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Introduction to Gamification of Knowledge

The **“EDUGAME: START” guide** constitutes a useful tool targeted at teachers, educators and other professionals in the field of education that want to get familiar with new educational methodologies, get inspired and transform the learning experiences of their students.

The main topic of this guide is **“Gamification of Knowledge”**. The introduction aims to present a brief theoretical introduction to the notion of gamification and to give special focus to current discussions regarding its conceptualisation, effectiveness and integration in classrooms.



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What Is Gamification?

Gamification is a familiar term to many people and it is connected with many different functions in the fields of education, business management, healthcare, marketing and psychology.

It has entered both academic and everyday discourse in the last decades, mostly due to the **development and utilisation of new technologies**, which led to the digitalisation and automation of processes.

Following the definition given by Weber et al. (2026), we could define gamification as ***"utilising certain design aspects influenced by gaming experiences that steer users' behaviour and attitudes in certain desired direction"***.

In simpler words, gamification is used to describe the transformation of procedures and functions through activities and methods specifically developed in such a way to resemble a game.

It is a fact that in the last years the term has been used in many different contexts to describe the integration of games in various educational or non-educational fields. However, as we will explore later on in this guide, this conceptualisation is not completely correct.

Gamification focuses on the **integration of "game-like" elements**, without necessarily leading to the holistic transformation of processes and activities into games.

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Game-Like Elements

As mentioned before, gamification is concerned with the inclusion of game-like elements. Current literature has explored in depth the different features and tools that constitute part of this process (Jun & Lucas, 2024, Rahman et al. 2018, Taspinar et al. 2016).

Some **examples** of this type of elements are:



Cards or Similar Materials

Utilisation of cards, flashcards or other materials to render learning activities, such as memorisation and learning new concepts, more fun and effective.



Experience Points (XP) or Levels

Implementation of a system to assess and evaluate progress through a level-based methodology. The use of XP (Experience Points) significantly helps in this.

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Quest Map and Treasure Hunting

Presentation of objectives and future goals as the next destinations in a quest map. The completion of the task leads players closer to the reward.



Puzzles

Useful for problem-solving, as they help break down complex tasks into simpler ones. Helpful also for the division of responsibilities and mapping of difficult notions.



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Gamification vs. Game-Based Learning

Even though the notion of gamification was presented and analysed in the previous sections, we should provide the **essential distinctive points** between the methodologies of **Gamification** and **Game-Based Learning.**

In everyday discourse, both notions are used almost interchangeably, however, it is useful to observe the similarities and differences between the two strategies. This clarification will enable teachers and other non-educational professionals to effectively distinguish the different methodologies that involve games in a direct or indirect way.



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According to Qian & Clark (2016), game-based learning ***"describes an environment where game content and game play enhance knowledge and skills acquisition, and where game activities involve problem solving spaces and challenges that provide players/learners with a sense of achievement"***.

From this definition, one can immediately detect the core common element between gamification and game-based learning: **the integration of methods relating to games in learning and general-scope processes**.

However, there is a slight conceptual and practical difference between these two terms. While gamification is based on the inclusion of game-like elements in learning and non-learning processes, game-based learning focuses on the **utilisation of games as educational materials**.

In this case, we do not talk about the integration of specific elements resembling a game, like puzzles, cards or quest maps, in a process, but the substitution of educational materials with games, such as **board games**, **online educational games** or **gamified activities**.

Both methods can be proven really beneficial for adapting materials and processes to the specific needs and preferences of each individual.

Each professional who wants to transform their materials and tools through the utilisation of games has the option to choose the level of integration.

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Gamification of Knowledge

Following the theoretical and conceptual framework presented in the previous pages, a brief section dedicated to the topic of the **Gamification of Knowledge** will follow.

For the scope of the “EDUGAME: START” guide, the notion will be linked to learning processes that take place in formal and non-formal educational institutions and spaces.

The notion is used to describe all of the games, elements, gamified activities, and tools that assist teachers develop their educational materials and lesson plans, using tools and methodologies that do not follow the traditional educational model which is based on manuals and textbooks.



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Gamification of knowledge involves all of the efforts and processes to render educational materials and processes **more inclusive, fun, engaging and accessible**, through the integration of games.

Even though modern digital and adaptive technologies have made the inclusion of games in classrooms easier, it should be noted that **gamification involves all types of games, and not only the digital ones** (Busarello et al., 2016).

This process could include:



Digital Tools and Platforms

Utilisation of digital educational platforms and tools for accompanying and enriching the traditional learning materials in classrooms, through group activities.



Adaptation of Traditional Games

Transformation of traditional games known to students, such as hopscotch, hangman and dominoes, into tools for learning in a fun and engaging way.

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The present guide is targeted at teachers and professors, in both formal and non-formal education, who want to deepen their knowledge in the topic of gamification and its relation with modern educational methodologies.

The information included in the guide is presented in simple language in order to allow teachers to also use the guide as an educational material for their students in the classroom.

This can allow both teachers and students get inspired and effectively implement gamified activities in schools.



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The “EDUGAME: START” guide follows a clear structure, including different topics and areas of interest:

- The first chapter is dedicated to the **Benefits of Gamification in Language Learning.** In this section, readers will have the opportunity to know more about the significance of integrating gamified activities and game-like elements in education, and specifically in language learning education.

- The second chapter is presenting the **Challenges of Gamification in Education.** More specifically, it deals with the internal and external factors that may render the integration of games and gamified activities difficult in modern educational systems.

- The third chapter is presenting several **Strategies for the Effective Integration of Games in Education**. It includes simple suggestions for teachers who want to include such activities in their lesson plans.

- The final chapter is dedicated for the presentation of **7 Best Practices** related to the gamification of knowledge, from all over Europe. This section is developed with brief descriptions of the activities, followed with step-by-step guides regarding their implementation and the types of materials or technologies used.

Finally, each chapter includes a list of additional reading materials.

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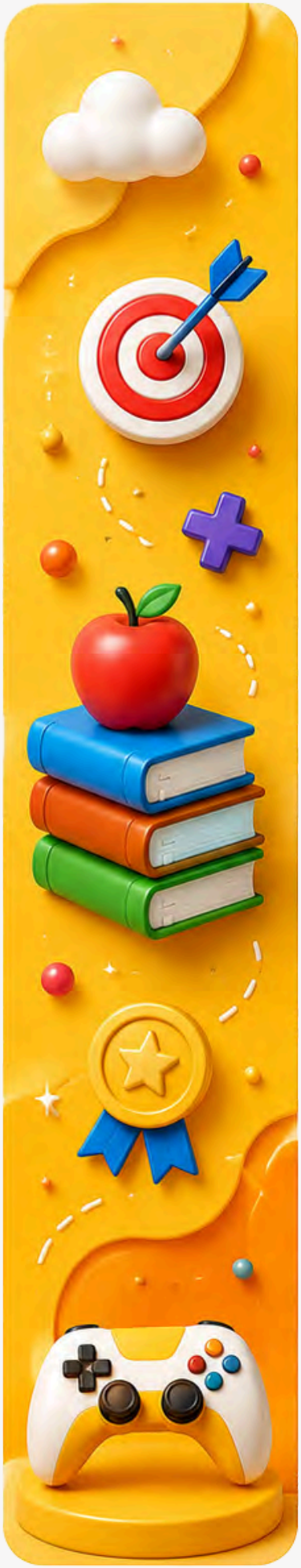


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Benefits of Gamification in Language Learning

Gamification can make language learning more **engaging, interactive and meaningful.** Game elements such as **challenges, progress tracking, collaboration and feedback** can support learners' motivation and participation while helping teachers create **more inclusive and dynamic learning environments**. For migrant learners in particular, gamification can **reduce barriers to participation** and create opportunities for active language use.

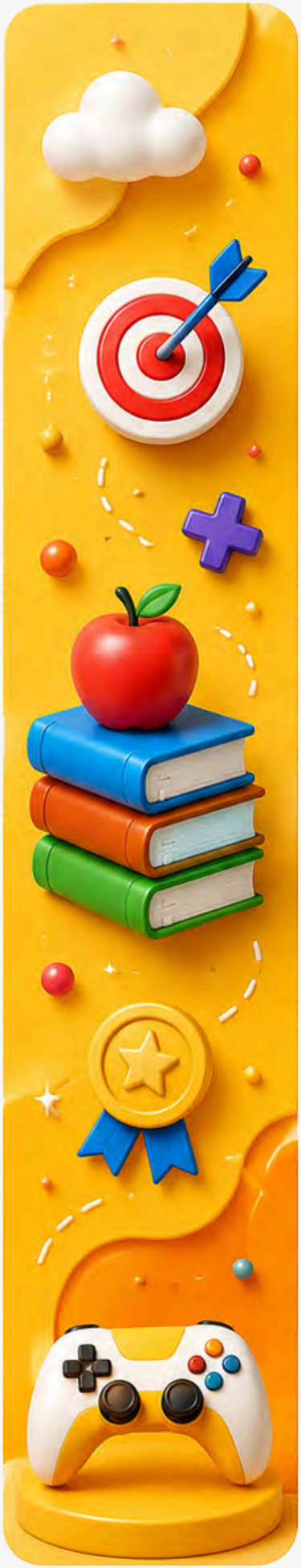
1. Increased Motivation and Engagement

One of the most widely recognised benefits of gamification is its ability **to increase learners' motivation and engagement.** Gamified activities introduce elements of challenge, achievement and progression that encourage learners to participate actively and remain focused on the learning process.
For migrant learners, maintaining motivation can be particularly important. Adapting to a new language and educational environment may feel overwhelming at times. Gamification can transform learning into a more positive and rewarding experience, helping students persevere even when they encounter difficulties.

