinct aspect; the aspect of literary works.

Literature itself is “*language in use*”, and hence, it can be used for language learning purposes (Carter & McRae 1996: 20). The use of literature in the classroom dates back a considerable number of years; it was the main source of input in the Grammar Translation method, but it died down eventually, as the rise in popularity communicative approaches

emerged (Khatib et al. 2011). The focal point shifted, and language learners and teachers were focused mainly on the real world and practical situations. However, this did not mean the end of the era of literature in the classroom; as numerous approaches surfaced, the views on literary works were revolutionized. After considering it merely as a body of knowledge and as language practice material, it was finally regarded as a tool for personal development, using exercises which correlate with students' individual experiences, and as a result of this, developing their emotions and imagination (Paran & Robinson 2016).

Since the study of literature involves a great deal of metalanguage (language used for the description of another language), critical concepts and knowledge of conventions, second-language learners need to have prior experiences and involvement with the usage of these in their first language (Carter & McRae 1996). Once that is given, a whole new world of possibilities opens, through which teachers can discuss specific issues with their students using literary works. When the given piece of literature is discussed in the classroom, it is crucial to keep in mind that “full appreciation” of the text cannot be achieved by simply reading the work and using it for vocabulary enhancement. There is a dire need for ample, comprehensive, and disciplined study of literature, which correlates with product-based teaching (discussed in detail subsequently under Using Literary Works in the EFL Classroom), and in turn draws on the “*historical, socio-cultural and biographical information*” (Carter & McRae 1996: 23) about the text. This is the key component to teaching literature in any language, whether it is a student's mother tongue or second/foreign language (Carter & McRae 1996). Without this component, the main value of any literary work is lost, and sadly the class ends up doing what it does most of the time: reading the work together, doing individual writing tasks and vocabulary expansion (Ljung & Mai 2021).

The aims of this research paper are the following: 1) to find out how literature can be used in the EFL classroom with the use of up-to-date methodologies that implement the principles of SEL and 2) to observe the reactions of students to the discussion of certain literary works that revolve around social and emotional problems.

The above-mentioned issue in combination with the principles of SEL is discussed in this paper. In the research conducted, different pieces of literature were discussed and analysed on the topic of love, mental illness, and racism. During the lessons conducted, the students' reflective skills, debating skills, and critical thinking skills were aimed to be developed. 90 students from eight groups in a secondary school were asked to collaborate with the help of various tasks and exercises, to share their thoughts in small groups as well as in front of the whole class. They were asked to provide feedback and thus they could improve their social

responsibility and emotional maturity. In the following sections of this paper, the necessary literature to understand the phenomenon of the combination of literary works and SEL in an EFL, secondary school setting is reviewed, and afterwards, the methods and results of the research are discussed, striving to shine some light on this niche. The objective is quite simple: “to help children and the adults who work with them address tough issues that kids face in their everyday social world” (Ludwig 2012).

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Using Literary works in the EFL Classroom

3.1.1 Arguments for the Use of Literary Works in the Classroom

Literature is part of all people's lives; hence it is part of our experience and using it in the language classroom does not take away from the students' language learning. On the contrary, it establishes connections that will occur in students' future professions, augments learning, and it also raises attention to different cultures (Paran & Robinson 2016).

Literary works have been used for a long time in the language learning process, so it does not come as a surprise that a need for an updated approach came into view which called for the reconsideration of teaching literature in EFL classes (Povey 1967). Literary works are seen, first, as being a substantial help for students to practice their four main skills – reading, writing, speaking, and listening – and they also present new vocabulary and grammar items (Usmonova 2021). Careful deliberation is needed to be able to achieve more than this, and to execute what Povey (1967: 41) deemed to be the goal of the use of literature: *"literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, and complex and exact syntax"*. With this in mind, it can be said that literature can develop language use, since it presents language in lifelike discourse, in a given dialect and register, and in a social context (McKay 1982). These characteristics aid the development of tolerance and understanding as well as emotional growth, when it comes to the discussion of certain topics, such as love, war, loss, or grief (Usmonova 2021).

The use of literature has a multitude of advantages. Khatib et al. (2011) name nine. The principles mentioned are the following: authenticity, motivation, cultural/intercultural awareness and globalization, intensive/extensive reading practice, sociolinguistic/pragmatic knowledge, grammar and vocabulary knowledge, language skills, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking. From these, a few are essential to discuss. With the help of literature, cultural and intercultural awareness can be developed (Carter 1996; Van 2009). In addition, literary works can promote the encouragement of tolerance of differences while portraying a cultural perspective (McKay 1982). Furthermore, literature is viewed as a mean for developing critical thinking because it is claimed that literary pieces can bring about change in students' perspectives (Ghosn 2002), and students can also reflect on instances of their lives, learning and language (Langer 1997).

3.1.2 Arguments Against Using Literary Works in the Classroom

Despite the previously mentioned facts, the importance of the use of literary works in the classroom has significantly decreased, as literature ceased to be the focus of English coursebooks (Usmonova 2021). According to McKay (1982), there are many common arguments against the use of literary works in the classroom.

First, the main aim of language teachers is to teach grammar and vocabulary, and the complex structure of literature does not contribute to this goal. Khatib and his colleagues (2011) present an idea in connection with these issues which is a three-way solution: using simplified texts, using easy texts, and using young adult texts. The last two are justified, however, Carter and McRae (1996) argue against the first point. They imply that the use of authentic, unsimplified material is significant. It is assumed that these are the types of materials that *“construct experiences or 'content' in a non-trivial way which gives voice to complexities and subtleties not always present in other types of text”* (Carter & McRae 1996: 24). The emergence of ambiguities is also a feared point by many teachers, which is one reason why they generally opt for simplified, graded readers. Still, in the opinion of Carter and McRae (1996), these ambiguities provide beneficial opportunities for discussions and contrasting interpretations. This underlines the Reader Response Approach (RRA), which is rooted in constructivism, which entails the composition of each reader's own interpretation when they are met with a text. Hence, there is a very real possibility of having multiple interpretations rather than just a single superior one (Rosenblatt 1994; Khatib et al. 2011).

Second, the study of literary texts provides little to nothing to students' academic goals. Khatib and his colleagues (2011) further reinforce the problem of the complexity of literary works, although they begin to argue for the implementation of literature and bring up advantages. They add that this intricacy can be seen as a source of practice for upper intermediate learners. In addition, the issue of lexical difficulty must be mentioned, more specifically old and outdated vocabulary, which further complicates students' ability to fathom the given piece of literature. As accurate as this assertion is, Khatib and his colleagues (2011) add an outstandingly paramount proposition: teachers are not compelled to implement old literature only. There is a myriad of modern literary texts to be used as a source of input, ones that were written closer in time to the students, ones with more digestible grammar and vocabulary, but most importantly, ones that discuss up-to-date topics and issues globally as well as regionally. Thus, when it comes to the choice that teachers have to make regarding the

discussed piece, they ought to decide on a work that students can obtain and relate to (Van 2009).

Third, literature reflects particular cultural perspectives, making it immensely difficult for students to comprehend (Paran & Robinson 2016). Many more downsides are mentioned by Khatib and his colleagues (2011), such as phonetics and phonology, semantics, selection of materials, literary concepts and notions, literature and academic English, and lastly, cultural barriers. The latter calls for some explanation. Every literary work that students are presented with is “*saturated with certain cultural concepts*” (Khatib et al. 2011: 205) which makes the understanding of the given work frustrating if students are not prepared appropriately (Van 2009). Notwithstanding, when students are prepared in an ample fashion both in their L1 and L2, the differences they are presented with are going to be effortlessly recognised and perceived. Overall, the discussion and consideration of these questions and issues are needed if literary works are to be discussed in a lesson.

3.1.3 Reading in the EFL Classroom

Reading in English in today’s EFL class still needs improvement. Students are forced to read “classics” – if they read literature on their lessons at all – without being prepared for it, or without the care for their current language skills. A solution to this is Carter’s (1996) idea of literature with a small “l”, which is a notion of contemporary literary theory, and it focuses on going against the canon and using texts for the basis of analysis which usually are not considered to be literary. Nonetheless, the hope for pleasurable and intrinsically motivated reading is not all lost. Widdowson (1979: 169) views reading as an “*interaction between writer and reader mediated through the text*”, and according to McKay (1982), this interaction takes place on two levels, linguistic and conceptual. Consequently, reading calls for the ability to correspond to the text by unravelling the language and grasping the presented notions. Reading is viewed by Rosenblatt (1994) as a type of act, one that involves a certain reader, a certain text, a certain time, and a certain context. So, reading takes place in a dynamic environment, where the reader and the text are not two fixed entities acting on each other but are two features that are part of this situation. She also regards literature as a tool that helps students understand others, to put themselves in others’ shoes, and adds that with the help of literature, unique interpretations are encouraged, creating a classroom environment in which students can express their opinions. The list of the advantages of reading in the classroom grows with Hayik’s (2016) ideas, who found that with the use of literary works, students’ awareness can be raised of the embedded messages in the text, and this can affect their world views as well. If not right there,

in the present, then perhaps later in life, when a given trigger strikes them the right way, and all the memories arise, bringing forth the appropriate reaction and answer. These examples support reading, glorifying it to the highest, listing all the advantages and successes the use of literature brought. While these are all to be celebrated, as Povey (1967) asserted, ESL/EFL teachers ought not to forget that the linguistic difficulty of reading is different from the linguistic difficulty of listening. Not every word needs a proper description, as there is a notion called “recognition vocabulary”. As a result of this, students can grasp the meaning of a piece of literature without understanding every word and structure precisely. However, while teachers might consider their students at a given level, in reality, the level of the class is always more diverse. So, if a teacher thinks something about their students, the reality might be completely different, and – referring back to the previously mentioned recognition vocabulary – some students might recognise the new-fangled structure and syntax with ease, putting it into place, whilst others might struggle with it significantly (Povey 1967). Besides, this issue does not only come into view with manageable, straightforward reading tasks. The tangible struggle begins when the aspect of culture is incorporated as well, because as Povey (1967: 44) claims, “*the whole area of cultural comprehension is more likely than language problems to cause difficulty*”. Distinct attention needs to be paid to striking a balance as well when talking about culture: whether the teacher should bring up culture in a universal term, e.g., by dealing with emotions all human beings feel, or specific cultural elements applying to specific groups of peoples. Nonetheless, if the teacher can, in fact, strike this delicate balance, an abundance of possibilities will open up to the students to fulfil, as they are given the opportunity to relate to the given work and see themselves in it. Thus, if there is an intricate balance present, if students truly appreciate the literary work and if they stay open-minded towards it, then even the most difficult to appreciate concepts – those farthest from the students’ own culture – will be understood effortlessly (Povey 1967). McKay (1982) builds on the idea of culture represented in literature as well, raising the question of whether or not a text with a divergent culture represented in it is beneficial for the students. She concludes that it can help develop a tolerance for people from different cultures for the students and the teacher as well.

Alongside this, McKay (1982) also mentions a few other reasons to use literature in the ESL/EFL classroom, and some issues to keep in mind as well. First, she talks about how literature can support students' creativity. This is activated when discussing culture as well and is about confronting uncomfortable and strange topics, more specifically, how this confrontation is worth the struggle after all, since it will promote creativity.

The next point McKay (1982) mentions is that the willingness of the reader to interact with the text is needed to achieve anything at all. This is where motivation proves to be crucial. Individual differences prevail here as well, but the fact stands that because of the motivating factor of literature, it can succour the development of reading proficiency hence contributing to students' academic achievement.

When it comes to reading, Rosenblatt (1991, 1994) names two different approaches: efferent and aesthetic. 1) Efferent reading is a non-literary type of reading, where the attention of the reader is focused mostly on the public aspect of sense. Its name comes from the Latin word "effere", meaning "to carry away"; the reader concentrates on what they will carry away from reading. In 2) aesthetic reading, the text is read with attention to what the words refer to, but what gets more prominence here is the thoughts, feelings and experiences the reader undergoes during reading. Rosenblatt (1991) stresses that reading can fall between these two categories and be a mixture of the two, and she also underlines the idea that texts should not be pigeonholed into these two categories either. Rather, they should be thought of as "*written for a predominant attitude or stance, efferent or aesthetic, on the part of the reader*" (Rosenblatt, 1991: 445). Thus, the focus is on the reader and the individual interpretations of a reader. Different readers have different interpretations of a text, and these interpretations are based on a reader's past experiences. If the literary text awakens a given memory in a reader, an encounter or reminiscence might emerge in their heads, providing the text with a multitude of interpretations (Rosenblatt 1991). Notwithstanding, Paran and Robinson (2016) argue that to some extent, efferent reading should always be present, because, without the ability to discuss and comprehend information about the plot, the characters or the themes, no literary work can be conferred about. Enjoying and appreciating the piece should have prominence, however, bringing in intelligent pieces of information will deepen and strengthen the already existing enjoyment.

3.1.4 Product-Based and Process-Based Teaching

The teaching of literature can happen in two main ways: product-based teaching and process-based teaching (Carter & McRae 1996). 1) Product-based teaching focuses on the analysis and study of literary pieces. It considers literary texts as holistic products which can only be comprehended when viewed as interconnected. In some ways, this approach is opposite to today's language-teaching practice, as "*techniques are presented for the student to acquire*" (Carter & McRae 1996: 21) and are thought to be mastered in the presence of an expert. The more recent techniques tend to put more emphasis on the process of interpretation, and on texts

which are suited for developing language skills (e.g., texts that can be continued, re-written, cut apart, or lexically or grammatically changed up). Other methods which align with product-based teaching view the literary texts as a body of knowledge, which need to be remembered by students and recalled when needed, usually for the sake of examinations. These methods strive to develop the knowledge about literature, and not the knowledge of literature. Hence, it is not mentioned how to use this knowledge to read literature or how to construct individual interpretations (Carter & McRae 1996). Meanings are pre-determined and stable, and the only goal for students is to learn to rely on someone else telling them what to think of a given piece. It is evident that such methods do not develop students' linguistic skills and that those who pursue these methods would distinctly deny the fact that the study of literature and language can be integrated (Carter & McRae 1996).

The other method is called 2) process-based teaching. This technique considers literature as a tool, which can be used in the language classroom for developing language use (Carter & McRae 1996). The teachers advocating for this teaching style are ready to descend from the pedestal and are determined not to view literature with their students as something sacred and untouchable, but as something attainable and understandable. All in all, literature does not have a special status in the classroom, and this has many implications (Carter & McRae 1996). First, the treatment of literary texts in the classroom does not differ from the treatment of other types of texts to a great extent. Second, texts are changed, e.g., cut up and students are asked to rearrange them, or dramatization is used to get students' motivation activated. Third, students are involved with the texts in order to help their comprehension of them unfold, and also to aid them in exploring and expressing their comprehension. This too adds to the maintenance of student-centred, language-based activities. Last, the communication between teacher and student will "*cease to be exclusively one-way*" (Carter & McRae 1996: 22). Pair work and group work activities will be applicable, and these tasks will be used in a way which is suitable for the given environment and text. Overall, the main aim is the growth of self-sufficiency and autonomy amongst students and consequently, the decrease in the reliance on the teacher as a source of knowledge. However, while this can sound like the perfect way of teaching literature in the classroom, Carter and McRae (1996) have argued that this language-based and process-oriented way of discussing literary works is reductive. This aspect is often voiced by those who do not find the linguistic interest in literature and claim that by diminishing the text to its language elements only, the holistic property of literature is lost, cultural traditions are disregarded, and the historical background and life of the writer – from which literature grows out – is, again, taken no notice of. That being so, product-based teaching should not entirely be

glossed over. It is needed in order to shine some light on the historical and cultural background of texts, so the full appreciation of literature can take place, with the addition of an extensive study of a given piece (Carter & McRae 1996).

Carter and McRae (1996) seem to agree with the above-mentioned principle, as they mention that when literary texts are taught, the desired end results include literary experience as well as achieving literary goals. This is further underlined by McRae (1991), as it is said that literary pieces do not refer to these so-called experiences but represent them. Hence, the literary experience is indirect, one that the readers will have to activate.

