



**UTN**  
**Facultad Regional**  
**Avellaneda**

***Vonnegut's model applied to the digital  
creation of teaching materials***

***La aplicación del modelo de Vonnegut para la  
creacion de material didáctico digital***

- Carrera: Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa
- Alumna: Camila Mascaro
- Tutor: Dra. Maria Rosa Mucci
- Año: 2022

# ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of teachers moving from consumers to producers of texts for teaching purposes. It works on the importance of analysing the narrative discourse from a post-structuralist and postmodern perspective, following Kurt Vonnegut's model "shape of stories". It deals with the integration of ICTs as a tool for creative and critical production, as well.

By supplying teachers at the teacher training college an insight and an alternative perspective on narrative analysis, this study demonstrates the quality of analysis in higher education is relatively limited. By the same token, it reveals students find it useful to incorporate ICTs to produce texts. It shows how, due to globalization, multiliteracies represent a vital concept to bear in mind in education. In this way, they were aware of the diverse types of literacies and how they interrelate all together. Consequently, they acknowledge the value of adopting and adapting contents according to the contexts they work in.

**KEYWORDS:** Narrative discourse; analysis; globalization; teachers; ICTs; Kurt Vonnegut

En este trabajo nuestra intención es analizar el paso del docente como consumidor de textos con fines educativos a productores de los mismos. El enfoque se ha centrado principalmente en analizar el discurso narrativo desde una perspectiva postestructuralista y postmodernista, enmarcada en el modelo del escritor Kurt Vonnegut denominado “Las formas de las historias”. Uno de los objetivos de este trabajo ha sido integrar las TIC como una verdadera herramienta para la producción de material de manera crítica y creativa.

Con este propósito se brindó a un grupo de alumnos del profesorado una mirada novedosa sobre el análisis de las narrativas, lo cual dio cuenta de las limitaciones que, en general, encontramos en los institutos de formación docente con respecto a estas miradas. A su vez, los resultados muestran que los estudiantes del profesorado encontraron que el uso de las TIC en la producción de textos es altamente provechoso. Esto coincide con la idea que demuestra que debido al proceso de globalización, la alfabetización múltiple representa un concepto esencial dentro del sistema educativo actual. En esta experiencia, los estudiantes, futuros docentes, reflexionaron acerca de los distintos tipos de alfabetización y cómo estos se encuentran permanentemente enlazados. Consecuentemente, reconocieron la importancia de adoptar y adaptar contenidos de acuerdo con los diversos contextos y necesidades laborales

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Discurso narrativo; análisis; globalización; docente en formación; TICS; Kurt Vonnegut

# Contents

<b>Introduction:</b> .....	1
<b>Chapter 1: Literature review</b> .....	8
• <i>Literacy and the change in thinking</i> .....	8
• <i>Digital literacy and ICTs in education</i> .....	15
• <i>Language perspective</i> .....	19
• <i>Narratology</i> .....	22
• <i>Kurt Vonnegut, a postmodern narrative analysis</i> .....	28
<b>Chapter 2: Methodology</b> .....	32
<b>Chapter 3: Results and discussion</b> .....	35
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	55
• <i>Implications</i> .....	56
• <i>Limitations and recommendations</i> .....	57
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	58
<b>Appendix</b> .....	62

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my tutor, Dr. Maria Rosa Mucci for her invaluable advice, continuous support, and patience during the development of this study. During my course of studies, along with Dr. Beatriz Castiñeiras, they expressed such an enthusiasm for the topics dealt with that they planted the seed of curiosity, inspired and encouraged me to gain deeper knowledge of discourse analysis, understanding its relevance for language teachers.

I also appreciate students who were involved in this research project, they have been really kind and demonstrated keen interest in the alternative approach to narratives provided by the study.

Finally, I must express my very profound gratitude to my family, and friends who were very supportive, gave me the time and space needed for my work and also their belief in me motivated me to continue when needed.

## **Introduction:**

Literacy is understood as a socially constructed practice which has always been shaped by the social conditions. By the mid-1990s, a group of literacy educators came together to reconsider how literacy teaching and learning should be adapted to respond to the changes brought by globalization, advances in technology and social diversity. The result was the concept “multiliteracies” which focuses on the ability to understand a text, considering the latter in the same way as Barthes (1969) did, as a multidimensional space in which a variety of meaning representations like linguistic visual, audio, spatial and gestural interrelate. Therefore, a multiliterate person can interpret, interact, use, and produce texts employing different semiotic systems for social, cultural, political, civic and even economic purposes in culturally diverse contexts.

Our world is mediated by different TICS which structure and transform knowledge and socio-cultural representations; therefore, they are not only to be used by students in their leisure times, but as a new strategic dimension that helps teachers adopt and adapt contents. There has been a dissolution of the linear literacies of earlier times and a recognition of multicultural, multimodal, multiliteracies as necessary to a relevant pedagogy. In what the *New Group of London* called a Design (1994), producers of texts are engaged in four knowledge processes: experiencing through the known and the new, conceptualizing abstract concepts by naming them, analysing or interpreting functions and finally applying the knowledge appropriately and creatively to their suitable situations.

According to a study conducted in Canada by (Gouthro & Holloway, 2013) “by including multiliteracies practices in the classroom, educators will give students agency within the imaginative and critical choices they are able to make in their own learning.” (p.64). In the same vein, student teachers need to learn how to integrate ICTs in their teaching not just as a tool but in an innovative way, heading towards a reflection on subject matter about the sociocultural implications they may transmit with their teaching materials.

Digital storytelling subsequently becomes a practical strategy to include multiliteracies practices in the classroom. This means telling stories in electronic form. According to previous research (Moradi & Chen, 2019) “becoming an encouraging support for a transformative technology approach for the improvement of learning, which includes content material, subject matter, critical thinking, information literacy, and motivation. [...] learners are challenged with critical thinking about combinations of content material and multimedia components while considering the standpoint of audiences.” (p.148)

All these aspects are translated into multimedia elements like images, soundtracks and even video clips embedded into texts which lead to the development of digital stories. Thus, “digital storytelling provides a systematic procedure that helps educators to design effective instructional activities based on learning objectives.” (Moradi & Chen, 2019). This creative process may involve what many scholars have called 21st Century Skills. These are described as a combination of Digital literacy meaning the ability to communicate with an ever-expanding community to discuss issues, gather information, and seek help; Global literacy which is the capacity to read,

interpret, respond, and contextualize messages from a global perspective; technology literacy that is the ability to use computers and other technology to improve learning, productivity, and performance; visual literacy referring to the ability to understand, produce, and communicate through visual images; and information literacy which is the ability to find, evaluate, and synthesize information.(Robin, 2008)

As it was mentioned before, using ICTs in the classroom involves mainly the user's creativity. Then, we can say that it is not necessary to create the material from scratch but we could make some adaptations, that is when intertextuality represents the main tool for digital storytelling. At this point, the producers of the text start collecting as many texts they have been exposed to as needed to create a new piece. In consequence, the adaptation may change distinct aspects of the supposedly original.

The integration and innovative use of ICTs in education (especially in EFL/ESL) relies on teachers' professional and digital competence so their education on this subject plays a significant role in preparing them to teach with technology. Educators who are trained in the production of multimedia teaching materials will see the creative and expressive value of TICs, integrate them in an innovative way, and develop some strategies to be critical at the time of choosing sources, gathering, and processing information that supports teaching and learning processes. They will become more confident to include these practices in their classrooms and thus provide students with real-life learning practices. They will strengthen and/or actualize their proficiency in using ICT in a professional context with solid pedagogic -didactic understanding of its implications for their students' learning.



Concerning storytelling and narrative analysis, Vonnegut (1981) draws a graph on which any story can be plotted. In this graph, there are two axes. The vertical one represents fortune and whether what the character experiences is something good or bad. The horizontal axis is the timeline from the beginning to the end of the story. Vonnegut explains that usually stories begin with the character's good fortune and then the characters, particularly the main one, start experiencing bad times which lead them into a hole from which with the development of the story they come up again. Another pattern starts with a normal day and then the character experiences good moments until something terribly bad happens, leading them into a hole again from which it comes up again. In this sense, it is noticed that for Kurt Vonnegut, the true movement of a story lies in a character's happiness. So, it is the feelings of the characters that we follow and not the plot. In 2016, a group of researchers from the University of Vermont and the University of Adelaide decided to put his theory to the test. They analysed the shape of over two thousand works of fiction available in the Project Gutenberg and found six main shapes of stories. Rags to Riches (rise). Riches to Rags (fall); Man in a Hole (fall then rise); Icarus (rise then fall); Cinderella (rise then fall then rise).

This research project is informed by the following research question: *How can teachers move from consumers to producers of educational texts through a synchronous way of combining their comprehension skills and a computer mediated reflection?* It pursues achieving the following goals:

- To contribute to a deeper understanding and knowledge of the use of CANVA as a tool for teachers at college to create teaching materials.
- To present new strategies based on Vonnegut's model of story analysis to comprehend and produce digital written texts.

Taking into account that there are many aspects one must consider at the time of combining comprehensive and productive skills, three hypotheses attempt to answer the research question.

- Teachers may use the Vonnegut's model for experiencing, conceptualizing and analysing the main movements in a narrative.
- Using Vonnegut's model will allow for a critical view of the text.
- Vonnegut's analysis will allow for a creative production of digital storytelling materials.

Foremost, discourse analysis is essential in the sense that it helps to name the conventions of the medium and the text types. Although students interact with them every day, they should be aware of what is needed to communicate with them. This research aims at analysing narratives in digital format. Hence, it is additionally required to consider an approach that explores the movements in a narrative. The chosen approach is Vonnegut's model which he called "The shape of stories". This model explains stories have shapes which can be drawn on graph paper. This leads to the first hypothesis which supposes that by watching a narrative and constructing a graph about it, participants will conceptualize and analyse the dominant movements in that narrative. That means its ups and downs as well as the conventions of the text type. To analyse the conventions of the text type, we will consider Chatman's (1990) definition of narratives that highlights the two parts of a narrative: The story, being the content which can be transposed to any medium without losing the essential properties and the discourse, indicating the medium through which the content is narrated.

The second hypothesis implies that Vonnegut's model will allow students to get a critical view of the text. This means that we expect they will question the story, moving away from the traditional, singular and fixed meaning of the story and including their own ideas to build their understanding of them. In this sense, this second hypothesis suggests participants will reflect on the type of text they are reading, how useful it may be for their lessons, and in what way they could adopt and adapt it to their classrooms and also . Taking into account the concept of text as a multidimensional space where trans textuality and socio-pragmatic awareness play a principal role. In this way, participants will analyse the text considering its purpose rather than just for pleasure.

Along these lines we arrive at the third hypothesis which states that Vonnegut's analysis will allow for a creative production of digital storytelling materials. This means that at the time of composing an alternative text or a text intervention, participants will be relating or referring to pre-existing texts in their various modes and will take into account new contexts and new audiences to which the production will be presented.

The analysis of the chosen multimedia elements for the production of teaching materials can be done from different perspectives. From a linguistic perspective, we will be capable of seeing the criteria and ideology behind teachers' choice of signifiers to convey meaning. This will be significant to interpret their reflection of the former text they worked with.

This research will be conducted under the qualitative method since there will be an analysis of linguistic and non-linguistic elements. Participants will be students of varied ages from the teacher training college "ISFD n° 11" and "ISFD n° 100" who are

attending the subject Prácticas discursivas de la comunicación escrita 4and they will be aware that they will be part of the research.

# **Chapter 1: Literature review**

- *Literacy and the change in thinking*

Literacy studies is a field that permeates all aspects of life. By 1990's theorists started to question the traditional concept of literacy since it was narrowly defined around written texts as the dominant way in which meaning is constructed and received. Pahl and Rowsell (2015) acknowledged that literacy studies encompass and are usually associated with school-based literacies. Curricula constructions and pedagogical concerns within education evolved in a conservative, prominent discourse of regularity and normativity. Literacy was therefore commonly described as the ability to read and write. (Pullen & Cole, 2009). Also, Kalantzis and Cope (2008) recalled that.

“The ‘basics’ of old learning were encapsulated in the ‘three Rs’— reading, writing and arithmetic. The process was learning by rote and knowing the ‘correct answers. ‘Discipline’ was demonstrated in tests as the successful acquisition of received facts and the regurgitation of rigidly defined truths. This kind of education certainly produced people who had learnt things, but things which were too often narrow, decontextualized, abstract and fragmented into subject areas artificially created by the education system. More than anything, it produced compliant learners, people who would accept what was presented to them as correct, and who passively learnt off by heart knowledge which could not easily be applied in different and new contexts” (p.199)

In 1994, the Centre for Workplace Communication and Culture at James Cook University of North Queensland, Australia, triggered an international project to consider what would need to be taught in the continuously changing future, and how it would be taught. Therefore, there was a call for ten different theorists from different fields of study, among them we could find Courtney Cazden, Bill Cope, Norman Fairclough, James Gee, Mary Kalantzis, Gunther Kress, Allan Luke, Carmen Luke, Sara Michaels and Martin Nakata, who debated the topic including their perspectives on language, specially English. The debate was rich in terms of their different cultural backgrounds, experiences and areas of expertise. Then, they finally enlarged the concept of literacy, understanding it as a socially constructed practice which has always been shaped by the social conditions. They also proposed that literacy teaching and learning should be adapted to respond to the emergent changes which result from the globalization process.

By the beginning of the 21st century Luke, Freebody and Land (2000) defined Literacy as

“the flexible and sustainable mastery of a repertoire of practices with the texts of traditional and new communications technologies via spoken language, print and multi-media. (Luke, Freebody & Land, 2000, p14)”

And a new literacy framework (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment & National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2004) has broadened the conceptualisation of literacy as well. Nowadays, UNESCO, for example, has defined Literacy as:

“... the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society. Generally, literacy also encompasses numeracy, the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations. The concept of literacy can be distinguished from measures to quantify it, such as the literacy rate and functional literacy.” (*Literacy | UNESCO UIS*, n.d.)

The New London group coined the term “multiliteracies” which focuses on the ability to comprehend a text, considering the latter in the same way as Barthes (1969) did, i.e., a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings encounter, contrast and combine with each other. There is no longer a person of authority providing one meaning to the text, on the contrary the receiver interacts with it creating their own meaning and interpretation. Multiliteracies then implies the idea of thinking critically about the texts, rather than the tools, that shape our identities, lives, and culture. The New London Group (1990) also suggested an educational reform if we were to provide our students with the skills they need to become literate global citizens and defined texts as a multidimensional space as well, and gave it the name of “Design”, a space “in which we (producers and receivers) are both inheritors of patterns and conventions of meaning at the same time active designers of meaning.” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2016). Moreover, they explained that “the active role of the literacy learner in constructing new meaning from existing resources” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2016)

Within the dominant paradigm of contemporary thinking about literacy there have been notions that texts represent different voices in which struggles and ideology

come into play, they could moreover, shape identity and social relations as well as they occur within certain kinds of discursive and social practices. Along these lines, Fairclough (1995) agreed that texts are social spaces in which two essential social processes take place in parallel: cognition and representation, as well as social interaction. As a result, a multifunctional vision of texts is required. (p.6). In these two processes we could find three analytically separable elements in the production of the text, the text itself, and the reception of the text. The production of the text focuses on the producers, the reception of the text focuses on the receivers and interpretation of the texts since meanings are made then through the interplay between them. When looking at these elements one should consider many aspects, for example, the position, interests, values and intentions of both producers and receivers. Therefore, meaning-making relies not only on what is overt in a text but also what is covert. (Fairclough, 2003)

Mills (2011) visualised classrooms as multimodal texts as well since these are spaces in which social actors, discourses, power relationships, different symbolic systems and technologies blend and construct a multimodal whole. This multimodal whole opens different spaces such as the dialogic, bodily, embodied, architectonic and screen spaces. For the purpose of this research, we consider the notion of the dialogic space in the classroom key to the concept of literacy taken into account since it supports the idea of intertextual, interdiscursive, multi-voiced spaces limited by the contexts (Mills, 2011). The dialogic space is based on Bakhtin's (1982) notions of heteroglossia and polyglossia which came from the analysis of novels. For him, heteroglossia refers to the variety, or styles, existing within the same language corresponding to different social groups. He adds that everything has been said or written by different individuals at different times in history, nothing is new and each



statement is also the representation of the group's ideology. The notion of polyglossia goes hand in hand with heteroglossia since the former understands that within the varieties there are also different voices who speak according to the contexts they are in, i.e. different perspectives although the producers of language belong the same social group.

