

# The role of board games in EFL teaching to Young learners.

Final dissertation.

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## Abstract

This study is an attempt to demonstrate that board games are a useful tool for working with important aspects such as pronunciation in classrooms where English is the vehicular language. It focuses in why and how should games be used as a teaching method for maximizing the positive results on language learning. Furthermore, this essay gives different game categories and it provides an example of one game per category that becomes good for language teaching.

The data is collected from surveys given to the teachers as well as evaluation worksheets answered by young learners before and after playing different board games. Moreover, children's motivation and learning style is analysed through grids while they play board games.

**Keywords:** Board games, young learners, study and English.

A través d'aquest estudi es vol demostrar que els jocs de taula són una eina útil per treballar aspectes tant importants com la pronunciació en aules on s'imparteixen classes de llengua anglesa. Es centra en perquè els jocs s'haurien d'utilitzar com a mètode d'ensenyament i en com aconseguir el major nombre de resultats positius en l'aprenentatge d'idiomes. A més, aquest assaig ofereix diferents categories de jocs i proporciona un exemple de joc per cada categoria que esdevingui bo per l'ensenyament d'idiomes.

Les dades recollides s'han extret de qüestionaris entregats als mestres així com també de proves d'avaluació de coneixements realitzades pels infants abans i després de treballar amb jocs de taula. A més a més, la motivació i el ritme d'aprenentatge dels infants seran avaluats a través de graelles mentre participin en els jocs de taula.

**Paraules clau:** Jocs de taula, infants, estudi i llengua anglesa.

## 1. Introduction

Everyone loves playing when they are young or old. From early ages playing is an important part of most human lives and is also the core of their life's development. Many people begin playing when they are in their childhood and because they develop some skills in their childhood they keep playing while the nature of their game grows and mature changes. At the age of 6 to 12 years old, children's game preferences change because they are more organized and begin including some variations of rules and a specific purpose in their games.

While playing, most of the game participants are forced to communicate with each other. The communication needs during some casual games and at the same time configuration games encourage students not being afraid when speaking, which develops their fluency and it is a valuable communicative ability as well. There is also an important fact to consider, which is the national foreign language curriculum, this curriculum emphasizes the importance of language learning and this includes the importance of communication.

In consequence, it is important to make teachers create a positive learning environment through trying to make students interested in culture and foreign language, in order to reach a successful process of language learning.

Not only games help to achieve those goals but also teachers must help when meeting the requirement of the curriculum and at the same time acting as a guide when that process takes place.

## 2. Theoretical basis

### 2.1 Background of learning based in games.

The teaching methods have changed a lot over the pass of the years. Once it was all about learners being passive and listening in the classroom, but today learners are usually much more active in the classroom, and what better way to be active than by playing games (Steve Sugar.1998).

This learning is classified as a branch of games that deals with learning objectives in a multidisciplinary way. These objectives are designed to balance classrooms, giving innovative strategies that enhance learner-player capacity and at the same time allow problems to be solved from their reality.

There are some theories that states that humans have eight intelligences, Howard Gardner (2006) claims that when we are exploring a certain topic in school it should, be approached in 6 ways in order to maximize the chances of reaching all students in the classroom. "The personal way", whose ultimate goal is seeing if it's possible to approach a specific topic by using, for example, role play, or other interactions (Gardner.2006.p 142).

Games deserve a place in classrooms where foreign language lessons are taught for a variety of reasons, on the one hand, because they are fun for most children, which is important because they help activating those students who easily disconnect because of their low interest in the lesson. Keeping students attentive to their lessons is vital because teachers cannot teach something if students are not part of the learning process.

On the other hand, one of the most important roles in games in general is building interpersonal relationships and including and putting everyone on the same level. Playing in the classroom usually creates a positive atmosphere where due to the rules we should follow in the game we can maintain a really exciting learning environment.

In this project learning is based on the use of educational games to improve the motivation and acquisition of knowledge and skills by students in their learning process. In particular, it refers to digital or computer games, but also traditional games, to support education, learning and assessment. It is considered an effective way to motivate students and make them participate in active learning experiences.

Being able to use a language in real situations, such as when we are in a foreign country, is one of the most important reasons when learning a new language, especially because we want to communicate with the people from that country. Due to games we can practice these skills to recreate situations like the ones mentioned above. In addition, we can achieve important roles for our students and even let them to lead the activity by themselves, so they can work on their responsibility and at the same time their self-confidence.

Learning based in games is exposed as an approach for teaching where students develop the relevant aspects of games from the incorporation of a learning document designed by educators. Teachers and students work together to add depth and perspective to the game interaction experience. These advances have shaped a new conception of what educational experiences are by enabling learning through games, including interactive games.

Through games we can divide large groups into small groups so that, for instance, those children who are more shy about activities can feel more confident about talking to a smaller audience and can practice oral communication. Apart from this, it is also easy to forget shyness because the atmosphere in games is very different from the atmosphere in classroom activities or exams for example.

One of the most important points of games in general is that they allow you to teach different contents of subjects other than languages, being able to use these teaching strategies at all ages and using other methodologies at the same time.

Last but not least, the fact that there are children who cannot play due to lack of free time is one of the reasons why games are held in the classroom. The changes that are happening in the society we live in make boys and girls spend more time at home playing video games and using virtual tools than playing board games that can improve relationships between people, for instance, the use of television, any screen takes us more free time now than before. This fact will have consequences later, because of the lack of movement (also note that not all games in classroom are physical) children can lead to health problems in a future.

## 2.2 Using board games for teaching English

To reach a meaningful learning and make our students take benefits from learning a foreign language such as English, educators should encourage the use of board games to teach and learn English in schools.

We must be careful with the use of board games as we sometimes stay away from the real goal of having fun by starting a competition where someone begins to lack respect to their teammates with the aim of win. It is important that the teacher is aware of the progress of the game in order to help resolving any conflicts that arise. We also need to make sure that everyone has a positive experience so they want to repeat it another day, this can take place by looking for games that most class members will like, always offering variety, balancing fun and challenges at the same time.