3.1.5 Communicative Language Teaching Integrated with Literature

Van (2009) also brings up a compelling idea, which is about considering the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) when teaching English literature to students. However, she was not the first one to propose this, as Carter (2007) has already connected the methodology of CLT to the use of literature in the classroom. The advocates of CLT believe that the main function of language is communication, and its primary goal is to develop learners' communicative competence (Hymes 1972). Communicative competence can be defined as the ability to understand and reproduce perceived social behaviours, and additionally, it calls for the involvement of the learner in the production of the target language (Canale & Swain 1981). It involves four competencies: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence (Canale & Swain 1981). Nevertheless, CLT is not considered to be one single method; it is more likely thought of as an approach which has "*left its doors wide open for a great variety of methods and techniques*" (Brandl 2020: 6). All in all, there is no single text that is viewed to have prominence over others, just as there is no single methodology which would prove true above all else. So, CLT uses given materials and methods when those are appropriate for the specific literary work (Brandl 2020). For the application of CLT, Van (2009) perceived that literature would be the proper medium and listed five reasons for this. The first principle of CLT that she mentions is the 1) place of meaning. Meaning is a relationship between the text and the reader, it is dependent on the reader's experience, the context, the style and the difficulty of the language. It is also influenced by the way students relate to the author, the author's identity, culture, or gender. Second is the 2) purpose of learning. Van (2009) at this point elaborates on the fact that literature – when introduced properly – can in fact facilitate the learning process and aid students' motivation. Third is the principle of 3) activities in the classroom. Tasks used in the classroom are subject to change, so they can be used as a medium for meaningful group- and pair work activities which call for the use of

English as the main mode of communication. Projects, dramatizations, or the above-mentioned group work tasks can facilitate active involvement with a literary piece. The fourth principle, the 4) role of the students states that literature is open to individual interpretations, hence students making these interpretations will be the ones who will want to continue the activities taking place in the class simply because they are interested in and fascinated by the topic. The fifth and last principle Van (2009) brings up is the 5) role of the teacher. The teacher is the one who will aid the learners in their process of understanding and interpreting a piece of literature. This must be done in an active, involved and encouraging way, which does not only entail the knowledge of the discussed literary work but also the activities used and the structure of the lessons. All these points and concepts relate to the three main approaches coined by Richards and Rodgers (2014). First, people learn a foreign language more successfully when they can use that language as a means of communication and understanding, rather than just an end. To elaborate, this means that while other language teaching methods use the language syllabus as a basis for organizing the material, CLT puts emphasis on the authentic language use of the learners. Second, the use of Content-Based Instruction shows students' need for learning a second language. CLT prepares learners for the genuine language they will encounter and shows them how to survive, thrive, and develop in this environment. Third, "*content provides the basis for activating both the cognitive and the interactional processes that are the starting point for second language learning*" (Richards & Rodgers 2014: 119). The understanding and utterance of content are thought to activate cognitive skills that provide the foundation for learning and for processes that promote the acquisition of the second language.

3.1.6 How to Select the Most Appropriate Literary Text

The main aim of a language classroom is to teach and practice the language. When we add the element of literature to this, careful consideration is needed when discussing why we are doing what we are doing, and what approach we should follow when dealing with literary works (Paran & Robinson 2016). Clearly, there has been a growing interest in the use of literature in the English classroom, whether combined with any other method or technique or simply used on its own. Whether teachers strive to use it in as a tool to study the language of a literary work, using it as content (in a way where literature is the base material for a course, providing knowledge of historical, social and political background or literary theory) or utilizing it for personal enrichment (encouraging students to recall their personal experiences, opinions, feelings) (Lazar 1993; Paran & Robinson 2016), important selection criteria should be kept in mind. According to Usmonova (2021), an appropriate text for the language classroom

has a 1) lexical complexity which matches the level of the students. It should also provide the opportunity for a two-way relationship between the reader and the text, where readers can interact with the literary work they are studying and interpret it freely. The text should be 2) interesting for the students and it should also 3) portray cultural significance. Another idea to keep in mind is the 4) age of the texts to be used. Most of the time, the older the text, the more difficult it is for students to understand; hence, it should be considered what appeals to them, what they understand with ease and what they can submerge themselves in willingly and contently. Young adult (YA) literature is perfect to this end, as it is written for teenagers, the protagonists are young, and it discusses issues that students can relate to, such as age, gender, or general everyday problems (McKay 1982; Paran & Robinson 2016). As Usmonova (2021) mentions, when students work with authentic English literary texts, they not only develop their knowledge of the language itself but also advance their critical thinking and interpreting skills. Many activities can be used to achieve these goals, like retelling the story, predicting how the story will end, role-playing or filling in the gaps. The most traditional point when it comes to the study of literature, however, is still the cultural approach (Lazar 1993). While it comes with many challenges – the question of reliability and the separation of language and culture –, many advantages arise from it as well. Literature provides "*insights into the possible relationships, emotions and attitudes of the inhabitants*" (Lazar 1993: 17) of a culture; it helps learners see events from another, so far foreign perspective. Nonetheless, one thing should not be forgotten: the representation provided in a literary work is fragmentary, so students should be encouraged to treat it as such, with critical thinking and deep consideration. Teachers should respond to these cultural approaches in literature critically as well, so the portrayed cultural aspects are not evidently accepted, but are "*questioned, evaluated and, if necessary, subverted*" (Lazar 1993: 17).

3.1.7 Emotions During Reading

The use of literature in the classroom is a versatile tool which affects many areas of students' lives, including their emotions. Bibliotherapy – the use of literary works that specifically help with the development and psychological wellbeing of students – is often used to assess these emotions, and it focuses on our feelings, and how those feelings impact our behaviour (Heath et al. 2017). Therefore, Heath and her colleagues (2017) propose the idea of using stories in order to build strong foundations for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), foundations which will have a positive influence on learners' behaviour; because good stories have the ability to alter how one thinks and feels. Bohn-Gettler and Rapp (2014) discuss the

issue of emotions during reading and writing, and they state that there has been a great deal of focus on the cognitive processes that underlie reading and writing, as the goal is to comprehend and improve learners' development and achievement. Emotions are thought to affect the mental strategies which are used while problem-solving. Many theories of emotion also apply when these emotions occur while reading. Firstly, there are Semantic Network Theories. These state that “*semantic memory represents a person's prior knowledge*” (Bohn-Gettler & Rapp 2014: 442). This knowledge is organised into a network, in which pieces of information are connected through semantic relations. Consequently, these emotions illustrate information in this network and are connected to the reader's knowledge and experiences. State-dependent learning is a term which can be touched upon here, as it occurs when one's memory is strengthened when their emotions while learning match their emotions while applying the knowledge (Bohn-Gettler & Rapp 2014). Secondly, in Resource Allocation Models it is believed that emotional information is distinct from other types of depictions, mostly because emotional information is a lot more striking and significant than non-emotional information. Thirdly, the Affect Infusion Model stands for the idea that “*attention is differentially focused as a function of mood*” (Bohn-Gettler & Rapp 2014: 444). This model supposes that emotions are connected with strategies that people rely on when completing a task. Another model and idea that Bohn-Gettler and Rapp (2014) presents is about mood congruency. It is stated that a reader remembers those pieces of information better which relate to their mood and recalls characters and texts easier when they are consistent with their mood. The research that this paper presents will discuss the issue of emotions and their control when discussing controversial topics, such as racism or mental disorder.

3.2 The Applications of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in the EFL Classroom

3.2.1 The Foundations of Social and Emotional Learning

It is undeniable that school has a vitally important role in students' lives. It prepares them to become well-informed, accountable, kind-hearted adults later in their lives. However, this is not a task that is completed with ease, veritable effort is needed to aid children on this path. In addition to this, it should not be forgotten that there is a tool very much present and ready to use for teachers – for those who look for it – that is ideal to achieve the above-mentioned goals: “*thoughtful, sustained, and systematic attention to children’s social and emotional learning (SEL)*” (Elias et al. 1997: 1). Social and Emotional Learning is defined by CASEL as:

the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions (1).

SEL is an essential part of education and human growth, and it focuses on authentic partnership amongst the school, the family, and the community. Through this, it strives to establish learning environments which can be characterized by trust, collaboration, a purposeful curriculum, and ceaseless evaluation (1). Nonetheless, SEL is not only a device with which the emotions and personal experiences of students are fostered, it also contributes to academic achievement, decrease in problematic behaviours, increase in the quality of relationships (Elias et al. 1997), children’s readiness to learn, and helpful school environments (CASEL 2003). In a study, Payton et al. (2008) found that SEL programmes – when implemented consciously and thoroughly – improved academic performance by 11 to 17 per cent. They also listed a few other points that describe SEL, such as: recognising and managing emotions, setting and achieving goals, showing care and concern for others, creating and maintaining positive relationships, making liable decisions and managing interpersonal situations successfully. When realised through classroom practice, SEL “*broadens the framework of education and addresses the complex interplay of emotions and cognition in learning, remembering, and understanding*” (Kress & Elias 2006: 102).

A question arises: Is SEL important? Can a child or a school function without a SEL programme being implemented? Looking at most schools outside of the USA, the answer is yes, children survive without a strict SEL programme, but research in these areas is lacking. Elias et al. (1997) have found that the common factor among academically successful schools is a SEL programme being executed. To further strengthen the idea of SEL being an

advantageous tool for academic success, research has been conducted in the field of neuropsychology. It has been found that many components of learning are interconnected/relational and that social and emotional skills are necessary for cognitive thinking and learning activities. Other papers on brain studies show that memory is coded to specific events and connected to social and emotional situations and that the latter are “*integral parts of larger units of memory that make up what we learn and retain, including what takes place in the classroom*” (Elias et al. 1997: 3). Therefore, it can be concluded that SEL skills are essential for an individual to be able to use their “*biological equipment and social legacy and heritage*” (Elias et al. 1997: 5) to the fullest. Mahoney and his colleagues (2018) in a study about an update on SEL outcome found that students who took part in SEL programmes showed more positive outcomes regarding basic SEL skills, positive social behaviour, and academic performance than those students in the control group. The findings were also reinforced by Payton and colleagues (2008) in that there was an 11 percentile-point gain in academic achievement, suggesting again, that SEL indeed adds to the academic performance of students. The results of the study of Mahoney and his colleagues (2018) clearly suggest that there is a statistically significant benefit for students participating in these programmes and that while the acquired effects and skills fade over time, this is a natural phenomenon, as any effect that takes place is stronger on the short-term than on the long-term. Nonetheless, the long-term effects of SEL are still persistent, mostly when applied to academic growth (and the 11 percentile-point gain). Another reason why knowledge did not fade so much over time is because students perceived a great amount of gain in their social and emotional skills, thus learning turned out to be “*sticky*” (Mahoney et al. 2018: 22), so it faded less.

SEL relates to many other theories, one being *character education*. It concentrates on creating school environments in which not only students are “*knowledgeable, responsible and caring*” (Elias et al. 1997: 1), but teachers are as well. Its goal is similar to SEL’s, developing youngsters emotionally, socially and academically, but doing this in a way which is infused with character development at each step. SEL also relates to service learning, which integrates community service into the classroom. Students are to improve in the same areas as mentioned before, but with the added element of performing needed tasks, learning from those experiences and supplying palpable advantages that serve the community. One another theory can be mentioned to which SEL relates, and it is called school-community-family partnership. It can be seen on Figure 1 below that SEL also believes what this hypothesis states, that the effect of classroom-based instruction is increased significantly when families are made part of the applied programme (CASEL 2003).

3.2.2 The Five Core Competencies

Now that it is established that a strongly implemented SEL programme is key to a thriving school environment, the five groups of core competencies of SEL are to be discussed that teachers should strive for. The five competencies are the following: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible Decision Making, Relationship Skills, and Social Awareness (1; CASEL, 2003; Payton et al., 2008). 1) Self-Awareness is about comprehending one's own emotions, feelings, interests, and values, and how these affect one's behaviours in different contexts. It also entails the ability to be aware of one's strengths and weaknesses and to have a well-grounded awareness of self-assurance and purpose. 2) Self-Management means controlling our emotions, behaviours, and thoughts in given situations in order to reach our goals and aims. This includes detaining fulfilment, managing stress, and feeling motivated to achieve personal goals. 3) Responsible Decision Making entails the ability to make considerate and encouraging choices about behavioural patterns and interactions with people across various situations. Here, individuals should not forget to keep ethical standards in mind and to assess the advantages and disadvantages of given actions. 4) Relationship Skills are about the ability to initiate healthy and supportive relationships and to successfully navigate situations with diverse people as well. It incorporates the capacity to communicate clearly, listen actively and solve problems collaboratively while providing guidance and seeking help when needed. Finally, 5) Social Awareness means being able to put oneself in others' shoes, to feel empathy and understanding for individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures. This includes feeling sympathy for others and comprehending wide-ranging historical and social norms.

Figure 1 below also shows the different levels which need to work together to foster students' Social and Emotional Learning. This does not only involve the classroom environment but the schools, families, caregivers, and communities as well. For a child's life to be completely filled with SEL-influenced occurrences, all these levels have to “*align on common language and coordinate strategies and communication around SEL-related efforts and initiatives*” (1).

Figure 1

5 core competencies of SEL (1)



3.2.3 What SEL Develops and Emotions in the Classroom

Precise *care* is required to be able to work in a coordinated fashion while not losing sight of children's wellbeing. This caring mentality is what should be passed down to children, as caring is primary when it comes to the construction and maintenance of meaningful relationships (Elias et al. 1997). This inherited caring only occurs when children receive the same type of caring from their guardians, and when they can comprehend that they will be accepted and respected for whatever abilities they might or might not possess. As Elias et al. (1997: 6) put it, "*caring is a product of a community that deems all of its members to be important, believes everyone has something to contribute, and acknowledges that everyone counts*". As we can see, caring can also be represented in learning communities. It is paramount to keep in mind the fact that these programmes should not only be concentrating on SEL but also on a community-strengthening belief (Kress & Elias 2006). To achieve this, no shortcuts can be taken; if the desired outcome strives to be authentic, then coordination, integrated programmes, and team effort must be at hand. "*The real message is that children themselves become a community of learners when the learners around them mobilize to become a community with the goal of developing children's skills*" (Kress & Elias 2006: 103).

Students can acquire many skills when their social and emotional skills are attended to, such as the five core competencies, optimism about the future, setting and achieving goals, empathy and respect towards others, and effective communicational skills. So, all in all, these

skills can be taught (CASEL 2003). Additionally, many SEL programmes focus on issues such as substance abuse prevention, violence prevention, sexuality, and character education. SEL is prevention-focused, and it is not yet extended by the topic of reaction, meaning what to do when a problem has already set in. By this it is meant that most SEL programmes deal with ways which – if followed – lead to a life that is not troubled by, for example, addiction or illnesses that could have been prevented. These programmes do not talk about the actions to take if the certain problems have not been prevented and are already present in an individual's life.

Kress and Elias (2006) determine four guidelines, so teachers can attend to SEL skills regarding community and collaboration. First, 1) taking the emotional temperature. It is a technique which basically entails asking students about their emotions with the help of a picture of a thermometer. This method does not only help the creation of a caring community, but it can be used for the creation of lasting SEL programmes as well. It can be viewed as needs analysis and can also be used to show the participants (students, teachers, staff, etc.) that their emotions are taken seriously. Overall, it can show that *“emotional self-awareness and empathy are valued and seen as integral in moving ahead in building a school community”* (Kress & Elias 2006: 104). The second is 2) creating a problem-solving mindset. This will allow the pliability to address difficulties and rethink obstacles and view them as opportunities to learn and improve. Third is 3) collaborating relentlessly, which puts the emphasis on working as a learning community and collaborating where it is possible. This can be done by staff too, not just students – as all these guidelines –, and it models values and behaviours which contribute to the caring climate that has been discussed. This climate in turn helps develop trust amongst participants, it aids respect towards people with divergent ideas, and respectful dialogue. Last, 4) building a share expertise. This approach applies to the school staff more than to the students, but it is still intriguing to mention. It speaks for the support and openness of leaders and states that having a companion – with whom our worries and troubles can be discussed – is essential in the long run.

3.2.4 The Importance of Teachers' SEL Skills

Social and Emotional Learning is not only a crucial part of the development of students but of teachers as well, as it will benefit all participants when it is applied correctly. Sadly, this quality of teachers is often overlooked. They need to use these competencies every day and students find those teachers most influential who practice such traits tirelessly (Jones et al. 2013). Additionally, these aspects are needed in everyday life as well, outside of the school environment; managing emotions and stressful situations are all around individuals, nowadays

maybe more than ever, as the world has changed a tremendous amount in the past few decades with technological advancements and the media (Elias et al. 1997). Students are subjected to high-stress levels and problems in all life areas, such as bullying, mental health problems, and relationships with peers, teachers, parents, etc. Evidently, it makes sense to construct an environment in which teachers are empathetic, pick up on cues and can act calmly in a stressful situation if then, students are expected to do the same. This supportive context is needed for students to be able to comprehend the social and emotional problems they are faced with day after day. After all, the teacher will be considered the role model for their students, whether for their knowledge about their subject or their SEL skills (Jennings & Greenberg 2009). Jennings and Greenberg (2009) add that teachers who are socially and emotionally competent can set the tone of the classroom and can help students have supportive relationships with each other, find and build on their strengths, promote intrinsic motivation, and use respectful and appropriate means of communication. Some more characteristics of these teachers with SEL attributes are having high self-awareness, recognising emotions and knowing how to control them, being joyful, enthusiastic and motivating, and understanding their capabilities (Jennings & Greenberg 2009).

Patrick and his colleagues (2000) found that teacher enthusiasm can also beneficially influence students. Their study was conducted with special attention to intrinsic motivation. Behaviours that are intrinsically motivated are done because the individual wants to do that specific action in order to get enjoyment from it. These behaviours can occur even if there is no external motivation or factor that promises any reward, so it is only done for the interest and curiosity of the person. It is a challenge to find ways in which students can be intrinsically motivated. Most of the methods originate from the self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan (1991), which focuses on the fact that humans can function optimally if their three basic psychological needs are fulfilled: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Additionally, in connection with intrinsic motivation, self-determination theory states that a social context which promotes this self-determination is most likely to also facilitate intrinsic motivation. The theory promotes positive feedback and a healthy teacher-student relationship. Another influencing factor on intrinsic motivation is the effect on interpersonal cues. In an educational context, this means that a student's intrinsic motivation can be facilitated through the perception that the teacher is also intrinsically motivated. In the study conducted by Patrick and colleagues (2000), it was found that an enthusiastic, dynamic teacher tends to have students who are highly intrinsically motivated when it comes to the given subject and the class environment as well. This enhanced level of enthusiasm also leads to students' greater interest and enjoyment, as

well as higher levels of energy and radiance. Notwithstanding, Patrick and his colleagues (2000) clearly state that teacher enthusiasm on its own is not enough to maintain students' intrinsic motivation if there is no learning context present which would be supportive of students' interests and needs. So, this enthusiasm will not replace a student's intrinsic motivation to learn, although it is suggested that it can be an effective mean for "*beginning to mobilize interest, excitement, and curiosity*" (Patrick et al. 2000: 233).

