



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Game-Based Learning Strategies in the Classroom

The difference between game-based learning and gamification is real, testable, and usually skipped — this course doesn't skip it.

DURATION 5 days · 25 hours	LANGUAGE English (B1+)	GROUP SIZE Max 20 participants
DAILY SCHEDULE 09:30–15:00 Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch	AUDIENCE All school levels No specific prerequisites — open to all teachers and school staff.	CERTIFICATE Attendance + Europass Mobility
COURSE CENTRES Antalya · İstanbul · İzmir · Mersin · Budapest · Bremen · Rome Dates and cities of the scheduled sessions are listed on the course page.		

01 Overview

A worksheet with points and a leaderboard bolted on isn't game-based learning — it's gamification, and the two get treated as interchangeable in most staff-room conversations about using games in class. That confusion isn't harmless: it's the reason so many "gamified" lessons end up feeling like homework wearing a costume.

In 2003 James Paul Gee catalogued 36 learning principles he found built into well-designed video games. Many of those principles do not depend on a screen. That is the test this week runs: which of them can move into a classroom that has no game engine at all? No programming or game-design experience is needed.

- Monday — you play a short game together, learn the working difference between game-based learning and gamification, and choose three of Gee's principles as your lens.
- Tuesday — you take a gamified lesson apart and rebuild it as a game-based one.
- Wednesday — you look at games that need no screen — cards, dice, puzzles, role-play — and design your first paper prototype for your own curriculum.
- Thursday — colleagues play your prototype as students while you watch, and you revise it from what you see.
- Friday — you play-test again, fit the activity into your unit, and plan how to try it with your own students.

By Friday you have a tested game-based activity for your own subject, a 20-minute first version that is easy to run, and a plan for trying it with your students within your first two weeks back.

02 Course description

Two ideas are often mixed up. Game-based learning uses a game, or something built like one, as the learning activity itself: learners play, and what they do while playing is what they learn. Gamification takes an existing lesson and adds game elements to it — points, badges, a leaderboard. This week uses those as working definitions, and treats gamification as a tool rather than an enemy: points and badges are sometimes useful, and the week compares them with a game-based rebuild so that you can choose.

The lens for the comparison is James Paul Gee's 2003 book *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*, which lists 36 learning principles he found in well-designed video games. Gee was describing how good games teach; he was not writing a rule book for classrooms. So the course does not work through all 36. It picks a short list — for example, learning where mistakes cost little, tasks that stay at the edge of what you can do, and learning by trying something and rethinking it — and asks you to look for those in your own activity. Whether a principle shows up is something you check by watching people play, not something you assume.

Everything is done at a scale a teacher can manage. A first prototype rarely works perfectly, and the week says so: you plan for what to change and what to keep, and you try it with your own students only after colleagues have tested it. Where a screen version would help — a slide deck, a quiz tool such as Kahoot or Socrative, a spreadsheet — you build one round of it on Thursday and check what it needs first: accounts, devices and connection.

03 Learning outcomes

- 01 Explain the difference between game-based learning and gamification, and use a short list of Gee's learning principles to judge a lesson.
- 02 Take a gamified lesson apart and rebuild it as a game-based activity.
- 03 Design a game-based activity for your own curriculum that works without a screen, and adapt it to a screen where that helps.
- 04 Test your activity with colleagues acting as students and revise it from what you observe.
- 05 Plan how to use the activity with your own students, including a shorter first version and what to change if it does not work the first time.

04 Methodology

Play First, Then Name It	Sessions start with a short game played by the whole group, and the group then names what the game made people do — that list is what Gee's principles are checked against.
Take It Apart, Build It Back	Participants pull a gamified lesson apart, rebuild it as a game-based activity, and design their own on paper before any screen is involved.
Tested on Colleagues	Every prototype is played by colleagues acting as students, so the problems show up in the room and not in a classroom.