Sometimes board games are described or viewed as an activity with rules to follow as well as goals as mentioned by Rixon, Flavell and Vincent (1991) but what is really difficult to see is that they are not just for fun or spending time, they are also an excellent tool that motivates children to learn English or any other language.

However, according to the General Education Curriculum updated in 2019 by the Educational Department, games (including board games) are one of the main pillars of teaching in schools because they motivate children and they generate a context in which languages are learned, which gives meaning to the learning through interesting activities.

Through tools such as board games we can also work on several areas at the same time, because the contents that revolve around each of the games deal not only with English but also with topics such as mathematics or natural and social sciences.

However, it is also worth noting that games make new languages easier to be acquired, especially for the younger collective who need encouragement to gain new knowledge as emphasized by Wright (2006), who also mentions that " games encourage students to direct their energy toward language learning, providing them with meaningful context" (p. 39). In addition, a board game encourages students to use the language so they can work creatively.

To sum up, Wright (2006) argues that through games it is possible for students to consistently practice their language skills using communication with other players that are participating in the board game as well. In the same line, board games create a



friendly and supportive learning environment that avoids frustrating experiences around the target language.

It should also be emphasized that with board games we work on interpersonal relationships and cooperation, which are very important values in schools today with which we can get children to work together more efficiently.

There are some features in games that should be in most of them despite the fact that we make some modifications to be more funny or interesting. Some of these features, such as repetition, should be common for games prepared for children from 6 to 8 years old. Furthermore, they can't neither have too many rules nor spend the same time such as the older ones. If it is a group of older students, such as 10-12 years old, there may be more rules than those already in the board game to make it more interesting and in addition we can emphasize teamwork.

Board games can be classified into competitive games and cooperative games, in the first case the emphasis is on winning or losing and can make the players try their best to win and in the case of cooperatives the teamwork is emphasized and they end up leading to better outcomes in learning processes.

However, despite many of the things mentioned above, there are educators who despise board games, see them as a waste of time and constantly question them saying they are only for disconnecting and hanging out, but not as something useful for deep in some contents and language.

## 2.3 Advantages and disadvantages of using Board games

When we talk about pros and cons of board games we are not only talking about fun and entertainment but we are also talking about teaching pedagogical values. Board games motivate children and help them reducing stress, in addition, encouraging communication while hardworking when learning a new language. Using board games has advantages but it also has some disadvantages.

### **Advantages**

On the one hand, these are several benefits of using board games in foreign language teaching:

- They help to work some specific structures and contents.
- They work as reinforcement of the contents worked in the classroom with other different activities.
- They ensure that all students participate in the session.
- All students, both good and low level English learners can participate in the board game without any problems, there are games adapted for everyone.
- They offer instructions and helps the teacher who directs the class.
- They contribute to healthy competition while working against frustration to lose.
- They cover all areas of knowledge other than English.

### **Disadvantages**

On the other hand, the disadvantages or cons about using board games in language teaching are the next:

- These tools require a lot of time to use them.
- Sometimes only a certain number of people can play the board game.
- Students can be very competitive against others and start conflicts depending on the game.
- Sometimes there is an age limit.

However, the disadvantages are not a problem because the use of board games is always useful for children when learning something new.

## 2.4 Social and cognitive skills developed through Board games

Board games play an important role in teaching, especially as they are useful for working on social and cognitive skills, they work and reinforce contents such as listening, speaking, reading and writing which work on a very different way from the one we are used to. By encouraging the use of tools like these, children will use home-like games as well as they will therefore subconsciously continue to improve their knowledge. Despite research that documents the diversity of ways children learn and express themselves, primary education has become more focused on addressing early learning standards than ever before (Collins, K. M., 2011; Griess, C. J., et al, 2011; Carithers, K., et al, 2011; Michaelis Castillo, D., et al, 2011).

In the same way, some of the social skills that are put into practice in most of board games (luckily we have a lot of very different games) are tolerance to frustration, teamwork and empathy. Apart from social skills, we also have the cognitive skills which, if reinforced, will be very useful for children's learning progress, these skills are reasoning, concentration, processing speed and quickly decision-making.

Regarding to the contents, we have board games to work with all of them in different ways:

### **Writing**

In case of writing, content that has to be worked a lot in classrooms and acquired slowly and is usually a difficult and boring process for some children, it can fit perfectly in board games as we provide children reasons to write and to see a utility in it. For instance, any word-formation game with cards or some pieces would be useful for working on writing in a fun way, such as scrabble game.

### **Listening**

Board games are also a good way to train your listening skills in a very interesting way, for instance those games in which there is an interlocutor who has a list of words and the players involved in the game have to point out the elements or the answer to a question that the interlocutor mentions on a board with drawings and paintings. An example of such games is questioning.

## **Speaking**

One of the most important points in the knowledge of a language is the communication or speaking, in order to work with it, board games are a very useful tool but the most important point here is the teacher using English as the vehicular language in front of the rest of the group because if the game is in English but we speak and translate it into our language, it will lose much effectiveness because they will also speak in a different language than English. Apart from that, most board games that work on oral communication emphasize fluency rather than accuracy, a very important skill especially outside of classrooms.

## **Reading**

It is extremely important that teachers have tools to work on reading skills and it will be better if they help keeping topics in the classroom interesting, for example through board games, because reading is vital for writing in a correct way. These types of contents are most often linked to writing games and apart from that, most of English board games promote reading in one way or another.

## **2.5 Communicative skills**

The ability of communication between students is the most important point if we are working through board games when learning new languages. To achieve a good level of this ability, students must know the forms and meanings of words (grammatical aspect). Otherwise, the goal when playing games which work on communicative skills is fluency (Hadfield. 1999. p. 8).

Larsen- Freeman (2000) states that in this teaching approach grammar (communicative language learning) is taught as a means to help learners convey their intended meaning appropriately. The teaching of grammar can be managed either deductively or inductively but focuses on meanings and functions of forms in situational context and the roles of the interlocutors.