Teachers can have considerable influence on their students, and according to Jones and her colleagues (2013), this influence can take place in at least three ways. Firstly, SEL qualities affect the relationship between teacher and students. When a teacher can manage their emotions, they can display a positive thrill and contentment with their job. Furthermore, those teachers who are equipped with SEL skills can turn toward students warmly and sensitively even when those students might have been a handful. When this qualitative teacher-student relationship is present, students adjust into society better and show higher academic competence. Secondly, students learn from the way teachers manage stress and frustration, how they control themselves and stay focused on the topic. Students also take notice of teachers' methods and manifestations when dealing with other students who lack SEL skills. Teachers should have certain "*habits of mind*" (Roeser et al. 2012: 167), like awareness, flexibility, relationship management and consciousness to be able to deal with problematic students and answer troublesome questions appropriately, always keeping SEL in mind. Finally, Jones and colleagues (2013) also take note of the influence teachers' SEL abilities have on the organization of their classrooms. To be able to build the desired, calm, supporting, and organised classroom environment, some things must take place first, such as effective behavioural management, encouraged creativity, student autonomy, and student reflection. To be able to achieve these, a trained teacher is needed who is equipped with all the necessary SEL skills to bring about this goal.

3.2.5 The Effects of SEL on Students' Mental Health

SEL can also benefit mental health and psychological wellbeing as it promotes prosocial behaviours, reduces emotional anxiety, and improves academic performance. However, SEL has been criticized for not paying enough attention to historically marginalized groups, because it tends to focus too much on the widely accepted social rules and it fails to look after the engagement of students in comprehending and labelling equity, such as "*positionality, identity development, interpersonal bias, and racism*" (Stark et al. 2021: 2). There has been development in recent years that included the transformative SEL approach, which entails the

development of positive ethnic and racial identity, and analyses privilege and power in a critical fashion (CASEL 2021). It focuses on engaging young people in working towards equity and on developing “*identity, agency, belonging, curiosity, and collaborative problem-solving*” (CASEL 2021). If these transformative SEL programmes are implemented, the conventional SEL model will improve, and its relevance will increase to students from various cultural backgrounds. It is also known that students with learning disabilities, language disorders, mental delays, and neurological disorders have difficulties when it comes to SEL skills (Elias et al. 1997; Agoratus 2020). These students are more likely to have difficulties regarding reading social cues and managing frustration and stressful situations. (Elias et al. 1997). Those students who are on the autism spectrum can have shortcomings in the areas of SEL skills, and with the use of SEL, these areas can be addressed. They also might need help with having these social and emotional skills, acquiring them, and using them appropriately. It is also important to view behaviour as a skill, and not as a “*compliance issue*” (Agoratus 2020: 35), as students with autism may act inappropriately because they do not know what is expected of them or they do not have the communication and coping skills needed to be able to react in a suitable fashion. SEL improves attendance, reduces problematic behaviours, and increases peer interactions; attributes which can be difficult for students with autism (Agoratus 2020).

3.2.6 Literature Integrated with SEL

Most SEL programmes are usually delivered in separate educational settings. There is, however, an alternative way in which social and emotional skills can be taught, and that is through subject matter as an essential element of the content learnt (Shechtman & Abu Yaman 2012). This type of learning comes with the liberal arts, such as literature. Students, when reading a literary piece, identify the characters, understand their problems and hindrance, and ultimately start understanding their peers and acquire insight into their own emotions and behaviour. As Storey (2019) states, the value of literature does not only lie in moral education but in helping children explore and interpret life. Literature includes a great variety of emotions and experiences that each reader can interpret and encounter individually. This can be aligned with the concept of SEL which concentrates on students' ability to compare their own perspectives to those around them and understand that one situation can be interpreted in various ways. Literature has an immense power to teach empathy, a sense of community, perspective, decision-making, critical thinking, empowerment, and moral judgement (Storey 2019). Research conducted by Stevahn and colleagues (1996) has shown that the group that has been taught conflict resolution skills through a literary work retained this knowledge and was

able to apply these skills, a shift happened in their views about conflicts together with an improvement in their academic achievement.

Reading can be viewed by students as a pleasurable act, as it can be a source of entertainment, stress relief or escape. It can also be compelling because youngsters can get reassurance about their feelings and experiences from a literary work. While they are reading, teenagers can develop self-awareness, self-identification, and self-construction which can help them transition from adolescence to adulthood (Howard 2011). This means students recognise SEL skills and the social and emotional power literature can have and are encouraged to explore the given literary work (Storey 2019). Literature also deals with a myriad of topics which can be a convenient tool for SEL. Elias and colleagues (1997) mention the following ones: friendship, courage, duty, loss, loyalty, freedom, family, and friends. When students are asked to relate these themes to their own lives, teachers are striving to construct a new context of meaning for what otherwise might be perceived as a dead work.

A few practical realisations of the use of literature integrated with SEL can be the following: read-aloud, group discussion, journal writing, problem-solving, role-playing, introspective essays, creative writing projects, and discussion questions (Ludwig 2012; Plucker 2019). Plucker (2019) brings a great example of the integration of literature and SEL, the ability to deal with failure. Success is overemphasized in today's society, so students might not know how to react when they are faced with obstacles. Literature can help with this issue, for example, with the help of biographies. Many famous scientists, inventors, and athletes have encountered failures that they had to overcome. These texts can show children resilience and help them see failure as not a negative process but as something which provides opportunities for improvement. As Shechtman (2009: 37) stated, *“through the imaginative process that reading involves, children have the opportunity to do what they often cannot do in real life – become thoroughly involved in the inner lives of others, better understand them, and eventually become more aware of themselves”*.

3.2.7 Summary

To sum up, literary works have been and will be part of our lives, so they should not be left out of our classrooms. Literature can be viewed as a helping tool when it comes to the four main skills teachers aim to develop (Usmonova 2021). Nonetheless, educators should see further and realise that literature can increase all language skills as it is a representation of lifelike dialogues, registers, and social contexts (McKay 1982). With these in mind, students can grow emotionally and advance in the discussion of certain taboo topics, for example, loss,

war, or grief (Usmonova 2021). To encourage students to read is the initial step that must be taken, and as Carter (1996) suggests, literature has to be made something feasible and enjoyable for every learner. This is further reinforced if the texts to be discussed are chosen accurately, with the principles of lexical complexity, interest and cultural significance kept in mind (Usmonova 2021).

To summarise Social and Emotional Learning, it can be said that it is a vital part of education as well as life itself. SEL focuses on the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills needed to develop healthy identities and manage emotions. It also calls for empathy towards others, a supportive environment, and responsible decisions (1). Besides qualities, SEL also strengthens academic achievement, and as Elias et al. (1997) have concluded, SEL is essential for people to be able to fully embrace their mental and social skills. The five core competencies it develops are Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible Decision Making, Relationship Skills, and Social Awareness (1; CASEL 2003; Payton et al. 2008).

Based on these facts, the integration of literary works with SEL seem more than possible, as Shechtman and Abu Yaman (2012) suggest in their study, saying that SEL skills can be taught through subject matter as an essential element of the learnt content. This type of learning is aided by liberal arts, such as literature. The process of reading and getting to know certain characters, identifying with their problems and obstacles leads to understanding students' own emotions, as well as their peers'. As Storey (2019) argues, literary pieces are filled with emotions and experiences ready for the learner to interpret. This aligns with SEL in the aspect of concentrating on students' capacity to relate to others' perspectives and interpret certain situations in various ways. The act of reading also helps develop core SEL principles, such as self-awareness, self-identification, and self-construction (Howard 2011). Finally, it cannot be forgotten that literature is a beneficial tool to use if a teacher wants to introduce any topic to a class, as literature encompasses every possible theme, such as freedom, courage, or friendship (Elias et al. 1997). So, it can be said that the integration of literary works and SEL is a possibility worth exploring further.

4 Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this paper is to explore how Social and Emotional Learning could take place in a secondary school EFL classroom with the help of literary works. To achieve this, 23 lessons were held to eight groups of students in three topics: love, autism, and racism. In the following section of this paper, the creation of the lessons, the lessons themselves, the results, and some difficulties encountered along the way will be discussed.

Emerging from the literature, the following research questions were formulated:

- RQ 1 How can literature be discussed in the secondary EFL classroom using up-to-date methodologies based on the principles of Social and Emotional Learning?
- RQ 2 How do secondary school EFL students react to the discussion of literary pieces revolving around social and emotional problems?

5 Methods

5.1 Participants and Settings

The presented research was conducted in a secondary vocational school in Hungary. This setting added the element of the students not being the most proficient or motivated, and posed extra challenge to see how they will receive the topics. Eight groups of students (90 students overall) participated in the research project. All the three lessons were strived to be held for all the groups to provide sufficient and reliable data. The students were from grades 9 to 11, from ages 15 to 17, their level was between intermediate and upper-intermediate (B1-B2). The groups consisted of 15-20 students and the lessons were 45 minutes long. The lessons were held in the place of their regular English lessons. Each groups' teachers were able to hand over their groups for the purpose of this research. The groups did not discuss the upcoming material in the syllabus in the lessons but deviated from the topic and participated in the lessons discussed in this paper. The students knew the lessons were to be held by someone else than their teacher, so they knew the lessons were going to be different but did not know the exact themes to be discussed or the aim of the research; they were only presented with these at the beginning of the lessons.

As part of the study, interviews were conducted with three English teachers. The interviewees were three secondary school teachers from different age groups, from their 20s, 30s and 50s. All of them used literary pieces in their classroom beforehand and shared their ideas and experiences with the author. Table 1 presents pieces of information about them. Cecil is a teacher of more than 30 years; she has worked in many schools but always remained in the public education system. Currently, she works in a secondary school in Budapest and is a head teacher of a 7th grade class. Mark is only in his 30s, but he is already head of the English department at his school. Sylvia was the youngest interviewee, but she had the most diverse experience out of all the participants. She is currently working at a university's practice school, where teacher trainees do their short-term teaching practice, but she has worked at a language school, a secondary school and at a vocational school as well.

Table 1*Interview participants*

Pseudonym	Approximate age	Teaching experience	Type of school	Place of work
Cecil	50	+ 30 years	Secondary school	Budapest
Mark	30	10 years	Secondary school	Budapest
Sylvia	25	5 years	Practice school	Budapest

5.2 Data Collection Methods**5.2.1 Classroom Study**

The lessons were planned around three topics, namely love, autism, and racism. All lesson plans were made based on the principles of SEL and aimed to encourage students to improve their emotional maturity and social responsibility through literary works. The lessons included pair work and groupwork activities as well as individual and whole class exercises. Each lesson started with a warmer that helped students open up more and share their ideas freely. Background music was also played for students while they were working. Of course, as these lessons were a one-time occurrence, the desired atmosphere was lacking behind the environment that could have been achieved with a long-term implemented SEL programme. Students were given the opportunity to personalise the tasks they were presented with and to do what they felt comfortable doing, but they were also encouraged to step out of their comfort zone, whether by talking in front of the class or discussing controversial topics with their peers.

In the study, students were subjected to qualitative as well as quantitative data collection methods (Mahboob et al. 2016). This way, while qualitative methods tend to focus on the process, be interested in meaning, are descriptive and involve fieldwork, they can also have downsides which need to be balanced, such as not assigning frequencies to data, ambiguities being overlooked, and their findings not being able to be extended to wider populations. On the other hand, quantitative methods ensure validity, they try out the instruments that will be used in the study (usually with the help of clarification, definition, or a pilot study), and with the help of that, check their relevance and reliability. However, they tend to be confirmatory and deductive as well (Ochieng 2009). So, with the balanced use of these two methods, the study is aiming to become as valid and reliable as possible, while providing widespread data that is

concerned with the process and the meaning. Data was collected with the help of feedback sheets. First – during the pilot – pieces of paper were distributed to students at the end of the lesson, then, later data was collected with the help of Google Forms. Students were asked to answer 6 Likert-scale questions and were encouraged to provide written feedback, but the latter was voluntary (Mackey & Gass 2005).

5.2.1.1 About the Three Lesson Plans – Lesson About Love

The lesson about the topic of love was held in two settings. Once, as a single lesson and once as two lessons right after each other. In this lesson, students dealt with poems only. They started with a brainstorming activity about love in general to get them introduced to the topic, and then moved on to a gap-filling exercise with a poem. They were asked to use Adrian Henri's *Love is...*, which talks about how many different things love can feel like. The latter task required them to read the poem about diverse representations of love and then to fill in the gaps according to their interpretation. Afterwards, they were able to compare their answers to the original poem and were asked to write an extra stanza to the poem, many of which were read out loud during the lesson. The aim of doing this was to let them express themselves and to make them follow a rhyming pattern in one or more stanzas. The poem continuing task was only done in one lesson, where the students had two lessons right after each other, so more time could be filled with exercises. Students also had to complete a project. By this, they were able to cooperate, collaborate, and discuss things together as well as present their original ideas to the whole class at the end. They worked in three groups and made a poster on love towards one's spouse, pet, and self. Most poems included were at an accurate level for the students, however, some challenging ones were used as well, such as *A Conceit* by Maya Angelou, which deviated from the usual unproblematic love, and *Serenity Prayer* by Brian Bilston, which discussed the simplicity of love with references to popular culture. The ones that could be considered "easier" to understand included two Rupi Kaur poems, *Love Is a Skin* and *Frisbee* by Brian Bilston, and *She waits* by Charlie Milne. All these were straightforward and used less complicated vocabulary.

These posters were presented at the end and later on displayed in their classroom as a permanent piece. Students added the poems, drawings, and pieces of art to their poster and were encouraged to add unknown words as well. This way, they not only learnt about the different concepts of love, but also broadened their vocabulary. Students were given a piece of paper containing all the discussed poems at the end of the lesson to read at home if they wish so. The lesson ended with the students listening to Derek Walcott's poem, *Love After Love*. They were

shown an illustrated video of this poem as the last task, to end the session with an important conclusion, that – as the title suggests – love is one of the most important qualities a person can have. The lesson plan and the poems can be found in Appendix 11.1 and the posters can be seen in Appendix 11.3.

5.2.1.2 About the Three Lesson Plans – Lesson About Autism Spectrum Disorder

The lesson on autism spectrum disorder was built up intentionally in a way that students would not suspect the theme of the lesson until after they have been introduced to the book. Students were kept in the dark with the help of 3 exercises, the first one being a warmer task, where students had to make a list of things they liked and disliked, the pieces of paper were collected and then randomly redistributed. After trying to guess the person who could have written the things on their pieces of paper, it was concluded that people are a lot more than what they like or hate. Next, they were presented with the likes and dislikes of the protagonist of Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of The Dog in the Night-Time*. This book is about a 15-year-old boy called Christopher who is on the autism spectrum. He is the narrator of the story, and the book beautifully portrays how his brain works so distinctly. Students tried to guess some characteristics of the main character, and only after this were they able to listen to a few chapters from the book. Their guesses were divergent, most of the time they were not able to make correct guesses about the protagonist. While listening, they had to either answer a few questions or draw an illustration of what they heard. This was asked of them to make sure they paid attention while listening. At this point, they were asked if they found something special about the protagonist; the fact that he was on the autism spectrum. Some groups did better in this aspect than others, but generally all groups figured out the solution. As a last task, they had to continue the story from the point of view of three different characters. They could either be the original protagonist or two other, very different characters. They were encouraged to create dramatic endings and involve the previously known facts as well. By doing so, they had to put themselves in others' shoes, practice some writing, and keep in mind the moral of the story – that just because someone has a condition, it does not mean they are worth less. The lesson plan can be found in Appendix 11.1.

5.2.1.3 About the Three Lesson Plans – Lesson About Race

The planning of the lesson about race required careful consideration and thorough background knowledge, for the author as well as for the students. The warmer here was a song (*Freedom* by Beyoncé) which students had to listen to and then were asked to write their

feelings down. By doing so, they were encouraged to share these feelings with each other, and the task also helped them to practice listening and guessing the topic of the lesson, which in most cases was a correct prediction. Following this, students were asked to make a mind map in groups about racism globally as well as locally. This was an effective way to collect their ideas together. The same answers circulated, involving “hate”, “African Americans” and “gypsies”. They had to share their answers, the combined mind map was drawn up on the board – so the collected ideas could be seen altogether – and with the help of frontal teaching, students could hear about the origins of slavery, racism, colonisation, immigration, and the effects of these topics in today’s society. It was an important factor for the students to be equipped with the necessary knowledge to discuss this topic, and with some helping questions, a fruitful discussion emerged as well. The local point of view was also emphasized to make the topic feel even more relevant and closer to the students. Next, a few chapters were read from *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett. This book is about two twin sisters who were both born into an African American family, but one of them could pass for white. The difference in their life is the main topic here, how their opportunities and the attitudes towards them differ based on their skin colour. While listening, one half of the students had to list characteristics of one of the protagonists, the other half about the other one. These lists gave the students an insight into the sisters’ privileges and struggles. By making them pay attention to one character only, the workload was divided, and the collected answers were shown on a slide to make sure everyone understood the differences between the two girls. Then, they were asked to complete a jigsaw reading task in pairs to practice asking targeted question from each other, and lastly, they had to write an ending to the story. The endings were focused on the difference between the two sisters, how their whole lives were determined by their skin colour. With the help of this task, they could put themselves in others’ shoes and reflect on the issue of racism even further. As a final task, students had to write an exit slip mentioning one idea they took away with them from the lesson. This task made sure they will remember at least one idea from the lesson, and as it can be seen in 6.3, Table 3, they mentioned some crucial dilemmas that are worth talking about. The lesson plan can be found in Appendix 11.1.