This framework reflects a necessity of including multiliteracies and multimodalities. The relationship between literacy and context are not altogether new. In the 1960's and 1970's concerns about the differences between students' abilities in language encouraged researchers to examine how their social and cultural backgrounds influence their language learning. For instance, Labov introduced the concept of linguistic relativity, meaning that the social and cultural background in which a child grew up framed their language ability. Cazden took the ideas further and explained that the initial knowledge can be transposed to different contexts and used appropriately, defining this as the communicative competence. Finally, by the beginning of 1990's, Gee reviewed and extended the ideas to the development of literacies and literate practices. By literacies he meant the skills required by the language and the literate practices referred to the attitudes and behaviours connected to the use of the literacies (Anstey, M., & Bull, G. 2006, p. 21).

The New London group introduced six elements in the meaning making process:

- Linguistic meaning: It concerns spoken and written language through the use of vocabulary, generic structures, grammar, modality, features of intonation and coherence
- Visual meaning: It refers to images, page layouts, screen formats.

- Audio meaning: It concentrates music and sound effects chosen
- Gestural meaning: It is body language.
- Spatial meanings: It is related to the environmental and architecture spaces.

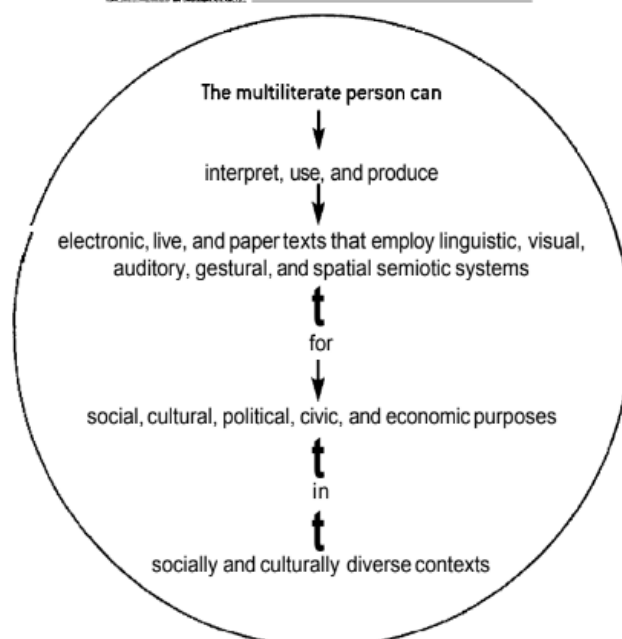
Each of these literacies are not seen as singular and isolated from other literacies, leading to the last meaning making process that they called “multimodal meanings” which has to do with the dynamic process of combining the other process in one final product. These processes also deal with the nature of information, and acknowledge many forms of sign representation. It should be noted that the texts we access or are exposed to are consciously crafted to share specific information in specific ways and to shape our attitudes, values and behaviours. Some information may be omitted, some may be overemphasised or presented in an attractive form using tone, colour or layout in a manipulative manner.

For instance, “social media images relate the linguistic meaning to the visual and to the gestural in intricately designed ways” (The new group of London 1990, p. 80). In the education system, all these modes should constitute an integrated learning experience customised to the learner's social and cultural context. Therefore, multiliterate teachers and learners can interpret, interact, use and produce texts employing different semiotic systems for social, cultural, political, civic and even economic purposes in culturally diverse contexts.

Finally, the multi in multiliteracies can be thought of in a number of ways. Broadly, it refers to the range of literacies and literate practices used in all sectors of life and how these literate practices are similar and different. Multiliteracies is an

attempt to comprehend and target the multiple text forms that have resulted from new technologies and new media forms, through a pedagogy that allows students to comprehend and deal with the growing complexity and interrelationship of different modes of meaning. Thus, a person must be literate not only with paper text but also with live (e.g., face-to-face) encounters and electronic works. This means being literate in multiple modes. Multiliteracy must also include critical reading, the ability to deconstruct texts, identify their origins and authenticity, and understand how they are structured to decode gaps and biases. According to a study conducted in Canada by (Gouthro & Holloway, 2013) “by including multiliteracies practices in the classroom, educators will give students agency within the imaginative and critical choices they are able to make in their own learning.” (p.64). In the same way, multiliteracy education offers educators innovative ways to think about how traditional literary studies can be redesigned without losing the depth of their critical perspective. “The effective implementation of the multiliteracies pedagogy requires that teachers reflect on and critique the discourses of their own culture.” (Mills, 2011)

#### Characteristics of a Multiliterate Person



(Anstey, M., & Bull, G., 2006).

- *Digital literacy and ICTs in education*

ICT stands for information and communication technologies and comprises a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store, and manage information. Education has been improved and continues to be optimised because of new ICT developments. Even so, educators should be cautious of overloading the curriculum with computer-mediated activities that may draw attention away from students' abilities in physical types of learning and outcomes. Educational improvements could thus be imagined as a dialogue between digital mediation and physical embodiment of ideas. Students who participate in a balanced curriculum will gain competence in handling new digital environments and will be equipped to actively incorporate these ideas through their actions. (Pullen & Cole, 2009)

More recently, advances in ICTs, workplace and educational requirements have influenced the way in which the teaching and learning process take place. On the one hand, learners must deal with a challenging environment of changes that go from technological innovations to the advancements in communicative exchanges. That is, nowadays the ability of reading and writing also involves doing so in different mediums and modes such as the various social networks and applications. Multimodality is “perceived as integral to contemporary learning. Making meaning of texts which immerse students has, thus, become a complex process of engaging with new knowledges and new forms of learning” (Iyer, R and Luke, C. 2009)

In this research we are considering the concept of digital literacy which, according to UNESCO (2011) is just an umbrella term that includes “ICT literacy [...], Technological literacy [...] and Information literacy”. The first type refers to the users’ skills that allows active participation in a society where services and cultural offerings are computer-supported and distributed on the internet. The second type also adds to the first the technical computing skills; and the last one is more connected to knowledge, i.e., to be able to search information, retrieve, process and use the digital data in the most favourable way.

Thus, also according to UNESCO (2011), digital literacy will be defined in this research as the awareness, attitude and ability of individuals’ to use digital tools within an ever-expanding community for communication, expression, discussion of issues, gathering information, and seeking help in specific life situations.

Teachers need to learn how to integrate ICTs in their teaching not just as a tool but in an innovative way, heading towards a reflection on subject matter about the sociocultural implications they may transmit with their teaching materials.

Digital storytelling subsequently becomes a practical strategy to include multiliteracies practices in the classroom. This means telling stories in electronic form. According to earlier research (Moradi & Chen, 2019) “becoming an encouraging support for a transformative technology approach for the improvement of learning, which includes content material, subject matter, critical thinking, information literacy, and motivation. [...] learners are challenged with critical thinking about combinations of content material and multimedia components while considering the standpoint of audiences.” (p.148)

It mainly involves a process that Charles Suhor (1984 in Mills, K. 2010) named 'Transmediation' denoting the rendering of content from one sign system into another. He explained that "transmediation deals with the structure of sign systems, and the connections between them for making sense of human experience". Here when we refer to sign systems, we focus on the semiotic structures through which human beings express meanings, letters, numbers, sounds, pictures, etc.

All these meanings are therefore translated into multimedia elements like images, soundtracks and even video clips embedded into texts which lead to the development of digital stories. Thus, "digital storytelling provides a systematic procedure that helps educators to design effective instructional activities based on learning objectives." (Moradi & Chen, 2019). This creative process may involve what many scholars have called 21st Century Skills. These are described as a combination of Digital literacy; Global literacy which is the capacity to read, interpret, respond, and contextualise messages from a global perspective; technology literacy that is the ability to use computers and other technology to improve learning, productivity, and performance; visual literacy referring to the ability to understand, produce, and communicate through visual images; and information literacy which is the ability to find, evaluate, and synthesise information. (Robin, 2008) The dynamic and systematic procedure of creative storytelling encourages students to take a more active role in the process of learning and also enhances deeper connections with the learning materials and subject. In this way, we can identify four main phases in the Digital storytelling process:

*"(a) pre-production: In this phase teachers start posing questions, exploring topic-related information, writing script and designing a story map or first draft.*

*(b) production: learners create multimedia elements*

*(c) postproduction: phase, the content is arranged and edited in a suitable manner in order to make a digital story.*

*(d) distribution: phase, the learners try to share their comments and produce digital stories with others. ” (Robin, 2008. p.4)*

As it was mentioned before, using ICTs in the classroom involves mainly the user's creativity. The integration and innovative use of ICTs in education (especially in EFL/ESL) relies on teachers' professional and digital competence so their education on this subject plays a significant role in preparing them to teach with technology. Educators who are trained in the production of multimedia teaching materials will see the creative and expressive value of TICs, integrate them in an innovative way, and develop some strategies to be critical at the time of choosing sources, gathering and processing information that supports teaching and learning processes. They will become more confident to include these practices in their classrooms and thus provide students with real-life learning practices. They will strengthen and/or actualize their proficiency in using ICT in a professional context with solid pedagogic -didactic understanding of its implications for their students' learning.

Then, we can say that it is not necessary to create the material from scratch but we could make some adaptations, that is when intertextuality represents the main tool for digital storytelling.

- *Language perspective*

Intertextuality is a poststructuralist concept and tool for text interpretation. It refers to a form of meaning-making principle, or it is a reader's link to one text while reading another. In such a case, reading becomes a process of moving between texts, and the meaning we derive from the text becomes something that exists between the text and all other texts or textual aspects.

The term intertextuality has its origin in linguistics and was coined by Kristeva (1986) who criticized the solid process of signification predicated by Saussure's semiology. She considered Bakhtin's concept of dialogism (i.e., that language reinforces class, ideological, and other conflicts, divisions, and hierarchies within society, along with other aspects of society) and the fact that one cannot understand the written work with singular purpose and unconnected to previous and further utterances or works. Thus, texts are inevitably in the phase of production instead of being products to be consumed. She claims that ideas are not displayed as finished, but rather in a manner that invites readers to add their own interpretations and meanings. The concept of the text is not a linear process but the t a mixture of cultural discourse which the reader cannot tell apart. Texts, according to Kristeva, do not have clear and constant meanings; they depict society's conflict over the meanings of language. Thereby, intertextuality is concerned with the existence of the text within society and history.

In Kristeva's words, intertextuality is "a permutation of texts, the space of any given text in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another" (1986). Here she indicates that a text is compiled as an assortment of quotations, the assimilation and a makeover of another. Intertextuality then, deals with



the process of creating a text outside the already present discourse. It is the relation of text in a larger system of signifying practices open to an infinite play of signs.

In this way, we come to a decentred view of the language as defined by Jacques Derrida (1999), which is opposed to the traditional structuralist point of view. For structuralism, language is a close first order system in which a sign is made up of two parts a signifier and a signified. The former is the word or acoustic image and the latter is the concept we have in our minds. For this intellectual movement, the meanings we give to words are arbitrary, since there is no specific connection between a word and what it mentions; it is also relational because the terms acquire meaning just in the binary opposition with the other; and finally meaning is always constructed and expressed through language, that is, through signs. (Saussure, 1916).

This being explained, we understand that for Structuralism, the structure of language is reduced to a centre and its margins, and that is what Derrida (1999) criticises in his essay "Structure, sign and play in the discourse of the human sciences". He made a point explaining that the centre organises and limits the play of signifiers within the structure. Besides, repetitions, transformations or substitutions of those centres can be traced back to find their origin, their presence.

"the entire history of the concept of structure, before the rupture of which we are speaking, must be thought of as a series of substitutions of centre which we are speaking, must be thought of as a series of substitutions of centre for centre, as a linked chain of determinations of the centre." (Derrida, 1999).

However, for Post-structuralism, there was a moment in which that structure was broken and thus, the centre could not be thought in the form of a presence anymore. On the contrary, in the form of a function. This means that there is not an origin but an infinite number of sign substitutions impossible to trace back.

Along these lines, there is a tension between play and history as well as a tension between play and presence. The former occurs since the appearance of this acentred structure comes about with a break with its past, origin and cause. So, within the acentred structure, which means an empty centre in the system, language comes to question itself by limiting the opposition between concepts and then questioning their history and origins. Once their history and origins are questioned, the opposition may dissolve. The play of signifiers is the disruption of presence, i.e., being is a presence or an absence according to its possibility of play.

Furthermore, post-structuralism develops the impossibility and inefficacy of defining language as a totalization since everything is discourse. Thus, language is a non-totalization, which means that the centre is never the centre since it is outside the totality, on the basis of a play of signifiers. This concept refers to language as an infinite chain of substitutions because of its finitude.

Within the structure of discourse, the movement of signs replacing centres is a movement of supplementarity. So, a sign may supply what is missing at the centre or may be something additional to complement it. In other words, in the play of signifiers there is not a privileged signifier but they are all equal, due to the fact that language is a bricolage, i.e., the use of words according to our needs, adapting and attaching them

meaning that we want to convey and changing it whenever it is necessary. In Derrida's words (1999)

“The movement of signification adds something, which results in the fact that there is always more, but this addition is a floating one because it comes to perform a vicarious function, to supplement a lack on the part of the signified”.

The authors are not original and do not create anything from original minds but compile from the already existing texts. Then, at this point, the producers of the text start collecting as many texts they have been exposed to as needed to create a new piece. Consequently, in this study we could link how intertextuality is functional to the adaptation of the story, considering adaptation as an ongoing process of intertextual reference and transformation of texts generating other texts by recycling, transforming, transmuting with no clear point of origin, so it may change different aspects of the supposedly original. In this way, we can talk about adapting to a new medium of expression, the plot, the characters, time and places and even the point of view from which the events are told.

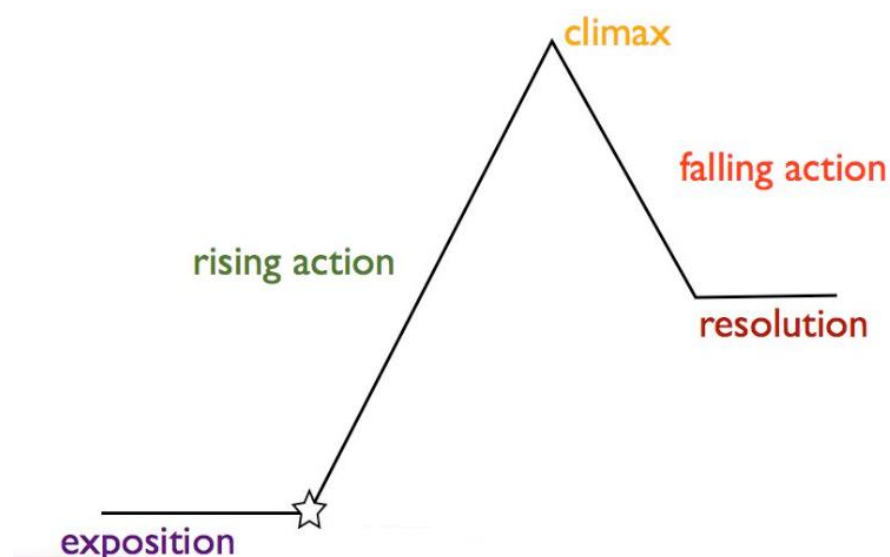
- **Narratology**

Concerning storytelling and narrative analysis, narratology, the science which implies how stories are constructed across the dimensions of time and narration would help to understand the narratives.

The first attempt to produce a model of narrative was made around 330 BCE by Aristotle, who tried to systematise the contents of the narrative applied to the Greek tragedy. Within the elements described by him, one can find the plot. For Aristotle, the plot meant a three part organisation of events into a system that gave them the coherence of a whole. According to his perspective, plot is the primary element of narrative, and character is subordinate to plot. So the events are the most important thing of all and could be grouped into beginning, the inciting event; the middle, which is the climax of the narrative and the resolution, that does not lead to other incidents and should solve the problem created in the climax.



In the nineteenth century, Gustav Freytag (1863) came up with the “pyramid”, in which the five stages of a narrative, i.e., introduction, ascent, tragic force/climax, falling action, and catastrophe are arranged in a peak structure rather than a lineal one.



