

The Power of Gamification in Teaching Language

Preparatory Studies Center as a Model

Salim Al Bulushi¹, Anwar AL Majrafi², Khalid AL Gharibi³, Afra Al Hatmi⁴,
Jumana Al Shamli⁵, Sultan Al Sawafi⁶ and Younes Audeh⁷

University of Technology and Applied Sciences – Sultanate of Oman -Ibri

Abstract

Gamification is understood as one of the pedagogical strategies that concentrates on students' full participation, engagement, and motivation. Adopting gamification in the educational process results in open-minded students, hard work and high achievement, quality projects and assignments, etc. In order to fathom the importance of adopting and utilizing gamification in teaching, the researchers have distributed a questionnaire to a number of experienced lecturers at the Preparatory Studies Center, University of Technology and Applied Sciences- Ibri / the Sultanate of Oman. The results were amazing; almost all participants agree that using gamification in teaching is so rewarding and beneficial. Discussion, recommendations, and explanation will be highlighted in detail throughout this paper.

Keywords: activity, assignment, classroom engagement, gamification, method, motivation, reflection

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Introduction

This era witnesses a great technological and digital development. Teachers and mentors keep searching for new ways and methods of teaching that give better results throughout effective motivation and engagement. What is important in the pedagogical field is utilizing gamification in the teaching process and methodology. Such method increases students' momentum of knowledge and keeps them alert to what is taking place during the class. By injecting simple elements of games and teaching aids into the learning process, teachers can transform the classroom into a dynamic environment of exploration and nourishment, and great impact in the educational field. This paper sheds some light on utilizing the Gamification method in classrooms, benefits gained by students and teachers alike, and what effect this has on the whole educational society.

Statement of the Problem

At academic institutions, higher education, in particular, students and teachers should be fully aware of the exact meaning of using diverse methods of teaching; it is not indoctrination, but a way of thinking and exploring the depth of knowledge throughout teaching aids in class, especially using games as a way of introducing the material at hand.

Objectives of the Study

This study pursues the following:

1. Identifying the power of utilizing games in teaching.
2. Highlighting the ultimate advantages / disadvantages of using games in the educational arena, and what necessary criteria to apply to get the benefit of using teaching aids in class.

Literature Review

“Gamification, or gamified learning, is a way to create immersive, engaging, and student-centered learning environments.” (The University of Chicago: Pedagogy Corner for Teaching and Learning, 2023, Para. 1). From time to time, some methods of teaching emerge, either to build on previous ones, or replace them. All what happens is considered a transformative step and valuable strategy to the whole educational process.

In recent years, gamification has emerged as a transformative strategy in education, leveraging game design elements to create more engaging and effective learning experiences. By incorporating aspects of games into educational contexts, educators can foster a more stimulating, competitive, and interactive environment. This approach not only makes learning more enjoyable but also enhances problem-solving, collaboration, and creative thinking skills among students. (NCCE, 2024, Para. 1).

“By designing our courses with game elements, we can lower student stress while maintaining the same academic rigor.” (The University of Chicago: Pedagogy Corner for Teaching and Learning, 2023, Para. 2). Moreover, teachers should participate in designing syllabi that concentrate on utilizing supportive teaching aids and games as ways of drawing students’ attention to what is being explained in class. No matter what nature of games used; traditional, digital, field tours, etc., all of that should lead to the benefit of the whole class. Interestingly enough, teachers and educators should know that the use of games is not just for fun, or a waste of time, but pure pedagogical. “While gamification can include technology and video games in the classroom, the essence of gamification is pedagogical rather than technological because it is possible to include games without gamifying.” (The University of Chicago: Pedagogy Corner for Teaching and Learning, 2023, Para. 2). Sometimes teachers split the class into groups and let

them solve a certain problem. It is a way of practicing cooperation practically, not to mention encouraging the spirit of healthy competition in a free and democratic way.

Team-based learning (TBL) incorporates gamification to enhance collaboration. In TBL, students are organized into teams and presented with problems or projects they must solve collectively. Points, badges, and leaderboards can incentivize cooperation and healthy competition, ensuring that all team members contribute to the group's success. (NCCE, 2024, Para. 7).