The table below provides an overview of the tasks done on each lesson.

Table 2*Tasks Done during the Three Lessons*

Lesson about Love	Lesson about Autism Spectrum Disorder	Lesson about Race
Brainstorming about the idea of love	Writing a list of things students love and hate	Listening to a song and trying to guess the topic
Gap-filling exercise with Adrian Henri's <i>Love is...</i>	Making assumption about the book's (<i>The Curious Incident of The Dog in the Night-Time</i> by Mark Haddon) protagonist based on the things he loves and hates	Mind map making in groups about racism (globally and locally) Providing background knowledge about the topic
Writing and additional stanza to the poem	Answering questions while listening to a few chapters, fine tuning guesses about protagonist	Filling in worksheet while listening to a chapter of a book (<i>The Vanishing Half</i> by Brit Bennett)
Poster making, groupwork activity about different types of love (spouse, pet, self)	Continuing the story from different points of view, group work activity	Jigsaw reading in pairs
Presentation of the posters		Continuing the story from different points of view, group work activity

5.2.1.4 Student Feedback Sheets

Students were asked to provide feedback at the end of each lesson. These questions were the following:

- How much did you enjoy the activities?
- To what extent do you think they contributed to developing your emotional maturity and social responsibility?
- How much did you like the discussed poems/book?
- To what extent was the language of the literary work at an accurate level?
- How much would you like to take part in similar types of lessons in the future?
- To what extent do you feel inspired to read in English after the lesson?

The examination of the answers to these questions can be seen under Results.

5.2.2 Interview Study

Interviews were also used as a tool for data collection, three English teachers were questioned about their practices and viewpoints on using literature in the English classroom and on the importance of students' SEL skills. With the help of these interviews, a connection was made between the author and the interviewees which helped the reveal of personal feelings and situations and the tearing down of barriers between the two parties (Denzin & Lincoln 2005).

The following interview questions were asked.

- Have you ever used literary works in the EFL classroom? What types of literary works did you use? Why?
- How do you think students benefit from reading literary works in the EFL classroom?
- What is your opinion on the conducted study and the endeavour to care for students' SEL skills?
- How important it is for you to aid students' emotional development in the EFL classroom?

5.3 Limitations and Ethical Concerns

The limitations and additional improvements of the study are points that need further elaboration. Limitations involved the short-term implementation of the programme and the fact that only one secondary school was used as the object of the study. Group diversity regarding language level and a restricting, rather outdated school setting also added to the difficulties. Further improvements and research are needed to get a full picture that is accurately representative of the Hungarian field. Another aspect that could have been done is a check-up session with the participants to see if their memories are still vivid and their SEL skill are at a higher level, or not. More schools' participation would be needed with a diverse group setting, the number of lessons should increase, and all groups should take part in each lesson, providing mandatory feedback after each session. This would undoubtedly be a more time-consuming work, but the larger scope of it would provide an accurate representation of today's Hungarian teenagers' social and emotional skills, which are not highlighted in the curriculum enough.

6 Results

The data analysis and discussion of results is presented in three sections, centring around the three different lessons. Students were asked to answer six questions in all lessons; this was the data that provided the basis for the analysis, as well as additional written feedback and a few pieces of oral feedback, both of which were voluntary.

6.1. Lesson about Love

This lesson plan focused on the use of poems, on students' feelings, creativity, and cooperation. It included a project where students had to make a poster on one of the three types of love (in this case, love towards one's spouse, pet, or self). They were asked to work in groups for a long time, discuss, cooperate, and create a poster and present it together. The feedback they gave showed that students immensely enjoyed working in these groups and they thought they should be able to do this more often as well. *"I really enjoyed it and I loved that we had to work in groups"* and *„it was a really enjoyable lesson because I like to work in groups with my classmates and it was a great exercise"* were some of the pieces of feedback they had given. While one would assume that today's school system is not focused on frontal teaching, still, group work tasks were a rarity for these students, and they thoroughly enjoyed them. It must be mentioned that these students were attendants of a secondary vocational school, and the mode of their English lessons was rarely the most student-centred and cooperative.

However, this only added to the element of their enjoyment, and can be seen in their answers to the Likert-scale question "How much did you enjoy the activities?". The mean of this question was 4.65 (n=44) indicating that students found the exercises and the lesson highly enjoyable. Besides the high level of entertainment, there was one student who was on the fence about the tasks. This fact is not surprising, as every student's interest is different and unique, so it cannot be expected of them to enjoy the same thing.

The second question – "To what extent do you think they contributed to your emotional maturity and social responsibility?" – proved to be too difficult first, as it used words and concepts that were foreign to students, so it had to be explained. However, after they have understood it, they gave great answers. They rated the question quite high, with a mean of 3.97 (n=44), showing that students believed the tasks were beneficial for their emotional maturity and social responsibility, and as this feedback was provided anonymously, they could not have been scared and could not have changed their answers because of being afraid of stating their opinion with their name and face. The answers provided to the second question depict that the

lesson plan was successful at achieving what it strived to. Students who participated in these lessons showed great involvement and cooperation, they took the tasks seriously, presented their work confidently, and found the posters aesthetically pleasing (these posters can be found under Appendix 11.3).

The third question, “How much did you like the discussed poems?” had a mean of 4.09 (n=44). Choosing the right poems proved to be more difficult than anticipated, but, as students have stated, it was still an understandable and enjoyable selection of poetry. When having individual discussions with students, the group who worked with poems about love for one’s spouse stated that their poems were considerably more difficult than the others’. However, all students were provided with synonyms to more difficult words in the poems, they could ask questions, and even use Google Translate if they felt like it was necessary.

The next question “To what extent was the language of the poems at an accurate level?” talks about the issue of language difficulty further, as most students understood the poems with a little help, but it is visible from the results – a mean of 4.25 (n=44) – that the language of the poems were the most difficult compared to the other literary works used on the other lessons.

When it came to the willingness and motivation of students, as the answers to the next question – “How much would you like to take part in similar types of lesson in the future?” – present, they showed great enthusiasm and interest about participating in similar lessons. This was highlighted by their feedback as well: *“I really enjoyed it!”* and *„I think this lesson strongly facilitated to the improvement of our emotional intelligence and maturity, probably this will make us interested in psychology.”* The mean of this question was 4.5 (n=44), and as it can clearly be seen, the latter piece of feedback seems to be at a higher level than all the others. This is because there was one student in one group whose level of English was outstanding, as well as their view on life. He personally handed in his feedback sheet at the end of the lesson and proceeded to have a discussion with the author, asking about their motivation, future opportunities, and the lesson in general. This student was also the one who recommended adding *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen to the poster about self-love and the case of Mr. Darcy. His abilities were clearly above the level of his peers, and he was himself on the autism spectrum. He participated in the other lessons as well, so the discussion of his role will continue there.

The last question was “To what extent do you feel inspired to read in English after the lesson?” The results were fairly varied and represented that even if most of the students enjoyed the lessons and the tasks, they might not have enjoyed all the poems equally. The mean here

was 4.06 (n=44), which is still considerably high, but their enjoyment was certainly lacking in this category.

6.2 Lesson about Autism Spectrum Disorder

The lesson about autism spectrum disorder focused on the sensitization of students regarding this topic. It discussed Mark Haddon's book, *The Curious Incident of The Dog in the Night-Time*, which can be seen as the diary of a protagonist who is on the autism spectrum, one that shows his innermost thoughts, feelings, and thought processes. In some of the groups, usually the ones that were made up of 10th or 11th graders, students quickly realised the book was about someone who is on the autism spectrum. On the other hand, those in 9th grade took a longer time recognising the characteristics of the protagonist and connecting it to their background knowledge about autism. The discussions at the end of the lessons proved to be rather successful, as students – with helping questions from the teacher – were able to voice their honest opinion about this topic. Most groups came to the conclusion that people who are on the autism spectrum are not different from those who are not, and hence, should be treated the same as others, with patience, kindness, and compassion. However, it needs to be added, that in one group students had very strong opinions about this topic. The previously mentioned student, who had given the very distinguished piece of feedback on the lesson about love, left the room before the start of the lesson because he had seen the topic previously. This was unfortunate, as his reaction to the lesson would have been engrossing, but the best solution was to let him leave right then and there. As it turned out, this person and some other members of the class had an ongoing dispute, as the others were not able to understand how and why he does things, and vice versa. The class members stated their opinion firmly, that just because someone is on the autism spectrum, they should not be treated differently, but they also should recognise themselves and not act selfishly. This is a two-way situation, and it felt like neither of the parties really wanted to understand each other and resolve their conflict. The background of this could have been that “*emotions represent information within the network and are thus connected to relevant knowledge and experiences*” (Bohn-Gettler & Rapp 2014: 442), so, as their experiences were negative, their emotions portrayed it as well. Therefore, the lesson progressed without the one student relative smoothly, no big controversial comment was said, nevertheless, the student came back into the classroom after the lesson to have a chat with the author and the teacher. The class's teacher made a remark regarding the fact that she thought the student could have stayed and might have enjoyed the lesson. The student gave the author a piece of paper with terms on it that were connected to autism spectrum disorder. He had done

this to educate the author and not as an insult. Another comment made by this student was that he had known the lesson was going to be about autism because he had seen the blue cover of the book. The book itself has many varieties of covers, but if the student does not mention this detail, it would have gone unnoticed.

Students were asked the same questions about all lessons, but their answers were always varied. The mean of the question “How much did you enjoy the activities?” was 4.54 (n=64), indicating that students enjoyed most of the activities, they liked putting themselves in the characters’ shoes and continuing the story with the added element of dramatization. “*I enjoyed being Christopher*” was one piece of feedback provided that can underline this. One longer piece of feedback was received:

I really liked this lesson, it was fun for the most part! And I really like the fact that it brought attention to autistic people. I have an autistic friend and he’s really nice! What I didn’t like was some of my peers’ reaction to autism... So, very good lesson, I loved your teaching style! Have a nice day!

This comment shows that just because on the whole, students seem to receive the message of the lesson, as individuals, they can still be unsure about what is going on or if they agree with the said principles. It needs to be said that this particular class was not so quick to recognise what the topic was, they were 9th graders, but all in all, they did not show signs of judgement.

The question “To what extent do you think they contributed to your emotional maturity and social responsibility?” yielded varied answers. They rated this question with a mean of 3.9 (n=64) because – as they have stated – they had already heard about this topic and felt decently educated on it. So, there was some confusion about the question, it could have been formulated differently, so the students’ confusion was understandable. Still, they found the lesson beneficial and useful and will hopefully remember what they have heard on the lesson later in their lives.

The liking of the book was also diverse – “How much did you like the discussed book?” – ; while many thoroughly enjoyed it, others thought it was too absurd. This is supported by the mean 4.0 (n=64). As students have said, the topic, without any introduction, was too shocking (as the book discusses the death of a dog who was murdered with a garden fork in the first chapter), but it is important to be said that the topic was introduced without a detailed foundation on purpose, to make students gradually realise what the theme was.

On the other hand, the level of the book – “To what extent was the language of the book at an accurate level?” – was perceived by all the students as understandable, with the mean of 4.4

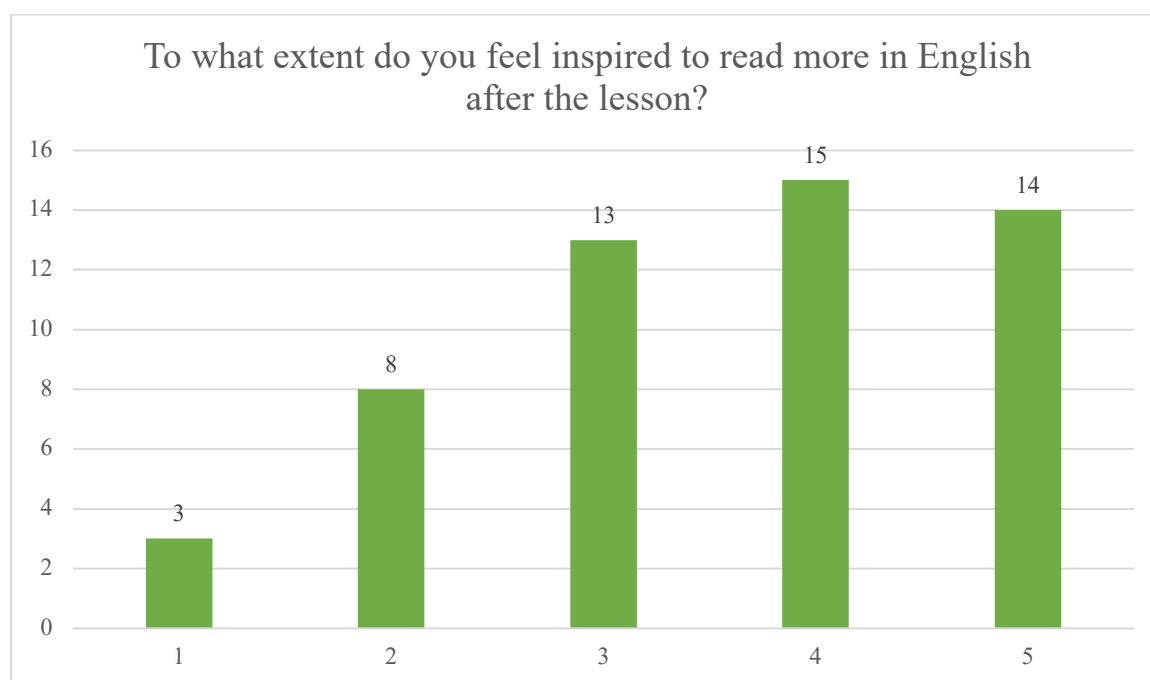
(n=64). This is accurate, the language of the book is indeed appropriate for even lower-level students than B2.

Numerous students (n=59) felt like they would like to partake in similar lessons in the future, which is shown by the mean 4.4 (n=64) to the question “How much would you like to take part in similar types of lessons in the future?”. Students had provided many encouraging pieces of feedback regarding this aspect as well, such as “*This lesson was very good and I think you can be a very good teacher.*”, „*I really enjoyed how energetic and positive you were doing this whole lesson. It kinda made my day.*” and „*I think you will be a good teacher. You have the facilities to be a good, contemporary teacher.*”

The last question here provided the most diverse results, as Chart 1 represents: “To what extent do you feel inspired to read more in English after the lesson?” The mean was 3.5 (n=64), and many students felt truly motivated to read in English or they have already been reading in English, as one piece of feedback shows “*I already read a lot of English fanfictions. I mostly read in English.*” Sadly, no other feedback was provided that could be brought as a cause for the varied answers. One thing that could have shaped the answers was the topic, as said previously.

Chart 1

To what extent do you feel inspired to read more in English after the lesson? – Lesson about Autism Spectrum Disorder



6.3 Lesson about Race

This lesson called for the most thorough planning for it be done accurately. Students mostly focused on pair work during this lesson, they were given worksheets (found in Appendix 11.2) they had to complete and that they could keep after the lesson. Following proper introduction to the topic with the help of a song and a brainstorming task, a discussion was held with the help of frontal teaching to activate students' background knowledge or provide the necessary knowledge if they didn't have it beforehand. Close attention was paid to the global and local implications of race and racism to enable students to view this issue not as something remote from them, but as something they can perceive every day. A generous amount of feedback was provided by the students, as they had to write an exit slip at the end of the lesson. These pieces of feedback show how passionate the students were about the topic. The pieces of feedback have been organised in Table 3 by the content of their answers and the number of answers. The statement they had to answer was "Write down one thing you're taking away from the lesson." The answers show students' understanding of the seriousness of this issue and that they became aware of it even more and are ready to act on their beliefs if needed.

Table 3

Content and Number of Answers

Content of Answers	Number of Mentions
Acceptance towards others	10
New words from the lesson	3
Development in racism	2
A new book about racism	2
BLM	1
Supporting people of colour	1
Difference in lives because of different skin colours	1
Hate towards people of colour	1
Being faithful	1
Racism can be talked about	1
The history of racism	1
Human rights	1

Students showed great enthusiasm about the activities, as the mean for the question “How much did you enjoy the activities?” was 4.6 (n=40). A reason for this high level of enjoyment could have been that students recognised the importance of the topic and were able to see a life-like example through the discussed book, *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett. Some students needed more explanation or an example, maybe some nudging to start working and to speak up, but all students participated willingly after they got comfortable.

As the exit slips have already presented, students felt like the lesson contributed to their development. This can also be seen in their answers given to the question “To what extent do you think they contributed to your emotional maturity and social responsibility?” which produced a mean of 4.1 (n=40). The theme is topical, so students might have already been informed about it, but all in all, they have found the lesson to be beneficial.