Practical example:

A teacher creates a "Language Explorer" challenge in which students earn points for completing vocabulary tasks, participating in conversations and helping classmates. As students progress through different levels, they unlock new challenges and receive recognition for their efforts.

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2. Reduced Language Anxiety and Fear of Mistakes

Many language learners hesitate to participate because they are afraid of making mistakes. This challenge can be even more pronounced for migrant students who may already feel insecure about their language skills or social integration.

Gamified activities **create a low-pressure environment** where mistakes become part of the learning process. **Students are encouraged to experiment, try again** and learn through practice. The focus shifts from avoiding mistakes to overcoming challenges and making progress.

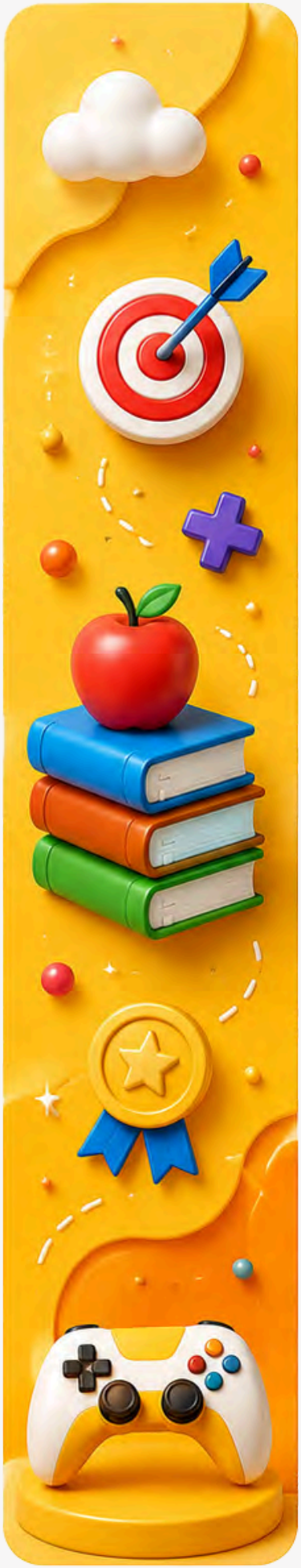
As learners gain confidence, they become more willing to speak, participate and take risks in using the target language.

Practical example:

Students complete a digital language quest where they solve simple communication tasks. Incorrect answers do not result in failure; instead, learners receive hints and additional opportunities to succeed.



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3. Higher Participation and Active Involvement

Gamification encourages learners to become active participants rather than passive recipients of information. Through missions, challenges and collaborative tasks, **students are invited to interact with the learning content and with one another.**

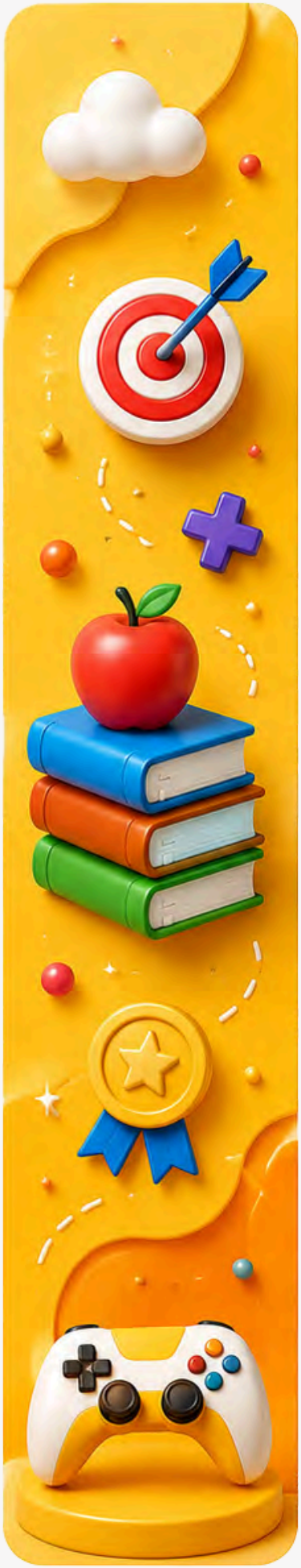
This increased participation is particularly valuable in language learning, where regular practice and communication are essential. Gamified activities often provide **multiple opportunities for learners to speak, listen, read and write in meaningful contexts.**
Students who are usually reluctant to participate may feel more comfortable contributing when learning is presented through engaging activities and shared goals.

Practical example:

Teams compete in a vocabulary treasure hunt, solving clues and completing language challenges together to reach a common objective.



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4. Immediate Feedback and Visible Progress

Effective learning requires feedback. Gamification allows **students to receive immediate information about their performance,** helping them identify strengths and areas for improvement. Game elements such as points, levels, progress bars and badges **make learning progress visible.** Instead of waiting for formal assessments, learners can monitor their development continuously and celebrate small achievements along the way.

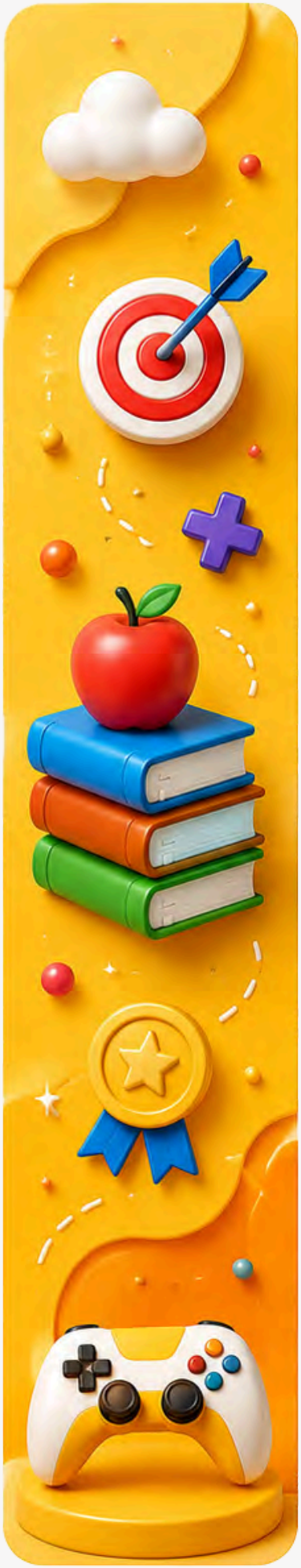
For migrant learners who may be progressing at different speeds, **visible progress can provide reassurance and strengthen their sense of achievement.**

Practical example:

Students complete short language challenges and earn digital badges for mastering specific vocabulary sets or communication skills.



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5. Better Memory and Reinforcement of Learning

Language learning requires regular exposure, practice and revision. Gamification supports these processes by encouraging learners to revisit and use language in enjoyable and meaningful ways. Instead of seeing repetition as boring, students experience it as part of a challenge, mission or game. Repeated practice helps learners remember vocabulary, grammar structures and expressions more effectively and use them with greater confidence.

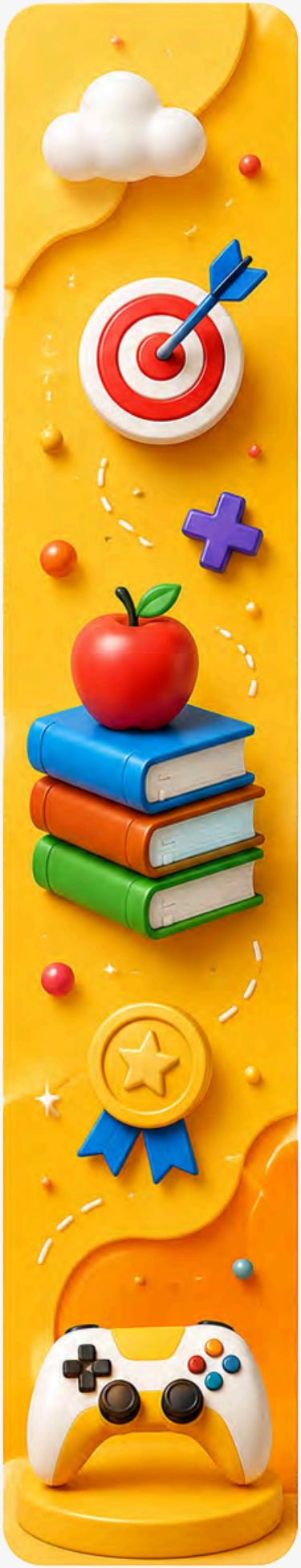
When combined with short learning activities, gamification can strengthen long-term learning and help students build a solid foundation for future language development.