## 2.6 Motivation through the use of Board games

One of the best solutions to motivate students when learning English is board games, because most of them are fun, challenging and interesting. These not only offer opportunities to express emotions and feelings to the most shy students but also students forget their fear and gain interest when they start playing.

There are three generic types of motivation in board games:

- Extrinsic motivation: This motivation takes place especially when the participants have the desire to complete the game in order to obtain an expected reward.
- Intrinsic motivation: Intrinsic motivation derives from an interest in the board game.
- Achievement motivation: This motivation is based on doing better than other participants.

On the one hand, Brown (2007) stated that intrinsic motivation is an issue since learners may have difficulties when seeing the relevance of English. As a result, low motivation comes from learning under a discouraging climate and using board games is a solution for an insufficient language input in EFL classrooms as well as to generate a new climate.

On the other hand, Hinebaugh, J. P. (2009) mentioned that pressure or tension is a negative predictor of motivation and because of that, high scores may imply impeding motivation. In consequence, we should encourage children to help and interact with their classmates to promote peer assistance, motivation and also reduce pressure when using these kind of games.

## 3. Practical Application

### 3.1 Aim and hypothesis

The aim of this study is to research on the influence of board games on young English learners and to what extent they may promote genuine communication in a EFL primary classroom. Nevertheless, this study examines whether communicative skills and motivation can be improved through the use of board game activities for language learning.

While there are some statements that claim that board games are useful for teaching to our young learners (Rixon, 1991; Flavell, et al, 1991; Vincent, et al, 1991;) I have formulated my hypothesis that states that teachers use board games only those times where they don't have any plans for the classroom and they may use them just as a time filler. Furthermore, I could add to my hypothesis the fact that teachers think they are wasting time when using board game at the class.

Due to the use of the questionnaires and the grids I have prepared for the practical approach I will see whether my hypothesis is right or wrong.

Bearing in mind that the goal of this project is to observe the influence of board games in EFL classrooms, a questionnaire has been sent to the English teachers from a German school in order to look at their ways of working, opinions and beliefs regarding to these kind of games. Furthermore, some activities about board games have been carried out with a classroom from the 6th grade.

Regarding to the information given previously, the aims of this research are those that fit the best as well as they could help to carry out the investigation about board games. These aims are the following:

#### **Aims**

1. Prepare a number of board games for EFL learning.
2. Carry out several class observations in a primary school class when using board games.
3. Analyse children's progress and motivation before and after introducing board games.
4. Design some board games for using them in an EFL classroom.

## **3.2 Methodology**

When someone carries out a research work project is necessary to consider the methods, techniques and instruments to ensure the basic phase of the research experience. While the method I have used represents the way forward in the investigation, the technique constitutes how to work in that way.

All researchers should consider that the selections and elaborations of techniques and instruments are essential at the stage of gathering information in the investigative processes.

It is important to find the required information that will respond to the problem proposed before. Besides, those techniques are useful ways of gathering and measuring information related to variables of interest.

I will apply those methods into my study working basically through observation to get quantitative results by gathering information with questionnaires sent to the teachers and looking at children's behavior when they carry out some prepared activities and board games as well.

### **3.2.1 Research**

When the research of this project takes place, information will be gathered by the use of grids where different kind of features about board games are written on it. Some board games have been carried out at classroom while the information is gathered and they can receive help with some issues as well.

The practical approach is the part where players advance in game dynamics by demonstrating skills, knowledge and competencies and show the extent of their learning goals by using these kind of tools.

### **3.2.2 Group of participants**

Albertus Magnus Gymnasium is a High school from Cologne (Germany) that has 850 pupils and 85 teachers and the students of this school are from 10 to 18 years old (5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> year) because elementary school in Germany finishes at the fourth grade as opposed to Spain.

On the one hand, the group of participants who answered the questionnaires that I prepared in my final essay are twelve English teachers from Albertus Magnus

Gymnasium, most of them are Spanish teachers as well so they can use those tools for teaching Spanish because it's also a foreign language there (see appendices 7.1 and 7.2).

On the other hand, the participants that took part in my second part of my research where I wanted to evaluate motivation and learning through the use of board games are the children from the sixth grade (ten to twelve years old) from the same school. I separated them into four different groups which I took five members from one of those groups to evaluate them while the lesson was going on.

### **3.2.3 Research instrument**

In this part of my study the instruments used to carry out this project will be shared. These instruments are the questionnaires I sent to the twelve English teachers from AMG school and the grids for evaluating children's motivation and learning style. While a questionnaire is a method which main purpose is to gather information from a group of people about some topics a grid is also a research with some blank spaces where I can fill information about something. Both methods are useful instruments for collecting data, one from a large group of people and the other from a short range.

#### Questionnaires

For the questionnaires, I have prepared a series of questions related to board games linked to foreign language board games which I have been able to observe their use in classrooms in the case of Albertus Magnus Gymnasium. I prepared those questions by myself when looking at the contents from the theoretical approach of this research project. In addition, I have chosen these questions because they fill in what I am looking for, the role of board games in EFL teaching to young learners.

Nevertheless, these questions have close answers where teachers have four options in most of them. Through the use of each question I can gather information from different topics related to board games such as which kind of games do teachers use, how many times do they use board games at their classrooms and in which ways do they think board games are useful for. The questions I asked were the following:



How often do you play board games in a week?

- Never
- 1 or 2 times per week
- 3 or 4 times per week
- More than 4 times

In case that you play board games, with who do you use to play them?

- Family
- Friends
- Both

Which genre of board games do you most likely play?

- Competitive games (Monopoly, goose game...)
- Educational games (for instance time's up or trivial)
- Both

Do you think that board games can be a useful tool for learning a foreign language?

- Yes
- No

Which of the following social skills do you think that can be worked through these kinds of games?  
(more than one option is possible)

- Tolerance to frustration
- Emotional management
- Teamwork
- Emotional expression
- Empathy
- Board games are not useful for social skills
- Other...