Most of the students also liked the book and felt the level of it was accurate, as the mean of 4.2 to the question “How much did you like the discussed book?” and the mean of 4.25 (n=40) to the question “To what extent was the language of the book at an accurate level?” show.

When it came to the will to participate in similar tasks, students were enthusiastic as the mean of 4.5 (n=40) shows to the question “How much would you like to take part in similar types of lessons in the future?”. Their feedback was the following: “*There should be more lessons like this in the future.*”, “*Everything was perfect.*” and “*I really like this lesson. I love it.*” As the mean and their pieces of feedback show, students felt that this was a serious issue to talk about and thought that they should be able to discuss such things in the school setting more often.

Many of the students also found the book compelling, and as it can be seen on their exit slips, they were encouraged to finish reading the whole book as well. To the question “To what extent do you feel inspired to read more in English after the lesson?” they provided a 4.0 (n=40) mean.

6.4 Interview with Teachers

Interviews were also conducted with three Hungarian teachers who were asked about their opinion on the use of literary works in the English classroom. Various excerpts of the transcriptions of the interviews can be seen under Appendix 11.4.

These interviews further underlined and strengthened the previously stated beliefs about the importance of the use of literature in the EFL classroom. All the teachers that have been interviewed used or use literary works in their classes regularly. Some use the literary pieces as

they come, some opt for graded readers and some for film adaptations. What all teachers had in common was that they found it paramount to place enough focus on something more than just literature: to aid students' language ability as well as their emotions, their capacity to express themselves and to put themselves in others' shoes. It was also mentioned by Mark that literature is the authentic approach towards the elements of cultural reality. This shows that 21st century teachers realise the importance and potential of literature in the English classroom when it comes to addressing present and sometimes controversial topics. The interviewees differed a fair amount when it came to their views on the literary pieces they have discussed or would discuss. The biggest difference was about using literary works from not contemporary writers, such as Shakespeare. Cecil said she would never bring in the works of Shakespeare, while Sylvia has already done so and talked about the fruitful results it has yielded. Young adult pieces were brought as examples as well as classics, fiction and nonfiction, novels and poems. A wide variety of literature could be seen in these teachers' lessons used for multiple purposes. Mark and Sylvia used these works to supplement the given course material, Cecil intertwined the use of the literary works with another lesson, and Sylvia chose to make it a conscious and continuous practice to talk about students' reading experiences.

Nevertheless, all of them agreed that students' emotional development is immensely important, and that the English lesson is one of the best places to care for this. Sylvia connected emotions and the proper expression of emotions to the school leaving exam, which requires students to be able to talk about themselves, which inevitably involves their emotions as well. So, while preparing students for their exams and tests, we can also prepare them for real life. One idea mentioned by Sylvia stood out, which was the following:

There are many instances in life when one is alone and is not able to connect with others. At these stages, students are unable to develop their social responsibility, so, when it comes to handling these problems, they freeze and don't know what to do. Life becomes a lot easier if children are prepared for these instances and if they can try themselves out in safe spaces in these situations. What teachers have to figure out is how to do this efficiently.

In conclusion, the interviews added to the validity and the reliability of the study, further proving the points already stated and anticipated while also adding real-life experiences and examples of the successful use of literature in the English classroom.

7 Discussion

To answer the first research question (*How can literature be discussed in the classroom with up-to-date methodologies with the principles of Social and Emotional Learning?*), it can be said that while students and teachers may be afraid to use literary pieces, it is indeed possible with techniques such as group and pair work activities, brainstorming sessions, worksheets, and story continuation (Lazar 1993; Harmer 2007). When SEL skills are involved, students not only develop their interpretation skills (Rosenblatt 1994), their critical thinking and emotional intelligence also flourish (Ghosn 2002; Khatib et al. 2011). It is also important to remember that literature encompasses a variety of emotions and experiences that need to be interpreted successfully and in a varied fashion. This aligns with SEL's endeavour which warrants students to put themselves in others' shoes and compare and understand their own and different perspectives as well (Storey 2019). The worksheets in Appendix 11.2 present some examples of tasks that use literary pieces with SEL in mind. These are concerned with racism and involve listening to a song by a woman-of-colour about the topic, making a mind map about the topic, writing down attributes of characters from the book while listening to excerpts and contrasting them, jigsaw reading, and writing an ending to the story. Some other ideas were also mentioned in the conducted interviews, such as watching film adaptations of novels, interviewing the protagonist, imagining what students would do in the place of the protagonist, reading articles and watching TED Talks on the topic, using a literary piece to awaken discussion about personal issues (aging, interest of individuals or the community, the importance of order and discipline), show and tell with recent reading experiences, constructing discussion questions, and roleplaying. Based on the conducted research, it can be said that students and teachers find that social and emotional skills should be developed and concentrated on during the English lesson, and as the interviews have shown, many teachers prefer using literature as a built-in part of their curriculum, helping and aiding the discussion about certain, more sensitive topics. The research question can further be answered by the research presented by Ludwig (2012) and Plucker (2019) which show that with the careful combination of literary pieces, care for students' SEL skills and new-fangled methodologies – such as read-aloud, group discussions, problem-solving, sharing personal experiences, and putting themselves in others' shoes – learners enjoy and benefit from the lessons. Shechtman's and Abu Yaman's (2012) research also answers the research question, as it shows that literature contributes to the positive behaviour of students, a motivation to learn, and an intimate atmosphere where students are willing to cooperate. The combination of SEL methods with literature also adds to students being engaged on a personal

level, to the reassurance of their feelings, and to drawing personal and social connections (Storey 2019).

To answer to the second research question (*How do secondary school EFL students react to the discussion of literary pieces revolving around social and emotional problems?*), it can be concluded that because reading can be seen as a pleasurable act by students, as it can be a source of entertainment, stress relief or escape (Howard 2011), their attitude towards the lessons was generally positive. The quantitative as well as the qualitative data show the high level of enthusiasm from the students and the true appreciation of the discussion of such topics. Students did not feel threatened or intimidated by the literary works discussed, and some of them even commented on already mostly consuming literature in English. They enjoyed the discussed pieces of literature and felt motivated to read more after the lesson. This was also aided by the fact that they craved the discussion of these issues and were able to get reassurance about their feelings and experiences from the literary works (Howard 2011). Students felt encouraged to dive into the topic and the literary works as they recognised the SEL skills and the outstanding social and emotional power it can have (Storey 2019). The multitude of topics literature deals with is also a motivating factor for students, and as it could be seen in the research, the certain topics that were discussed also aligned with the principles of SEL: discovering emotions (love), mental health (autism spectrum disorder) and acceptance (racism). The topics also awoke strong emotions and feelings from the students which had an impact on their behaviour. Heath and her colleagues (2017) talk about this phenomenon and propose that stories can be used to build SEL skills. As the study presented in this paper shows and as Bohn-Gettler and Rapp (2014) argue, emotions affect the mental strategies which are used while problem-solving. This could be seen in one of the lessons that discussed autism spectrum disorder, and when the class showed a heightened level of emotional sensitivity because of the disagreement between them and one of their classmates (one who was on the autism spectrum). Their emotions clouded their judgement, decision making, and problem-solving, as after this issue arose, they were unable to dissociate the abstract context of someone being on the autism spectrum from their past experiences.

8 Conclusion

As the results of the study have shown, it is undeniable that the use of literary works in the classroom is still a valid practice, if executed appropriately. It is known that the use of literature was declining in the past, but just as Pugh (1989) argued for literature being an abundant source of significant input, M. Faraj (2021) further reinforced this by stating that although literature should not be overused, it can diversify and compliment the material used in the classroom.

Students' overall reaction to the discussion of literary pieces talking about social and emotional problems were a bit hesitant at first, as literature seemed to be a very distinct topic only liked by those whose specific field of interest it was. Nevertheless, by the end of the first lesson, and even more in the following ones, students showed a great level of interest and participation. They expressed their opinions freely and were open to having discussions and educated debates on the sensitive topics that were addressed.

The goal of this study was to see how students in a secondary vocational school would react to literature in the classroom combined with SEL. As the results show, the study can be proven successful in the sense that the anticipated excitement and participation were even more present than first thought. Students, regardless of their school or background, showed great social and emotional skills emerging and had educated debates about the discussed topics. They stated their opinion bravely and were sensitive to the themes of the lessons.

These findings suggest that students benefit from the use of literary works in the classroom when these practices are combined with the concepts of SEL.

Future research directions involve the discussion of other taboo topics that would benefit SEL skills, such as climate change, equality, disabilities, addiction, etc. The research could also be conducted in different school settings which would affect students from different socio-economic backgrounds. The implementation of a long-term SEL programme would be the best way to assess the development of students' skills, however, this is not the most realistic of the further directions.

9 Summary in Hungarian

9.1 Szakirodalmi háttér

A szociális és érzelmi tanulás (Social and Emotional Learning – SEL) segíti a fiatalok fejlődését, nemcsak személyes, de tanulmányi céljaikat illetően is (1). A SEL segítségével a diákok képesek pozitív kapcsolatokat kezdeményezni és fenntartani, az élethosszig tartó tanuláshoz szükséges készségeket elsajátítani, és hozzátenni egy pártatlan világ működéséhez. Emellett az irodalmi művekre az angolórán tekinthetünk úgy, mint egy eszközre, mely segít a személyes fejlődésben, olyan feladatok használatának ad táptalajt, melyek a diákok saját tapasztalatait képezik le, és ennek következtében fejleszti érzelmeiket és képzelőerejüket (Paran és Robinson 2016). Ezen eszközök kapcsolata abban rajzolódik ki, hogy fő céljuk a diákok érzelmi-, szociális- és tanulmánybeli fejlődése, valamint az, hogy a diákok képesek legyenek mások szemszögéből szemlélni a világot.

9.1.1 Irodalmi művek használata az angolórán

Az irodalom minden ember életének része, tehát az angolórán való használata fosztja meg semmilyen lehetőségtől a diákokat. Épp ellenkezőleg, olyan kapcsolatokat teremt, melyek majd a diákok jövőbeli karrierjében megjelenhetnek, segíti a tanulást és felhívja a figyelmet más kultúrákra (Paran és Robinson 2016).

Az irodalmi művek sok ideje képezik részét a nyelvtanulásnak, így nem számít meglepőnek, hogy megjelent az igény egy korszerűbb megközelítésre, ami maga után vonta az irodalmi művek angolórán való használatának újragondolását (Povey 1967). Az irodalom maga lényeges segítségként van jelen, amikor a diákok négy fő, nyelvtanulással kapcsolatos készségéről beszélünk – szövegértés, szövegalkotás, beszéd, hallás utáni szövegértés – valamint új szókincsbeli és nyelvtani elemeket is magában foglal (Usmonova 2021). Gondos figyelemre van szükség, ha ennél többet szeretnénk elérni az irodalmi művek használatával, és hogy megvalósuljon az irodalom célja, amit Povey (1967: 41) így fogalmaz meg: *„az irodalom az összes nyelvi készséget növeli, mivel az irodalom kiterjeszti a nyelvi tudást azáltal, hogy bizonyítékként áll a széleskörű és kifinomult szókincsbeli használatra és az összetett és pontos szintaxisra”*. Ezt figyelemben tartva ki lehet jelenteni, hogy az irodalom fejleszti a nyelvhasználatot, mivel életszerű diskurzust prezentál egy adott dialektusban és regiszterben, egy szociális kontextusban (McKay 1982). Ezek a jellemvonások támogatják a tolerancia, a

megértés és az érzelmi intelligencia fejlődését, amikor olyan témákról van szó, mint a szeretet, a háború, a veszteség vagy a gyász (Usmonova 2021).

Az irodalmi művek használatának számos előnye van. Khatib és mts. (2011) kilencet említenek meg. Ezek a következők: hitelesség, motiváció, kulturális/interkulturális tudatosság és globalizáció, intenzív és széleskörű olvasásgyakorlás, szociolingvisztikai és pragmatikai tudás, nyelvtani és szókincsbeli tudás, nyelvi készségek, érzelmi intelligencia és kritikai gondolkodás.

Az irodalmi művek olvasásának az angolórán a mai napig fejlődésre van szüksége. A diákok kötelesek klasszikusokat olvasni – ha egyáltalán olvasnak az órán – anélkül, hogy fel lennének rá készítve, vagy hogy a nyelvi készségeik számításba lennének véve. Mégis, Widdowson (1979) úgy tekint az olvasásra, mint interakcióra az író és az olvasó között, amelyet a szöveg mediál, és McKay (1982) szerint ez az interakció nyelvi és fogalmi szinten történik. Rosenblatt (1994) nézetei szerint az olvasás egyfajta cselekedet, mely magába foglal egy adott olvasót, egy adott szöveget, egy adott kontextust, egy adott időben. Tehát az olvasás dinamikus környezetben zajlik, ahol az olvasó és a szöveg nem két rögzített entitás, akik egymásra reagálnak, hanem két funkció, melyek egy azon szituáció résztvevői. Ezenkívül Rosenblatt (1994) úgy tekint az irodalomra, mint egy eszközre, ami segíti a diákokat abban, hogy megértsék egymást, más szemszögébe tudjanak helyezkedni, valamint hozzáteszi, hogy az irodalom segítségével a személyes interpretációk fejleszthetők, és egy olyan környezet teremthető az osztályban, melyben a diákok kifejezhetik véleményüket.

Az irodalom egy sokoldalú eszköz, amely a diákok életének számos részére gyakorol hatást, ezek közül többek között az érzelmeikre is. A biblioterápia – olyan irodalmi művek használata, melyek kifejezetten a diákok mentális egészségét fejlesztik – sokszor használatos eszköz, mikor az érzelmek felmérésén van a hangsúly, valamint azon, hogy ezek az érzelmek hogyan hatnak a viselkedésre (Heath és mts. 2017). Így tehát Heath és munkatársai (2017) azt javasolják, hogy történetek segítségével építsük fel a szociális és érzelmi tanulás (Social and Emotional Learning – SEL) alapjait, mely alapoknak a későbbiekben pozitív hatása lesz a diákok viselkedésére. Ugyanis az ideális történeteknek megvan a készsége arra, hogy megváltoztassák, hogyan érez vagy gondolkodik valaki. Bohn-Gettler és Rapp (2014) beszél az érzelmekről olvasás és írás közben, és azt állítják, hogy sok figyelmet szentelnek a kutatók azoknak a kognitív folyamatoknak, melyek az olvasást és írást támasztják alá, mivel a cél az, hogy megértsék és segítsék a diákok fejlődését és teljesítményét. Az érzelmek hatást gyakorolnak a mentális stratégiákra is, amelyeket problémamegoldás közben használunk.

9.1.2 Szociális és érzelmi tanulás az angolórán

Tagadhatatlan, hogy az iskolának létfontosságú szerepe van a diákok életében, hiszen felkészíti őket arra, hogy jól informált, felelősségteljes és jószívű felnőttek legyenek. Viszont ezt nem minden erőfeszítés nélkül lehet elérni, valóságos igyekezet szükséges ahhoz, hogy a diákok ezen az úton maradjanak. Ezenkívül nem szabad figyelmen kívül hagyni, hogy van egy eszköz, ami a tanárok segítségére lehet ennek a feladatnak az elérésében; abban, hogy figyelmes, kitartó, és rendszeres figyelem legyen fordítva a diákok szociális és érzelmi tanulására (Elias és mts. 1997). A szociális és érzelmi tanulást a CASEL így definiálja:

az a folyamat, amelyben minden fiatal és felnőtt elsajátítja és alkalmazza azt a tudást, képességet és hozzáállást, melyek segítségével személyiségüket fejlesztik, érzelmeiket kezelik, személyes és közösségi célokat érnek el, empátiát éreznek és mutatnak ki, támogató kapcsolatokat kezdeményeznek és tartanak fenn, valamint felelősségteljes és törődő döntéseket hoznak.

A szociális és érzelmi tanulás (továbbiakban SEL) lényeges része az oktatásnak és a személyiségbeli fejlődésnek, az iskola, a család és a közösség közti autentikus kapcsolatra fókuszál. Ezáltal akar olyan tanulói környezeteket létrehozni, melyeket jellemez a bizalom, az együttműködés, egy céltudatos tanterv és folyamatos értékelés (1 (CASEL)). Ennek ellenére a SEL nem csak az érzelmekre és a személyes tapasztalatokra összpontosít, hanem hozzájárul az tanulmányi eredményekhez, csökkenti a problémás viselkedést, fejleszti a kapcsolatok minőségét (Elias és mts. 1997), a diákok készenlétét a tanulással kapcsolatban és a segítőkész iskolai környezetet (CASEL 2003). Payton és mts. (2008) tanulmányukban azt találták, hogy a SEL programok – ha tudatosan és alaposan vannak végrehajtva – akár 11-17 százalékkal is emelhetik a tanulmányi eredményeket. Ezen felül megemlítenek még pár pontot, amik a SEL karakterjegyei: érzelmek felismerése és kezelése, célok állítása és elérése, gondoskodás és törődés kimutatása mások felé, pozitív kapcsolatok létrehozása és fenntartása, felelős döntések meghozatala és interperszonális kapcsolatok sikeres kezelése. Mikor osztálytermi környezetbe helyezük, a SEL „szélesíti az oktatási keretrendszert és megnevezi az érzelmek, a megismerés, az emlékezés és a megértés összetett kölcsönhatását a tanulásban” (Kress és Elias 2006: 102).