Practical example:

A classroom quiz game revisits previously learned vocabulary every week, helping students remember key words and expressions while keeping them engaged and motivated.



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6. Social Interaction and Inclusion

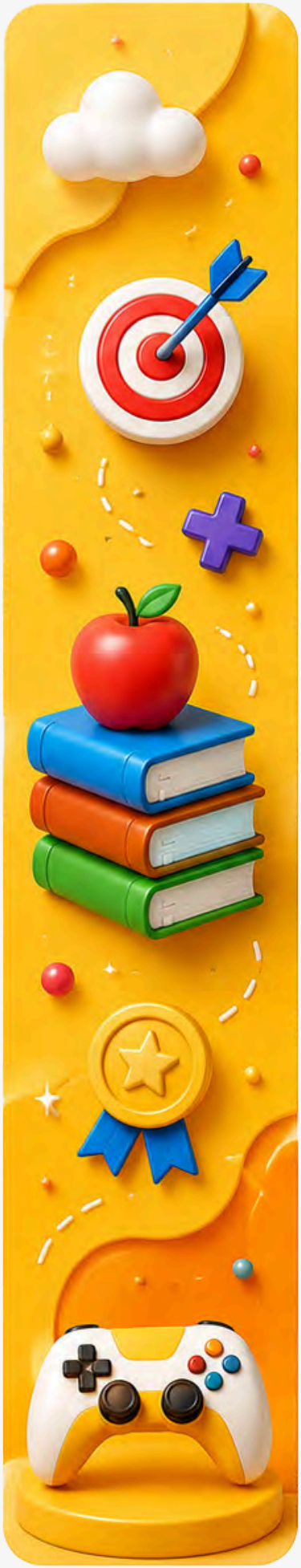
Language learning is a social process. Gamified activities often involve **teamwork, communication and cooperation, creating opportunities for learners to interact with their peers.**
For migrant students, these interactions can **support social integration and help build positive relationships** within the classroom. Collaborative activities encourage learners to communicate, share ideas and support one another in achieving common goals.
When designed inclusively, gamification can **contribute to a stronger sense of belonging** and participation for all students.



Practical example:

Students work together to solve a language mystery, with each group member contributing different pieces of information needed to complete the task.

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7. Personalised Learning Experiences

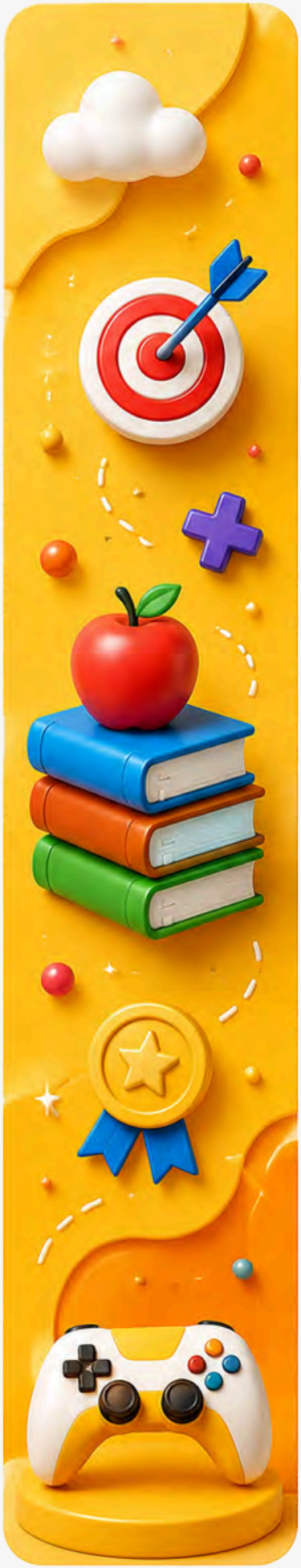
Learners differ in their interests, abilities, prior knowledge and learning pace. Gamification can support personalised learning by **providing different levels of challenge and multiple pathways** to success.
Rather than expecting every learner to progress in exactly the same way, gamified activities can offer choices and opportunities for differentiation. This flexibility is especially valuable in linguistically diverse classrooms where students may have varying levels of language proficiency.
Personalised experiences help learners remain motivated while ensuring that activities remain achievable and meaningful.

Practical example:

Students choose between beginner, intermediate and advanced language missions depending on their confidence and skill level.



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8. Development of Digital and Transversal Skills

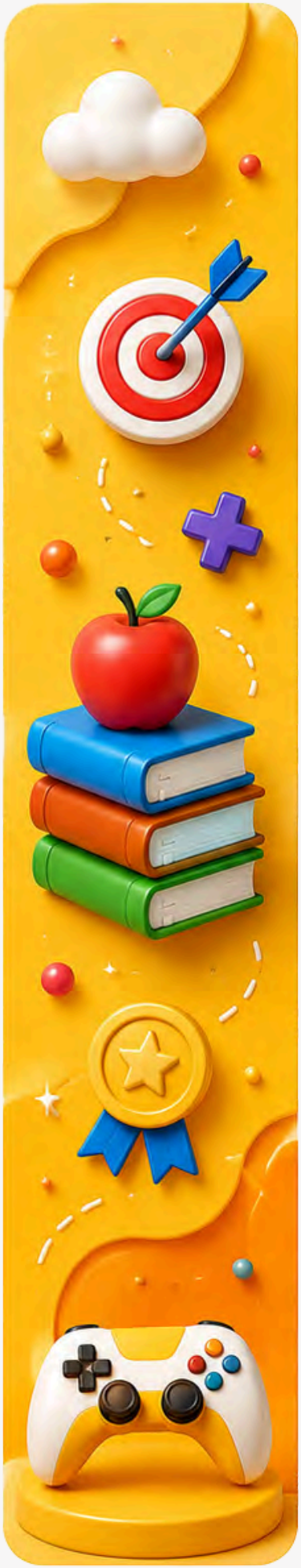
Many gamified learning activities make use of digital tools and interactive technologies. As students participate, they not only develop language skills but also strengthen digital competences that are increasingly important in modern society.
In addition, gamification can foster transversal skills such as **problem-solving, collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking**.
These competences support learners both inside and outside the classroom.
For migrant learners, these broader skills can contribute to successful participation in school and everyday life.

Practical example:

Students use a digital platform to complete collaborative language challenges that require communication, teamwork and decision-making.



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9. Practical Tips for Teachers

Successful gamification does not require complex technologies or elaborate game systems. Small changes can often have a significant impact.

Start small
Introduce one or two game elements before developing larger activities.

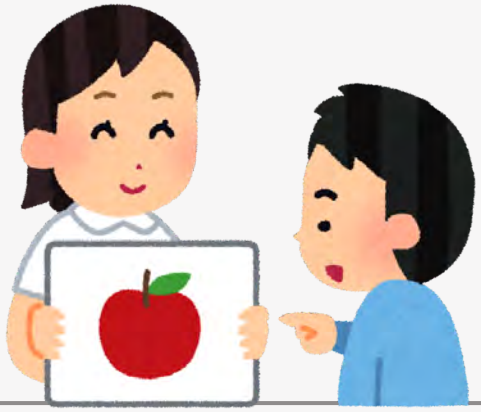
Focus on learning objectives
Game mechanics should support learning goals rather than distract from them.

Reward effort and progress
Recognise improvement, participation and persistence, not only high performance.

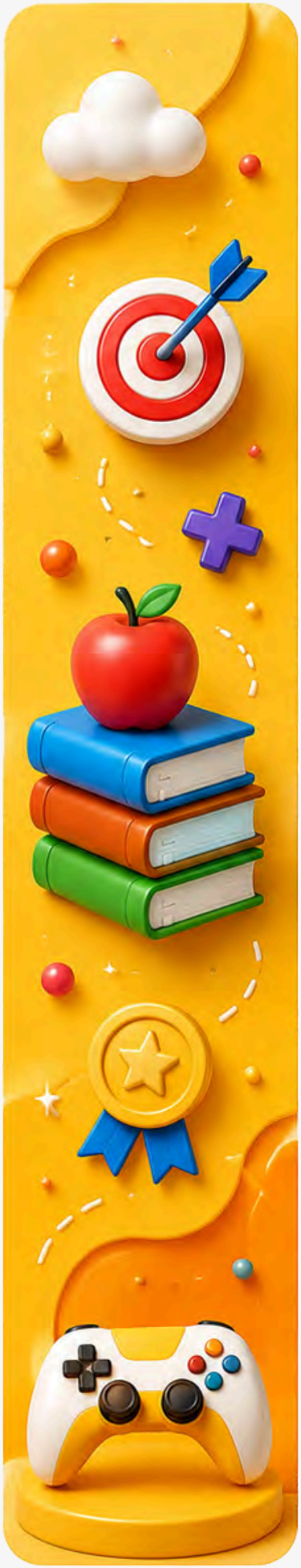
Combine collaboration and competition
Balance competitive elements with opportunities for teamwork and mutual support.