Which of the following contents do you think that are easy to work with these tools? (more than one option is possible)

- Oral communication
- Listening
- Knowledge of the language
- Reading
- Board games are not useful for working with English contents
- Other...

Which of the following cognitive skills do you think that fits the best with the idea of teaching with board games? (more than one option is possible)

- Reasoning
- Sustained attention
- Concentration
- Short-term memory
- Processing speed
- Decision making
- Board games are not useful for working with cognitive skills
- Other...

Do you use board games in English Lessons?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

If the answer was "yes", how often do you teach through those tools in classroom?

- Once per year
- Once per month
- 1 or more times per week
- Every day

Do you have a "favourite" game for teaching English? Which one?

Long-answer text

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How much time do you spend when you play a board game with your classroom?

- The whole session
- 20 to 40 minutes
- 5 to 20 minutes
- I don't play board games in EFL classrooms

Do you think that board games are a multidisciplinary tool? (tool which can be used for teaching science, for example, while teaching a foreign language)

- Yes
- No

### Grids

It is worth noting that the aspects I have chosen to appear on the grids are those that I considered necessary to assess the motivation and learning style of boys and girls when using board games. Apart from that, they are related to sections where I talk about these same aspects in the theoretical part, so they are easier to link to my study. Once the aspects have been selected, I have decided that there will be three different gradations as well as a section of observations so that the evaluation of each of the points is very clear.

The section called excellent refers to "a lot", while the section of good refers to "neither little nor a lot" and the section of poor refers to "a little". On the other hand, the data I extract from these grids serves me to be able to draw more or less clear conclusions about what effects board games have when working with English (see *Grid 3.1*).

Grid 3.1

<b>MOTIVATION AND LEARNING STYLE EVALUATION GRID</b>				
<b>Participant:</b>				
Aspects to be evaluated	Excelent	Good	Poor	Observations
He/She shows interest in learning				
He/She makes an effort to participate in every part of the game				
He/she shows difficulties while executing the different tasks				
He/She pays attention to teacher explanations				
He/She frequently thinks that he or she is doing everything in the wrong way				
He/She has doubts in each step of the game				
He/She plays by the wish of learning more and being satisfied for his or her progress				
He/She works together and helps each other when someone needs him/her				
He/She plays with the wish to win against the other players				
He/She shows respect to each participant in the game				
He/She respects the rules of the game				
<b>NON-MENTIONED ASPECTS</b>				

In order to carry out the second part of the practical application, I prepared some games that are the following:

### **BOARD GAMES**

The first idea was to work on the present perfect simple and continuous, giving some exercises previously about the topic without having worked anything before. Then using the game to learn how to solve similar exercises so that later on, you could correctly answer and improve the results obtained from a similar exercise to the one from the initial model.

However, I had to work differently because I had to adapt to what I was allowed to do at the school and what I was not allowed to do. Finally I did it differently and presented this part of the project with different kind of games where they worked on many contents, putting some skills into practice. Later on, they could prepare their own games and teach them as a useful tool for working the foreign language (see appendix 7.1 and 7.3).

One of the disadvantages is that during those activities they were speaking in German so they could disrespect others or make some comments without my supervision because I cannot speak and understand German properly.

The games I showed and the structure I followed are the following, the first one is handmade and the second one already exists but has some changes:

#### **Fill in the chart**

The idea of this game comes from the Fill in the chart games where the participants have to fill in a chart with some names about food, animals, countries and cities that begin with certain letters. I changed this game including extra things and I improved it into a board game where we have all squares with some letters in every one and each time one player lands on a square that player has to draw a card with the same letter of the square. Then, that player must read it loud, asking the question that is written on the card.

**Objective/s:** This game has two objectives. The first one, is to get students to practice their reading skills by reading aloud a short text and asking questions to another player. The second one is to get the students to practice listening, because they need to listen carefully so that they can answer the question in the correct way. Furthermore, other skills that this game puts in practise are memory and thinking.

**Time:** On the one hand, we must assume that this game will be carried out during a whole lesson, on the other hand, the time depends on the participants that are in each group.

**Age:** From ten to twelve years old but it could be adapted to older or younger groups if we change its content and the structure of the answers.

**Preparation:** To be sure that all students can play several turns during the game, and with this to maximize their reading and listening practice, the best way would be to divide the whole classroom into different groups, having all groups playing separately and having a maximum of five players for each group as well.

**How to play:** One player starts throwing the dice and moving his piece. and If the token lands on a square with a letter, the player sitting to his right draws a card with that letter and asks him the question that appears on the card. If the player that is moving can't answer the question correctly, he must return to the square he comes from, but if he answers correctly, he must remain in that square. Each player can only manages to roll the dice once during each round. There are other kind of squares in the game such as "roll the dice again" or "lose one round", those rules must be followed when playing the game. To end with it, players must finish in the last square not exceeding the number of squares by throwing the dice, otherwise they will have to move backwards. The player who reaches first the last square wins the game. Through this board game we can work with cognitive and social skills as well as some English contents at the same time, these are the following:

**Cognitive skills:** Concentration, short-term memory and processing speed.

**Social skills:** Tolerance to frustration and emotional management.

**Content in Language:** Speaking, listening and reading.

### Time's up

Each player will have 10 cards, and then all players must discard two cards. No one should see the word that appears in each card. The game is played by teams and one of the players of those teams will have to give some clues to his or her team for 30 seconds while the team tries to guess what are they talking about. The player who gives the description rotates and the team which has more cards guessed correctly at the end of the game will win.