Ezekre a tényekre támaszkodva ki lehet jelenteni, hogy az irodalom és a szociális és érzelmi tanulás integrációja lehetséges, és ahogy Shechtman és Abu Yaman (2012) emeli ki tanulmányukban, a SEL készségek taníthatóak egy témán át, és így lényegi részét képezik a megtanult anyagnak. Ezt a fajta tanulást támogatják a bölcsészettudományok, mint például az irodalom is. Azáltal, hogy olvasás közben a diákok megismerik az adott karaktereket, felismerik a problémáikat és akadályait, megértik a saját, valamint társaik érzéseit is. Storey (2019)

szerint az irodalmi művek tele vannak érzésekkel és tapasztalatokkal, melyek készen állnak arra, hogy a diákok értelmezzék őket. Ez egybefügg a SEL azon céljával, mely arról szól, hogy a diákok képesek megfelelő módon viszonyulni mások perspektíváihoz és alkalmas módon tudnak reagálni különböző szituációkra. Az olvasás ezen kívül fejleszti a SEL fő kompetenciáit is, mint az öntudatosságot, az önazonosítást és az önépítést (Howard 2011). Továbbá nem szabad megfeledkezni arról, hogy az irodalom egy hasznos eszköz a tanárok számára, mikor adott témákat szeretnének bevezetni az osztályba, hiszen az irodalomban minden elképzelhető téma jelen van, mint például a szabadság, a bátorság vagy a barátság (Elias és mts. 1997). Tehát ki lehet jelteni, hogy az irodalom és a SEL összevonása egy olyan lehetőség, amit megéri tovább kutatni.

9.2 Célok és kutatási kérdések

Ezen tanulmány célja, hogy bemutassa, milyen módon zajlik a szociális és érzelmi tanulás a középiskolai angolórán irodalmi művek segítségével. Ennek eléréséhez 23 órát tartottam meg nyolc csoportban, három témában: szeretet, autizmus és rasszizmus. A dolgozat következő részében szó esik ezen órák megtervezéséről, magukról az órákról, az eredményekről és néhány nehézségről, amelyek ezen folyamatok közben merültek fel.

A szakirodalomból kiindulva a következő kutatási kérdések fogalmazhatóak meg:

- Hogyan lehet az irodalomról beszélni az angolórán módszertanilag naprakészen és a szociális és érzelmi tanulás elveivel együttesen?
- Hogyan reagálnak a közoktatásban tanuló diákok az angolórán azokra irodalmi művekre, amelyek a szociális és érzelmi problémákra fókuszálnak?

9.3 Módszerek

9.3.1 Résztvevők és körülmények

Jelen kutatás egy magyarországi szakiskolában zajlott le. Az iskola típusa hozzátett ahhoz, hogy a diákok nem voltak igazán motiváltak, valamint nyelvtudási szintjük sem volt kiemelkedő. Ez külön kihívást jelentett, hiszen felmerült a kérdés, vajon hogyan fogják befogadni a kicsit sem egyszerű témákat. Nyolc csoportnyi diák (összesen 90 tanuló) vett részt a kutatásban. Törekedtem arra, hogy mindhárom órát megtartsam minden csoportban, hogy

elegendő és megbízható adat szülessen. A diákok 9-től 11. osztályosok voltak, 15 és 17 év közöttiek, a nyelvtudásbeli szintjük pedig középszint (B2) körüli volt. A csoportok 15-20 diákból álltak, az órák 45 percesek voltak és a diákok angolóráinak idejében voltak megtartva.

A kutatás részeként interjúkat készítettem három angoltanárral, akik a közoktatásban dolgoznak és különböző korosztályokból származnak (a húszas, harmincas és ötvenes éveikben vannak). Mindegyikük használt már irodalmi műveket az angolóráján, és ezzel kapcsolatban osztották meg ötleteiket és tapasztalataikat.

9.3.2 Adatgyűjtési módszerek

Az órák három témát tárgyaltak: a szeretetet, az autizmust és a rasszizmust. Minden óraterv a SEL alapelveit figyelembe véve készült, hogy buzdítsa a diákokat arra, hogy fejlesszék érzelmi érettségüket és társadalmi felelősségvállalásukat az irodalmi művek segítségével. Az órai feladatok között volt páros munka és csoportmunka is a saját- és egész csoportos munkaforma mellett. Minden óra egy bemelegítő feladattal kezdődött, mely támogatta a diákokat abban, hogy megnyíljanak és szabadon megosszák ötleteiket egymással. Háttérzene is segítette a diákokat és az atmoszféra megteremtését munka közben. Mivel ezek az órák csak egyszer voltak megtartva, így az elvárt légkör nem volt annyira magas szintű, mint ami akkor lehetett volna, ha egy hosszútávú SEL programon belül folyt volna a munka. A diákoknak megvolt az esély arra, hogy személyessé tegyék a feladatokat és hogy azt csinálják, amit kényelmesnek érezték, viszont bátorítva voltak arra, hogy kilépjenek a komfortzónájukból, akár azáltal, hogy a csoport előtt beszéltek, akár azáltal, hogy problémás témákat vitattak meg egymással.

A kutatásban alkalmaztam kvalitatív és kvantitatív adatgyűjtési módszereket is (Mahboob és mts. 2016). Az adatok visszajelző lapokkal lettek összegyűjtve. Elsősorban – a kísérleti tanulmány alatt – papírlapokon jelölték a diákok válaszaikat, majd később ugyanez Google Forms segítségével történt. A tanulók hat Likert-skála kérdést válaszoltak meg, valamint lehetőségük volt írásos visszajelzést is adni, de az utóbbi nem volt kötelező.

A tanulmány korlátai közé lehet sorolni a rövidtávú SEL programot, a megvitatott témák számát, a megtartott órák számát, az elért csoportok számát és azt, hogy csak egy iskolában voltak megtartva az órák. Több etikai kérdés is felmerült a kutatás közben, például az, hogy egy kívülállónak mennyire szükséges belefolylnia egy osztály vitájába, hogy mennyire kell fegyelmezni a diákokat egy „rendkívüli” órán és hogy hogyan vitassunk meg olyan problémás témákat a diákokkal, amikbe maguk a diákok is beletartoznak – az autizmus-spektrumzavart

(ASD) olyan diákokkal, akik a spektrumon vannak, vagy a rasszizmust azokkal, akik esetleg tapasztalták már azt a saját bőrükön.

Az alábbi táblázat összefoglalja az órai feladatokat.

1. Táblázat

Az órákon zajlott feladatok

Szeretet	Autizmus-spektrumzavar	Rasszizmus
Ötletelés a szeretetről	Lista írása szeretett és utált dolgokról	Egy dal meghallgatása és a téma megtippelése
Lyukas szöveg feladat Adrian Henri <i>Love is...</i> c. versével	Feltevések a könyv (Mark Haddon – <i>A kutya különös esete az éjszakában</i>) főszereplőjéről arra alapozva, mit szeret és mit utál	Gondolattérkép készítése csoportokban a rasszizmusról (globálisan és helyileg) Háttértudás aktiválása
Plusz versszak írása	Kérdések megválaszolása fejezetek hallgatása közben, feltevések pontosítása	Feladatlap kitöltése részletek hallgatása közben (Brit Bennett – <i>A halványuló fél</i>)
Poszterkészítés, csoportos feladat különböző fajta szeretetektől (pár, háziállat, ön)	Történet folytatása több szempontból, csoportos feladat	Mozaikolvasás párokban
Poszterek prezentálása		Történet folytatása több szempontból, csoportos feladat

Az interjúk, melyekben a három angoltanár véleményét osztotta meg az irodalom használatáról az angolórán segítettek abban, hogy egyfajta kapcsolat alakuljon ki az interjúalanyok és az interjúztató között, és hogy a személyes érzelmek és helyzetek felszínre kerüljenek, melyek által a határok leomlottak a két fél között (Denzin és Lincoln 2005).

Az interjúkérdések a következők voltak:

- Használt már valaha irodalmi műveket az angolórán? Milyen típusú irodalmi műveket használt és miért?

- Miért gondolja úgy, hogy a diákok gazdagodnak azzal, ha irodalmi műveket olvasnak az angolórán?
- Mi a véleménye ezen kutatásról és arról a célkitűzésről, hogy foglalkozni kell a diákok szociális és érzelmi készségeivel?
- Mennyire fontos önnek, hogy elősegítse a diákok érzelmi fejlődését az angolórán?

9.4 Eredmények

Az eredmények elemzése három részre osztható, amelyek a három különböző órára fókuszálnak. A diákoknak hat kérdést kellett megválaszolniuk, az ezekre adott válaszok adták az adatok nagyját, ezen kívül még írott és szóbeli visszajelzésre is lehetőségük volt.

A következő hat kérdést kellett megválaszolniuk:

- Mennyire élvezted a feladatokat?
- Milyen mértékben járultak hozzá az érzelmi intelligenciádhoz és társadalmi felelősségvállalásodhoz?
- Mennyire tetszettek a versek/könyvek?
- Mennyire volt érthető az irodalmi mű nyelvezete?
- Mennyire szeretnél még részt venni hasonló órákon?
- Mennyire érzed magad motiváltnak, hogy angolul olvass az óra után?

A szeretettel foglalkozó órán a diákok érzelmein, kreativitásán és kooperációján volt a hangsúly. A visszajelzésükből látható volt, hogy kifejezetten élveztek csoportban dolgozni a társaikkal, és úgy gondolták, több ilyen lehetőségre lenne szükség az angolórán. Lehet azt gondolnánk, hogy a mai iskola környezetben a fókusz már nem a frontális oktatáson van, de ebben az iskolában látható volt, hogy a csoportmunka ritkaságnak számít, viszont a diákok nagy élvezettel fogadták. Ez viszont csak hozzájárult az élményhez, mivel az első kérdésre – „Mennyire élvezted a feladatokat?” – adott válaszuk átlaga 4.65 (n=44) volt. A „Milyen mértékben járultak hozzá az érzelmi intelligenciádhoz és társadalmi felelősségvállalásodhoz?” kérdés először kissé nehéz volt a diákoknak, de miután megértették, válaszuk átlaga 3.97 (n=44) volt, amely mutatja, úgy érezték, hozzájárultak a feladatok az említett készségeikhez, valamint, hogy a diákok részt vettek az órán, komolyan vették a feladatokat és bátran bemutatták munkájukat. A harmadik kérdésre – „Mennyire tetszettek a versek/könyvek?” – adott válasz átlaga 4.09 (n=44) volt. A diákok érthetőnek és élvezetesnek találták a verseket, viszont mikor személyesen nyilvánítottak véleményt, elmondták, hogy egy-egy csoport jóval nehezebbnek

érezte a verseit, mint más csoportok. Pontosan ezért voltak szinonimák megadva pár nehezebb szó esetén, a diákok kérdezhettek és fordítót is használhattak, ha szükségesnek tartották. Ide csatlakozik a „Mennyire volt érthető az irodalmi mű nyelvezete?” kérdésre adott válaszok átlaga is 4.25 (n=44). Mikor a diákok motivációjára és hajlandóságára került a sor, a „Mennyire szeretnél még részt venni hasonló órákon?” kérdésre adott válaszok átlaga, mely 4.5 (n=44) volt, jól mutatta lelkesedésüket. Az utolsó kérdésre adott válasz – „Mennyire érzed magad motiváltnak, hogy angolul olvass az óra után?” – átlaga 4.06 (n=44) volt. Ez illusztrálja, hogy igaz, a diákok nagyja élvezte az órát és a feladatokat, de ez még nem jelenti azt, hogy mindannyiuknak annyira tetszettek volna a versek, hogy motiválják őket az olvasásra.

Az ASD-vel foglalkozó óra a diákok érzékenyítésére volt kihegyezve. Ami a diákok véleményét illeti a témával kapcsolatban, sikeres beszélgetések alakultak ki, ahol az őszinte gondolataikat osztották meg egymással. A legtöbb csoport arra jutott, hogy azok, akik az autizmus spektrumon vannak nem más emberek, mint azok, akik nincsenek a spektrumon, és ugyanolyan türelemmel, kedvességgel és együttérzéssel kell őket kezelni, mint bárki mást. Viszont hozzá kell tenni, hogy egy csoportnak elég szélsőséges véleménye volt a témával kapcsolatban. Ebben a csoportban volt egy diák, aki az autizmus spektrumon van. Ő, mikor megtudta, hogy mi lesz az óra témája, felállt, és kiment a teremből. Sajnálatos volt a reakciója, viszont később kiderült, hogy közte és a csoport között egy komoly nézeteltérés alakult ki, melyben a társai nem tudták megérteni, ő miért csinál bizonyos dolgokat, és fordítva. A csoporttársai határozottan kijelentették, hogy csak azért, mert valaki az autizmus spektrumon van, még nem igényel másfajta bánásmódot, és igenis fel kellene ismernie, hogyan viselkedik, és nem kellene önzőnek lennie. Ez egy kétélű szituáció volt, melyben egyik fél sem akarta megérteni a másikat. Ennek háttere, hogy az érzelmek bizonyos információkat reprezentálnak egy adott hálózaton belül, és így össze vannak kötve a releváns tudással és tapasztalatokkal (Bohn-Gettler és Rapp 2014). Tehát, mivel korábbi tapasztalataik negatívak voltak, így érzéseik is ezt mutatták. A diákok ezen az órán is ugyanazokat a kérdéseket válaszolták meg, mint az előzőn. Az első kérdésre – „Mennyire élvezted a feladatokat?” – adott válaszuk átlaga 4.54 (n=64) volt, tehát a feladatokat élvezték, szívesen helyezkedtek más karakterek szemszögébe és örömmel folytatták a történetet. A „Milyen mértékben járultak hozzá az érzelmi intelligenciához és társadalmi felelősségvállalásodhoz?” kérdésre adott válaszok sokszínűek voltak. Átlaguk 3.9 (n=64) volt, mivel, ahogy a diákok elmondták, sok mindent már eleve tudtak ezen a témával kapcsolatban. Az órát ettől függetlenül még előnyösnek tartották, és remélhetőleg a jövőben is emlékezni fognak arra, amit ekkor hallottak. A könyv is különféle szinten nyerte el a diákok tetszését. A „Mennyire tetszettek a versek/könyvek?” kérdésre adott

válaszok átlaga 4.0 (n=64) volt. Sokaknak tetszett, de sokan csak egyszerűen abszurdnak tartották. Azért is lephette meg ennyire a mű a diákokat, mivel az első fejezetben rögtön azzal szembesültek, hogy valaki megölt egy kutyát egy vasvillával, viszont fontos volt a tervezési folyamatban, hogy bármilyen alap nélkül, fokozatosan jöjjenek rá a diákok a témára. A könyv szintje – „Mennyire volt érthető az irodalmi mű nyelvezete?” – a diákok szerint érthető volt, az átlag itt 4.4 (n=64) lett. Ez egy valós megállapítás, hiszen a könyv nyelvi szintje tényleg nem kihívást jelentő. Számos diák (n=59) gondolta úgy, hogy szívesen részt venne még hasonló órán – „Mennyire szeretnél még részt venni hasonló órákon?” – amit alátámaszt a 4.4 (n=64) átlag is. Az utolsó kérdésre – „Mennyire érzed magad motiváltnak, hogy angolul olvass az óra után?” – adott válaszok voltak a legvegyesebbek, az átlag 3.5 (n=64) volt. Sok visszajelzés érkezett arról, hogy vannak, akik már amúgy is csak angolul olvasnak, és vannak, akik tényleg motiváltak lettek, viszont a másik oldalra sajnos nem érkezett szöveges visszajelzés.

A rasszizmusról szóló órán a diákok többnyire párokban dolgoztak feladatlapokkal. Ezen az órán kiemelkedő mennyiségű visszajelzés érkezett, hiszen a kilépőkártyát kötelező volt kitöltenie a diákoknak. A diákok nagy érdeklődést mutattak a feladatok iránt, ez látható a „Mennyire élvezted a feladatokat?” kérdésre adott válaszokban is, melynek átlaga 4.6 (n=40). Ennek oka az is lehet, hogy a diákok felismerték a téma fontosságát és életszerű példával találkoztak a könyvben. Ahogy a kilépőkártyák is mutatták, a diákok úgy érezték, hozzájárult az óra az érzelmi intelligenciájukhoz és szociális felelősségvállalásukhoz – „Milyen mértékben járultak hozzá az érzelmi intelligenciádhoz és társadalmi felelősségvállalásodhoz?” – az átlag 4.1 (n=40) volt. A téma releváns, a diákok nagy valószínűséggel már sokat hallottak róla, az órát mégis hasznosnak tartották. A diákok nagyjának a könyv is tetszett, ahogy ezt mutatja a válaszuk a „Mennyire tetszettek a versek/könyvek?” kérdésre 4.2 (n=40) átlaggal, és a „Mennyire volt érthető az irodalmi mű nyelvezete?” kérdésre adott válaszok 4.25 (n=40) átlaggal. Lelkesek voltak a hasonló órákon való részvétellel kapcsolatban is – „Mennyire szeretnél még részt venni hasonló órákon?” – válaszaik átlaga 4.5 (n=40) volt. Úgy gondolták a diákok, hogy ez egy komoly és fontos téma, és véleményük szerint szükséges lenne erről többet beszélni az iskolában. Sokuk magával ragadónak találta a könyvet és motiváltnak érezték magukat arra, hogy be is fejezzék. A „Mennyire érzed magad motiváltnak, hogy angolul olvass az óra után?” kérdésre adott válaszok átlaga 4.0 (n=40) volt.

