Gamification: Hype or Useful Teacher Tool?
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https://sites.google.com/site/gamificationforelteachers/

Key concepts
- Gamification isn't about using games; it's about adding game elements to ordinary classroom activities to create a novel feeling and achieve goals, such as enhanced motivation and engagement.
- Teachers already use some game elements. Now we need to add "game thinking" and "players".
- Counting up is more motivating for most learners than counting down (deducting from an initial A+).
- Project-based learning fits very well with gamification: quests, epic challenge, team work.

Manrique (2013a) offers 35 game mechanics, organized by steps in the design process.

The game mechanics most likely to be used by teachers are:
- Tutorial – learning process to develop the player's skills; scaffolding falls into this category.
- Party/Team – we usually think of it as group work.
- Player vs. player – competition opportunity.
- Fixed or variable rewards – given if the player meets a certain condition; some teachers use stars.
- Experience points – giving numerical value for actions. We call them grades. We tend not to give points to a group or for routine activities, but we could.
- Game constraints – rules for the system; classroom routines, requirements, and penalties are here.

Other game mechanics that we can and should try to include:
- Levels – gaining more points leads to more or different rewards. If we changed grading so that learners started from zero points and added more, we would be doing something like this. A very interesting idea!
- Badges – used as part of a reward system, but they look different for different achievements.
- Social area – having a time and place to interact with others; this can be part of Chat systems – communication channels for social interaction.
- Progress display – progress is visual in some way. A chart of reading speed might be one example of this. It’s something that language teaching doesn’t always do well. Learners often don’t know where they are in their move toward language acquisition.
- Free lunch – rewards granted to all based on the achievements of some members of the group; this is used sporadically, but can help build group cohesion.
- Ambassador – expert who serves as a mentor to others.
- Not mentioned by Manrique, but part of other lists: Ownership – feeling that you control something. Having learners publish their work to a broader audience can give this sense, as can giving learners more autonomy in choosing topics and tasks in the classroom.

Project-based and task-based learning incorporate additional game mechanics:
- Quest – a mission with concrete objectives; project- and task-based learning can use this. It’s another way of visualizing progress.
- Epic challenge – the sense of accomplishing something big, usually for experts in a game. Language teachers can approach this by having learners do projects that go outside the classroom and that have a large external audience.
- World – the game world; for teachers, a special "space" for learning.

Final comment: The teacher’s role is to establish the learning environment that is motivating, engaging, and linguistically rich. The teacher needs to build intrinsic motivation, not just extrinsic with points and badges. When learning is motivating, that’s intrinsic motivation. It’s where we want our learners to be.

References
This provides information about limitations to Prensky’s depiction of digital natives and digital immigrants.

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Extra Credits. (2012). *Gamifying education*. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MuDLw1zlc94
   This very fast-paced YouTube video gives reasons why gamifying education could be a good thing.

Juul, J. (2003). *The game, the player, the world: Looking for a heart of gameness*. Available at http://www.jesperjuul.net/text/gameplayerworld/
   Background about using games in language teaching; definitions of games.

   An interesting and useful read for teachers, trainers, and game developers.

   Kelly’s seven real gamification mechanics are another approach to thinking about gamification – they go beyond the usual list of game mechanics and talk about what may be really going on.

   A toolkit that provides 35 mechanics, with explanations. You can download them online or pay for a print copy.

   How to start: With the goal, actions to achieve the goal, players (students, for us), and system (how the whole thing will work). SMA: Storytelling, Mechanics, Aesthetics

   This uses examples from different games to discuss game mechanics that can be useful in gamification.
   Much longer than Kelly (2012b), but gives more information.


   This paper started the discussion of generational differences.

   While not specifically for ELT, this provides an excellent look at creating a game and gamifying.

   More for game creators, this explains 47 elements of game mechanics used by game-maker SCVNGR.