

From Theory to Practice

Revisiting Gamification

By Pilar Bravo

In recent years, the incorporation of gamification in our English classes and mediations has gained considerable attention as an effective strategy to enhance student engagement and motivation. In the realm of English language teaching, where the development of language skills may sometimes be a challenging endeavor, gamification has emerged as a promising approach to make the learning process more enjoyable and memorable. By integrating game elements and mechanics into the language learning context, educators have been able to create immersive and interactive experiences that foster active participation, collaboration, and intrinsic motivation among other multiple benefits. Let's revisit some principles and implications of gamification at the CCA.



A. The Why and the How of Gamifying the Learning Experience

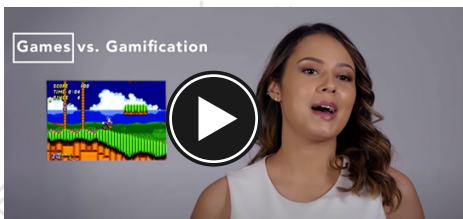
- ✓ Involves the application of game-like mechanics to non-game contexts or purposes, such as English Language learning.
- ✓ Encourages a specific response or behavior.
- ✓ Geared towards the achievement of a particular learning objective.
- ✓ Uses features like points, levels, and rewards to enhance student engagement and motivation.
- ✓ Creates an interactive and enjoyable learning experience similar to a game.
- ✓ Can involve educational games, online platforms, or gamified activities.
- ✓ Can be applied to various language learning aspects like vocabulary, grammar, listening, and speaking.

B. Gamification helps...

- ✓ gain higher levels of engagement and motivation,
- ✓ improve focus,
- ✓ lower the affective filter/anxiety,
- ✓ develop problem-solving skills,
- ✓ strengthen teamwork and collaboration,
- ✓ and obtain instant and personalized feedback.

C. Games Vs. Gamification

There are important differences between games and gamification. Watch the video and identify them.



D. A Few Examples of the Application of Gamification in the EFL Classroom

- ✓ **Vocabulary Challenges:** Create vocabulary challenges where students earn points or badges for correctly identifying and using new words in context. This could involve word quizzes, word-building games, or vocabulary scavenger hunts.
- ✓ **Leaderboards:** Display a leaderboard that ranks students based on their achievements and progress in different language learning tasks. This fosters healthy competition and motivates students to actively participate and improve their skills.
- ✓ **Language Quests:** Design language quests or missions that require students to complete specific language tasks or challenges. For

example, they could solve language puzzles, write a short story, or record a dialogue. Completing each quest successfully earns them points or unlocks new levels.

- ✓ **Interactive Quizzes:** Convert traditional quizzes into interactive and engaging experiences. Use online quiz platforms that provide immediate feedback and rewards for correct answers. Students can compete against each other or try to beat their previous scores.
- ✓ **Virtual Language Olympics:** Organize language Olympics where students participate in various language-related competitions, such as spelling bees, pronunciation challenges, or rapid-fire vocabulary quizzes. Medals or certificates can be awarded to winners.



E. Some Rules of Thumb...

5

Assess the activity: Use self-assessment for learners to feel free to make mistakes and self-correct.

1

Align Gamification with the objectives of the class.

4

Assess the activity: Use teacher and peer-assessment.

2

Challenge students with the activity: It should not be too easy or too difficult.



3

Students need to receive feedback: Given by the activity or by the teacher.

Adapted from: Majumia, J. Koivisto, J. & Hamaria, J. (2018). Gamification of education and learning: A review of empirical literature

Graphic designed by David Cano



How much do you know about...

By Fabian Amaya – EducationUSA Mediator



The EducationUSA Center is a worldwide network dedicated to promoting higher education in the United States. We provide accurate, comprehensive, and up-to-date information about all accredited schools and universities in the country. Our team of professional advisors in international education are committed to maintaining ethical standards and undergo training from the Department of State to ensure their expertise in the U.S. higher education system and the advising process. Below, you will find a diverse range of activities that EducationUSA offers at Centro Colombo Americano in Bogotá as part of our services portfolio.