**Time:** To play this game we need the whole English lesson.

**Age:** From eight to twelve years old and it can be adapted for older groups increasing the difficulty.

**How to play:** The game consists in three rounds: in the first round they have to describe something that appears in the cards without saying the word. In the second round, only one word can be said to help your group when guessing, which implies a great abstraction. The last round must be played through mimic so they can't talk. Through this board game we can work with cognitive and social skills as well as some English contents at the same time, these are the following:

**Cognitive skills:** reasoning, concentration, short-term memory, decision making and processing speed.

**Social skills:** tolerance to frustration, emotional management, teamwork.

**Content in Language:** Oral communication: speaking and listening, written communication: reading, knowledge of the language

### 3.2.4 Data analysis

On the one hand, in order to analyze the results from the questionnaires, I grouped the answers in different points where one of the points is related to general aspects such as the role of board games in English classrooms and how many times do they use board games. However, another point is the positive and negative facts about using board games at the English class and which things are worth to work with these tools.

Moreover, the collected data from the questionnaires is analyzed by myself and presented in form of percentages or bar charts. Observation uses to be qualitative but in my project it has become quantitative in order to allow me for analyzing the results.

On the other hand, the results from the grids are analyzed in two separated points, while the aspects related to motivation are taken in one of the points, those aspects related to learning style are mentioned and get in depth in the other part as well as the gathered information is transformed through the grids.

## 4. Discussion and results

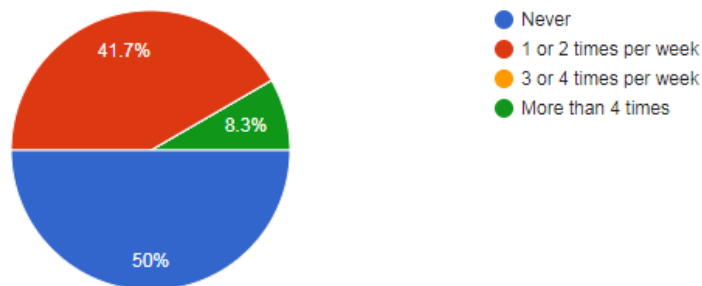
First of all, I will explain the part of the research from the teacher's questionnaire that is focused on the results presented in bar charts and percentages and then I will focus on the results of the grids taken from the activities carried out with the students.

### 4.1 Questionnaires, results and discussion

Due to the results obtained through the responses of the twelve teachers from Albertus Magnus Gymnasium who were sent the questionnaires, I have noticed that they are probably not using the board games as a learning tool as I expected them to be. This is because of the answers from the graphics 4.1, because they don't use to play board games during the week, 4.2 because I thought they were more used to play educational games and in case of the graphics 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 we can see that they are not used to use board games at their classrooms. At least all the English teachers from AMG think board games are a useful tool for language teaching (see graphic 4.6).

How often do you play board games in a week?

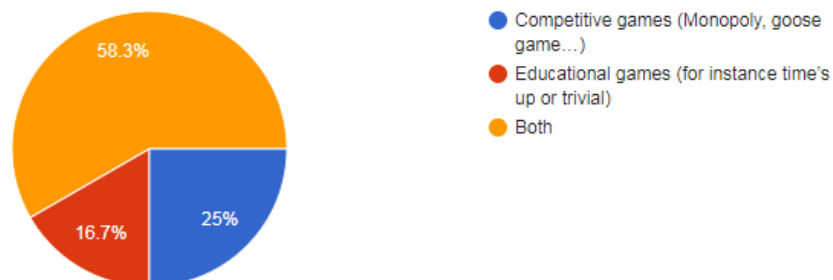
12 responses



Graphic 4.1

Which genre of board games do you most likely play?

12 responses

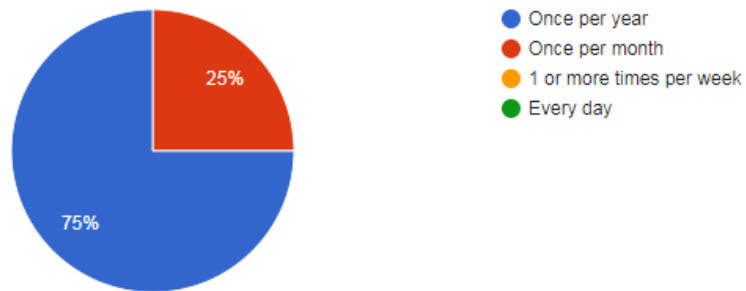


Graphic 4.2



If the answer was “yes”, how often do you teach through those tools in classroom?

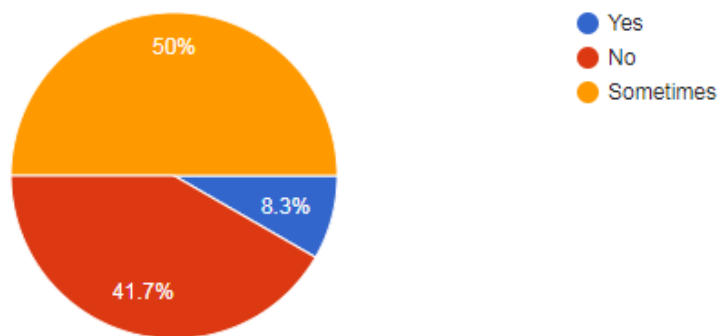
8 responses



Graphic 4.3

Do you use board games in English Lessons?

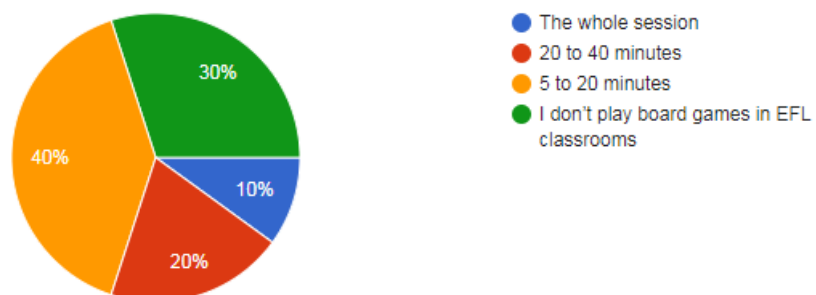
12 responses



Graphic 4.4

How much time do you spend when you play a board game with your classroom?