Success does not only come from granting gifts or rewards, but also from adopting a comprehensive way of planning, checking, sifting, and crafting the content combined with the mechanics of a certain game in a very clear and to the point purpose. "Success comes not from the rewards, but from how the learning journey is crafted for students to travel. Combining game mechanics with intentional exploration of aligned content will result in students' participating willingly". (McCarthy, 2021, Para.; Rahman, 2025). Students, on the other hand, have to spend a considerable time reading, exploring, watching films, or videos in order to get the utmost amount of the knowledge of the content at hand. Teachers, on the other hand, have to consider students' efforts and encourage them by words of thanks or gifts, certificates of appreciation, etc.

Gamification provides powerful experiences that are noncompetitive play to facilitate learning. Students invest time in and outside the classroom to complete the challenges, such as doing extra readings, video viewings, and practice activities. The more time spent and/or content consumed can only improve depth and breadth of students' knowledge and skill mastery. Such investment by all students is time well spent and should be rewarded with badges and work-related status. (McCarthy, 2021, Para. 5).

Gamification does help students build their own personal skills such as self-reliance and control which leads to success in their personal and professional lives and become good figures in the society.

Gamification empowers students with the ultimate in choices when setting goals for what badges and achievements they want to complete, which leads to learners building skills for self-reliance and self-control. You can explore more mechanics for implementing gamification here. Game on! (McCarthy, 2021, Para. 16).

Gamification can provide students with the tools required for exploration such as thinking outside of the box, storytelling skill with concentration on the content, theme of the story, characters, climax and then solutions. Moreover, via gamification, skillful students can design and build virtual buildings and cities.

Creativity is a critical skill for students in the 21st century, and gamification can provide the ideal platform for fostering creative thinking. Educational games often encourage

students to think outside the box and experiment with new ideas. Storytelling games are of particular utility because they require students to create narratives, develop characters, and solve conflicts within a storyline. Additionally, games that involve building and designing, such as “SimCity” or “Roblox,” provide students with the tools to create virtual worlds, thus stimulating their imagination and creativity. (NCCE, 2024, Para. 10).

Regarding higher education institutions, applying gamifications helps students learn on their own with the sense of proficiency. One great merit of adopting the teaching method using gamification is creating a strong connection among all academic members via collaboration and competitive atmosphere. Gamification has made learning enjoyable, no matter whether face to face, or online.

The application of gamification in higher education will incentivize students to learn on their own and with more efficiency. A primary reason is that it helps build connections among members of an academic community through encouraging collaboration and competition. It is very important to be mindful of the social dimensions of teaching and learning whether the instructor is teaching in person or remotely, and gamification is an excellent tool for achieving this goal. Furthermore, a gamified learning process has the potential to immerse your students in the curricular content and cultivates a positive attitude toward study. Learning is no longer a laborious task but a fun and rewarding quest. (Wang, 2021, Para. 23).

Utilizing gamification in education keeps getting more power and strength, and expected to last for a long time. It has become a need and required strategy in pedagogy. “A decade after its introduction, gamification is still gaining strength in the field of educational research and has become a didactic strategy that favors engagement and motivation”. (Rincon-Flores, 2022, Para. 4). There is a similarity between the traditional and game scheme points in that they both reward students who do excellent jobs in solving some problems and/or excel in doing distinguished tasks, or getting good results in exams, etc. “Similar to conventional grading schemes, game points or experience (XP) systems reward students for completing various tasks, assignments, or assessments”. (University of Waterloo, (n.d), Para. 8).

Quiet delivery of classes is not always a sign or proof of successful teachers. Using games in classrooms is never considered a waste of time at all, on the contrary, it is a very rewarding step on the way of evolving and engaging students in a free and natural way. The following example shows that difference in delivering classes.

A principal walk[s] by two classroom doors. From one door, she hears echoes of laughter, cheers, and class-wide celebration. The second room is silent, with students focused at their desks on workbook practice. Are both rooms learning? Yes. But who’s more engaged? More likely than not, the students behind door number one. (Teaching Strategies Reflex, (n.d.), Para. 1)

Using gamification in classrooms develops the individual's psychological condition; a way to understand the behavior. "Gamification psychology is a field that studies the behavior of users in gamified systems. In other words, it focuses on how to understand and influence people's behaviors through gaming methods". (Buljan, 2025. Para. 8).

To conclude, students should be treated equally, rewarding a small number of students, while depriving others creates a gap among students and psychologically affects them. To get excellent results of utilizing games and other teaching aids in class, students should be treated in a just way, games should be chosen properly, and teachers should be wise and fair.

Allowing only a few to earn rewards demotivates students who either believe that they cannot compete or experience frustration at having invested time toward the goal, only to fall short because someone else edged them out. When the focus is on who wins, learning by all becomes the biggest loser. (McCarthy, 2021, Para. 7).