Formalists, for example, were interested in analysing literature into its component parts and in describing its principal devices and modes of operation. This analysis took two main forms in the two major genres of prose narrative and poetry. They focused first on the operations of narrative. In their work, they noticed that narrative literature

“consisted of two major components: the plot or fabula, by which they meant the story as narrated within the pages of the book (with all the attendant arrangements of chronological sequence, point of view, etc.), and the story or syuzhet, by which they meant the sequence of events in the order and the actual duration in which they ostensibly occurred. Once this simple distinction is made, one can begin to analyse all of the features of story-telling, the many devices such as point of view, delayed disclosure, narrative voice, and the like that go into the creation of the imaginary story through the manipulation of plot or story-telling devices.” ( Rivkin, J and Ryan, M. 2004, p. 4)

Later, Chatman (1980) considered the narrative as a structure representing wholeness since although it is constituted by independent elements, these tend to be related; a structure that maintains and completes itself; and finally as a process of transformation in the form of communication between authors and readers, being real or abstract.

In further detail, “a narrative is a whole because it is constituted of elements-events and existents-that differ from what they constitute. Events and existents are single and discrete, but the narrative is a sequential composite” (Chatman, 1980). These elements are usually organised and related to each other so as to manifest the structure they belong to. Likewise, the narratives involve self-regulation and transformation since it keeps close to itself and although one adds or subtracts elements from it, all satisfy the laws and express meanings on its own rights.

According to him, within this structure two layers can be distinguished: the story and discourse. The former relates to the content while the latter relates to the medium through which the content is narrated. The story is then what can be transposed to any medium without losing the essential properties. It is composed of events, which are the actions and happenings; the existents, which are the characters and settings and finally the people, things and places as pre-processed by the author's cultural codes. However, also these two parts "should contain (1) a form and substance of expression, and (2) a form and substance of content." (Chatman, 1980, p. 25). In this way, he explained that a story is made up of form and substance of *content* since it is just the material, what is being communicated.

On the other hand, discourse is connected to the sequence of narrative statements and defines the "aesthetic object", i.e., what comes to existence when the observer experiences the real object and constructs it in their minds. It includes two components, the structure of narrative transmission that represent the relation of time of the story to the time of the recounting and the medium. In this way, discourse must be coherent, and the existents may remain the same from one event to the other, if not there should be an explanation. So, referring back to the fields of substance and form, differently to story, discourse is built upon the form and substance of *expression* seeing that it represents the medium and how the content is manifested. (Chatman, 1980, p. 25)

Mieke Bal (1997) worked on something like Chatman by referring to *fabula* and *story*, where the first one relates to the content of the story and the second to the

perception of the content in the mind of the reader. Furthermore, she includes what Chatman (1980) called discourse as a third layer in the narrative: text.

Regarding the components of a narrative text, according to Bal (1997) we could identify agents, the fictitious spokesman or narrator; events suggesting the transition from one state to another that always takes time and inevitably occur somewhere and actors who are agents performing actions. These elements represent the content of a narrative that will be arranged in relation to one another to produce a desired effect. This arrangement may be or may not be chronological. The chronology of the events will depend on the readers when weaving the story in their minds.

“Ideally, the characteristics of narrative text should be as follows:

1. Two types of 'speakers' are to be found in a narrative text; one does not play a role in the fabula whereas the other does. This difference exists even when the narrator and the actor are one and the same person as, for example, in a narrative related in the first person. The narrator is the same person, but at another moment and in another situation than when she originally experienced the events.
2. It is possible to distinguish three layers in a narrative text: the text, the story, and the fabula. Each of these layers is describable.
3. That with which the narrative text is concerned, the 'contents' it conveys to its readers, is a series of connected events caused or experienced by actors presented in a specific manner.” (Bal, 1997, p. 9)

Gerard Genette in his book “Narrative Discourse: An essay in method” (1980) argues that there are three broad notions of narratives. The first one and most common to hear defines narrative as the oral or written discourse that tells events or a series of them. The second definition refers to the succession of events, being them real or fictitious, that are the content of the discourse and related in diverse ways, for instance by opposition or repetition. And the third meaning, according to Genette (1980), the

oldest and most traditional, relates to someone recounting something. In other words, the narrative as a sign is the act of narrating in which the signifier, that is the content that needs a narrator, and the signified, which is the whole real or fictional situation come into play. Consequently,

“analysis of narrative discourse constantly implies a study of relationships: on the one hand the relationship between a discourse and the events that it recounts (narrative in its second meaning), on the other hand the relationship between the same discourse and the act that produces it, actually or fictively (narrative in its third meaning).”  
(Genette, 1980. p. 27)

One of the categories that Genette (1980) explored in the analysis of narratives is what he called “a narrative instance” or narrative situation. This instance is crucial when constructing the narrative's overall structure and it involves the existence of three elements which may overlap or there may be a predominant one:

- *The narrative voice*: It is the relation between the action being told and the person uttering it. This means that the mode of the verbs is considered for their relation to the subjects. The subjects are not only the people who perform the action or receive it but also who reports it. That means, all people who are part of the event actively or passively. Within these voices we have three types of narrators
  - A. Homodiegetic narrator: It is present as a character.
  - B. Heterodiegetic narrator: The narrator is absent as a character, may be a witness of the situation.



C. Auto diegetic narrator: It is present as a character in the narrative but at the same time it is the hero or protagonist of it.

- *Narrative perspective or focalization*: It means through whom the audience perceives the story. The perspective the narrator stands in relation to the story and/or to the characters. There are four main patterns.

A. Fixed focalization: Narrative facts and events are told from a constant position, there is a single focalizer.

B. Variable: The episodes or situations in the narrative are seen through different eyes of different focalizers.

C. Multiple: There is one single episode presented by different focalizers each time.

D. Collective: The focalization is through a plural narrator or a group of characters.

- *Time of narration*: This is one of the most important aspects of the narrative instance since one must necessarily narrate in present, past or future.

Understanding that the narrative's material can be told from various points of view will help us better comprehend narrative focalization and the narrative perspective. So, depending on who is telling the story or whose story is being told the analysis of the narrative will result differently. (Genette, 1980)

- *Kurt Vonnegut, a postmodern narrative analysis*

Postmodernism is a movement that began after World War II, aimed at criticising and dissolving the Master narratives, using irony to revisit the past and including

intertextual elements to blur generic boundaries. Also, the movement accepted pluralism, as a result, it includes every culture and social norm as equal and it does not give any superiority to a particular culture or ideology. Accordingly, it rejected modernist thoughts and views and it emphasised multiple truths, stories, and points of view.

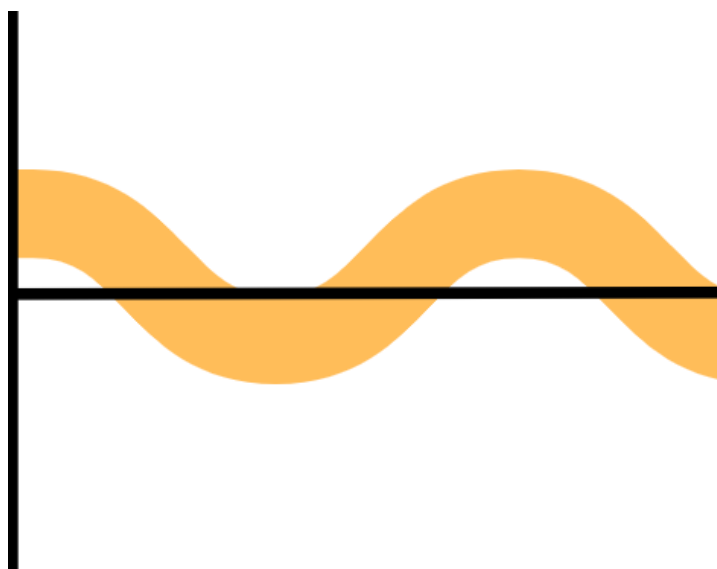
As seen before, narratology has many exponents so the analysis of narratives can be done through different lenses. In this research we followed Vonnegut's main thesis (1981) which was exposed in a conference called "shape of stories". Kurt Vonnegut was an American writer noted for his satirical novels. He frequently used postmodern techniques as well as elements of fantasy and science fiction to point out the horrors and ironies of 20th-century civilization.

In 1981, he developed the notion of giving each story a shape. That means he combined the maths graphic element of X and Y axes and the literary notion of plot. He drew a graph on which any story can be plotted. As said before, there are two main axes: The vertical one (Y axis) which represents fortune and whether what the character experiences is something good or bad, placing the good fortune at the top of the axis and bad fortune at the bottom. On the contrary, the horizontal axis (X axis) is the timeline from the beginning to the end of the story.

In this sense, following the idea of not a single truth but many and giving voice to different groups, Kurt Vonnegut challenged the traditional conception of plot in which the main elements were the events and introduced the idea of the true movement of a story lying in a character's happiness, or in his own words, "The shape of the curve is what matters." (1981) So it is the feelings of the characters that we follow and not the

plot. The different waves in each shape shift in the time-varying emotions of the story's character from which we are reading the story. A rising phase represents a change to a positive emotion, whereas a falling phase represents a change to a negative emotion for the character. A foreground of shifts reflects the fact that the plots of stories focus on processes of change, rather than on periods of stasis.

In his talk, Vonnegut explained that stories usually begin with the character's good fortune and then they start experiencing bad times which lead them into a hole from which with the development of the story they come up again. Another pattern identified was the one which starts with a normal day and then the character experiences good moments until something terribly bad happens, leading them into a hole from which it comes up again.



In 2016, a group of researchers from the University of Vermont and the University of Adelaide decided to put his theory to the test. They analysed the shape of over two-thousand works of fiction available in the Project Gutenberg and found six main shapes of stories.

- Rags to Riches (rise).
- Riches to Rags (fall).

- Man in a Hole (fall then rise).
- Icarus (rise then fall).
- Cinderella (rise then fall then rise)
- Oedipus (fall then rise then fall)

Their focus was on the emotional trajectory of a story, not merely its plot. They also analysed which emotional structure writers used most, and how that differed with the ones readers liked most. Consequently, researchers picked six from a mix of popular lists based on what shapes the computer identified most. Even though the researchers were focused on a book's emotional arc, they found an overlap in how plot points reflected emotional highs and lows as measured by the sentiment analysis.

In the present research we are mainly considering "Man in a hole" and "Cinderella". The former shape starts above the midpoint of the fortune (Y) axis. Then something devastating happens to the protagonist and the rest of the story advances following the hero trying to get out of the hole, until eventually he does, and he ends up in a place that is even better than where he started.

On the other hand, in "Cinderella" shape, the hero starts below the midpoint, they are someone who has experienced real tragedies in life. Then, things begin to happen that lead to an improvement in their situation. Step by step their situation gets so much better that the character breaks past the midpoint into the area of good fortune. At least, for a bit. After that, the character's fortune declines crossing into the negative fortune side again, but not as far down as the beginning. And that is where things stay until one last reversal which not only ends on a high top, but also with the potential for infinite happiness. Also, we could consider "from rags to riches", representing the main character rising, and going on to win the world.

## **Chapter 2: Methodology**

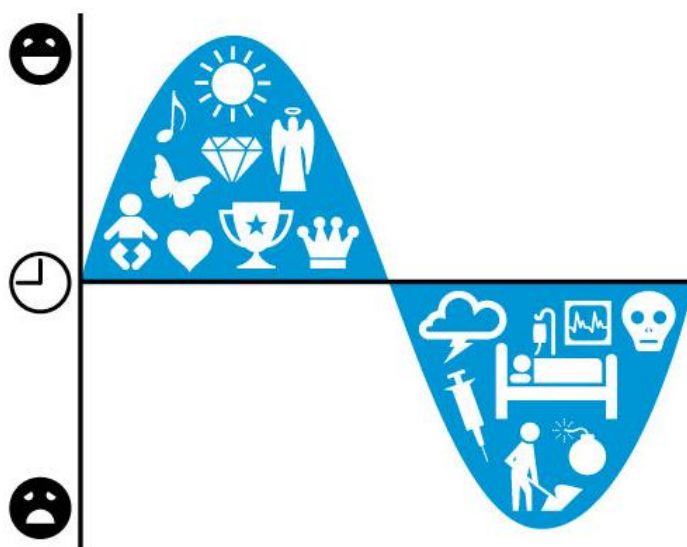
This study is conducted under the qualitative method. Qualitative research methods respond to questions about experience, meaning, and perspective, mainly from the participant's viewpoint. These kinds of data are seldom measurable and quantifiable. Small-group discussions are among the qualitative research techniques used to explore beliefs, attitudes, and normative behavioural patterns. (Hammarberg, Kirkman, and de Lacey, 2016)

This being so, the focus group studied is small, just 18 teachers-to-be participated from two different teacher training colleges in order to find out how and why they produce their materials using ICTs. Along these lines, the view of human behaviour here is seen as dynamic and situational presented in multiple realities. The role of the researcher is known by the participants so they are aware they will be part of a study. We consider this research as a case study since the experience is an explanation and interpretation of a person or case aiming at identifying variables, structures, forms, and interactions between the people participating in the situation, or in order to assess performance or development progress. It is important to mention that the researcher has taken part in the production of material to be used in the experiment.

As regards the type of data, this study involves the systematic collection, organisation, description and interpretation of textual, verbal or visual data through observations of participants, note-taking and reflections. The final report would contain contextual descriptions and subjectivity may be expected.

We will begin the class by showing students the graph of Kurt Vonnegut's model (fig 1). They will be allowed five minutes to observe the graph and write down what they can comprehend, what they can relate it to and what they imagine it is.

After collecting papers, there will be some discussion about the emoji, the axis and what they stand for. Students will first explain their possible interpretations and then, students will be asked "Why is there a clock? In what way is it relevant? What specific type of text does this model apply to?"



After that, students will be introduced to the two models selected for the present work: "Man a hole" and "Cinderella".

Although starting from students' earlier knowledge, the Cinderella model will be constructed by their retelling. While students will be retelling the story, considering the key events, I will be constructing the graph on the whiteboard. When it comes to the key moment in which Cinderella starts to achieve her goals, students will be asked whether it happens suddenly or step by step, directing them to build up the right model.

Once the two models are presented, students will be invited to think about other narratives considering films or written texts that could fit in these models. They will be allowed 20 minutes brainstorming and considering stories they have read or seen. In some cases, students can come up with stories that do not belong to the models but may be an example of other models proposed by Kurt Vonnegut. For example: Man

in a hole. Another model they can come up with is “from rags to riches”, representing the main character rising, and going on to win the world.

The third stage of the experience consists of displaying students two pieces of teaching material for reading comprehension. They will decide if they can clearly identify the shape of the stories and discuss in what way they can perceive it. Students will watch the animated version of *Three Little Pigs*<sup>1</sup>, written by Roald Dahl in his book “Revolting rhymes.” After watching the video, they will draw a graph for the story. They will show their graphs and explain the perspective or character from which they did it. That means they will use the story we examined to teach anything.

The following stage is allowing students to use their drawings as a draft to design teaching material for reading skills. They will be allowed between 30 and 40 minutes to the creative process and start designing the material using CANVA, in the format they prefer. Once the projects are completed, students will share them by email to be seen in the results section. To conclude, students will write on a piece of paper the answers to “What I knew... What I learned in the experience... and How I would involve it in my teaching practices”.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://youtu.be/F5DS2DnsJ04>

## **Chapter 3: Results and discussion**

The research was conducted in two different teacher training colleges from the south of Buenos Aires Province. The total number of participants were 18 from the last year of the course of studies. There are not eighteen different productions since some students preferred to work in small groups or in pairs.

These two colleges are similar in regard to their location and people who attend classes. They are in the centre of the cities and people live in the surroundings, most of them went to classes before or after working at schools, they not only participated as students but also as teachers, having in mind a group of students to produce their material as a reading task. All students in the two colleges had the necessary resources to work with, such as internet connection and computers or mobile phones. Students also knew how to use the technological tool required and the ones who did not know how, managed to use any other application in order to complete the task appropriately.

We started the lessons by showing participants a graph that represents the shape of stories and students' answers associated the graph to the cycle of life considering early stages and being an adult, life with its ups and downs or enjoyable and negative aspects, life and death and a few students said it could be related to happy or bad endings. As regards the clock in the graph, they thought about the length of life or the length of the story. Then we discussed why the model was called shape of stories, focusing on which aspects give shape to a story. Students from both teacher training colleges talked about events in the story. At ISFDyT n° 24, students discussed that from the graph they could see "many elements that can be action or reaction



triggers, not necessarily all of them in just one story”. They also observed the clock and said that it could represent “the plot, the time of the story because it is linear”. They were asked what elements could be found within the plot, to which they answered, “turning points”. Again, we asked them what they meant by “turning points” and they replied those were “the moments in which a story develops until the conflict, the conflict and when it is solved”. Moving on to the emojis in the graph, they discussed characters as the graph introduced good or dreadful things, they mentioned the graphs could represent “comedy and tragedy” and some others said that characters and events were not different things, but they were linked since events happen to characters. Similarly, students from ISFD n° 100 answered that the graph was very much related to life, to the balance between “Achievements” and “failures”. One student wrote that “One can take any aspect of life to create a story[...] thus a narrative shows different situations that the character lives in the story, events that are interpreted as ups and downs throughout the story”. Then, students were asked further questions about the reason why the model was called *shape of stories*, but they did not come with an answer, they just looked confused.