Provide regular feedback
Help learners understand what they are doing well and where they can improve.

Gather student feedback
Ask learners what motivates them and adapt activities accordingly.



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10. Gamification for Migrant Learners: Key Considerations

When working with migrant learners, it is important to ensure that gamified activities remain inclusive, accessible and culturally responsive.

Support different language levels
Provide tasks with varying levels of difficulty and offer additional support when needed.

Use visual and multimodal resources
Images, symbols, videos and audio can help learners understand instructions and participate successfully.

Encourage peer support
Collaborative activities create opportunities for language practice and social integration.

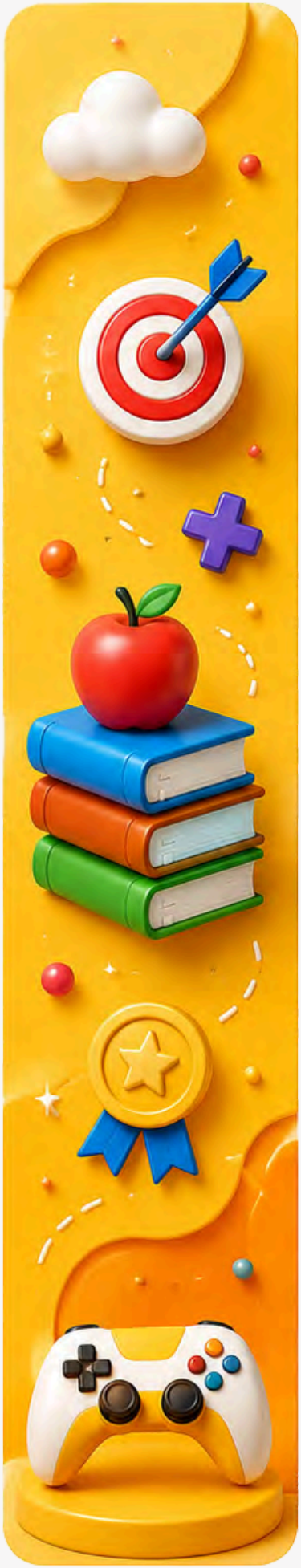
Avoid excessive competition
Focus on progress, participation and cooperation rather than ranking students against one another.

Respect cultural diversity
Choose themes, examples and activities that are inclusive and sensitive to different cultural backgrounds.

Offer multiple ways to participate
Allow learners to contribute through speaking, writing, drawing, acting or using digital tools.

Make success achievable
Ensure that all learners can experience success and build confidence throughout the learning process.

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Challenges

Although the use of gamification in education offers numerous benefits, as highlighted in the previous section, it also presents certain challenges that warrant consideration. If these challenges are not taken into account, gamification may fail to achieve the desired outcome or even lead to students losing interest in the subject matter. Let's now take a closer look at some of the most common challenges associated with this methodology.



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1. The Need to Understand the Concept

First and foremost, we must consider what may constitute the primary challenge that may be encountered, namely teachers' or educators' mastery of the concept. Although the name of this methodology may suggest an understanding of the concept, it is important that teachers and educators receive specific training on the subject (Darad, 2024; Huseman, 2023; Pérez Granados & Muñoz González, 2024) or conduct research into the concept. The temptation to carry out branching-based tasks without prior study of the concept may lead to the preparation of activities that do not effectively fulfil the intended purpose and, above all, that are not engaging enough.



2. It Takes Time, Planning and Resources, and Requires Creativity

On the other hand, a gamified activity requires planning, effort and creativity; it takes up extra time for the teacher and, at times, involves some financial outlay for the purchase of specific materials (Darad, 2024; Ladouceur, 2024).

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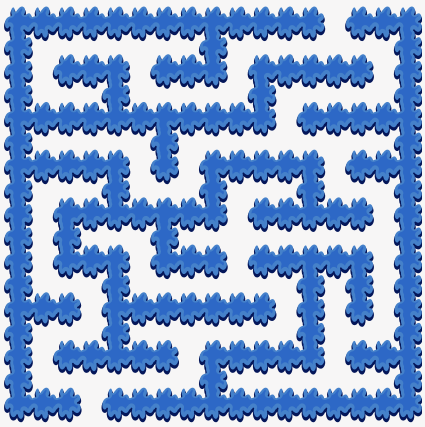


Without a clearly defined purpose and without well-structured and carefully thought-out game mechanics, there is a risk that the activity will fail to meet its objectives and will not be motivating enough for the pupils.



3. Less Suitable for more Complex Learning

When designing a gamified activity, some more complex concepts may not be fully grasped by students, as gamification can oversimplify certain concepts. It is sometimes more effective to tackle certain topics using other methodologies that encourage more discussion, reflection and deep thinking about a particular concept (Ladouceur, 2024).



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4. External Motivation Takes Precedence Over Internal Motivation

Although gamification does not necessarily have to incorporate rewards, rankings or badges, the truth is that these are among the easiest game mechanics to use. For this reason, and because they are so commonly used, there is a risk that students may be committed to the reward rather than to learning (Celepkolu, 2020; Huseman, 2023; Ladouceur, 2024; Pérez Granados & Muñoz González, 2024). On the one hand, this predominance of external motivation may indicate a problem with knowledge acquisition; on the other hand, if the rewards are reduced, students will automatically become less motivated towards the task and less engaged. So, teachers should carefully balance motivational mechanisms and game mechanics with educational goals.



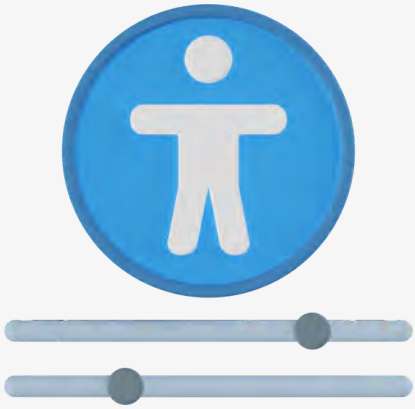
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5. Tasks that are not Fully Inclusive and Accessible

Whenever a teacher prepares a gamified activity, it should be designed to meet all their pupils' individual needs (Ladouceur, 2024).

One potential risk is that the teacher may become so absorbed in preparing their gamified activities that they forget to make them fully accessible and inclusive to all their pupils and to take into account the specific characteristics of each class, including students with disabilities, learning difficulties, or limited digital literacy. Inclusive tasks must be a reality in all lessons, including those that require more initial planning. Whether the activity is digital or not, students' needs must not be overlooked. Teacher must assure accessible design principles, flexible learning pathways, and differentiated activities.



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6. Activities not Fully Aligned with the Curriculum

One challenge that should not be underestimated is the need for a direct and effective link between the various activities and the curriculum (Darad, 2024; Huseman, 2023). This means that the activities carried out should not allow game mechanics to take precedence over the curriculum, but rather should place game mechanics at the service of the curriculum and learning. In this way, the activities must be fully aligned with the content to be learned, avoiding superficial and decorative game mechanics that do not contribute to deeper learning and content understanding.



7. Limited Learning Transfer Capability

Gamified activities may, in some cases, limit students' ability to apply the knowledge they have acquired to real-world problems or to solve tasks outside the gamified environment that has been created (Celepkolu, 2020).



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8. Lack of Sustained Engagement

Gamification may have the opposite effect to that intended and cause students to lose interest in the activity or content, as they may not feel motivated by the playful elements created through game mechanics; these may be considered irrelevant or even disruptive to the task at hand (Celepkolu, 2020).



9. Resistance from Students, Teachers and Society

We all know that young people have a natural affinity for gaming and are constantly playing in their spare time. The introduction of game mechanics into education and classroom activities may be hampered by the stigma that is already forming in society around the excessive amount of time young people spend gaming (Huseman, 2023).



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10. Increased Competition and Student Anxiety

As already mentioned, competition is a very common game mechanic in gamification tasks. However, when used excessively, it can lead to demotivation among some students, particularly those who consistently find themselves at the bottom of the leaderboard. This situation can also cause frustration, stress, embarrassment and anxiety, as excessive competition can lead to less healthy behaviours on the part of students.



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Bearing in mind the recognised challenges of introducing gamification into our schools, whilst also taking into account the motivational benefits of this methodology, we present some recommendations for the effective and sustainable implementation of gamified activities:



A proper understanding of the concept, through specific training with experts in the field;

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Defining the objectives to be achieved, the concepts to be studied and the relevant curriculum content;



Selecting the game mechanics that best suit the activity to be implemented, with a clear purpose and intention, so that they do not become a distraction or dampen motivation;



Considering, from the outset, the pupils for whom the task or activity is intended, so that it is fully inclusive and appropriate to their actual needs.

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Strategies for the Effective Integration of Games in Education

The previous chapters have highlighted both the benefits and the challenges of using games in education. While game-based learning and gamification have the potential to increase motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes, their success depends on how they are implemented in the classroom.