Benefits of playing games in class

Playing games in classrooms encourages creativity and allows students to behave naturally and express themselves freely. Moreover, they can learn new practical skills more effectively by practicing activities rather than spending all the time on reading, writing, solving mathematical problems, etc.

Games do offer students the chance to adjust to the academic institution and get more accustomed to the learning environment. In addition, playing games in classrooms encourages healthy interaction in a relaxed way, especially for shy students. Moreover, Gamification plays a crucial part in enhancing team-work and promotes efficient study groups.

Some games that a number of teachers should focus on:

Memorizing objects is a good game and exercise that tests students' ability in remembering some details about new objects. The teacher may use the overhead projector to show some objects within a timeframe, then asks students to remember what they had seen. Another game focusses on finishing some incomplete sentences such as: I met my cousin yesterday and had... (students have to put suitable words like: dinner, fun, coffee, etc.).

Some games utilize technology in classrooms such as Kahoot which is a platform that makes it easy for teachers to create games concentrating on quizzes or short tests. This game encourages group-work and pure engagement.

Artificial Intelligent (AI) helps students excel in using proper games via digital technology. The teacher asks students to work in groups to get some information about a certain topic. Upon finishing the task, they tell the other groups about what they had achieved. Pictionary does have a great effect on memorizing new words and expressions.

Pictionary is a game used to introduce new words by practice. It is similar to a contest that proves who has the ability to remain to the last second without losing the game.

The Preparatory Studies Center (PSC)

The Preparatory Studies Center is an academic institution that belongs to the University of Technology and Applied Sciences. It is a service unit that serves all the departments in the university, especially the newly admitted ones who fail the placement test. All of them are fresh and study English as an orientation course. In order for students to get well-engaged in class, teachers use games as a way of encouragement to support the lessons taken in class. It should be mentioned that the teachers at the (PSC) are of high caliber. They really are astonishing and represent a multilingual community with experience in different parts of the globe.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design using a survey method to gather data on using Gamification in teaching. The use of surveys is appropriate for collecting standardized, comparable data across a sample of participants, allowing for statistical analysis of their responses.

Participants

The participants (20 male and female lecturers) teach at the Preparatory Studies Center / University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Ibri in the Sultanate of Oman. They are all experienced and have taught at different universities and colleges around the globe.

Sampling Strategy

Due to logistical constraints, the sample size was limited to (20) participants. A convenience sampling method was employed, as the lecturers were readily available to the researchers at the time of the study. However, the small sample size limits the generalizability of the results and is considered a limitation of the study.

Research Instrument

Data was collected using a questionnaire created by the researchers that had (15) questions. The survey asks (Yes/No), (Agree/Disagree), and (Multiple Choice) questions to gauge respondents' opinions on the subject of *The Power of Gamification in Teaching Language*, which included empathy, fairness, and communication skills. A pilot study with five lecturers was used to validate the device in order to ensure clarity and reliability, and any necessary changes to the wording were made in response to their input.

Data Collection Procedure

Questionnaires were distributed to participants during their free time at the Preparatory Studies Center. Before participation, they were briefed about the purpose of the study, informed of their right to apologize anytime, and assured of their anonymity. Participants provided written consent, and surveys were completed within (10) minutes during a scheduled session.

Ethical Considerations

This study followed ethical research guidelines. All subjects gave their informed consent, and they were promised that their answers would be kept private.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table1

I. As a teacher, I believe I possess the required and essential resources to use games in the classroom	Yes	No
	18	2
	90%	10%

I. As a teacher, I believe I possess the required and essential resources to use games in the classroom

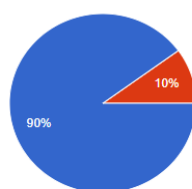


Table 1 illustrates that 90% of participants agree that they possess the required and essential resources to use games in the classroom. This shows that teachers are confident in their ability to improve learning through engaging and interactive techniques.

Table 2

2. I am sure that gamification in classrooms makes students feel more motivated.	Yes	No
	20	0
	100%	0%

I am sure that gamification in classrooms makes students feel more .2 .motivated



The findings indicate that the participants (100%) believe that they are sure that gamification in classrooms makes students feel more motivated. This indicates that teachers can create a dynamic learning environment that fosters creativity and teamwork by implementing game-like elements.