Day 1

Game-Based Learning, Gamification and Gee's Principles

- **Meet and warm up by playing:** the group runs one short game together, then names what it actually made them do — pay attention, take a risk, try again after failing — and that list is what Gee's principles are checked against later in the day
 - Presentations of participants' schools — a few words each, no slides needed
 - **Two ways to use games in class:** working definitions of game-based learning and gamification
 - James Paul Gee's 2003 catalogue of 36 learning principles found in well-designed video games — where it comes from, and how the week uses a short list of them as a lens
 - **Choosing your lens:** three principles you want to see in your own lesson, and one topic from your curriculum
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Day 2

Gamification Taken Apart

- **Warm-up in new pairs:** each participant describes a game their own students already play outside school, and the pair decides what, if anything, it teaches
 - **Taking a gamified lesson apart:** what it keeps from a game, and which of your three principles it leaves out
 - **Rebuilding it as a game-based activity:** a goal, rules, feedback, and a safe way to fail
 - **Points, badges and leaderboards as a tool:** when they help and when they get in the way
 - **Your before-and-after pair:** one gamified lesson and its game-based rebuild
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Day 3

Games Without Screens

- **Real examples of game-based activities:** card and dice mechanics, puzzle and escape-room formats, role-play, quiz races
 - **Where creativity enters:** students inventing questions, characters or rules
 - Designing your own paper prototype from your topic and your three principles, with a partner who plays it and questions it as you go
 - **Writing the rules on one page:** goal, turns, feedback, and what happens when a player fails
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Day 4

Testing and Revising

- **Play-testing your prototype:** colleagues play as students while you watch and do not help
- **What to look for:** where players got stuck, got bored or found a shortcut, and which of your principles showed up
- Revising your activity from what you observed
- Building a screen version of one round of your activity, if that helps: a slide deck, a quiz tool such as Kahoot or Socrative, or a spreadsheet — and checking what it needs first (accounts, devices, connection)

Day 5

Your Activity in Your Curriculum

- A second play-test round in small groups, with feedback against your three principles: which showed up, which did not, and what to change
- **Fitting the activity into your unit:** where it goes, how long it takes, and a 20-minute first version
- **If it does not work the first time:** what to change and what to keep
- Your plan for trying it with your own students in the first two weeks back
- Reflection and self-assessment
- Course evaluation
- Issuance of the Certificate of Attendance

PLEASE NOTE

Sessions run from 09:30 to 15:00, Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch. Timings can shift a little to suit the venue and the group.

Course activities and content may vary depending on participants' needs and the trainer leading the session; any changes are at the trainer's discretion. If there is a specific topic you would like included, please let us know — content-related requests must reach us at least 3 weeks before the course start date so we can confirm them in time.

06 Materials

- Worked on during the week: a short list of James Paul Gee's learning principles used as a lens, paper prototypes built with card, dice, puzzle and role-play mechanics, and, only if it helps, one round of your activity in a screen tool such as Kahoot or Socrative.

07 How to prepare

- Nothing needs to be prepared in advance: you choose one topic from your own curriculum on Monday.
- A laptop is useful on Thursday if you want to build a screen version of one round of your activity; everything else in the week works on paper.
- No programming or game-design experience is needed.

08 After the course

- Participants will receive their Certificate of Attendance and the co-signed Europass Mobility document.
- Participants will complete a general course evaluation and event survey.
- Participants will receive course materials, videos, photos, and PDF documents in both digital and print formats.
- Follow-up support: self-evaluation materials are provided. Depending on the group, an email group may be set up so that participants can keep exchanging ideas.

09 Why this is Erasmus+ eligible

The Erasmus+ Programme Guide names digital transformation as a horizontal priority, stating that "the Erasmus+ programme plays a key role in supporting citizens of all ages in acquiring the digital skills and competences they need to live, learn, work, exercise their rights, be informed, access online services, communicate, critically consume, create and disseminate digital education content" (Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2026, Part A – Priorities of the Erasmus+ Programme, p. 8).

10 What the course fee covers

INCLUDED IN THE COURSE FEE

- 25 hours of training and course materials
- Certificate of Attendance + Europass support
- On-site local support throughout the week

ARRANGED SEPARATELY BY THE PARTICIPANT

- Travel to the host city — invitation letter on request
- Accommodation — we share recommended options
- Travel & health insurance

ISSUED BY

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COURSE PAGE

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ABOUT ERASMUS MOBILITY ACADEMY

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