In this way, we analyse their ideas under the light of narratology, a theory which relies on the narrative structure and how its components relate to each in order to achieve a goal. Narratives are constructed across dimensions of time and narration, that means the development of the story and the discourse used to tell the events. Furthermore, before continuing, it is important to mention that according to Bal (1997), the narrative system consists of an infinite number of texts that can be described using a finite number of concepts such as agents and events. At the same time, we need to understand that the narrative system has a three-layer distinction that although we can analyse them separately, they are not independent from each other. These layers are

the text, which is the sign system of language and the only directly accessible; the fabula which is the content of the narrative and the story which is the result of the reading process.

“Such a distinction carries with it the assumption that it is possible to analyse the three layers separately. That does not mean that these layers 'exist' independently of one another. The only material which we have for our investigation is the text before us.[...] Only the text layer, embodied in the Sign system of language, visual images, or any other, is directly accessible”  
(Bal, 1997)

It was relevant to explain to participants that when they read or produced narratives, they had to be aware of these three layers since they would work as a guide on what to include. Furthermore, this is linked to the diverse types of literacy they would need to master to produce a text. In this way, for example, when reading as well as when drafting their 'text' layer, they have previously thought about the content and might have had in mind the reader to which their text is addressed, so they were trying to convey linguistic, audio, spatial and visual meanings all at the same time.

Along these lines, we understand that what students could see in the graphs shown was just the text or what Chatman (1980) would call the discourse, that means just the medium or the sign system chosen to tell the events. Also, participants' conclusions are related to what Chatman explained about events and existents, which are the content of the story that can be transposed to any medium, what Bal (1997) later referred to as fabula. The events or happenings, which are the processes in the fabula, imply existences that are the characters and or settings. Also, the interpretation of the signs in the shape worked by the principle of selection and order. According to

Chatman (1980), this is part of the discourse of the narrative and the selection of contents is made by the author while the order is made by the reader who, in this case, built up the model showing the development of the story.

Next, we introduced the model of “man in a hole” and invited students to supply examples of texts they had read or seen in their lives that could fit in the model. Students from the ISFDyT n° 24 mentioned “Avengers: End Game” while students from ISFDyT n°100 named “The fall of the House of Usher”, “Titanic” from Rose's perspective, “The Truman show” and “A kid like Jake.” When thinking about examples they came up with some others that didn't fit in the Man in a hole model” so they reflected on the possibility of other shapes.

From this stage onwards, we could analyse students' answers from two complementary perspectives. On the one hand how they understand the narrative itself and on the other hand how they design the graphs, considering the multiliteracies theory. The New London Group (1994) indicates the numerous ways by which signification occurs. For the New London Group, Design expresses the functional role of literacy in learners constructing new signification from existing resources. As Design rejects the isolated, abstract learning, it demands instead the production of a new way of representation rather than a replication of the existent one. In this sense, multiliteracies approaches are respectful and inclusive of the diverse and complex cultural perspectives of learners and their diverse learning styles. When evaluating students' intervention from the multiliteracies perspective, we can understand that while retelling the stories, giving examples and even applying the models to other stories they had been exposed to, they went under four knowledge processes of deep understanding and proactive learning. Firstly, it is experiencing where the prior

knowledge and life experience of the learner is combined with immersion of the new knowledge and new experience in meaningful settings.

To present the “Cinderella” model, students were asked to retell the story considering the main movements. At this stage, the concept of “movement” was explained as the events which lead to a change in the mood of the narrative, for instance if there is a moment of cause-consequence that makes the character take a decision which modifies the course of actions. As they were mentioning them, we were outlining them on the board, building it up together. Also, students were asked whether Cinderella’s rising was abrupt or scaffolded and they were allowed some minutes to think about it, concluding that Cinderella came up to good fortune step by step. At that point, they mentioned an abrupt fall when the clock struck 12 at night and finally a rise again. In this stage, they went through the second and third knowledge process of deep understanding according to the New London Group (1994), conceptualising, which enables the learner to define, apply concepts and comprehend the abstract generalised meanings in visual representations; and analysing which involves interpreting functions through the comprehension and exploration of purpose and intentions of the text.

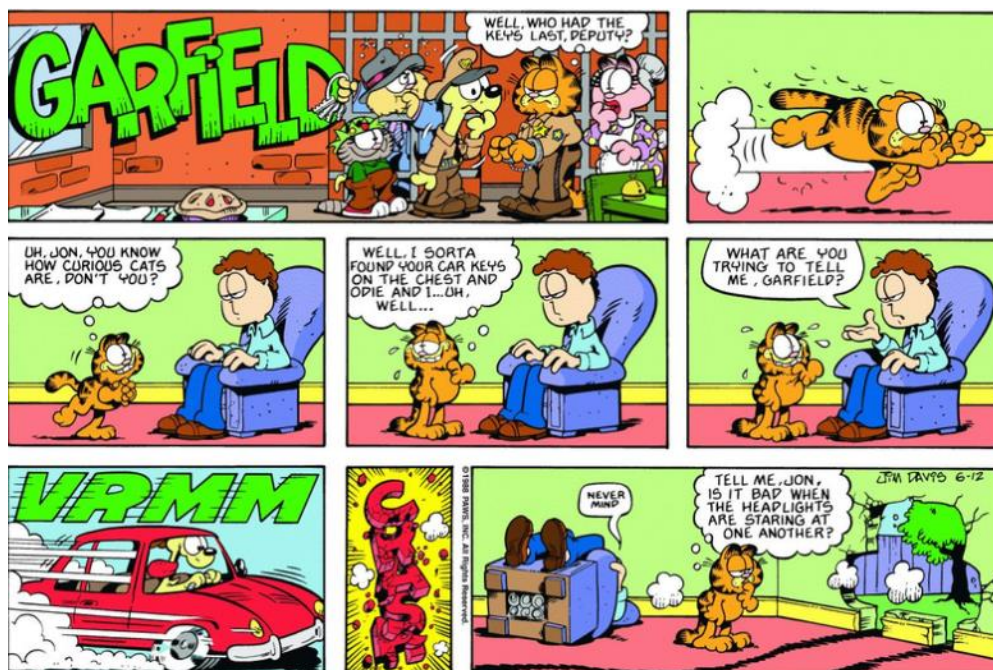
Furthermore, when students retold the story, they still thought of it in three main moments: Beginning, middle, and end according to the unfolding of events. This showed that the narrative discourse analysis at the Teacher Training college is basic since some professors may not be specialists and the analysis, they carry out is a simple one. However, in the discussion, one student shared his meaningful experience when he had studied to be a film director. He commented that they implemented something like Vonnegut’s model when they had to present the script to the rest of the

team. Therefore, they made a drawing of the time axis and a line indicating the movements of the story, which combined the technical and the literacy script.

At this point, from a post structuralist point of view, we explained the shape depended on the character's development, so we could have many shapes according to who we put at the centre of the story. Although he developed his ideas from a structuralist perspective, Gerard Genette's concept (1988) of Narrative instance useful for the development of Vonnegut's idea. Narrative instance implies that narrative voice, narrative perspective and time of narration are central at the time of building up the shape of the narrative. So during the research, we considered and applied focalization or narrative perspective to understand that the content of the narrative can be told from different angles and thus the story we build up in our minds, or the graphic shape we give to them will be different. Besides, according to Kurt Vonnegut's theory, the story will be followed through the character's experience and not from the plot. That means the characters or who narrates events will be at the centre. Besides, Vonnegut emphasises that narratives should give the reader at least one character they can root for, "making awful things happen to them-in order that the reader may see what they are made of." (Vonnegut, 1999).

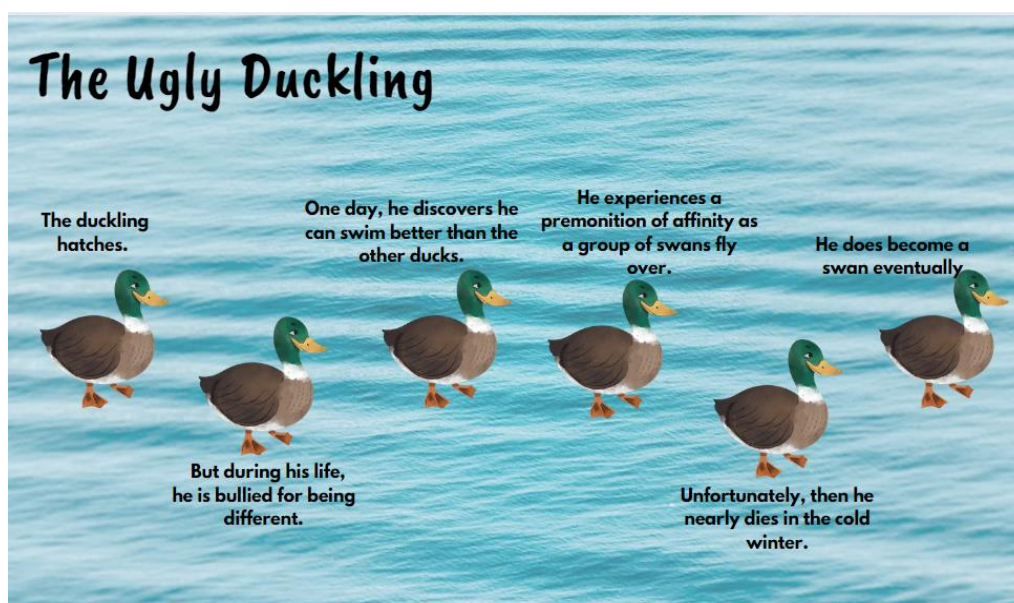
Moving on to the plane of discourse, the idea of narrating from different perspectives and thus having a different story is related to the post-structuralism concept of language and meaning. According to Barthes (1969) texts are no longer just to be read but they are open to an interaction with the reader, meaning that they are flexible, and the resulting story comes from the play between pre-existing texts in the mind of the reader and the text being read in the moment.

After the introduction we moved on to the writing stage, i.e. the fourth knowledge process in the multiliteracies theory which is applying knowledge appropriately and creatively by understanding suitable situations to apply and extending it to create new knowledge. Consequently, students were presented two different stories (*the Ugly Duckling and Garfield comic strip*) to note if they could name any shape easily.



(Garfield comic strip retrieved from

<http://images.ucomics.com/comics/ga/1988/ga880612.gif>)



(Story taken from <https://storiestogrowby.org/story/the-ugly-duckling-story-a-fairy-tale-story-for-kids/> and adapted for research purposes)

They talked about what they could recognize in the pictures, and they interpreted the characters' expressions; however, they answered there was not a clear recognizable shape of the story because of the distribution of the panes, it looked linear, and they could not define Garfield's attitude towards the events. For example, students from ISFD n° 100 said that "the events are bad fortune at the beginning and end even worse, but they did not seem to affect Garfield's emotions so much", "Although we know Garfield is the main character, he doesn't care about what's happening, he is like from the outside". At ISFDyT n° 24, students have similar answers suggesting that "Finding a shape here is far more difficult than in the Ugly Duckling since the character's emotions are not so obvious". It was different when they saw the especially created version of The Ugly Duckling which in fact revealed a shape.

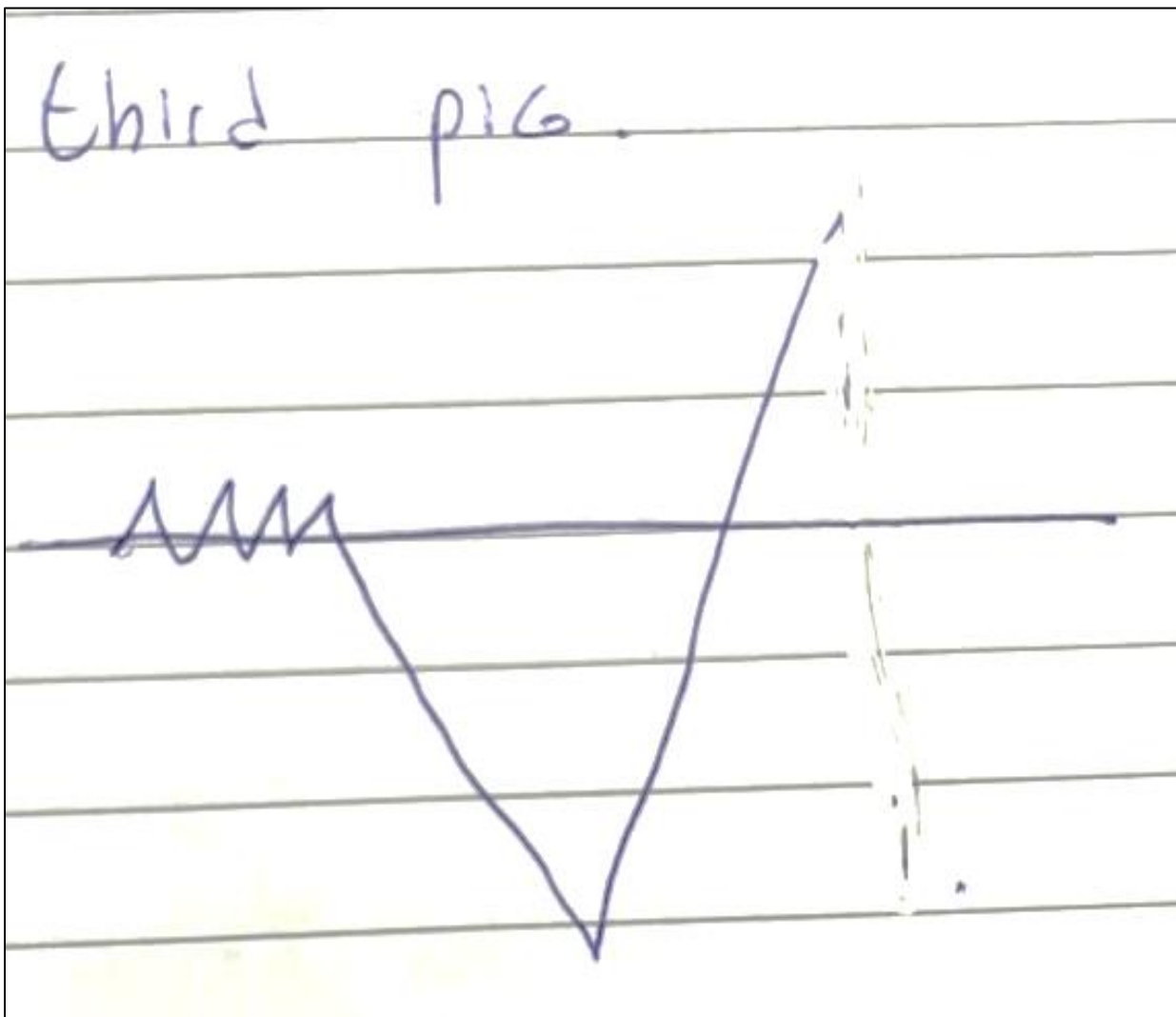
As each reader bears their own interpretation of texts, they described the story within two shapes: Cinderella and good news and bad news. Students from ISFD n° 100 suggested that the shape they could give to the story came not only from what they could perceive in the picture but also their previous knowledge of the story. For instance, they mentioned that at the end the ugly duckling is happy because he turns into a swan, but the character's emotion is not written nor shown in the picture. They talked about the language used, connectors and time sequencers in particular, and images and the position of the ducks in the development of the narrative.