This chapter explores useful strategies to support the effective integration of games into language learning. The chapter is divided into the following sub-topics:

1. Provide useful tools
2. Teacher training
3. Align gamified activites with learning objectives
4. Foster collaboration and social interaction
5. Provide immediate feedback
6. Integrate cultural relevance and inclusivity
7. Combine physical and digital gamification
8. Monitor and assess learning outcomes

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1. Provide Useful Tools

To facilitate the effective use of games in language learning, schools need to provide the necessary resources and tools for both physical (“analogue”) and digital gamification. For many schools this may be a challenge due to tight budget. Financial barriers can be reduced by selecting scalable digital solutions that meet schools' needs while remaining affordable.

Careful planning and the use of available funding opportunities can further support the implementation of educational technology.
It is important for schools to have access to a variety of digital tools and equipment to support diverse teaching and learning activities.



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2. Teacher Training

In a rapidly evolving digital world, teachers will continuously need updated competencies. They require training in how to use digital tools, as well as regular updates on the benefits, limitations, and challenges associated with them. Schools also require clear policies and guidelines to ensure the safe use of digital tools, both with regard to access to appropriate content and the safeguarding of students' privacy.

Maintaining a balance between digital activities and other instructional approaches is an important consideration for teachers. Consequently, it is essential to identify the competence aims for which game-based learning can provide meaningful pedagogical support.

The teacher needs to create frames for an inclusive and positive digital interaction.

Sharing examples of effective practice among colleagues is a valuable strategy for promoting professional collaboration and improving teaching quality.



Figure 1. Visualisation of the Professional Digital Competence Framework for Teachers.

2017 (https://www.udir.no/globalassets/filer/in-english/pfdk_framework_en_low2.pdf)

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3. Align Gamified Activites with Learning Objectives

To ensure the meaningful use of gamified activities, it is important to align them with the competence aims of the curriculum. Such activities can enhance student motivation, provide variety in learning, and contribute to deeper and more sustained learning outcomes.

Teachers need to analyse how learning objectives, content, teaching methods, assessment, and students' individual learning needs interact in digital learning environments. They should also possess a variety of instructional strategies and be able to use digital teaching materials and learning resources effectively.



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4. Foster Collaboration and Social Interaction

In language training social interaction is essential, since collaboration promotes communication. Using game elements in the classroom can support collaboration.

"***Gamification is the incorporation of gaming elements into a learning environment in order to increase engagement and participation.***" (Thurairasu, 2022). It enhances learners' participation, motivates actions, efficiently improves their academic performance and effectively facilitates language learning.

"***Recent studies show that playing learning games with others cooperatively can lower anxiety.***" (Reinhardt, Bein, 2026)

Gamified activities often involve quests, missions or team challenges. The gamification can take many forms in a language learning classroom: role games, board games, escape room, treasure hunt, physically active learning games and gamified learning software are just some of them.

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5. Provide Immediate Feedback

For some gamified activities, it can be useful to provide immediate feedback. When the student receives instant information about their performance, they can correct mistakes and adjust their learning strategies in real time.

In a language learning classroom this is particularly valuable, because language learning depends on consistent training and timely correction.

Immediate feedback can support the development of vocabulary and grammar, increase motivation for the students and help the teacher monitor the students´s development.



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6. Integrate Cultural Relevance and Inclusivity

In language learning, inclusive teaching also involves considering students' diverse cultural backgrounds. When students can connect new knowledge to their own experiences, they could be more motivated and engaged in the learning process.

Game-based learning activities can help promote culturally aware learning. By comparing different cultures, students can reflect upon similarities and differences. These activities can also be integrated into interdisciplinary learning.



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7. Combine Physical and Digital Gamification

A variety of teaching methods can enhance students' motivation and engagement.

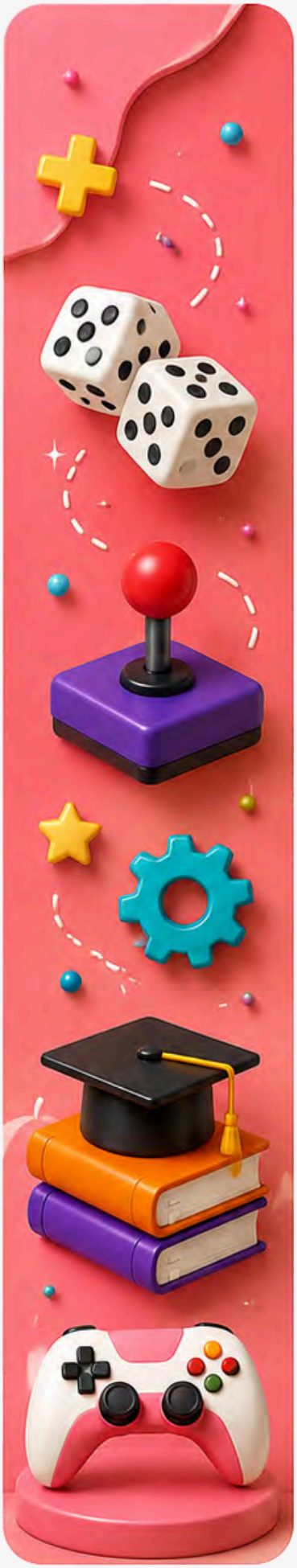
Researches show that physical activity (PA) levels among children and adolescents in EU countries are generally low (Marzi et al, 2021).

"***School-based physical activity positively impacts academic achievement, particularly in mathematics and overall performance.***" (Hermassi S. et al., 2025).

Gamification can increase motivation and participation in physical activity. Similarly, integrating physically active learning into traditional game-based activities can further enhance motivation and engagement.



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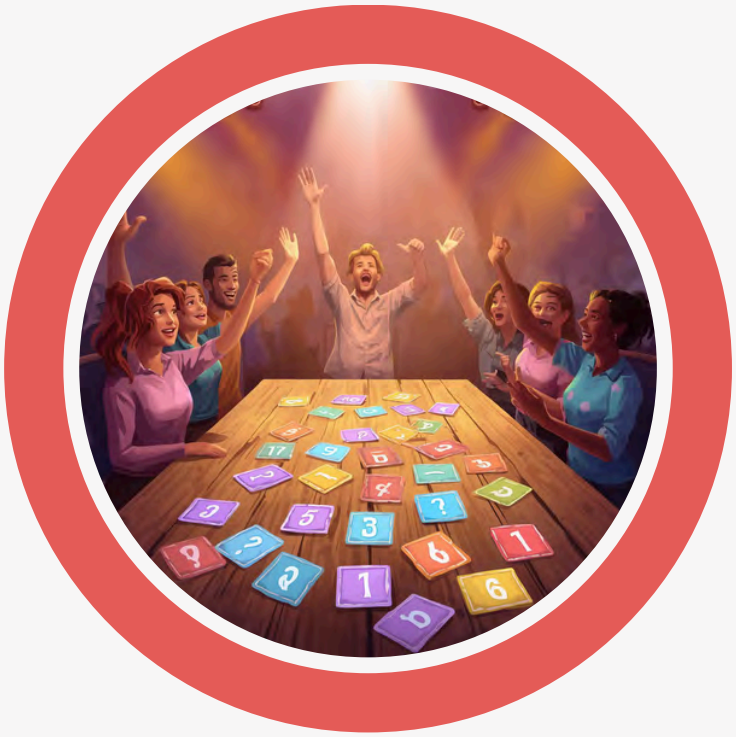
8. Monitor and Assess Learning Outcomes

To ensure an effective use of games in education, it is important to regularly monitor and evaluate the process and learning outcomes.

Through observations you can monitor the students` participation and engagement. You can observe their collaboration and communication in the different activities.

Different game features support monitoring student performances, like for instance: scores, levels, progress and time used in different tasks.

Through immediate feedback, quizzes and tests the students can also evaluate their own development.



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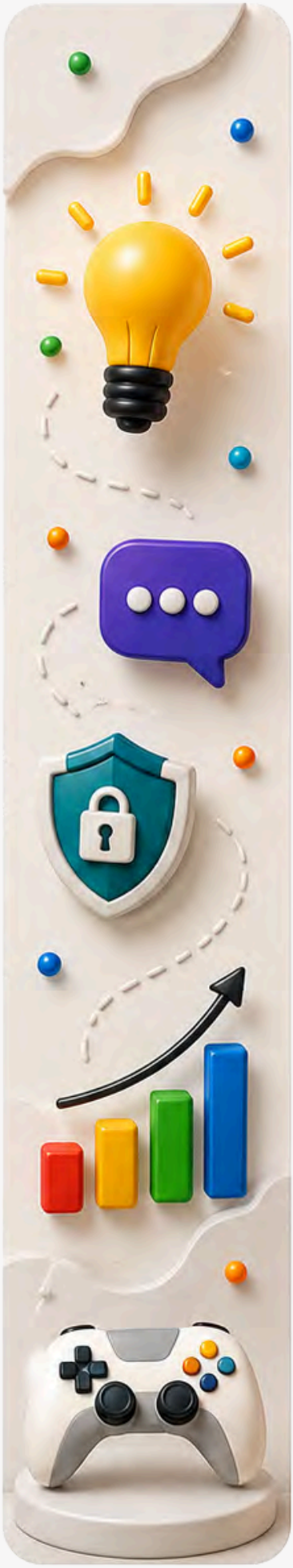


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Best Practices Introduction

In this final chapter, several **best practices** related to education, in both language learning and general education contexts, are presented.

