

**Embrace Failure, Emphasize Practice:  
Bringing Gamification into the Language Classroom**

Erica Swanfeldt-Stout

Graduate Research Assistant, English Department

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Gamification incentivizes individual learning, promotes greater learner autonomy, and places an emphasis on objective completion by making learning engaging and relevant for students.

Gamification is the application of game design elements in non-game contexts with the aim of making something ordinary both fun and rewarding. Components of gamification include accumulative grading, do overs, badges, levels, and sometimes leaderboards. In the classroom, this approach provides a learning environment built to use specific calibration that bridges the gap between what the student knows and what they need to learn. Beyond maintaining the zone of proximal development, this approach fosters persistence by embracing failure. Students are given the chance to redo tasks, thereby turning a failed attempt into an opportunity for success by examining what went wrong and attempting the task again. This is especially important in language classrooms where students' uptake of the target language is shown to be facilitated by their own language production, regardless of immediate accuracy, because mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities. Beyond the classroom, this approach offers a real-world application to problem-solving and promotes practice as a learning exercise.