Table 3

8. Gamification can improve students' participation in the language classrooms?	Agree	Disagree
	17	3
	85%	15%

?Gamification can improve students' participation in the language classrooms .8

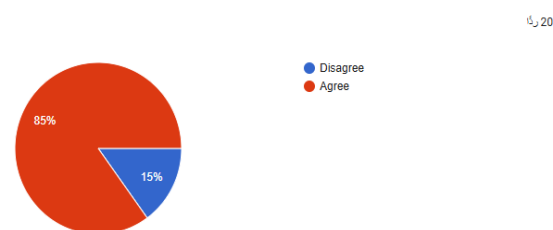


Table 3 shows that the largest group of participants (85%) agree that Gamification can improve students' participation in the language classrooms .

Conclusion

Utilizing gamification in teaching creates an authentic atmosphere in classrooms. Moreover, the teaching /learning process becomes more effective with a high level of engagement from the side of teachers and learners alike. Teachers should choose the proper games and teaching aids that suit students' academic level and age, and might recommend some video games and films to watch at home, so as to make things more supportive for them(students).

Teachers and students should be aware that immersing games in teaching is not for fun; on the contrary, it is for acquiring knowledge in a relaxed and friendly way under the control of teachers. Games should be competitive and make a positive change in students' behavior and psychological condition which results in improving students' extreme motivation and comprehension of the educational content.

Recommendations

1. Using gamification in classrooms develops individuals' psychological conditions; a way to understand the behavior of all participants.
2. Using games in classrooms is never considered a waste of time, on the contrary, it is a very rewarding step on the way of evolving and engaging students in a free and natural way.
3. Gamification in classrooms, is a way to create immersive, engaging, and student-centered learning environment.
4. Students should be treated equally. Rewarding a small number of students, while depriving others creates a gap among students and psychologically affects them.

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About the authors

Jumana Al-Shamli is a part-time lecturer at the Preparatory Studies Center, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Ibri, Sultanate of Oman. She holds a Bachelor's degree in English Language Studies from Sohar University, where she graduated with a high GPA of 3.95. In addition, she obtained an Educational Diploma in English Language. Her academic interests focus on education and applied linguistics, and she is highly motivated to engage in educational and academic research.

Khalid Al-Gharibi is a lecturer at the Preparatory Studies Centre - University of Technology and Applied Sciences- the Sultanate of Oman. He is an M.A. holder in English Language

Teaching from Aligarh Muslim University - India. He has been teaching English as an ESL/EFL for a long time. He has taught at 2 different colleges and for now in a university UTAS, in the Sultanate of Oman. His research interest is “Educational Leadership and Management”.

Anwaar Abdullah Al Majrafi is a part-time lecturer at the Preparatory Studies Center at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences – Ibri College, Sultanate of Oman. She holds a bachelor’s degree in English Language and Translation from Sohar University. Moreover, she holds a CELTA certification from Cambridge. She has experience in teaching English to adult learners at the tertiary level. Her research interests include English language teaching methodologies and translation studies. She aspires to pursue further studies and contribute to the advancement of English language teaching and learning in higher education.

Afraa Hamed AL Hatmi is an Information Resource specialist in the LRC (Learning Resource Center) at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences/ Ibri College branch - the Sultanate of Oman. She holds a Ph.D. in Libraries and Information Science from the International Islamic University Malaysia. She is interested in educational and academic research.

Salim Mohammed Al-Balushi is an English assistant lecturer at the Preparatory Studies Centre at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Ibri – the Sultanate of Oman. He holds a bachelor’s degree in English language and literature as well as a CELTA certificate. His main research interest is in educational methodologies.

Younes Audeh is a part-time lecturer at the Preparatory Studies Center at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences – Ibri College – the Sultanate of Oman. He is an M.A. holder in Applied Linguistics from Indiana University of Pennsylvania -USA. He has been teaching English as an ESL/EFL for a long time. He has taught at a number of colleges and universities in different countries: Jordan, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and the Sultanate of Oman. His research interest is “academic writing”.

Sultan Al Sawafi is an English Lecturer at the Preparatory Studies Centre, University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS), Ibri, Oman. He is currently serving as the Head of the English Language Curriculum and Assessment Unit. He holds a Bachelor’s degree in Education majoring in English Language from Sultan Qaboos University and a Master’s degree in Education in TESOL from the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. With over nine years of teaching experience in Omani schools and more than eleven years at the university level, he has developed extensive expertise in English language teaching, curriculum design, and assessment. His academic and professional interests include foreign language acquisition, teaching methodologies and approaches, and the integration of AI in education.