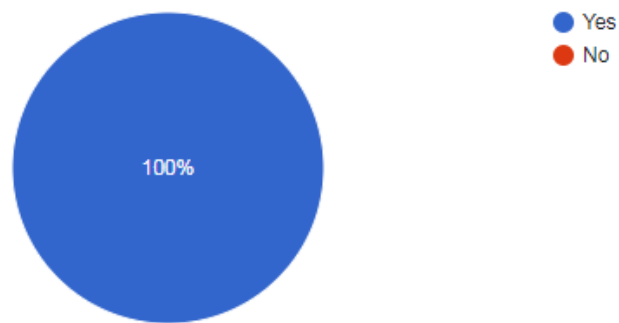
10 responses



Graphic 4.5

Do you think that board games can be a useful tool for learning a foreign language?

12 responses

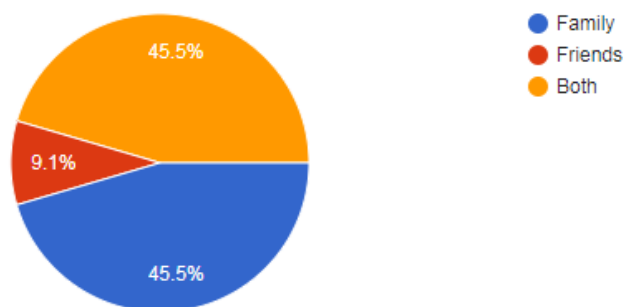


Graphic 4.6

Furthermore, analysing graphic number 4.7 I find that board games are more used to play with family and friends outside of the professional sphere (having fun is one of the main purposes) than in the classroom, probably because the school where the questionnaires have been sent are taught only for the 5th and 6th grades of primary, all secondary and high school (in Germany from the 5th on, they take already part in high school).

In case that you play board games, with who do you use to play them?

11 responses

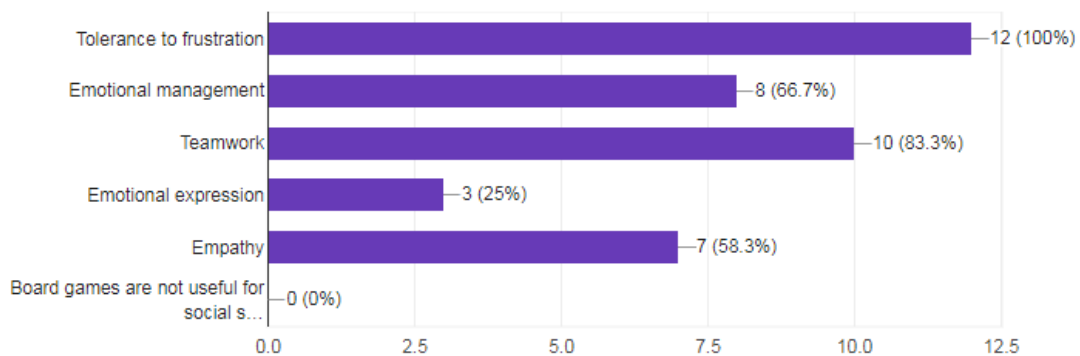


Graphic 4.7

Nevertheless, regarding to the skills and contents that can be worked on through board games, it is good to see that graphics 4.8, 4.10 and 4.11 show that teachers think these kind of games are suitable for work on frustration tolerance or other kind of skills, as they are one of the most appropriate tools for this task, because many times you can become the winner or the loser. However, the range of answers also depends on what people know about different board games or not, a teacher who often uses them in the classroom will have more options to work on different skills than others that use the same game again and again .

Which of the following social skills do you think that can be worked through these kinds of games? (more than one option is possible)

12 responses



Graphic 4.8

Another important point to note is that with answers like this I can get new proposals about other board games that I was completely unfamiliar with so they could be useful in my future classroom , such as the Taboo game given in the graphic 4.9.

Do you have a "favourite" game for teaching English? Which one?

4 responses

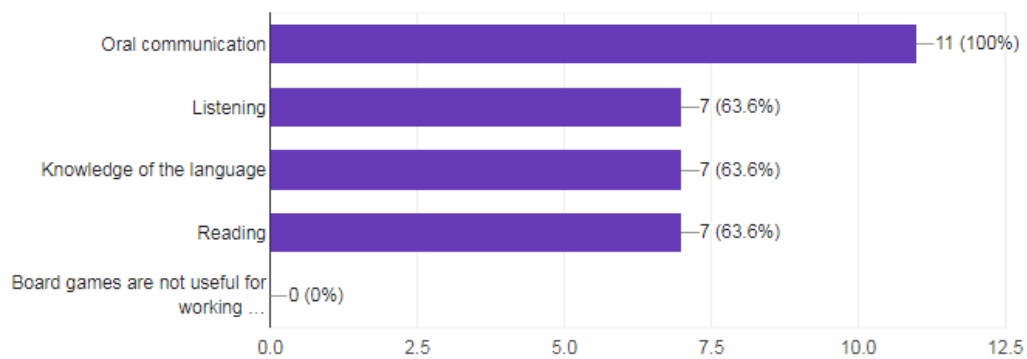
- A vocabulary game (to be played with a partner), I use it several times per year.
- Rummy
- No, I don't.
- Who is it, Tabu

Graphic 4.9

The range of answers is not much varied and I cannot rely on these answers to take clear conclusions, because in a different school or in a different country such as Germany this type of tool is not as powerful as, for example, in other places such as the Catalan schools. For instance, in English academies they are most often used to teach English through board games instead of schools.