More specifically, the partners of the DigitaLang project, coming from Slovakia, Norway, Hungary, Portugal, Romania and Italy, have collected **7 games and gamified activities** that can be easily adapted and integrated in classrooms.

Each activity is presented in detail, containing:

- the general context connected to the implementation of the activities;
- the materials or digital tools needed for carrying out the game;
- a comprehensive description of the activity (participants, game-like elements, use of materials);
- a conclusion about the significance of this activity in educational contexts.

The main objective of this chapter is to inspire teachers to transform and revamp their lesson plans, in order to include more activities that do not make part of traditional curricula and teaching methods. Through this transformation, they will manage to render the learning experiences of their students more inclusive, engaging and fun.

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Kind Words Quest: Inclusion Through QR Missions

International House Bratislava

At a glance

A gamified outdoor learning activity designed for young learners, including migrant children, to promote English practice, emotional safety, and classroom inclusion through short QR-code missions. The activity combines speaking, mindfulness, gratitude, and collaborative reflection using simple digital tasks and partner interaction.

Key individuals



Students



Teacher

Context

Many young learners, especially children adjusting to a new language and school environment, need activities that build belonging, as well as language confidence. This activity responds to that need, by using QR-code stations placed around the school grounds, where children complete short, supportive missions focused on kind language, gratitude, calm noticing, shared interests, and class values.

The digital element is not the goal in itself- it serves as a simple, motivating bridge between movement, language, and social-emotional learning . Each station opens one slide with a visual prompt, a short instruction, and a sentence frame, allowing children with different English levels to participate successfully.

Kind Words Quest: Inclusion Through QR Missions

International House Bratislava

Digital Tools Used

Google Slides: Each QR code opens one simple task slide with a prompt, image, and sentence frame, making the activity easy to organise and edit.

QR code generator: Google Chrome or similar tools can quickly turn each slide link into a printable QR code for outdoor stations.

Optional Padlet or shared slide response page: Children can type one word, sentence, or appreciation message if the teacher wants a shared digital record.

Kind Words Quest: Inclusion Through QR Missions

International House Bratislava

Description

The activity can be carried out in one lesson or across two shorter sessions. Students work in pairs or small groups and follow a QR trail around the school grounds. At each stop, they scan a code, open one slide, and complete one short collaborative mission. The missions are designed to strengthen positive peer relationships while practising useful English in a calm, low-pressure way.

Rather than focusing on speed or competition, the game emphasises cooperation, reflection, and participation. Teams can collect stamps, stickers, or simple points, but every group should complete the whole trail and contribute to the final class reflection.

The first stop, **Kind Eyes**, asks students to share something they know about a classmate and one thing they appreciate about that person. They can write their answers on paper or type them into the task slide. This supports both speaking and positive peer recognition through sentence starters such as “I know that you like…” and “I appreciate that you…”.



Kind Words Quest: Inclusion Through QR Missions

International House Bratislava

Description

The second stop, **Grateful Heart**, invites students to choose one thing they are grateful for and say or write a short sentence such as “I am grateful for my friend” or “Today I am thankful for playtime”. Gratitude activities can help create a caring classroom atmosphere and give learners accessible, meaningful language practice.

The third stop, **Calm Moment**, focuses on mindfulness and self-regulation. Children pause, take slow breaths, and notice what they can hear, feel, or smell. The slide can include visual icons and sentence stems such as “I can hear…”, “I can feel…”, and “I can smell…”, so the activity remains concrete and age-appropriate.

The fourth stop, **Same as Me**, helps students find one thing they have in common with a partner. This may be a favourite game, food, colour, activity, or routine. The task encourages children to ask simple questions and notice shared experiences, which supports inclusion and peer bonding.



Kind Words Quest: Inclusion Through QR Missions



International House Bratislava

Description

The final stop, **Our Class Promise**, brings the activity back to the whole group. Students complete sentence frames such as “I promise to…” or “I vow to…” using a word bank that includes *listen*, *help, wait, share, open,* and *give*. The teacher can collect these responses on paper, on a shared slide, or on a class poster to create a visible inclusion charter for the classroom.

Because each QR slide contains only one short task, one visual prompt, and one sentence frame, the digital format remains manageable for young learners. This structure is especially useful for multilingual classrooms because it reduces reading load and supports participation through speaking, pointing, selecting, or typing.



Kind Words Quest: Inclusion Through QR Missions



International House Bratislava

Lesson learnt

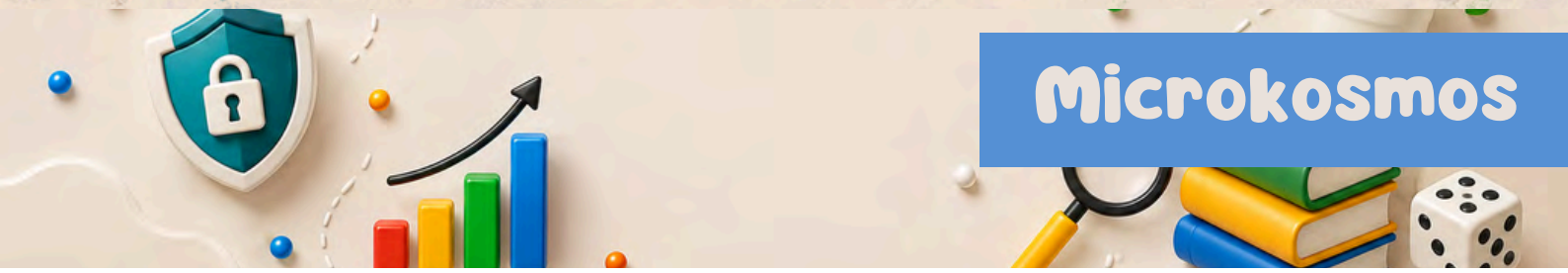
This kind of gamified trail can support both language learning and social-emotional development, when tasks are short, visual, and collaborative.

For migrant learners in particular, low-risk speaking tasks and structured peer interaction can help reduce pressure while increasing participation and belonging.

The strongest lesson from this design is that digital tools work best when they simplify access, not when they dominate the activity. One-slide QR prompts, clear sentence frames, and shared reflection tasks allow technology to support inclusion, mindfulness, and language practice at the same time.



Vocabulary Game: Be Fast, Guess Correctly



Microkosmos

At a glance

A gamified activity implemented in language learning environments that gives learners the opportunity to master basic vocabulary related to colours and objects in a fun and engaging way. The activity also allows students to connect the new vocabulary to real-life objects, maximising thus the efficiency of the activity.

Key individuals



Students



Teacher

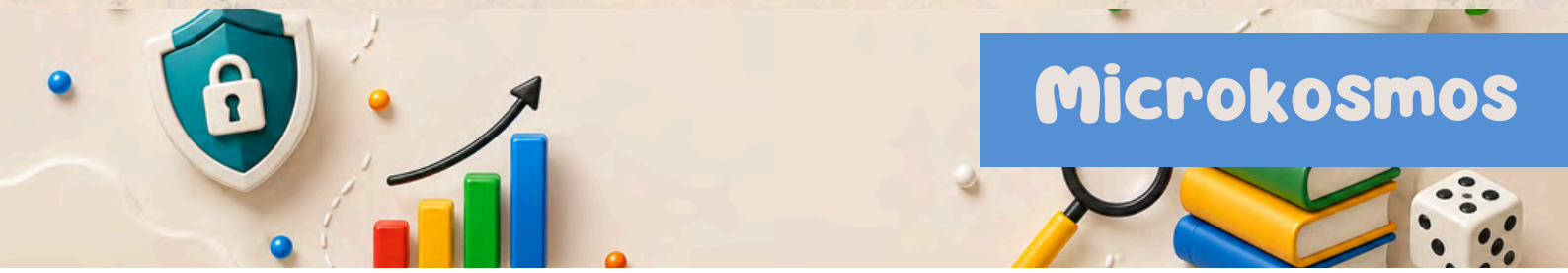
Context

In Europe, language learning is an important part of school curricula since primary education. From a young age, students have the opportunity to learn a new language at school.

Due to the students' age and educational level, the first language lessons focus on greetings and basic vocabulary. However, the acquisition of this vocabulary, even though it is simple, may be proven challenging for many students.

This is why such innovative and engaging activities that allow students to easily learn the basics of a new language, through cooperation and gaming, are developed.