Students were told that when reading the two digital stories, they were combining a series of different literacies. They got the visual to understand the combination of pictures and the textual literacy to read words. As a result, they claimed

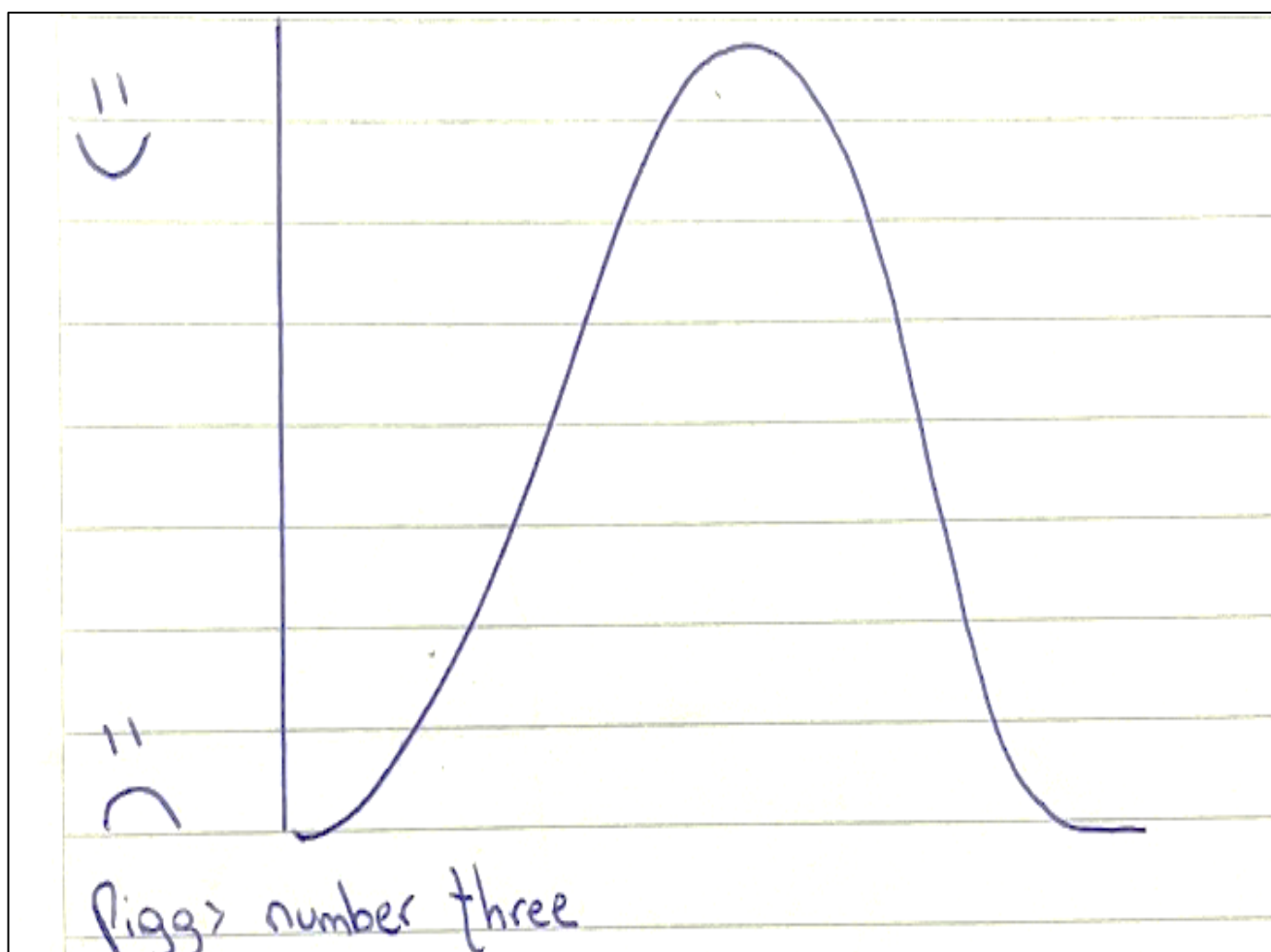
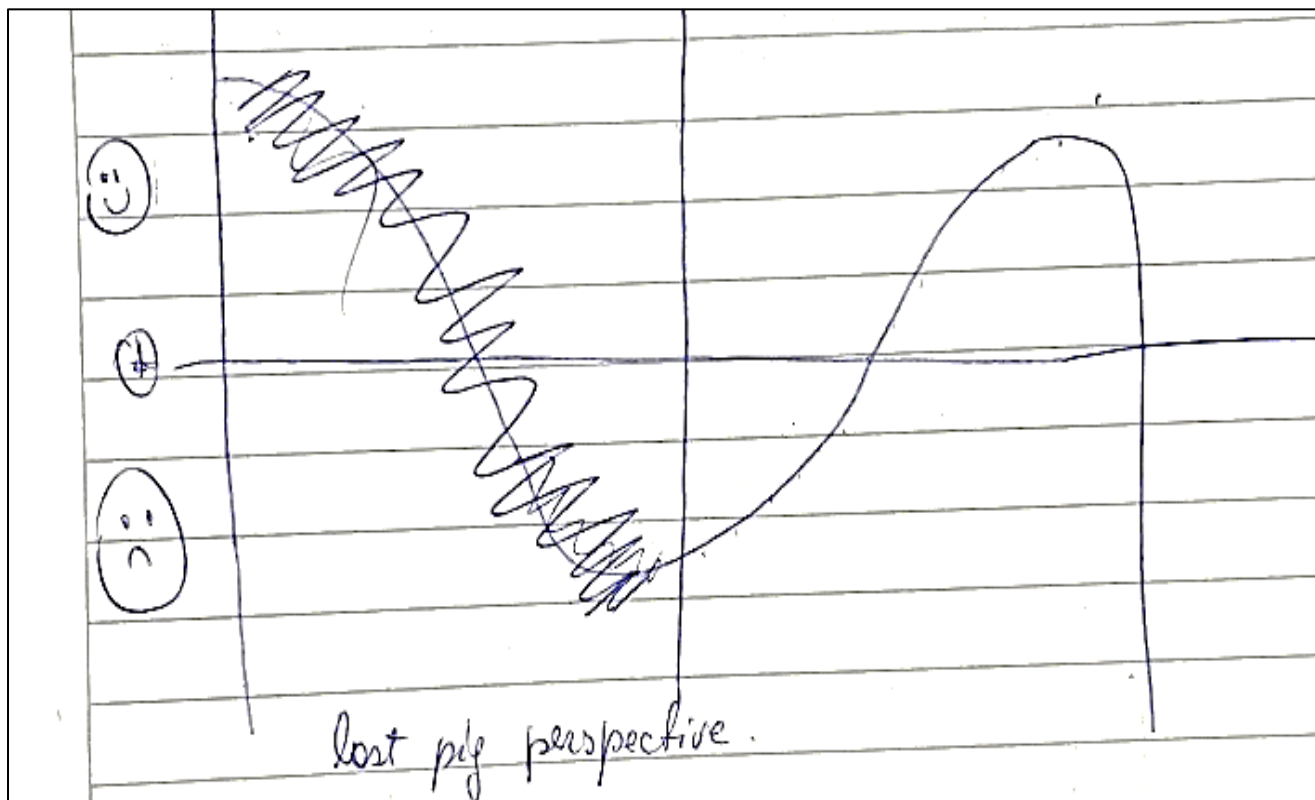
they could find a sequence through specific words like “one day”, “eventually”, “fortunately”, “but.”

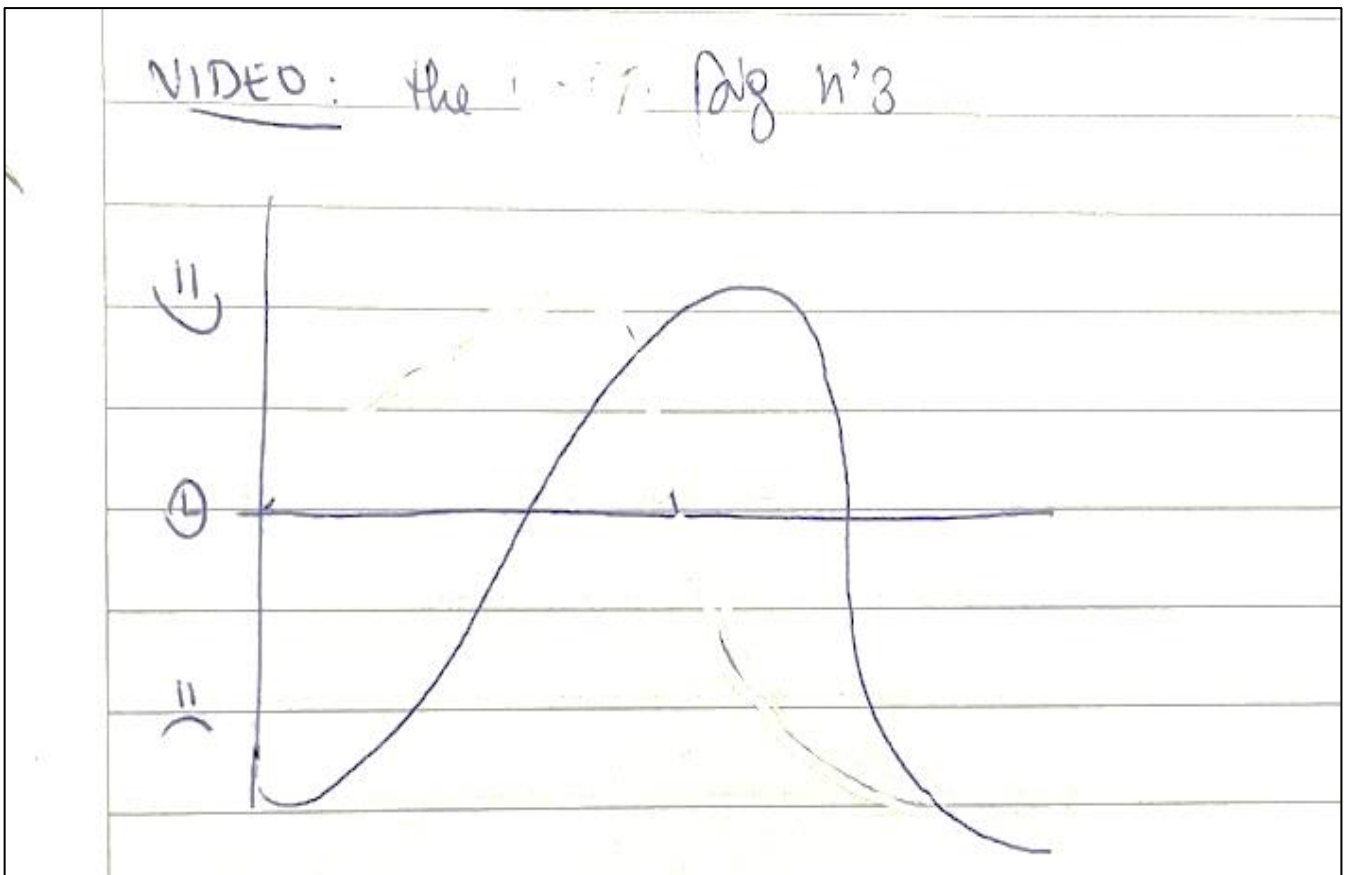
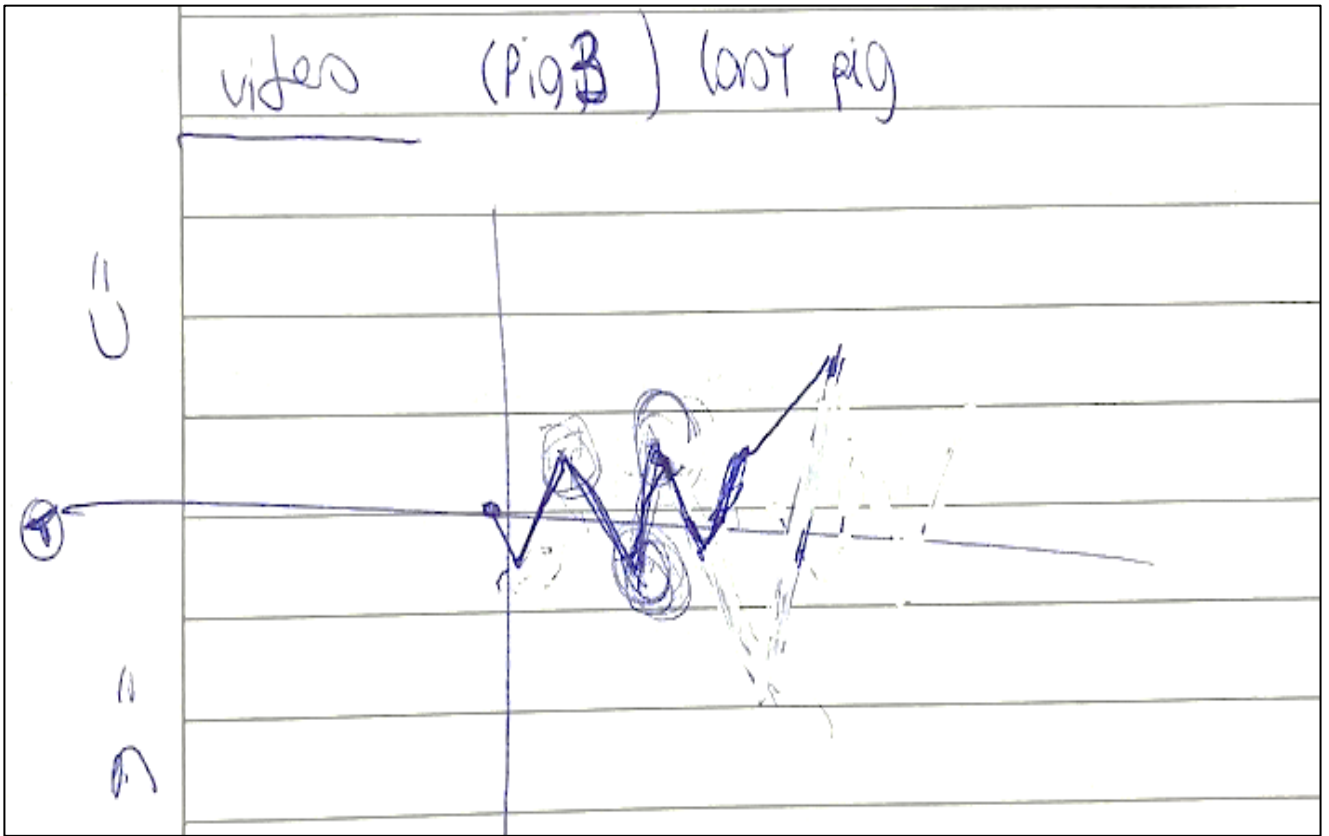
After analysing the two picture-stories, students watched a video and again put into motion different literacies like the visual, the audio literacy and the linguistic literacy combined to create one meaning. Students were asked to produce the shape of *Three Little Pigs* by Roald Dahl. In both colleges students constructed graphs based on the characters. From a total of 21 students,

- 8 drew the graph based on the third pig’s experience.