9.5 Értekezés

Az első kutatási kérdésre válaszolva (*Hogyan lehet az irodalomról beszélni az angolórán módszertanilag naprakészen és a szociális és érzelmi tanulás elveivel együttesen?*) kimondhatjuk, hogy míg a diákok és a tanárok is félhetnek az irodalmi művek használatától az angolórán, ez egy lehetséges út olyan módszerekkel, mint a páros munka, az ötletelés, a feladatlapok és a történetfolytatás (Lazar 1993; Harmer 2007). Amikor a SEL készségek is jelen vannak, a diákok nemcsak az interpretációs készségeiket fejlesztik (Rosenblatt 1994), hanem a kritikai gondolkodásuk és érzelmi intelligenciájuk is virágzik (Ghosn 2002; Khatib és mts. 2011). Azt is fontos figyelembe venni, hogy az irodalom számos érzelmet és tapasztalatot magában foglal, melyeket megannyi módon lehet értelmezni. Ez a SEL azon céljával van összhangban, mely azt várja el a diákoktól, hogy mások szemszögébe helyezkedjenek és összehasonlítsák a saját nézőpontjaikat másokéval (Storey 2019). A függelékben lévő feladatlapok példák arra, hogyan lehet az irodalmi műveket az angolórán használni a szociális és érzelmi tanulás fejlesztésére. Ilyen például egy dal meghallgatása a rasszizmus megvitatása közben, melyet egy fekete énekesnő énekel, gondolattérkép készítése a témáról, karakterek jellemzőinek leírása majd összehasonlítása, mozaikolvasás és történetbefejezés. További ötletek, melyeket az interjúalanyok említettek: filmadaptációk nézése, a főszereplő meginterjúvolása, „Mit tennél ebben a helyzetben?” kérdés megválaszolása, cikkek olvasása és TED Talk-ok nézése a témával kapcsolatban, egy mű használata arra, hogy egy beszélgetés kialakuljon és a személyes tapasztalatok felelevenedjenek (öregedés, az egyén vagy a közösség érdeke, a rend és a fegyelem fontossága), olvasmányélmények megosztása, vitakérdések írása és szerepjáték. A kutatás alapján ki lehet mondani, hogy a diákok és a tanárok úgy gondolják, a szociális és érzelmi készségeket fejleszteni kellene az angolórán, és ahogy az interjúkból kiderült, sok tanár a tantervükbe beépítve használja az irodalmat, mely segíti és támogatja bizonyos kényes témák megvitatását. A kutatási kérdést továbbá alá lehet támasztani Ludwig (2012) és Plucker (2019) kutatásaival, melyek azt mutatják, hogy az irodalmi művek, a SEL készségek és a modern módszertan – mint a felolvasás, csoportos megbeszélés, problémamegoldás, személyes tapasztalatok megosztása, önmaguk más szemszögébe helyezése – gondos összhangjával a diákok élvezik az órákat és előnyük származik belőle. Shechtman és Amu Yaman (2012) tanulmánya is választ ad a kutatási kérdésre, mivel azt mutatja, az irodalom hozzájárul a diákok viselkedésének pozitív változásához, a tanulásuk motiválásához és egy bizalmas környezet kialakításához, melyben a diákok hajlandóak kooperálni. A SEL módszerek és az irodalom kombinációja hozzátesz a diákok figyelmének

lekötéséhez, az érzelmeik visszaigazolásához és a személyes és társadalmi kapcsolatok megrajzolásához is (Storey 2019).

A második kutatási kérdést (*Hogyan reagálnak a közoktatásban tanuló diákok az angolórán azokra irodalmi művekre, amelyek a szociális és érzelmi problémákra fókuszálnak?*) megválaszolva elmondhatjuk, hogy mivel az olvasás a diákok számára egy élvezetes folyamat, mely forrása lehet a szórakozásnak, a stressz csökkentésének, és lehetőséget ad egy másik világ felfedezésére (Howard 2011), így a diákok hozzáállása az órákhoz összességében pozitív volt. A kvantitatív és a kvalitatív adatok is magas szintű lelkesedést mutatnak a diákok részéről, valamint őszinte méltányolás, hogy ilyen témákat megvitathattak. A diákok nem érezték magukat fenyegetve vagy megfélemlítve az irodalmi művek miatt, élvezték a megvitatott műveket és motiváltak érezték magukat, hogy többet olvassanak angolul az óra után. Ehhez az is hozzátett, hogy szükségesnek érezték ezeknek a témáknak a megbeszélését és hogy visszajelzést kaptak az érzéseikre és tapasztalataikra az irodalmi művekből (Howard 2011). A diákok ösztönözve érezték magukat, hogy belemenjenek az adott témákba és művekbe ahogy felismerték a bennük SEL készségeket és kiemelkedő szociális és érzelmi erejüket (Storey 2019). A számos téma, amit az irodalom lefed szintén egy motiváló tényező a diákoknak, hiszen ahogy a kutatás is mutatja, számos ilyen téma esik egybe a SEL elveivel: érzelmek felfedezése (szeretet), mentális egészség (autizmus-spektrumzavar) és elfogadás (rasszizmus). A megvitatott témák erős érzelmeket és érzéseket váltottak ki a diákokból, melyeknek hatása volt a viselkedésükre. Heath és munkatársai (2017) beszélnek erről a jelenségről, és javasolják, hogy a történeteket lehet a SEL készségek fejlesztésére használni. Ahogy a jelen kutatás és ahogy Bohn-Gettler és Rapp (2014) kutatása is mutatja, az érzelmek befolyásolják a mentális stratégiákat, amelyek a problémamegoldás közben használatosak. Ez azon az órán volt látható, ahol az ASD volt a téma, és a csoport egy emelkedett érzelmi szintet mutatott a vita miatt, ami köztük és egy társuk között zajlott (aki az autizmus spektrumon volt). Érzelmek elfátyolozták ítélőképességüket, döntéshozatalukat és problémamegoldásukat, mivel miután a téma feljött, képtelenek voltak elvonatkoztatni a személyes tapasztalataiktól, és úgy tekinteni az autizmus-spektrumzavarra, mint egy absztrakt elképzelésre.

Összességében a tanulmány eredményéből látható, hogy az irodalmi művek használata az angolórán egy tagadhatatlanul helytálló módszer, hiszen az irodalom jelentőségteljes nyelvi mintát állít a diákok elé (Pugh 1989) és változatossá teszi, valamint kiegészíti a tananyagot (M. Faraj 2021). A diákok elsődleges reakciója kissé bizonytalan volt, viszont a későbbiekben magas szintű érdeklődést és részvételt mutattak, véleményüket bátran kifejezték, és az érzékeny témákban is érett vitákat folytattak. A kutatás célja az volt, hogy megmutassa, hogyan reagálnak

a diákok az irodalmi művek használatára a SEL módszereivel karöltve egy középiskolai angolórán. Ahogy az eredmények is mutatják, a kutatás sikeresnek tekinthető, hiszen a tapasztalt részvétel és izgalom meghaladta az elvárt szintet, és a diákok – az iskolától vagy a háttérüktől függetlenül – kiemelkedő szociális és érzelmi készségeket mutattak. Tehát kimondható, hogy a diákoknak előnyük származik az irodalmi művek megvitatásából az angolórán, mikor ez SEL készségekkel társul.

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11 Appendices

11.1 Lesson plans

The lesson plans can be found under the following link:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1v2pHFhy4ozaYAy2BHYK3FJucFmSqppqQ/edit?usp=share_link&ouid=109811588368486602443&rtpof=true&sd=true

11.2 Worksheets about Race

Worksheet – Race

- A -



1. Warmer

We'll listen to a song, Freedom by Beyoncé. Write down your feelings that come up in you when you're listening to the song.

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What was the song about?

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2. Background knowledge

What is racism?

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What do you know about this issue? Make a mind map. Collect ideas, examples from history, songs, films, pieces of literature, etc. connected to race and racism. Reflect on the situation in the world but also in Hungary.

3. Chapters from *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett

While you listen to the chapter from the book, collect characteristics of one girl. Write these things in the correct column.

Desiree

Stella

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4. Jigsaw reading

Work in pairs. You'll both receive the same text, but different pieces of information are missing from them. Ask questions from your partner and try and figure out what the words are that are missing.

Sometimes she lost Stella and had to search for her, wanting to call her name but afraid to send her voice off the ceilings. Once, she'd found her polishing the bedroom, staring off into the vanity mirror adorned by tiny bottles of lotions,, as if she wanted to sit on that plush bench and rub scented cream onto her hands like Audrey Hepburn might. herself for the sake of it, as if she lived in a world where women did such a thing. But then Desiree's appeared behind her, and Stella looked away,, almost, to be seen wanting anything at all.

5. Write an ending

Work in groups. Come up with an ending to the story. Involve elements that we talked about today.

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Worksheet – Race

- B -



1. Warmer

We'll listen to a song, Freedom by Beyoncé. Write down your feelings that come up in you when you're listening to the song.

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What was the song about?

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2. Background knowledge

What is racism?

.....

What do you know about this issue? Make a mind map. Collect ideas, examples from history, songs, films, pieces of literature, etc. connected to race and racism. Reflect on the situation in the world but also in Hungary.

3. Chapters from *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett

While you listen to the chapter from the book, collect characteristics of one girl. Write these things in the correct column.

Desiree

Stella

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4. Jigsaw reading

Work in pairs. You'll both receive the same text, but different pieces of information are missing from them. Ask questions from your partner and try and figure out what the words are that are missing.

Sometimes she lost Stella and had to for her, wanting to call her name but afraid to send her voice echoing off the Once, she'd found her polishing the bedroom dresser, off into the vanity mirror adorned by tiny bottles of lotions, wistfully, as if she wanted to sit on that plush bench and rub cream onto her hands like Audrey Hepburn might. Admire herself for the sake of it, as if she lived in a world where did such a thing. But then Desiree's reflection behind her, and Stella looked away, ashamed, almost, to be seen wanting anything at all.

5. Write an ending

Work in groups. Come up with an ending to the story. Involve elements that we talked about today.

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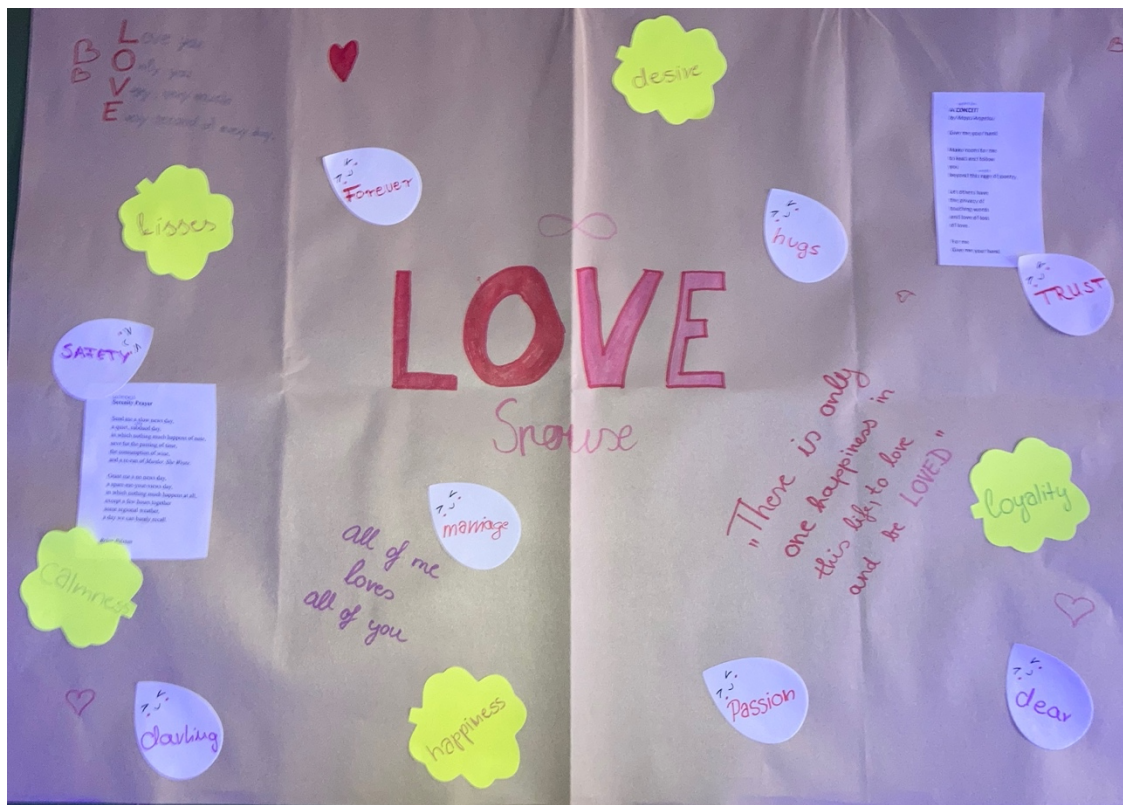
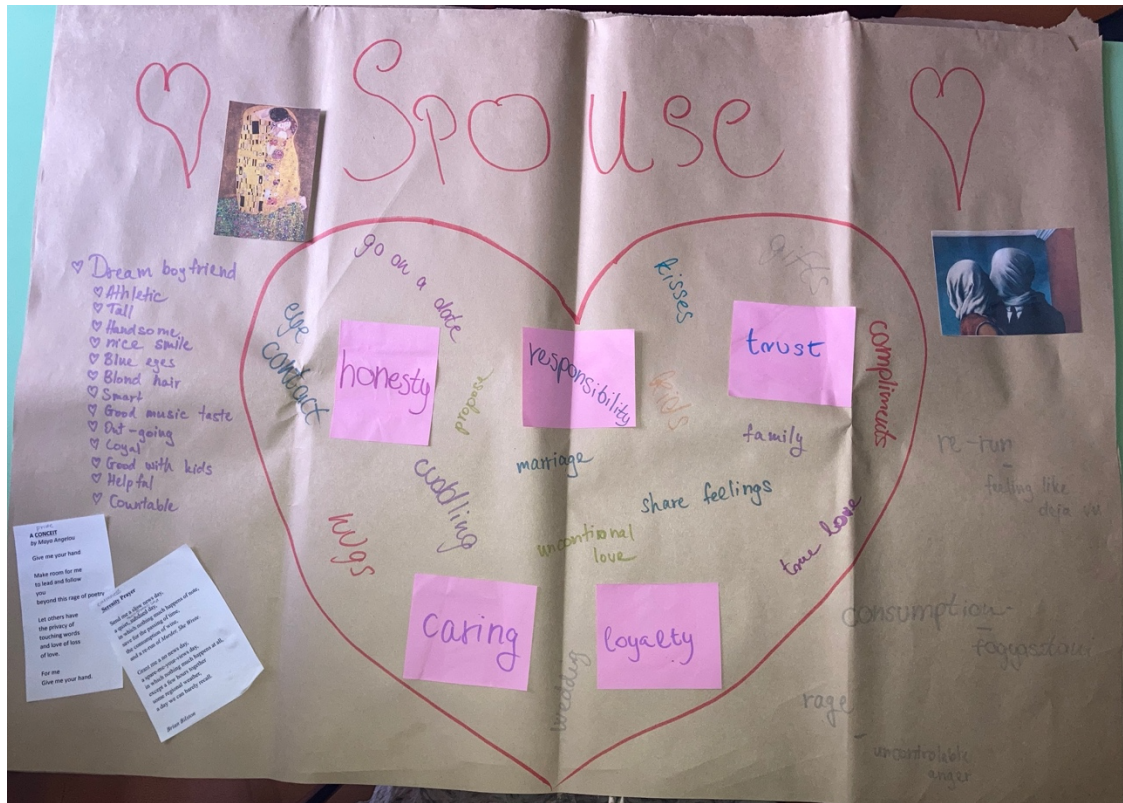
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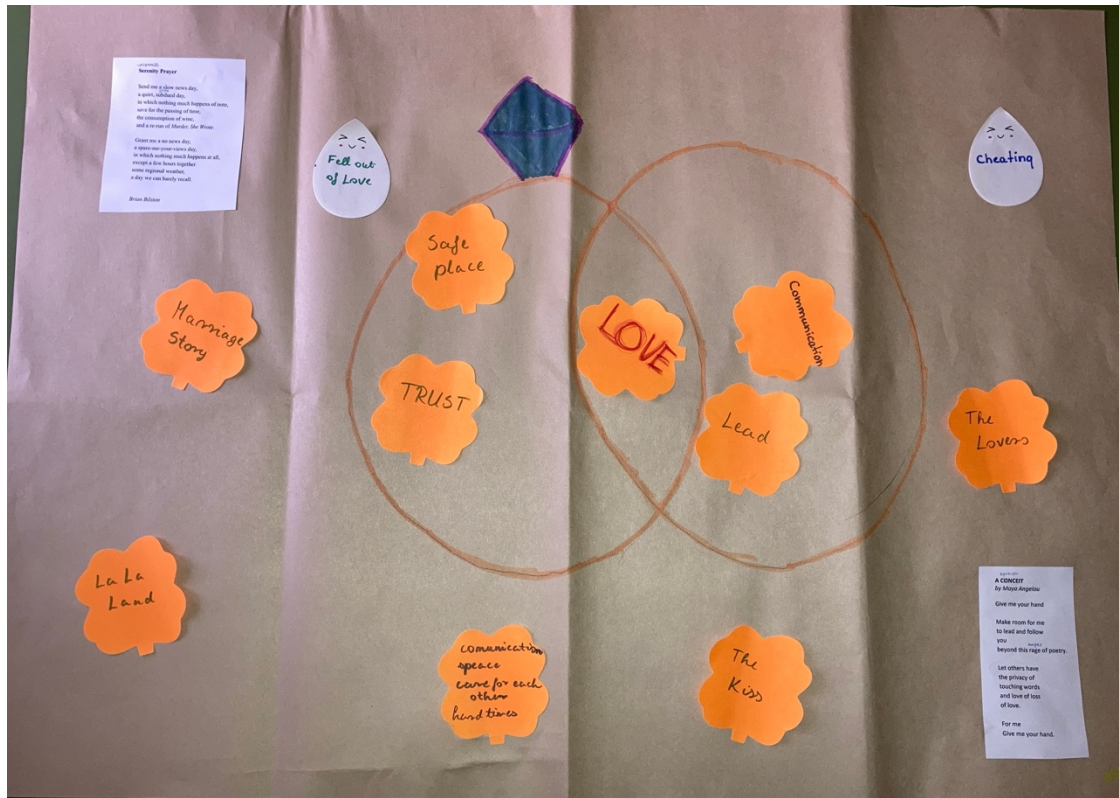
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11.3 Posters by Students Made on the Lesson about Love