Vocabulary Game: Be Fast, Guess Correctly



Microkosmos

Tools Used



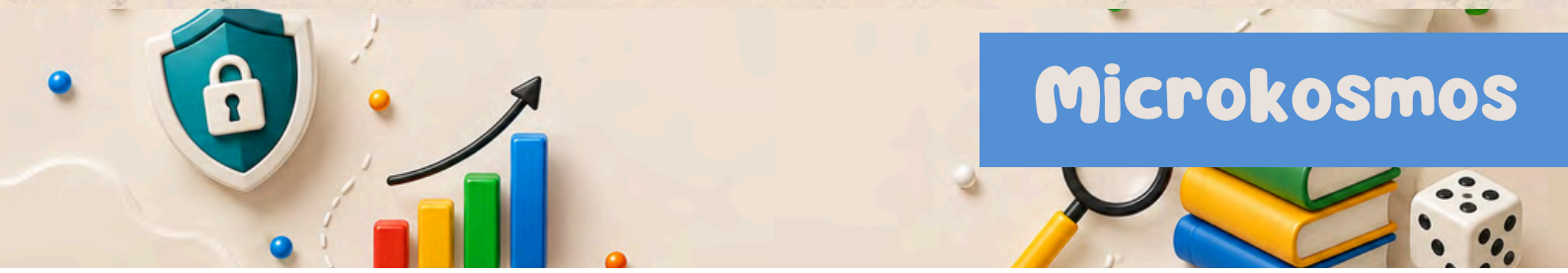
Multicolour Markers: They can either be multicolour markers or pencils. Useful for the first part of the activity. They can be of any colour, as long as the colours are easily recognisable.



Whiteboard: Whiteboard or any type of surface on which players can write and design. It should be easily visible by all players.

Google Images: Online search engine for pictures, videos and, in general, visual content.

Vocabulary Game: Be Fast, Guess Correctly



Microkosmos

Description

The activity initiates with the teacher splitting the players/students into two groups. Then, one player from each team comes to the teacher's desk, on which all of the multicolour markers/pencils are positioned. The teacher says out loud a random colour in the learning language. The first student to grab the correct marker/pencil wins one point for their team.

Then, the winning player has the opportunity to draw an object with that colour on the board, or find a picture of that object on Google Images. Then, their teammates should repeat out loud the colour and the name of the object in the language that they are learning. The team wins an extra point if they guess the object correctly.

Lesson learnt

Through this activity, students have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with basic vocabulary in a new language with the use of real-life objects. The structure of this educational game fosters cooperation and team-building, while simultaneously engaging students in learning activities adapted to their needs, preferences and educational level.



Vocabulary Quest: Learning English Through Gamification

Agrupamento de Escolas do Barreiro

At a glance

A gamified learning activity implemented with 6th Grade students (11–12 years old) to improve English vocabulary and speaking skills through challenges, teamwork, and digital tools.

Key individuals



Students



Teacher

Context

Many 6th Grade students struggle to remain motivated when learning new vocabulary. In order to make language learning more engaging, the teacher introduced a gamified approach called "Vocabulary Quest".

Students worked in teams and completed a series of language missions related to the topic "Daily Life and Hobbies". Points, badges, and mini-rewards were used to encourage participation and collaboration.

Vocabulary Quest: Learning English Through Gamification

Agrupamento de Escolas do Barreiro



Digital Tools Used

Kahoot!
Interactive vocabulary quizzes and team competitions.

Wordwall
Matching games, word searches, and vocabulary challenges.

Canva
Creation of digital badges and certificates for students.

Vocabulary Quest: Learning English Through Gamification

Agrupamento de Escolas do Barreiro

Description

The activity was carried out over two weeks during English lessons. Students were divided into teams and completed different missions:

- Vocabulary quizzes on Kahoot!
- Interactive games on Wordwall
- Speaking challenges using target vocabulary
- Team presentations about their hobbies
- Collection of points and achievement badges

At the end of the project, the team with the highest score received a "Language Champions" certificate, while all students received participation badges.

Lesson learnt

- Students showed greater motivation and participation.
- Improved vocabulary retention through repetition and play.
- Teamwork increased confidence in speaking English.
- Digital tools created a more interactive learning environment.
- Simple gamification strategies can make language learning more enjoyable and effective.



The Quadrilateral Mystery Challenge

Agrupamento de Escolas de Idães

At a glance

A gamified activity was implemented in a 7th-grade CLIL Mathematics class. The objective was to explore the properties and classification of quadrilaterals. The lesson was structured as a mystery narrative in which students had to discover which quadrilateral had disappeared, who was responsible, and why.

Key individuals



Students



Teacher

Context

This gamified activity was implemented in a 7th-grade CLIL Mathematics class (ages 12–15) to make the study of quadrilaterals more engaging. All these lessons were taught in English. Its design was guided by the Octalysis Framework by Yu-kai Chou, integrating key motivational core drives to enhance student participation.

The mystery of a “missing quadrilateral” created Epic Meaning, while points, rankings, and progressive tasks supported Accomplishment. Group work encouraged Social Influence, and the final comic allowed Creativity and Feedback. Clues delivered over time added Unpredictability, keeping students curious and involved. Through this structure, mathematical learning became more interactive, collaborative, and motivating.

The Quadrilateral Mystery Challenge

Agrupamento de Escolas de Idães

Activities Used



Gamification framework with points, rankings, clues, and certificates.



Group work with teams identified by colours or symbols.



Email clues sent individually to students, requiring written responses.



Hands-on classification tasks using worksheets (matching activity and exercises using comics).



Comic-creation app for the final narrative (suggested app: Storyboard That).



Teacher validation and scoring for each completed task.

The Quadrilateral Mystery Challenge

Agrupamento de Escolas de Idães

Description

The activity was designed as a gamified investigation in which 7th-grade students explored the properties and classification of quadrilaterals, in CLIL lessons. The lesson began with a narrative hook: a quadrilateral had mysteriously disappeared. Students worked in groups throughout the process, earning points for completing tasks, solving clues, and progressing through the mystery. They first engaged in hands-on classification challenges, using sheets to match names, images, and properties of quadrilaterals. Clues about the disappearance were sent individually by email, requiring students to analyse information and respond quickly to gain points. Additional group exercises reinforced geometric reasoning.

In the final stage, students created a comic retelling the story of the disappearance, integrating the clues and mathematical concepts they had learned. A ranking system and certificates added a layer of friendly competition. The activity combined narration, collaboration, and problem-solving to make geometry more engaging and memorable.

Lesson learnt

The activity showed that a narrative-based, gamified structure significantly increased student engagement and supported clearer understanding of quadrilateral properties. Group collaboration, clues, and creative tasks helped maintain motivation and focus. Overall, the approach made geometry more interactive, memorable, and enjoyable for students.

A Virtual Journey

Hilstad barne- og ungdomsskole

At a glance

An interdisciplinary gamified activity was implemented in the 7th grade to introduce different societies in the English-speaking world. It was meant to motivate and engage the students to explore other countries, cultures and traditions. By using digital tools they could create interesting travel journals from different countries.

Key individuals



Students



Teacher

Context

This teaching program is an interdisciplinary introduction to the following competence aims:

1. Explore ways of life and traditions in different societies in the English-speaking world.

2. Describe geographical main features in different parts of the world and reflect on how these features influence the people who live there.

Digital tools have transformed the way we learn about people, places, and cultures around the world. Through technologies such as interactive maps, virtual tours, videos and digital storytelling, students can explore distant locations and experience aspects of daily life in other countries without leaving the classroom.

A Virtual Journey

Hilstad barne- og ungdomsskole

Digital Tools Used



Quizlet and Quizlet Live: Practising necessary vocabulary individually and in teams using Quizlet live.



Explore destinations and create a digital map using **Google Earth**.



Create a famous landmark from the chosen destination in **Minecraft**.



Create a travel journal using one of these options: **Microsoft Powerpoint, Canva (Travel Magazine Template), Book Creator, iMovie, Explain Everything**

A Virtual Journey

Hilstad barne- og ungdomsskole

Description

In English lessons the students started practising on necessary vocabulary individually on Quizlet. To motivate them even further, they used Quizlet Live for teams, where they could collaborate and compete.
Geography: The teacher had chosen different locations to show on Google Earth to inspire the students when they picked their travel destination.
In Arts and Crafts they created a landmark from their chosen destination on Minecraft for Education.
In music lessons they learned about traditional music and artists from that destination.
As a final product they created digital travel journals.

Lesson learnt

Gamified activities increase student engagement. They encourage active learning and provide meaningful contexts for exploring culture, traditions, and geography. They can be a meaningful addition to practical and hands-on activities.



Comic Strip as a Gamified Microlearning Activity

Regional Centre for Information and Scientific Development

At a glance

Students create short digital comic strips using newly learned vocabulary and language structures to solve a challenge or tell a story.

It is particularly effective for learners with different language proficiency levels, as visual elements support understanding and expression.

Key individuals



Students



Teacher

Context

This activity was developed and tested in an international educational context to increase learner engagement and support language development through digital storytelling. Students work individually or in small groups to create short comic strips around a given theme, challenge or real-life situation.

The approach combines elements of gamification and microlearning. Learners complete a creative mission, receive feedback on their progress and use language in meaningful contexts. The visual nature of comic strips helps reduce language anxiety while encouraging communication, collaboration and active participation.