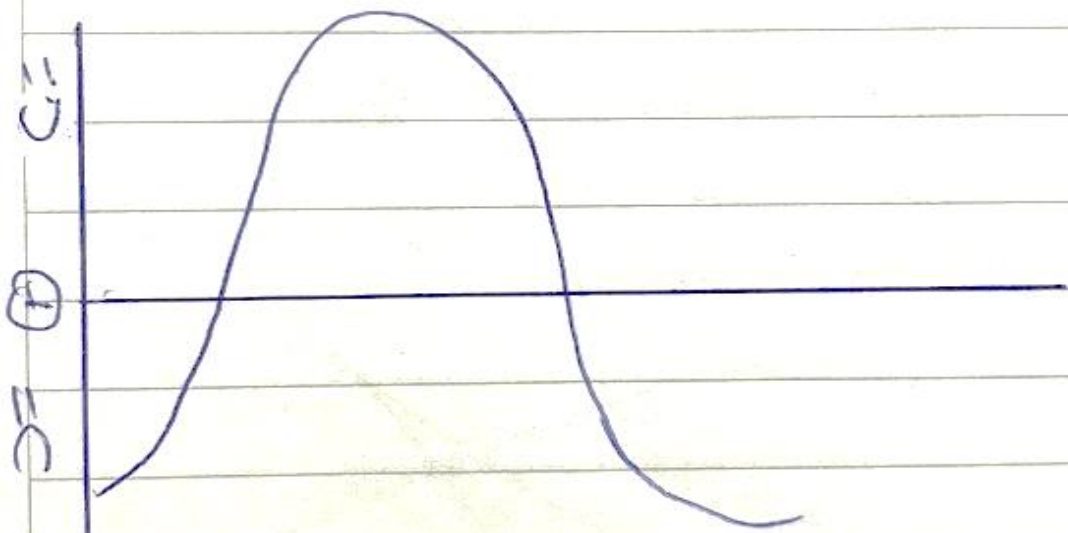






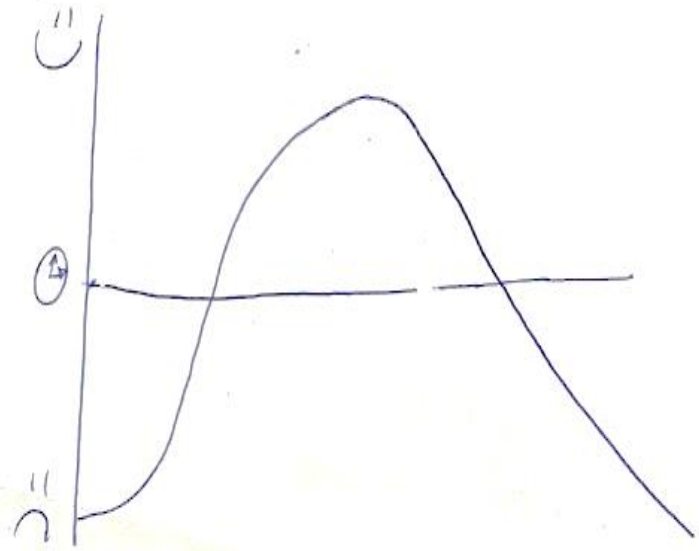
video: The three little pigs<sup>1</sup>

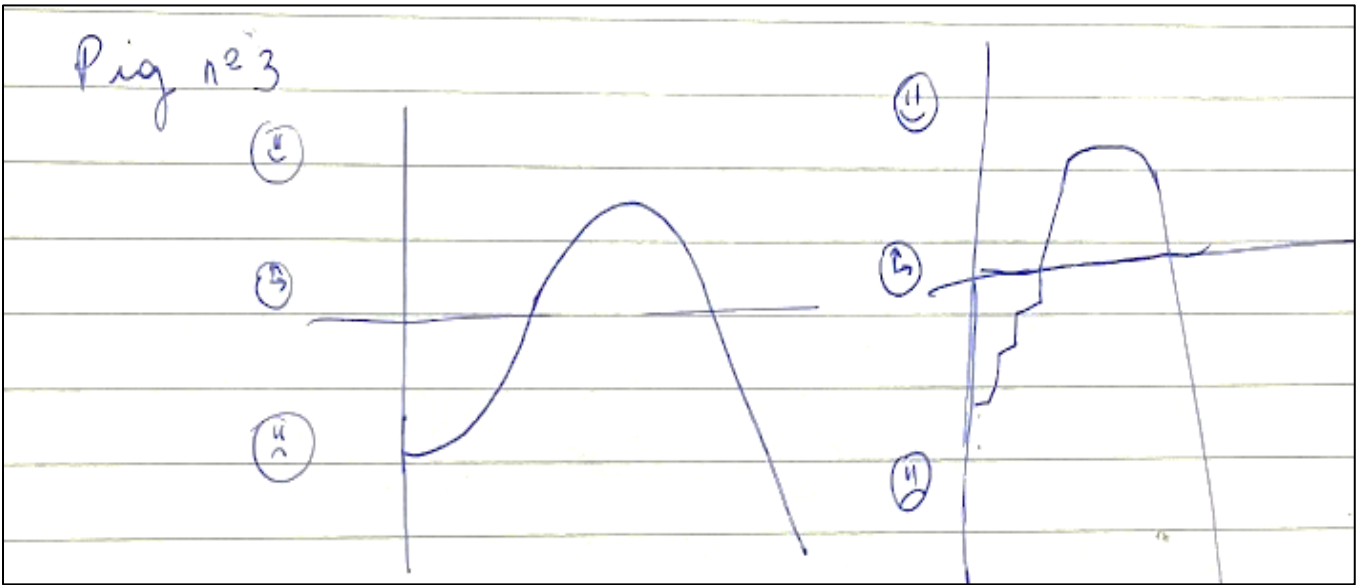
Pig N° 3



② Video

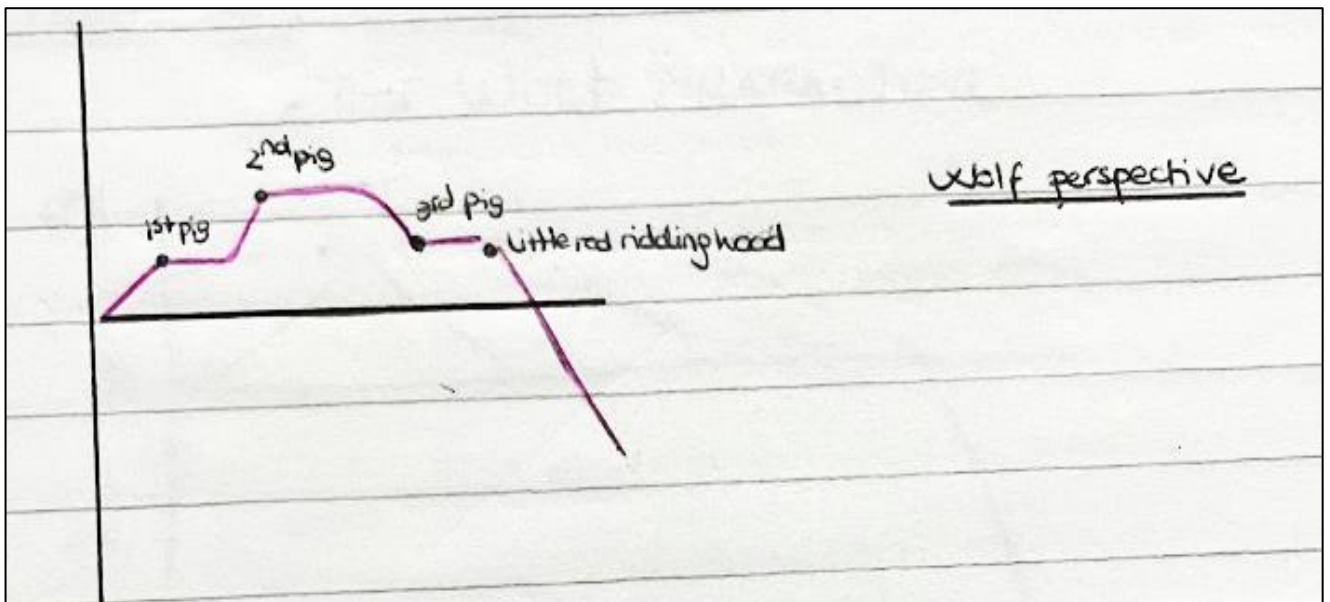
Pig N° 3

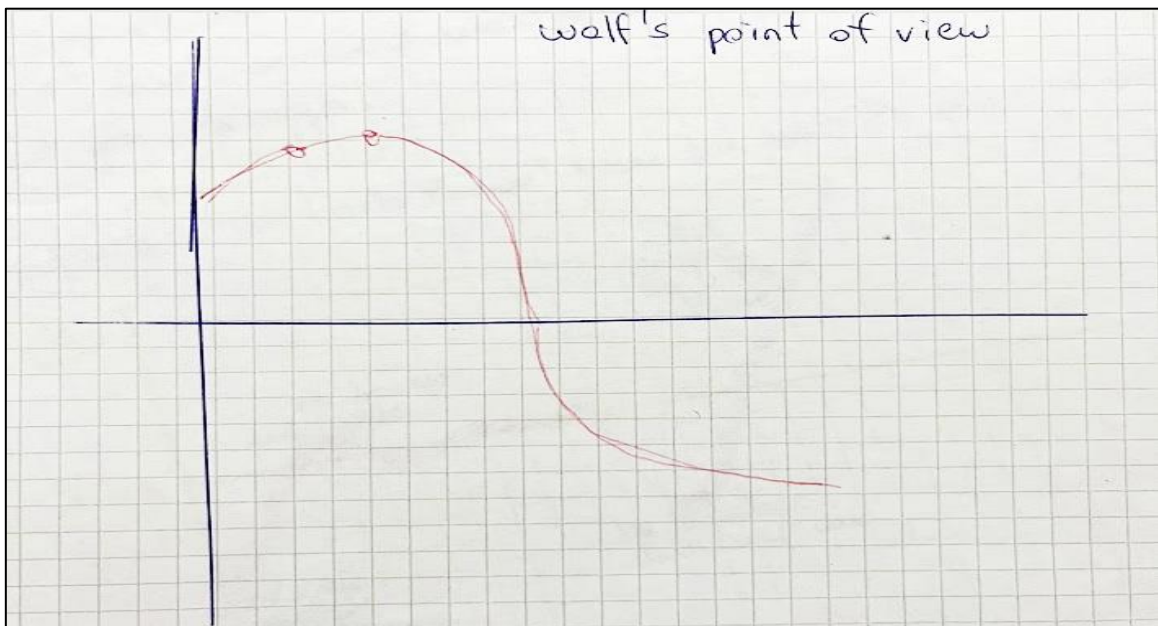
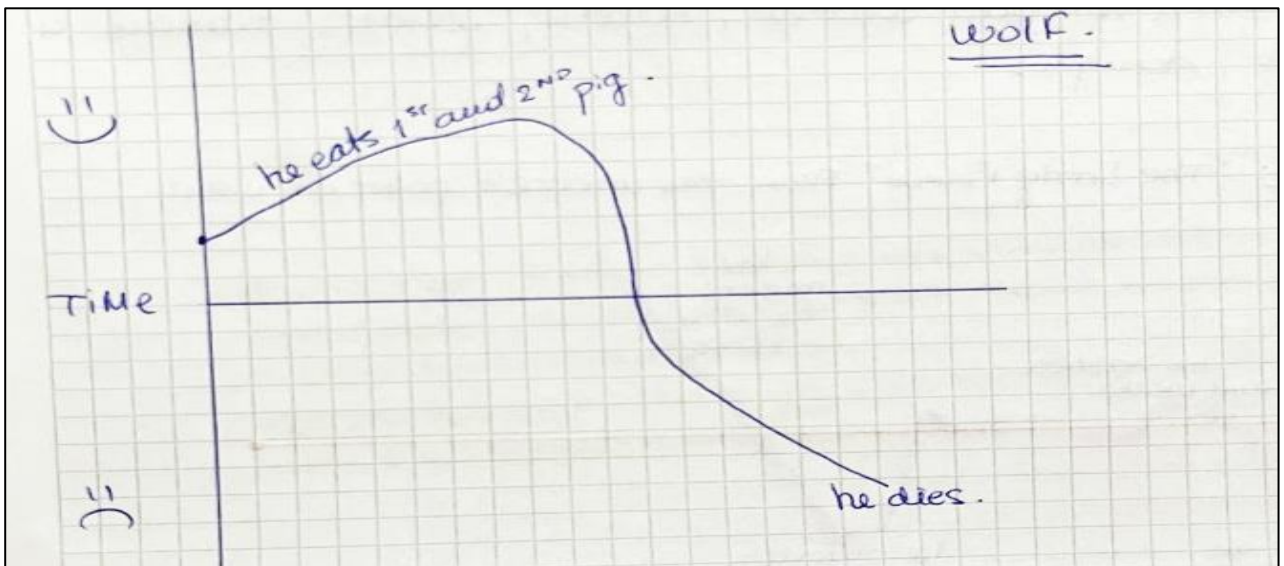
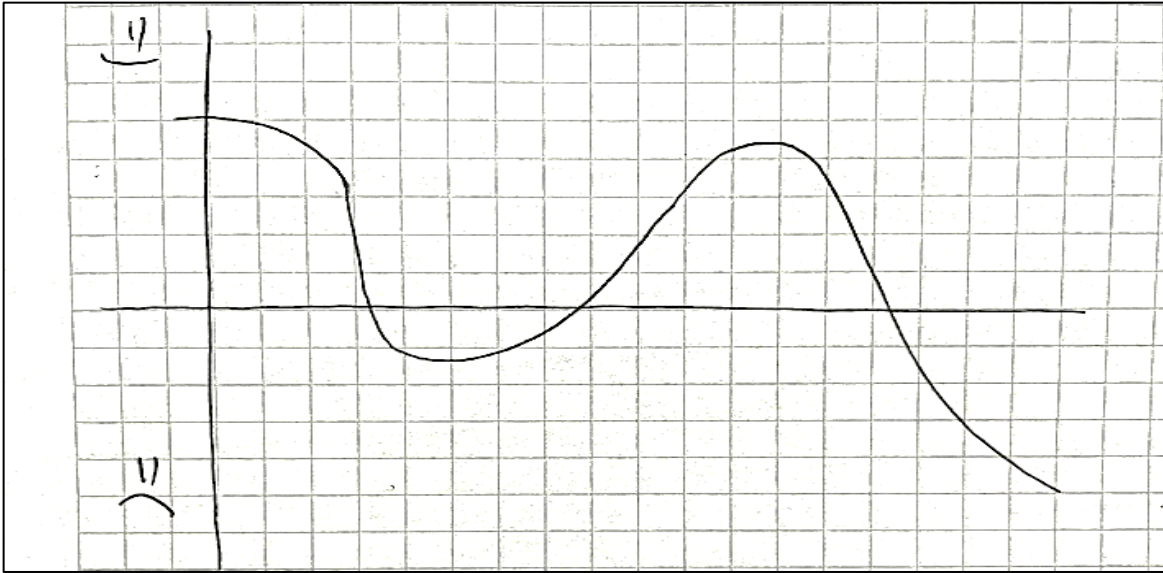




As one can see, students who constructed the graphs based on the third pig's perspective came up with the "Icarus" model which represented the rise and then the fall. Ergo, students showed that the third pig started with ill fortune since the wolf was following him, then he moved to the good fortune axis when calling Little Red Riding Hood but finally he went down to the ill fortune again when little Red Riding Hood killed him and turned him into a suitcase.

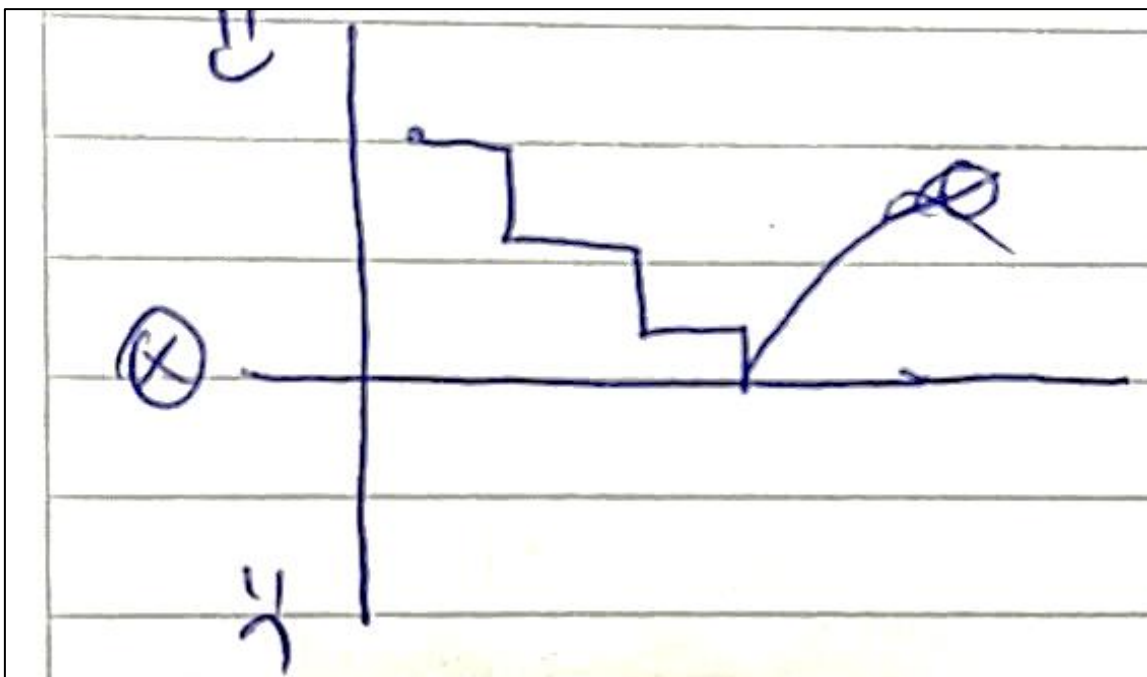
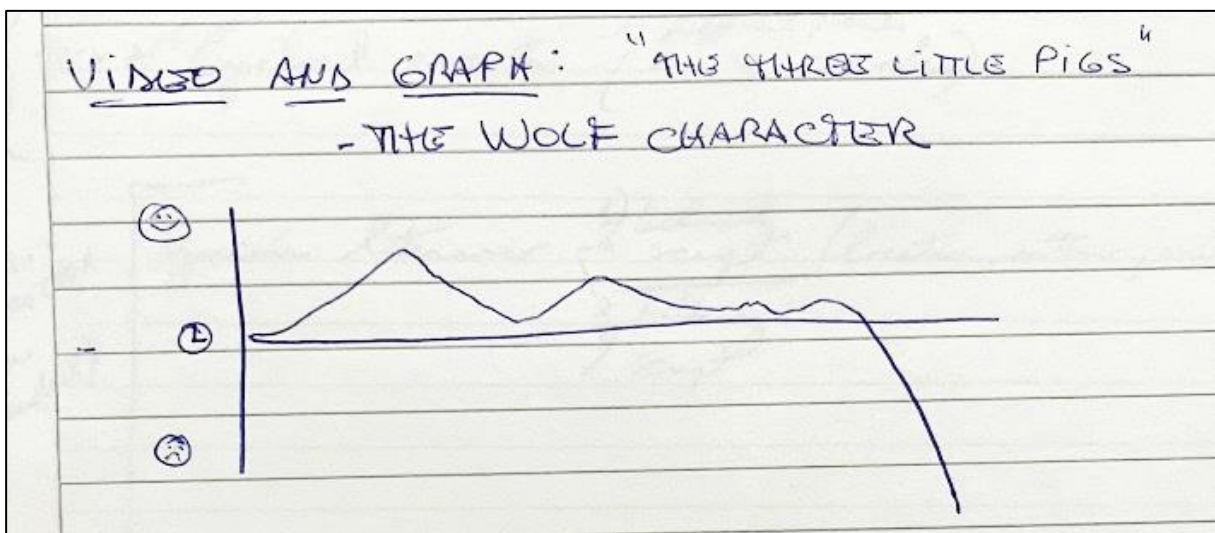
- 4 students drew it from the wolf's perspective.