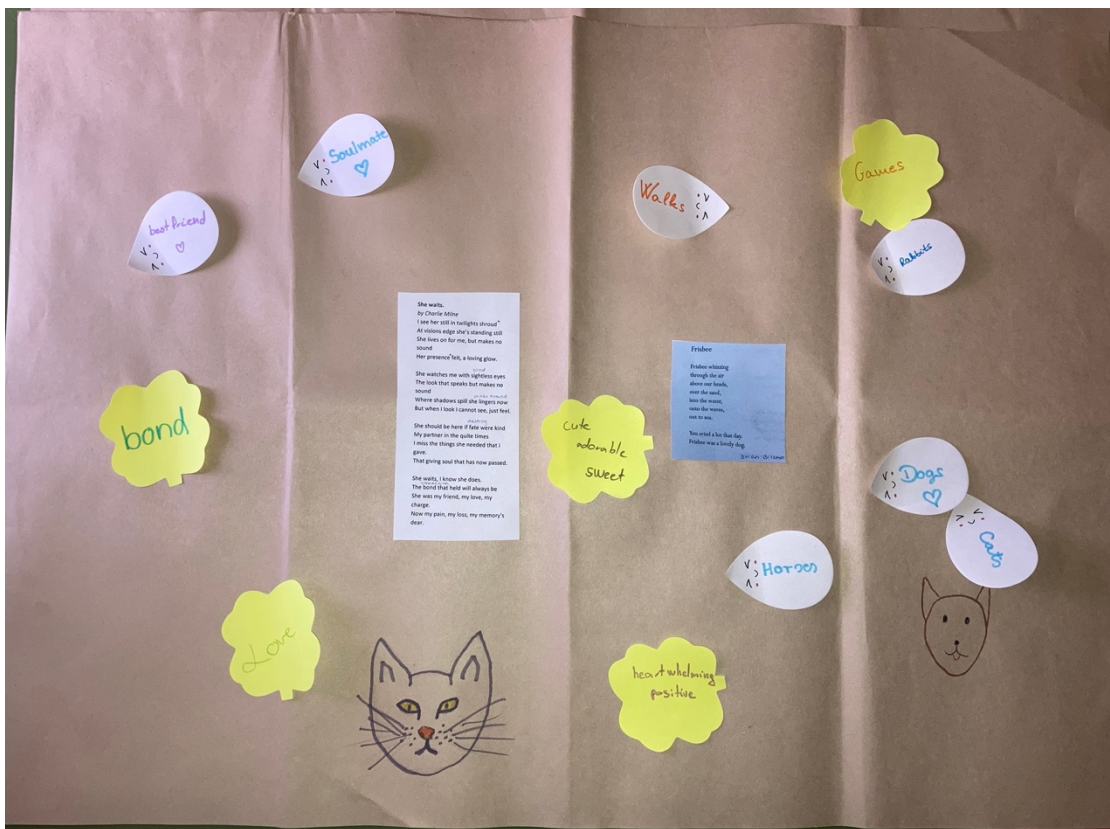
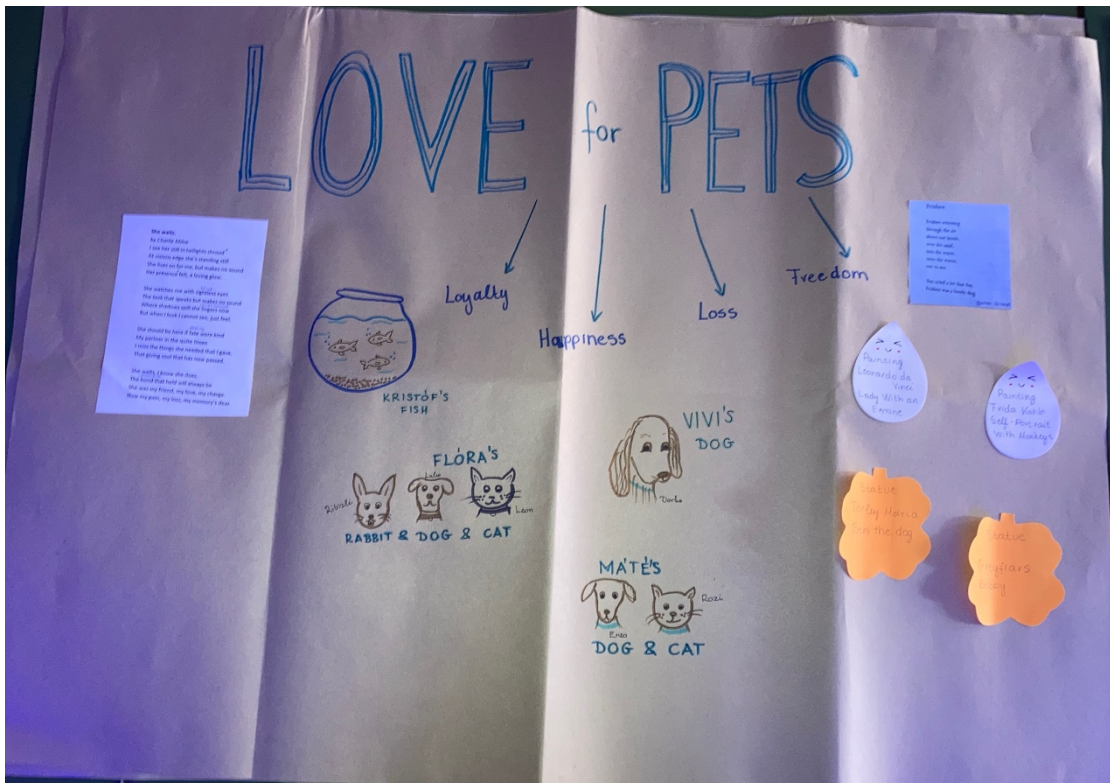
11.3.1 Posters about Love for One's Spouse



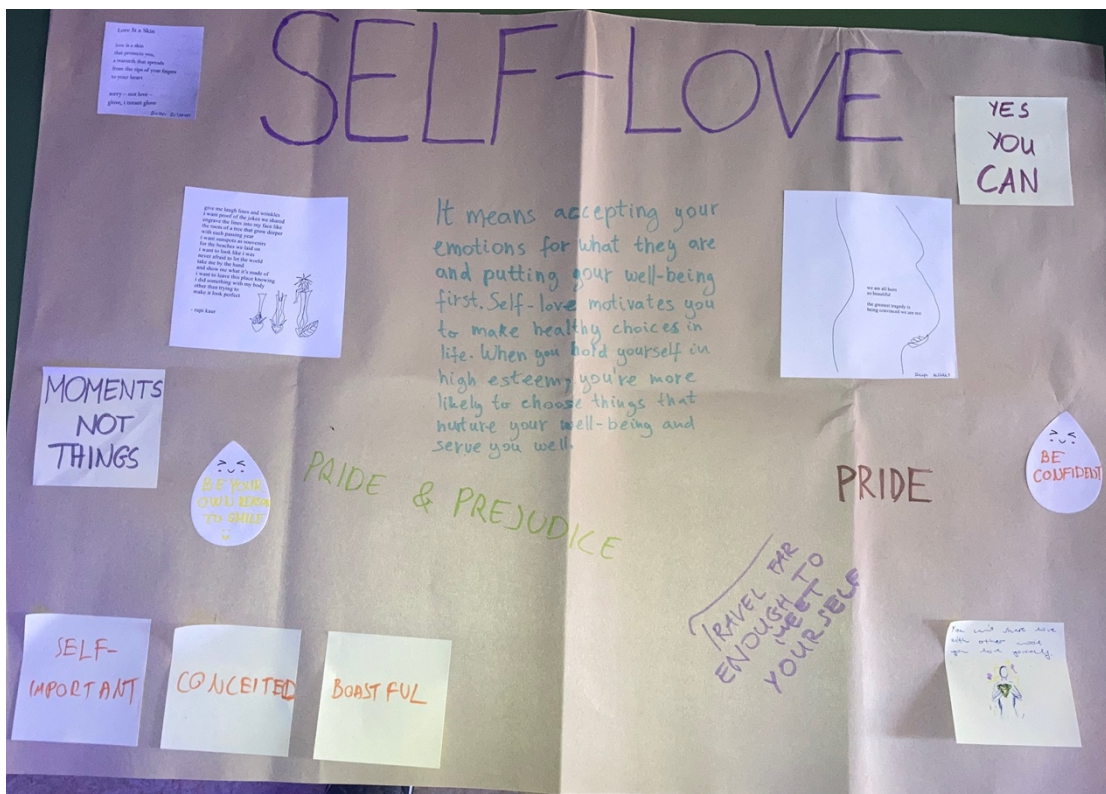
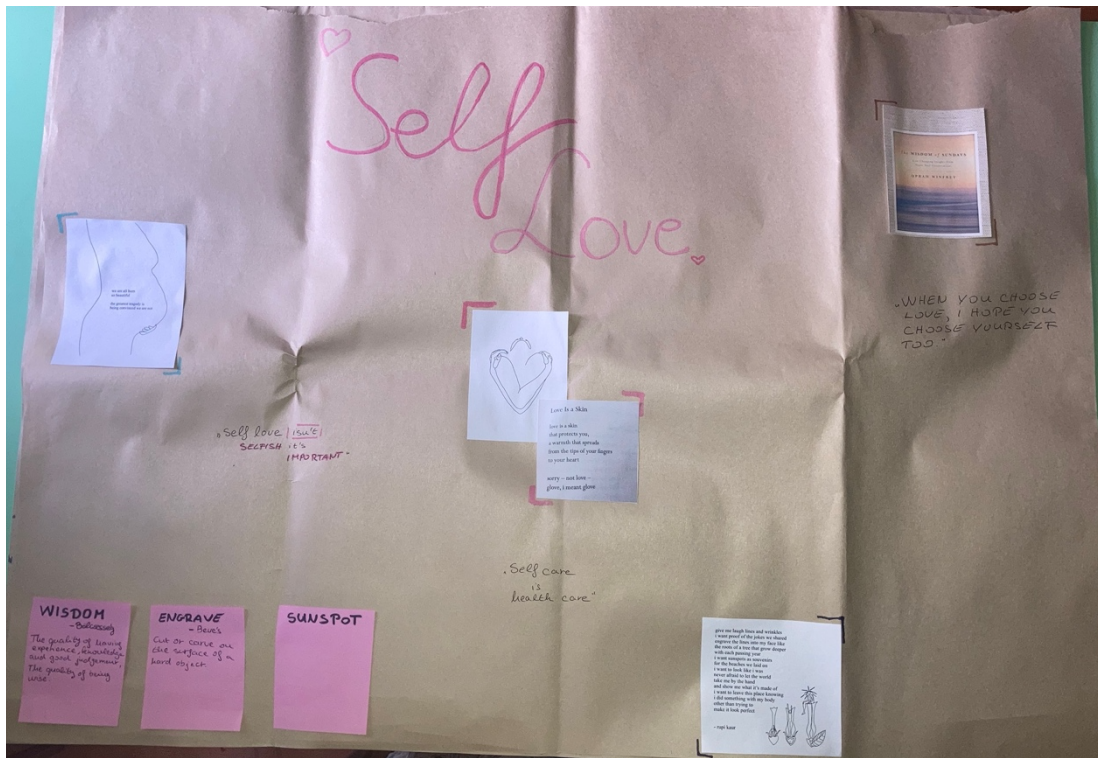


11.3.2 Posters about Love for One's Pet





11.3.3 Posters about Self-Love



11.4 Excerpts of Transcriptions of Interviews

11.4.1 First Interview

Have you ever used literary works in the EFL classroom? What types of literary works did you use? Why?

I usually use films that are adaptations of classic novels, but I would also consider using novellas. However, I wouldn't use poems, I would leave that up to their literature teachers. Two of these film adaptations come to mind that were the most memorable, one being *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak and the other *Fateless (Sorstalanság)* by Imre Kertész. [...] I have talked to the class's Hungarian Grammar and Literature teacher, so the two lessons were in sync. [...] To make students remember what has happened in the film, we have a quiz or a multiple-choice task at the beginning of the lessons. Some tasks students especially enjoy are the ones where they have to elaborate on a given topic or conduct an interview with the protagonist. One more book comes to mind, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* by John Boyne, which is about the Holocaust. It can be used with younger children as well, as the book is about children. One thing I would never bring into class is Shakespeare. It is just too complicated and difficult; it would only confuse students.

How do you think students benefit from reading literary works in the EFL classroom?

Students usually hate reading, so the use of films helps them understand and actually like compulsory reading material. They benefit in many areas, such as their social responsibility, sensitivity, acceptance towards others regarding social and religious background, etc. [...] Literary works also enrich vocabulary and provide new idioms and phrases for students. [...]

What is your opinion on the conducted study and the endeavour to care for students' SEL skills?

It is an outstanding topic. If I had the chance and the idea, I'd have researched this myself. [...]

How important it is for you to aid students' emotional development in the EFL classroom?

It's not only about teaching the language; it is through literary works or movies that children can be understood. [...] It is also immensely important what you say and how you say it. Your own experiences and identity are represented through your acts of communication; this also helps capture students' attention, they love it when the teacher talks about their own life.

11.4.2 Second Interview

Have you ever used literary works in the EFL classroom? What types of literary works did you use? Why?

I have and I still do. I execute this in two ways. After determining the level of the students in a given group, we do a reading project, through which students read a graded reader which was originally written in English, it could be fiction or nonfiction, and which is connected to the topic of the coursebook. This way, there is a new topical element, but the overarching theme stays the same. Language-wise, we read graded readers as well as originals. When it comes to poetry, I usually choose pieces that are from the literary canon or ones I have learnt at university. For graded readers we use the Oxford Bookworms Library. [...]

How do you think students benefit from reading literary works in the EFL classroom?

Literature is the authentic approach towards the elements of cultural reality. Any films, articles, TED Talks, literary works and folk tales serve this purpose. [...] It also should not be forgotten to implement a pedagogical point of view when discussing these pieces of literature, meaning the tasks students do should align with the pedagogical context of the teacher.

What is your opinion on the conducted study and the endeavour to care for students' SEL skills?

It is very important to talk about these topics. The main aim seems to be pressing in on 21st century skills and global citizenship, all of which have an effect on the education process. [...]

How important it is for you to aid students' emotional development in the EFL classroom?

It is obviously very important, and with the use of literature, we can access the elements of cultural reality. It also helps students expand their world views.

11.4.3 Third Interview

Have you ever used literary works in the EFL classroom? What types of literary works did you use? Why?

I have used many, some of the most memorable involve a monologue from Shakespeare's *As You Like It* called *The Seven Ages of Man*; it talks about the different stages of life. [...] More recently, in one of my groups we read a book called *The Giver* by Lois Lowry which is a relatively short novel describing a dystopian society. [...] On Fridays, we do a read and share activity with my groups, in which they are invited to share something which they've read, let that be a book, an article or anything in between. [...]

How do you think students benefit from reading literary works in the EFL classroom?

Their language develops, involving their vocabulary, grammar, and overall, they are able to produce more correct speaking patterns. [...] It gives them confidence when they were able to and were brave enough to talk about a topic. However, their personality also plays a huge role in this process. Their interests and what they know about the world will influence their enjoyment of a topic and the outcome of the process.

What is your opinion on the conducted study and the endeavour to care for students' SEL skills?

It is crucial to try out these tasks as well and not to forget that we can learn a lot from each other as teachers. There are many instances in life when one is alone and is not able to connect with others. At these stages, students are unable to develop their social responsibility, so, when it comes to handling these problems, they freeze and don't know what to do. Life becomes a lot easier if children are prepared for these instances and if they can try themselves out in safe spaces in these situations. What teachers have to figure out is how to do this efficiently.

How important it is for you to aid students' emotional development in the EFL classroom?

In my opinion, the English lesson is the best way to develop students. Just to bring an example, the school leaving exam requires them to be able to talk about themselves, which involves their emotions. This is what the lesson should be about, to make them think about certain topics and to enable them to express those opinions. [...]