1. University fairs:

EducationUSA organizes both virtual and in-person fairs for students. Throughout the year, we hold four fairs featuring accredited universities from the United States.

EducationUSA STEM:

Universities offering programs in fields such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Students will have firsthand information about undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs, including application processes and financial aid in areas like nanotechnology, data analysis, software design, among others.

EducationUSA Fair:

Over fifty accredited universities from the United States representing all fields of study and educational levels.

EducationUSA LLM Tour: Master's programs in law.

EducationUSA Community Colleges Fair:

Community colleges offering technical and technological training programs.

2. We also have an Opportunity Fund Program:

The flagship program of the U.S. Department of State supports exceptional students pursuing master's or doctoral studies in the United States. It offers financial assistance to cover initial university application costs, including exam fees, document translations, student visa expenses, and international travel. The program provides comprehensive guidance throughout the application process. For details on annual application calls, please visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/EducationUSAColombia>
or <https://www.instagram.com/educationusacolombia/>



3. Information Sessions:

This is a space where students can learn about the five steps to pursue studies in the United States. The sessions are held monthly. For session schedules, please follow us on

<https://www.facebook.com/EducationUSAColombia>
or <https://www.instagram.com/educationusacolombia/>

4. Personalized Advising:

EducationUSA provides advising services to students interested in intensive English programs, undergraduate, master's, or doctoral programs, as well as short courses at accredited institutions in the United States. To schedule an advising session, please email us at bogota@educationusa.org.

5. Webinars & Facebook Lives:

Don't miss the opportunity to connect directly with representatives from US universities. They'll provide valuable information on academic programs, financial aid, and application requirements. You can ask questions, get guidance, and explore diverse programs at all study levels. Stay updated on event schedules by following EducationUSA on social media.

<https://www.facebook.com/EducationUSAColombia>
or <https://www.instagram.com/educationusacolombia/>

6. Community College Initiative Program:

The Community College Initiative (CCI) Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, allows international students to study at community colleges in the United States. This exchange program promotes academic, vocational, and cultural exchange to foster mutual understanding. It seeks students with strong leadership skills and proficiency in English.

7. EducationUSA Mediations:

Our mediations enhance and diversify the learning experience for Colombo students. They provide enriching content that reflects our identity as a binational cultural center and American Space. These experiences allow students to explore U.S. culture, language, identity, multiculturalism, gender and more while also developing skills necessary for success in academia and the professional world. To book a mediation visit: <https://mediaciones.colombobogota.edu.co/>

8. International Exams

The Colombo Americano Testing Center provides a variety of exams to certify English language proficiency for academic and professional purposes. These exams are aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which describes language skills at different proficiency levels.

For more information visit: <https://www.colombobogota.edu.co/examenes-internacionales/>



The Pride Month at the CCA: Spaces to discuss diversity

By Laura Rico, Study in the USA Coordinator

To celebrate Pride Month, EducationUSA and Universidad Ean collaborated on two events designed to foster conversations around inclusion and diversity. These events aimed to encourage dialogue and promote understanding of these important topics.

One of the events was a workshop titled “Taller de construcción de alas” (Wing Building Workshop). It took place on June 15th, 2023, at Universidad Ean. The objective of the workshop was to construct butterfly wings while providing an opportunity for dialogue on inclusion, diversity, and the sharing of experiences.



The second event was a webinar called “Conversaciones sobre inclusión y buenas prácticas en educación” (Conversations on Inclusion and Best Practices in Education). This webinar was hosted by EducationUSA and Universidad Ean, and the following participants were involved: **Brigitte Baptiste**, President of Universidad Ean; **Fabrina Acosta**, expert in feminism and inclusion; **Daniel Valderrama**, Director of Alumni and Social Responsibility Programs for Centro Colombo Americano and **Diana Patiño**, Higher Education Specialist for the U.S. Embassy in Colombia

During the webinar, the participants explained how their respective projects were related to inclusion and diversity, sharing the challenges they faced and the lessons they learned for the future. They also provided reflections on how each of their projects considered different factors and conditions to promote inclusion through an educational approach.



You can access the webinar through the following link:

<https://fb.watch/LHKEbOgfut/>

General ELT Notes References

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