Which of the following contents do you think that are easy to work with these tools? (more than one option is possible)

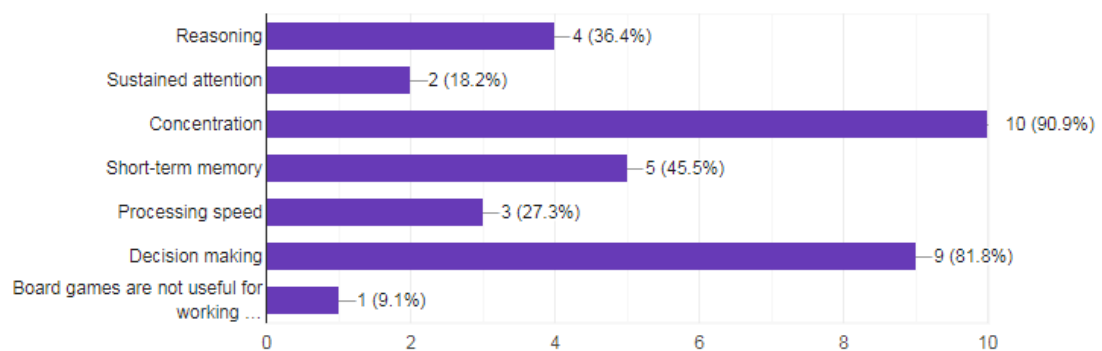
11 responses



Graphic 4.10

Which of the following cognitive skills do you think that fits the best with the idea of teaching with board games? (more than one option is possible)

11 responses

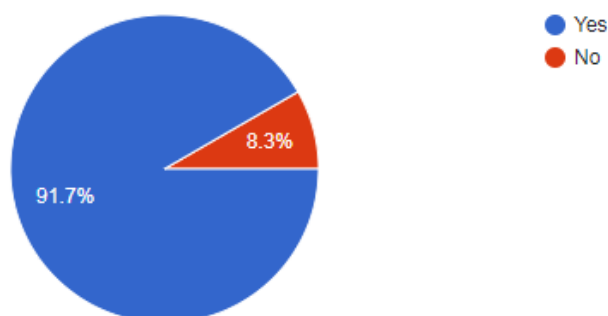


Graphic 4.11

Last but not least, we note that almost 100% of the teachers interviewed agree that board games are a good teaching and multidisciplinary tool that can be used in almost any subject (see graphic 4.12).

Do you think that board games are a multidisciplinary tool? (tool which can be used for teaching science, for example, while teaching a foreign language)

12 responses



Graphic 4.12

## 4.2 Evaluation grids, results and discussion

The results that have been shown in the tables above were obtained through English lessons with one of the groups from the 6th grade at Albertus Magnus Gymnasium. I presented some kind of board games related to different contents and while they were doing those activities in groups I chose five members from one of the groups to track everything they did and how they did it. While I was filling the grids I had teachers in the classroom helping me and directing the activity with previous instructions that I had given them.

What is especially noticeable is that I had five very different pupils in the way they acted, from very passive participants and with no desire to take part in the activities such as the participant from the grid 4.5 to energetic participants that wanted to help everyone and enjoy every game such as those from the grids 4.3 and 4.4. To sum up, in the grid number 4.1, we have a participant who wanted to follow the activities but hard to keep up with especially because of her problems of communication and last but not least, those participants who were really good but also very competitive against the rest of their classmates, for instance the participants from the grids 4.1 and 4.2.

Grid 4.1

MOTIVATION AND LEARNING STYLE EVALUATION GRID				
Participant 1				
Aspects to be evaluated	Excelent	Good	Poor	Observations
He/She shows interest in learning	X			
He/She makes an effort to participate in every part of the game	X			
He/she shows difficulties while executing the different tasks		X		
He/She pays attention to teacher explanations	X			
He/She frequently thinks that he or she is doing everything in the wrong way		X		
He/She has doubts in each step of the game			X	
He/She plays by the wish of learning more and being satisfied for his or her progress	X			
He/She works together and helps each other when someone needs him/her			X	The participant tries to direct the group and to be the leader the whole time.
He/She plays with the wish to win against the other players	X			
He/She shows respect to each participant in the game			X	The participant tries to be the best player and he says he is better than the rest of the group.
He/She respects the rules of the game	X			
<b>NON-MENTIONED ASPECTS</b>	Very competitive against the other players.			

Grid 4.2

MOTIVATION AND LEARNING STYLE EVALUATION GRID				
Participant 3				
Aspects to be evaluated	Excelent	Good	Poor	Observations
He/She shows interest in learning	X			
He/She makes an effort to participate in every part of the game	X			
He/she shows difficulties while executing the different tasks		X		
He/She pays attention to teacher explanations	X			
He/She frequently thinks that he or she is doing everything in the wrong way			X	
He/She has doubts in each step of the game		X		
He/She plays by the wish of learning more and being satisfied for his or her progress	X			
He/She works together and helps each other when someone needs him/her	X			
He/She plays with the wish to win against the other players	X			
He/She shows respect to each participant in the game	X			
He/She respects the rules of the game	X			
<b>NON-MENTIONED ASPECTS</b>	The participant is a really good player and very competitive as well, playing the whole time by the wish to win while respecting and helping each other participant.			

However, what they absolutely agree with is that all of them (from grid 4.1 to 4.5) were respecting all the rules they had given to complete the tasks, which is probably because they were quite disciplined in school in general.

Notice that the groups were completely random and due to this there were probably some situations of rejection towards others. However, most of the students really

enjoyed this different way of working and learning at the same time. Once they had finished with all the activities, they had the opportunity to design their own games in English and then present them and use them with the rest of the class (see appendix 7.3).

Grid 4.3

<b>MOTIVATION AND LEARNING STYLE EVALUATION GRID</b>				
<b>Participant 2</b>				
Aspects to be evaluated	Excelent	Good	Poor	Observations
He/She shows interest in learning	X			
He/She makes an effort to participate in every part of the game	X			
He/she shows difficulties while executing the different tasks			X	
He/She pays attention to teacher explanations	X			
He/She frequently thinks that he or she is doing everything in the wrong way			X	
He/She has doubts in each step of the game			X	
He/She plays by the wish of learning more and being satisfied for his or her progress	X			
He/She works together and helps each other when someone needs him/her	X			
He/She plays with the wish to win against the other players			X	The participant plays with the wish to have fun and learn at the same time.
He/She shows respect to each participant in the game	X			
He/She respects the rules of the game	X			
<b>NON-MENTIONED ASPECTS</b>	The participant is self-motivated and really helpful for the whole group because helps the others when they need something.			