Comic Strip as a Gamified Microlearning Activity

Regional Centre for Information and Scientific Development

Digital Tools Used



Canva: the Canva Comic Strip Templates can be freely used to easily perform the task.



ChatGPT: the language model can also be used to create comics through a simple comic prompt structure



Gemini: it is a free tool that can be used to generate short comic strips easily.

Comic Strip as a Gamified Microlearning Activity

Regional Centre for Information and Scientific Development

Description

Students receive a language-learning challenge connected to the current topic of the lesson. Examples may include introducing themselves, asking for directions, solving a mystery, welcoming a new student or completing a daily-life task. Working in teams, learners create a short comic strip consisting of 4–8 panels. Each panel represents a step in the story and requires students to use target vocabulary, expressions or grammar structures. The teacher provides a clear mission and success criteria while allowing learners freedom in developing characters, dialogues and visual elements. During the activity, students practise reading, writing and communication skills while also developing creativity and digital competences. The activity can be adapted to different language levels and implemented either in face-to-face, online or blended learning environments.

Lesson learnt

Students often produce more language and demonstrate greater creativity when working through visual storytelling than in traditional written assignments.
Providing a clear mission, simple structure and visual support significantly increases participation and confidence, particularly among learners who are less comfortable using the target language.



Letter Detectives: Find, Match and Build the Letter

Federația Organizațiilor Neguvernamentale pentru Servicii Sociale - FONSS

At a glance

"Letter Detectives" is a short blended-learning game for early literacy. Children identify a target letter, match it with sounds and images in a digital quiz, then build it using simple materials. The activity combines repetition, teamwork and instant feedback.

Key individuals



Students



Teacher

Context

This activity was inspired by classroom practice documented by Teach for Romania, where a teacher working with a preparatory class (children aged 6-7) introduced a digital game to support letter recognition. The approach was designed for children with specific educational needs and limited learning support at home and focuses on developing early literacy skills, including letter recognition, phonemic awareness, vocabulary development and oral language. The blended version presented here builds on that documented practice by combining short digital game-based tasks with hands-on collaborative activities suitable for early primary education.

Letter Detectives: Find, Match and Build the Letter

Federația Organizațiilor Neguvernamentale pentru Servicii Sociale - FONSS

Digital Tools Used



Quizizz or Google Forms can provide a short exit quiz to check letter recognition and sound–picture association.



Wordwall (or similar platforms such as LearningApps) can be used to create interactive letter-recognition and picture-matching games with instant feedback.



Storytelling platforms, like Book Creator or similar: They can provide the narrative (imaginary) context that motivates children before the game begins. Each challenge (finding the letter, matching pictures, building the letter) becomes a "mission" that helps the character continue the story. At the end, the character thanks the children and awards them the next piece of the "Letter Detectives Alphabet".



A tablet, laptop or interactive whiteboard can be used to display the activities, while a tablet or mobile device can also be used to photograph children's letter constructions and encourage reflection on their work.

Letter Detectives: Find, Match and Build the Letter

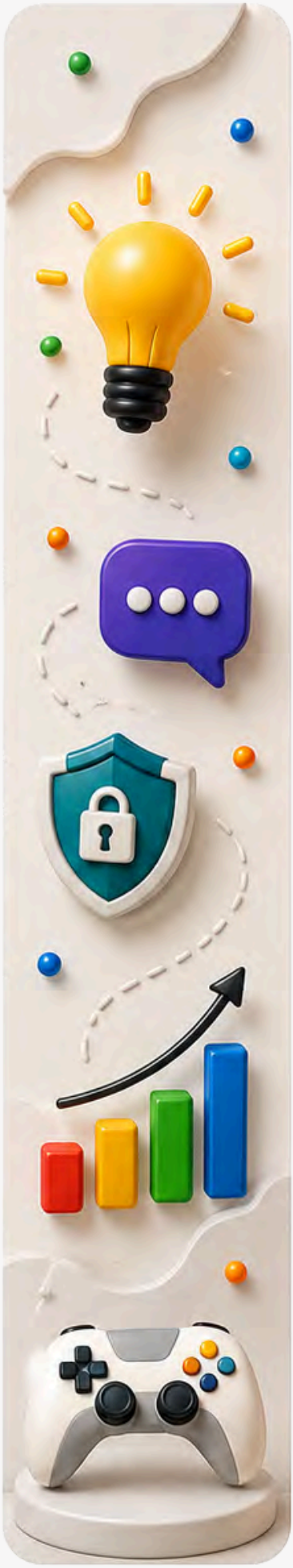
Federația Organizațiilor Neguvernamentale pentru Servicii Sociale - FONSS

Description

In "Letter Detectives", children become detectives searching for a “hidden” target letter. The teacher introduces the mission with a short story (e.g., “The letter M is hiding among other letters. Can you find it?”) and models its sound. Using a digital game (e.g., Wordwall), children identify the target letter among distractors and receive immediate feedback, with unlimited attempts. They then complete a second challenge by sorting pictures into two groups: words that begin with the target sound and words that do not. The activity is differentiated by using either images only or images with written words, depending on learners’ literacy level. Next, pairs of children build the letter using simple materials such as sticks, clay or construction pieces, compare it with the digital model and say a word beginning with that letter. The session ends with a short digital exit quiz assessing letter recognition and sound–picture matching. Rather than ranking children, the class earns a collective “Letter Detectives” alphabet piece, celebrating shared progress and encouraging cooperation.

Lesson learnt

By combining short digital challenges with hands-on teamwork, this activity strengthens early literacy skills, including letter recognition, phonemic awareness, vocabulary and oral language, while also developing collaboration, confidence and problem-solving. Celebrating shared achievements rather than competition helps every child participate, progress and enjoy learning.



Best Practices Short Conclusions

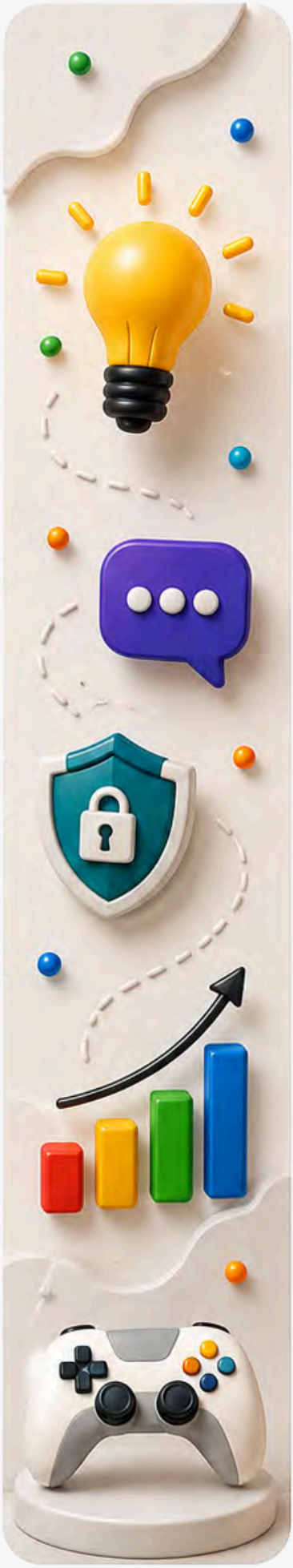
The best practices presented in the previous pages highlight the numerous different applications of gamification in modern educational settings. The inclusion of activities belonging to different educational sectors and fields (language learning, maths, preparatory literacy) showcases the possibility to use gamification as a cross-curricular pedagogical approach, leading to significant positive results in learning, comprehension and engagement.

All of the best practices included in this guide share gamification as a common characteristic, however, their different educational and learning targeting proves that gamification can be a valuable methodology that can be easily adapted to different objectives and needs. More specifically:

- The activities presented by **Microkosmos** and **Agrupamento de Escolas do Barreiro** highlight how gamified activities, making use of both digital and physical tools, can render vocabulary learning easier and more engaging.

- The activities of **International House Bratislava** and **Hilstad Skole** promote language practice through immersive indoor and outdoor activities that foster collaboration and enable students to explore new environments and cultures through digital gamification tools.

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- **Regional Centre for Information and Scientific Development (RCISD)** used a gamified activity that combines language learning and artistic creation, allowing students to develop a wide range of skills, while simultaneously practising a new language.

- **Federația Organizațiilor Neguvernamentale pentru Servicii Sociale (FONSS)** presented an activity that can assist students of young age obtain basic literacy skills in a fun and engaging way.

- Finally, **Agrupamento de Escolas de Idães** showcased the possibility of using tools and methodologies on interactive activities for teaching different subjects, in this case maths, in multilingual contexts.

Each one of the activities included in this section of the "EDUGAME: START" guide can be easily adapted to different educational contexts and to various educational needs and preferences of students.

Teachers are welcome to implement one or more of the practices presented in the previous pages and report the engagement and learning levels of their students, in order to understand what type of activities and at what level they can be proven pedagogically beneficial.

Teachers should also feel free to develop, use and propose different activities that can constitute an innovative step in redefining traditional educational methodologies and strategies.

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