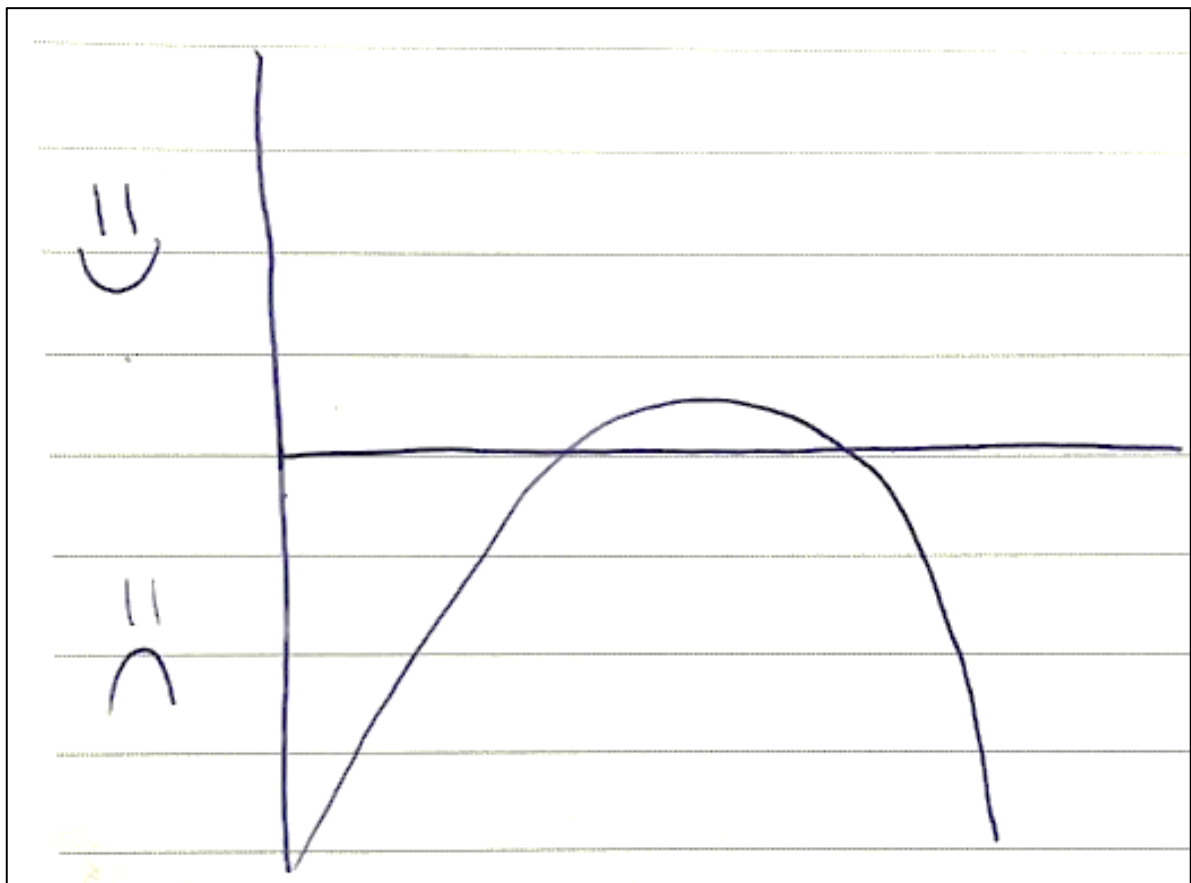
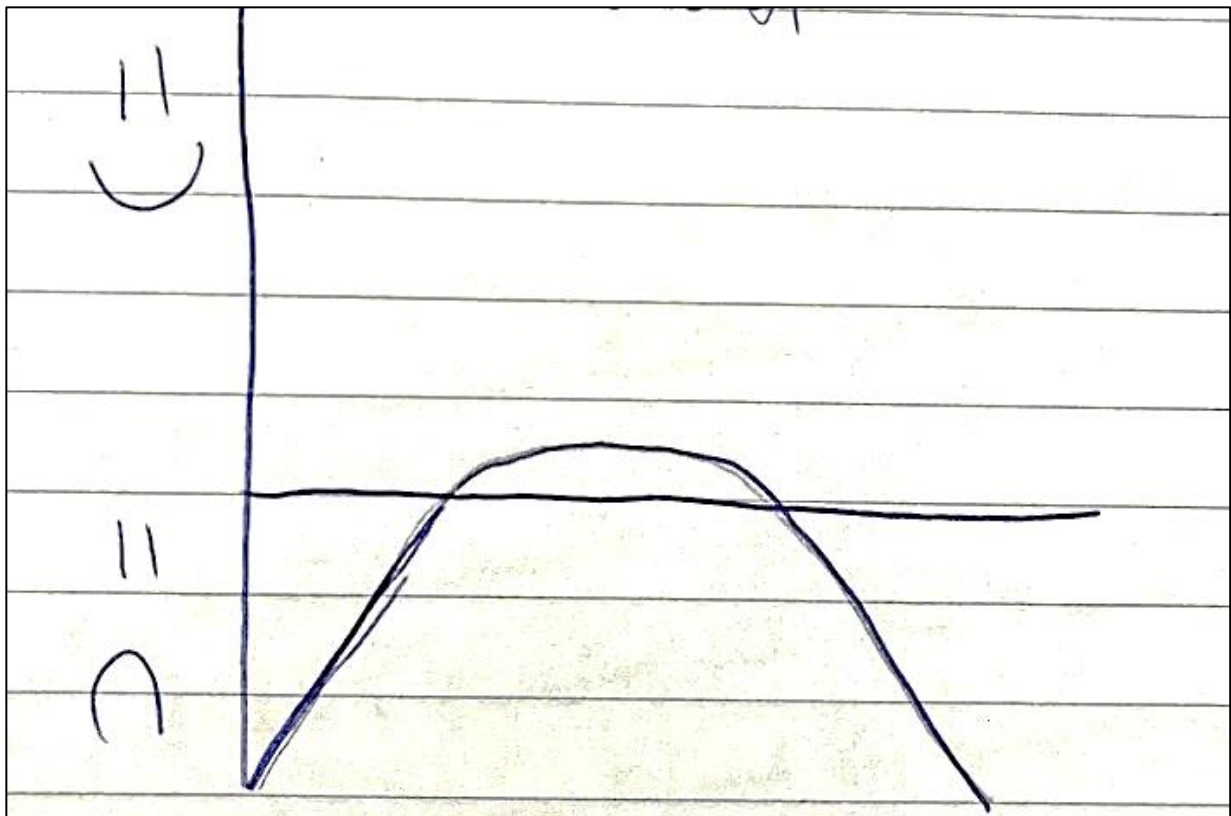




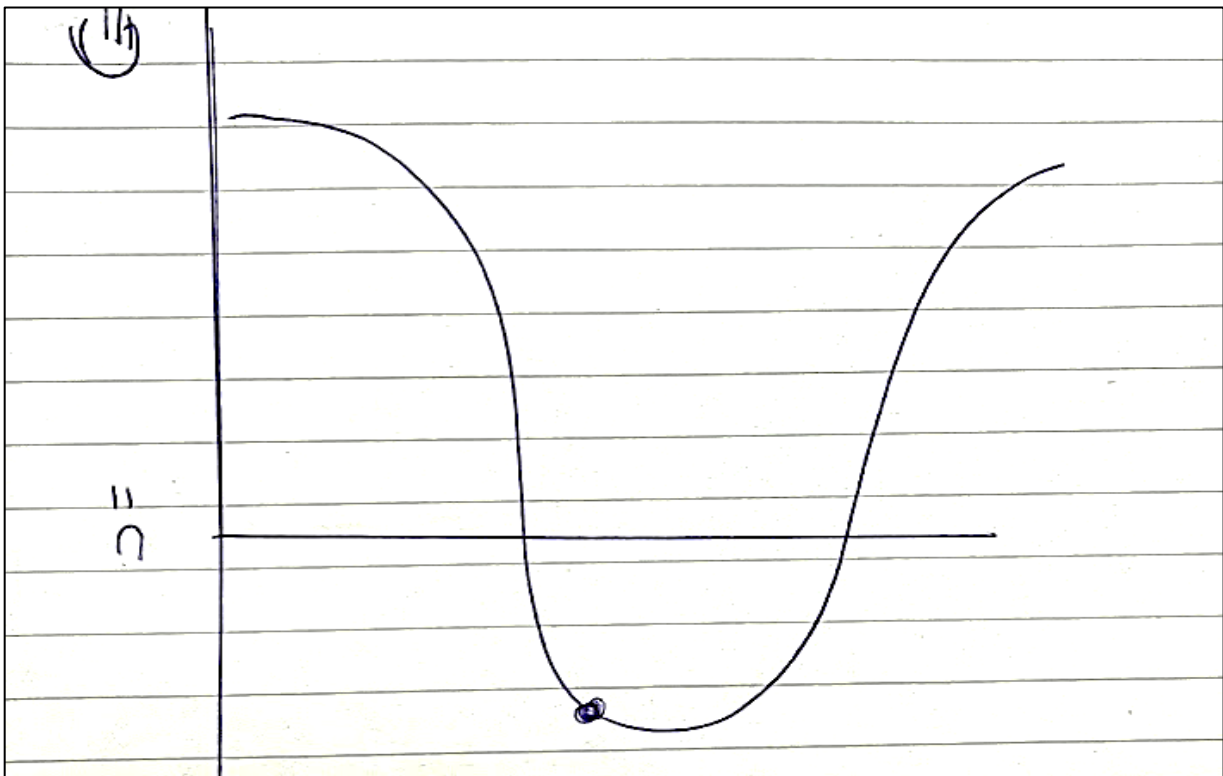
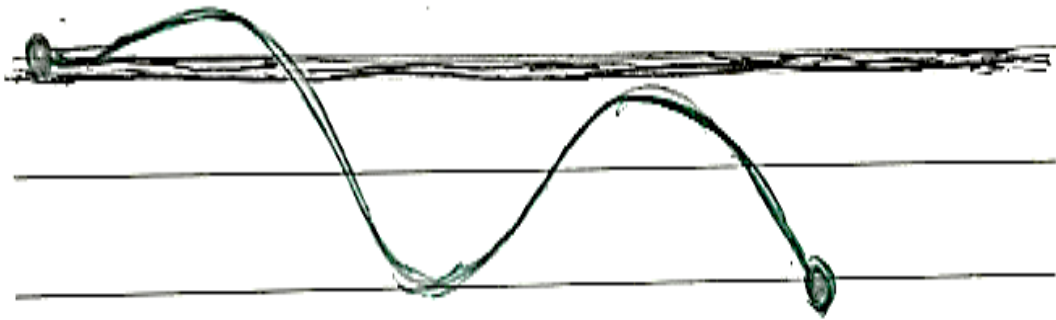
Students who based their graph on wolf's perspective came up with the "riches to rags" shape since the wolf started well, eating pigs one and two but when the third pig called Little Red Riding Hood, he is killed and turned into a coat. These students also showed in their graphs that the rising of the wolf went high up since he was successful at eating the first two pigs and he got confidence to continue. Similarly, the falling of the wolf is quite abrupt and went deep down due to his death.

- 9 students made a drawing considering the Three Little Pigs as only one against the wolf.

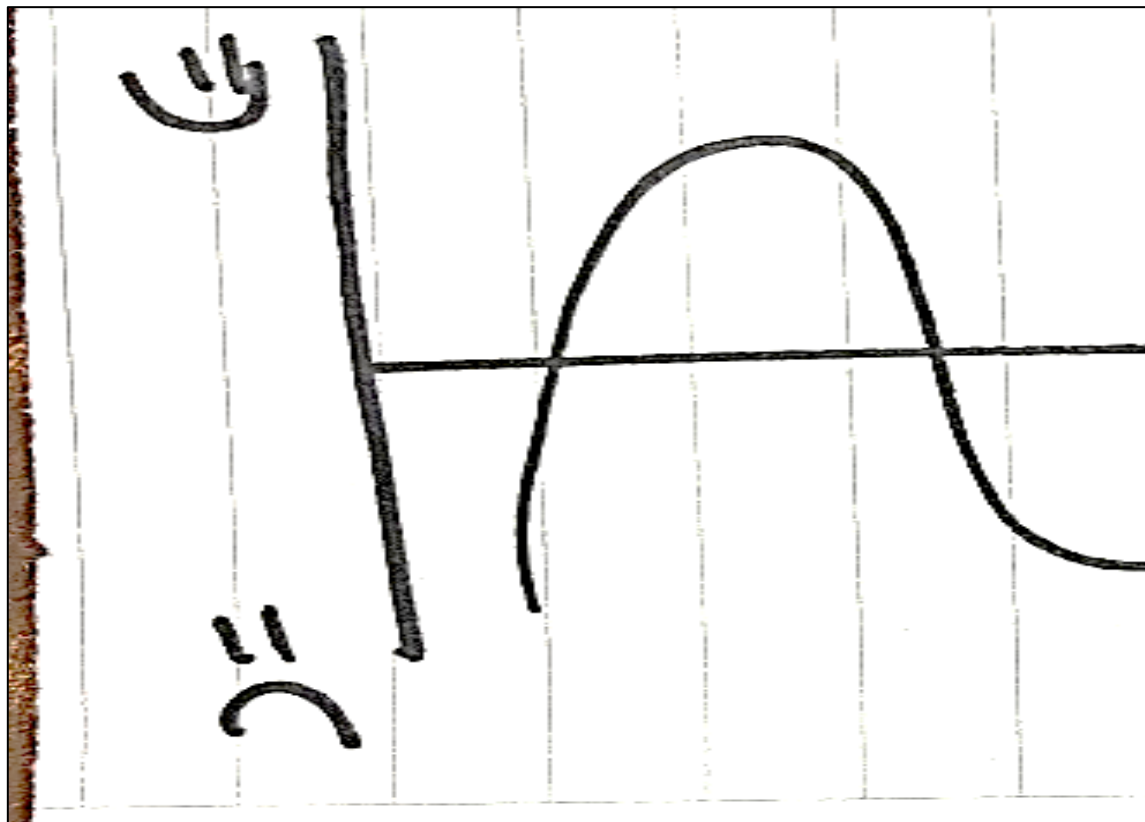
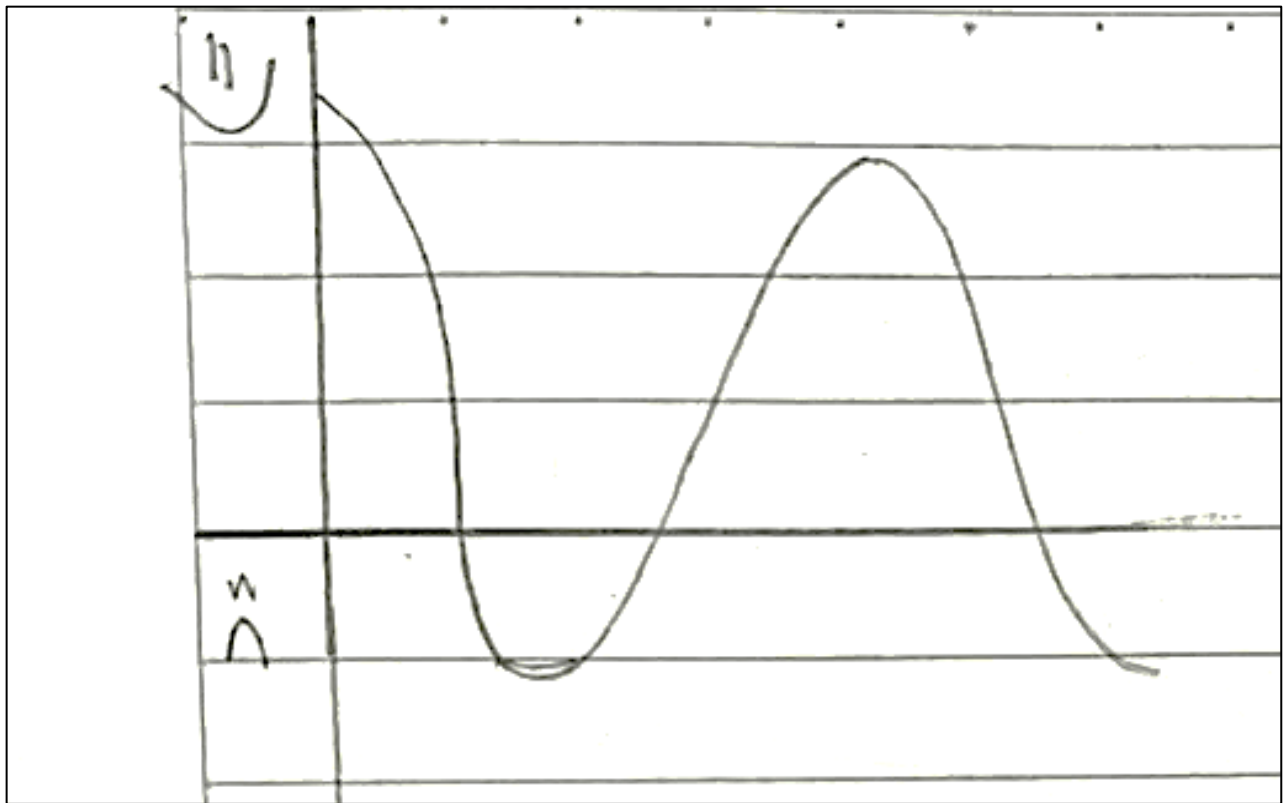


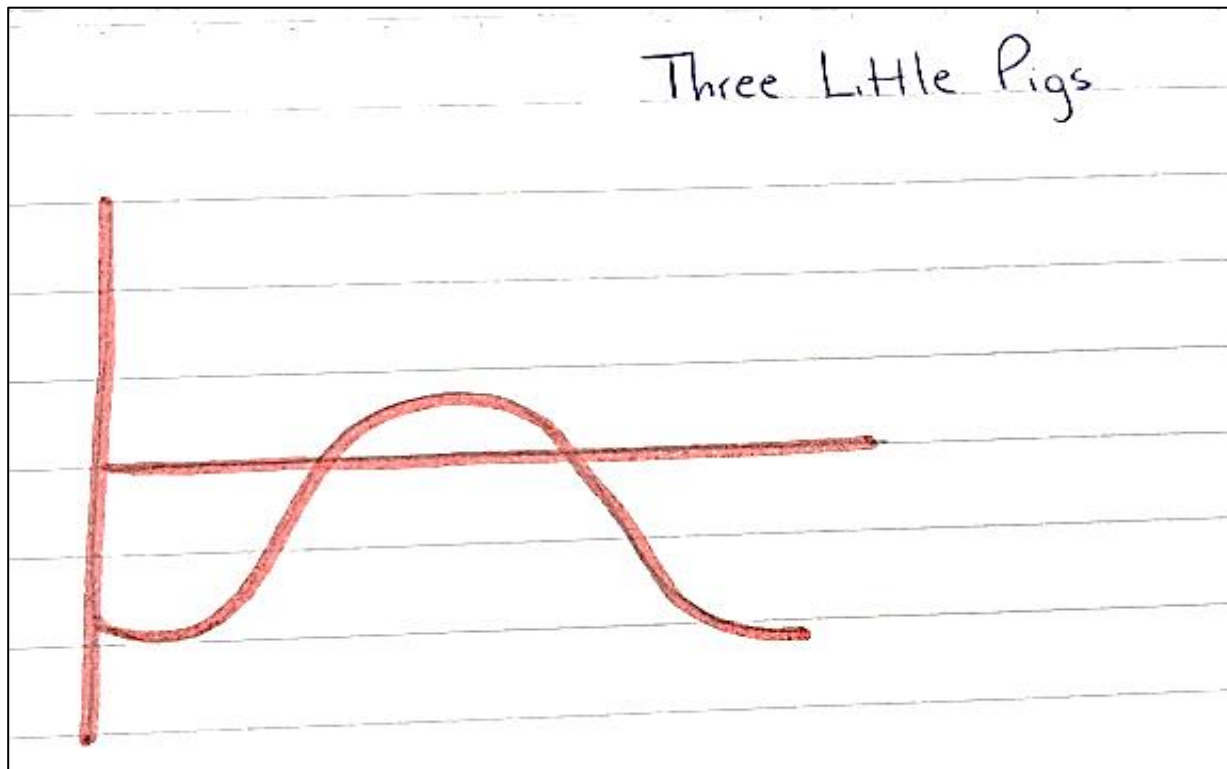


The Three Little Pigs by  
Ronald Dahl









From the 9 students who drew the graphs considering the three pigs as one, 4 students came up with the “Oedipus” model (first 5 pictures above). This meant the story experienced a fall, then a rise and then it fell again. Like so, in this case the pigs had started positively building their houses until the wolf blew up the first (a fall) , then the second had some time to enjoy his house (a rise) up to the moment the wolf blew it up (a fall) and the third pig called little Red Riding Hood who killed him. The rest of students worked on the “Icarus” model (next 4 pictures) which shows a rise when pigs were building their houses and a fall when the wolf started to blow them out until they are all dead. Once again, these exemplified that although there was one single text it, there were as many interpretations as readers, involving their schemata.

Students used their shapes as a draft to produce their own digital version of the story combining pictures and text, clearly describing the shape they had previously defined. [\(see appendix\)](#) Using ICTs in the classroom involves mainly the user’s

creativity. As they already worked with a known story, it was not necessary to create the material from scratch but they were able to make some adaptations, placing intertextuality, that is the simultaneous presence of two texts, as the main tool for digital storytelling. In this process, we are considering their adaptation in terms of changes made according to different purposes. Some of the operations to adapt the previous text that could be seen were selection, in which all the productions included the pigs and the wolf; concretization, since all the participants used technological devices but differently to what has been used before. Participants did not include sounds or music; they just used pictures and little written language. Most of the students placed the objects in the canvas in the shape of the graph. Productions creatively retell the stories through pictures, emoji, and icons.

# **Conclusion**

Accordingly, the research project was intended to find an answer to the question: *How can teachers move from consumers to producers of educational texts through a synchronous way of combining their comprehension skills and a computer mediated reflection?*

Taking into account that there are many aspects one must consider at the time of combining comprehensive and productive skills, three hypotheses attempted to answer the research question.

- *Teachers may use the Vonnegut's model for experiencing, conceptualising and analysing the main movements in a narrative.*
- *Using Vonnegut's model will allow for a critical view of the text.*
- *Vonnegut's analysis will allow for a creative production of digital storytelling materials.*

The first hypothesis which implied *that teachers may use the Vonnegut's model for experiencing, conceptualising, and analysing the main movements in a narrative* was confirmed since it was shown that students could conceptualise the model, experience through looking at examples provided by the researcher and also by contributing with their own examples. Participants analysed the main movements in the story according to the characters' development and emotions, i.e., its ups and downs as well as the conventions of the text type.

The second hypothesis proposed *using Vonnegut's model for a critical view of the text* and was also confirmed because participants reflected on their previous knowledge about how to analyse narratives and could move away from the traditional models which generally comprehend narratives as a three part text with beginning,

middle and end. Participants explored the fact that this model allows readers to give voice to different characters and change the perspective of the stories. They thought that the model could be useful to teach a simple reading strategy representing characters' emotions or feelings, making students think about the story from different perspectives. In this way, they would understand that there is not only one voice in the narrative. Instead, they would explain that it depends on who is at the centre. It was interesting to notice that participants, being teachers-to-be, considered using the model not just as a reading comprehension strategy but also as a pre-writing stage for their students. This observation demonstrates that Kurt Vonnegut's model of analysing narratives is not only useful for teachers, but also for students at different levels, from primary to

The third hypothesis determined that *Vonnegut's analysis will allow for a creative production of digital storytelling materials*. Considering the results, one could say that it was partially confirmed since participants made creative productions, however, they did not think of it for teaching or as a teaching material. Alternatively, they reversioned the narrative using Canva, making the text multimedia and changing the point of view of the narrator, i.e., they adapted it without considering what they could do with that piece of text afterwards.

- ***Implications***

The present research worked on the integration and innovative use of ICTs in education (especially in EFL/ESL) which may be helpful for teachers' and their professional and digital competence. Their education on this subject nowadays plays a significant role in preparing them to teach with and through technology. Being trained in the production of multimedia teaching materials will encourage the creative and expressive value of TICs, as well as develop some strategies to be critical at the time

of choosing sources, gathering, and processing information that supports teaching and learning processes. The multiliteracies approach aims to acknowledge the role of technology in communication, representation and meaning making processes considering all forms of representation as dynamic processes of transformations in the same way in which multimodal texts allow students to experience the presented information in a global and local context.

- ***Limitations and recommendations***

Some limitations to be found are related to the small groups of participants which added up to just 18 people and although they belonged to different places within Buenos Aires Province, their social contexts and access to TICs were similar. Hence the results are not extensive to any teacher training college. Also, some participants worked in groups, so the productions were less than eighteen and some others faced difficulties at the time of sharing their material. By the time the analysis was done, two or three productions were no longer accessible. Therefore, further and more extensive research is recommended to get a deeper insight of applying the multiliteracies theory in the classroom, training both teachers and students to be proficient at using TICs in a creative, critical and expressive way.

## **Bibliography**

- Anstey, M., & Bull, G. (2006). Defining multiliteracies. In *Teaching and learning multiliteracies: changing times, changing literacies* (pp. 19-55). Newark, Del.: International Reading Association.)
- Bal, M. (1997). *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (2nd ed.). University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division.
- Blattner, G., & Fiori, M. (2011). *Virtual Social Network Communities: An Investigation of Language Learners' Development of Sociopragmatic Awareness and Multiliteracy Skills*. *CALICO Journal*, 29(1), 24-43. Retrieved July 21, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/calicojournal.29.1.24>
- Chatman, S. (1980). Introduction. *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (New edition). Cornell University Press.
- Comberg, D. (2010, 30 October). *Kurt Vonnegut on the Shapes of Stories* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oP3c1h8v2ZQ&feature=youtu.be>
- Derrida, J. (1999). Structure, sign and play in the discourse of the human sciences. In D. Lodge & N. Wood (Eds.), *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader (2nd Edition)* (2nd ed.). Longman.
- Dirección General de Cultura y Educación & Dirección Provincial de Educación Superior. (2017). *Profesorado de Inglés*, 53. Ministerio de Educación Provincia de Buenos Aires.
- Fairclough, N. (1995b). General introduction. In *critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language* (first ed. pp. 1–21).
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. Routledge.

- Genette, G., (1988) *Narrative Discourse Revisited*. New York: Cornell University Press
- Gouthro, Patricia A. and Holloway, Susan M. (2013). *Preparing Teachers to Become Lifelong Learners: Exploring the Use of Fiction to Develop Multiliteracies and Critical Thinking*. *Language and Literacy*, 15 (3), 50-68. <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/educationpub/45>
- Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M., & de Lacey, S. (2016). Qualitative research methods: when to use them and how to judge them. *Human Reproduction*, 31(3), 498–501. <https://doi.org/10.1093/humrep/dev334>
- Harvard Educational Review. (1996). *A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures* (N.o 66). <https://www.themarginalian.org/2012/04/03/kurt-vonnegut-on-writing-stories/> sept 25th
- Kristeva, J. (1986), *The Kristeva Reader*. London: Blackwell. (p.37)
- Kalantzis, M., & Cope, B. (2008). Language Education and Multiliteracies. *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, 10, 195–211. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-30424-3\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-30424-3_15)
- Luke A, Freebody P, Land R (2000). *Literate futures: Review of literacy education*. Brisbane, Queensland: Education Queensland.
- LaFrance, A. (2018, 1 November). *The Six Main Stories, As Identified by a Computer*. The Atlantic. Recuperado 13 de mayo de 2022, de <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/07/the-six-main-arcs-in-storytelling-identified-by-a-computer/490733/>
- Mills, K. A. (2010). Multimodality, Media and Access. In *The Multiliteracies Classroom (New Perspectives on Language and Education, 21) Multimodality, Media and Access*. Multilingual Matters.



- Moradi, H., & Chen, H. (2019). *Digital Storytelling in Language Education*. *Behavioural Sciences*, 9(12), 147–154. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs9120147>
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment & National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (2004). *National Council for Curriculum and Assessment: Customer Service Action Plan 2004-2006*. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.
- Pullen, D. L., & Cole, D. R. (2009). Section 1: Theoretical frameworks for technology and multiliteracies. In *Multiliteracies and technology enhanced education: Social practice and the global classroom* (pp. 1–71). Information Science Reference.
- Robin, B. R. (2008). Digital Storytelling: A Powerful Technology Tool for the 21st Century Classroom. *Theory Into Practice*, 47(3), 220–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405840802153916>
- Røkenes, F. M. (2016). Digital storytelling in teacher education: A meaningful way of integrating ICT in ESL teaching. *Acta Didactica Norge*, 10(2), 311–328. <https://doi.org/10.5617/adno.2431>
- Saussure, F. (2004). Course in General Linguistics. In J. Rivkin, & M. Ryan (Eds.), *Literary theory, an anthology* (2nd ed., pp. 59-71). -, UK: Blackwell Publishing.
- Starman, A. (2013). The case study as a type of qualitative research. *JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL STUDIES*, 28–43. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265682891\\_The\\_case\\_study\\_as\\_a\\_type\\_of\\_qualitative\\_research](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265682891_The_case_study_as_a_type_of_qualitative_research)
- *Literacy | UNESCO UIS*. (n.d.). <https://uis.unesco.org/node/3079547>

- UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education, & Karpati, A. (2011). Digital literacy in education. *IITE Policy Brief*, 0000214485. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000214485.locale=en>
- Vonnegut, K. (1999). Introduction in *Bagombo Snuff Box: Uncollected Short Fiction*. G.P. Putnam's Sons.
- <https://storyempire.com/2021/01/25/basic-plots-vonneguts-boy-meets-girl/>

# **Appendix**

Productions

[VID\\_111490412\\_032048\\_424.mp4](#)

[White Blue Modern Marine Pollution Infographic.gif](#)

[pdf\\_20220708\\_163827\\_0000.pdf](#)

<https://www.canva.com/design/DAFF2g1h1uc/HXM5pBucdpKFUTtoXjAjHA/view?presentation>

<https://www.canva.com/design/DAFGP0GNTbE/CzcD9x4qpD6cb3bjvX94NA/view?presentation>

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAFGP\\_uJKz4/mEZI71qoUNX08vPO1C89xg/view?utm\\_content=DAFGP\\_uJKz4&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=publishsharelink#8](https://www.canva.com/design/DAFGP_uJKz4/mEZI71qoUNX08vPO1C89xg/view?utm_content=DAFGP_uJKz4&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=publishsharelink#8)

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAFGP0xvHjc/HSfaFTtZJgJGa\\_9yIEc83A/view?presentation](https://www.canva.com/design/DAFGP0xvHjc/HSfaFTtZJgJGa_9yIEc83A/view?presentation)