Grid 4.4

<b>MOTIVATION AND LEARNING STYLE EVALUATION GRID</b>				
<b>Participant 4</b>				
Aspects to be evaluated	Excelent	Good	Poor	Observations
He/She shows interest in learning	X			
He/She makes an effort to participate in every part of the game	X			
He/she shows difficulties while executing the different tasks	X			The participant shows lots of difficulties especially when speaking in English with the rest of the group.
He/She pays attention to teacher explanations	X			
He/She frequently thinks that he or she is doing everything in the wrong way			X	
He/She has doubts in each step of the game	X			
He/She plays by the wish of learning more and being satisfied for his or her progress	X			
He/She works together and helps each other when someone needs him/her	X			
He/She plays with the wish to win against the other players	X			
He/She shows respect to each participant in the game	X			
He/She respects the rules of the game	X			
<b>NON-MENTIONED ASPECTS</b>	The participant is motivated and interested in each task whether having doubts or not.			

Grid 4.5

MOTIVATION AND LEARNING STYLE EVALUATION GRID				
Participant 5				
Aspects to be evaluated	Excelent	Good	Poor	Observations
He/She shows interest in learning			X	
He/She makes an effort to participate in every part of the game			X	
He/she shows difficulties while executing the different tasks	X			
He/She pays attention to teacher explanations		X		
He/She frequently thinks that he or she is doing everything in the wrong way			X	
He/She has doubts in each step of the game			X	
He/She plays by the wish of learning more and being satisfied for his or her progress		X		
He/She works together and helps each other when someone needs him/her			X	
He/She plays with the wish to win against the other players			X	
He/She shows respect to each participant in the game	X			
He/She respects the rules of the game	X			
<b>NON-MENTIONED ASPECTS</b>	The participant doesn't feel comfortable with the rest of the group and in consequence she keeps without participating in any task.			

## 5. Conclusions

According to the results of this research, those students who learn English language through board games achieve a better communication level as well as they are more motivated in comparison to those who are used to learn in an ordinary teaching without this kind of tools. Furthermore, in my opinion this study was also helpful for seeing that most of these games are especially useful to encourage children to speak in English while having fun.

An important aspect to be taken into account is that children were sometimes speaking in German when they weren't able to understand each other in English, as this fact became a communication barrier for me as well because my German language skills are really limited. In addition, I had to prepare some authorizations in German language for children's parents in order to carry out this research into the classroom and taking pictures and recording the session as well ( see appendix 7.4 and 7.5).

The positive findings in this research have contributed in those aspects and other kind of things such as classroom management or group learning, similar to the idea that was stated by Wright (2006) when he mentioned that board games encourage people to practice speaking in groups. I have discovered that board games offers us the opportunity to control the whole classroom even if we have a big group or a small group, not only most of these tools give us some rules to be followed by children but also they have instructions for the teacher in case of getting stuck at some point or step.

To sum up, this group learning technique not only gave the chance to play in similar level peers but also assisted the teacher, as everyone who takes part into the lesson can absorb the language that is constantly used by this face to face technique. Accordingly, through this study I suggest to increase the hours per month dedicated to board games as teachers and at the same time students could experience an improvement in the academic results. In other words, almost all activities done in classrooms should have eliciting language output in short periods of time and board games are perfect for this task.

Nevertheless, some of the students felt pressure maybe because they had to speak in English when they knew we were going to play English board games or because some of them linked it to get wins or high scores against the others, as it was also stated by

Hinebaugh, J.P. (2009) in the theoretical framework of this research when he says they can feel tension when they play these games.

Another fact to take care about is that some board games have their digital version and digital board games are getting increased nowadays because of the impact of ICT's. In consequence, schools with less resources can easily access to almost everything about these tools so they can for instance check websites to find digital versions and then print them in order to not pay for the whole amount of the physical game.

Last but not least, with the results obtained through this study I can confirm that the aims mentioned in this research have been achieved because the influence of board games is beneficial for children's learning. I could see that children's improved their motivation as well as their speaking skills when I carried out the practical approach of my study. However, I could also check this influence in English teachers when I obtained the results from the questionnaires I had sent.

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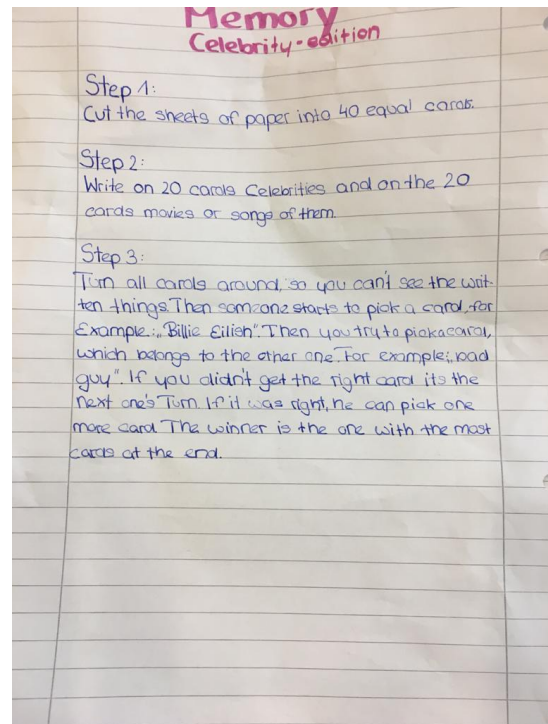
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### 7.3 pictures about children's board games.



### 7.4 Autorization

Genehmigung und Zustimmung für Videoaufnahmen und Aktivitäten für die Arbeit am Ende der Klasse: **The role of board games in EFL teaching to Young learners.**

Herr...../a .....mitDNI/NIE....., als Eltern/Erziehungsberechtigte des am Albertus-Magnus-Gymnasium ..... eingeschriebenen Schülers:

- Ich ermächtige Gerard Casas, Student der Praktika der Universität Vic, Fotografien, Videoaufnahmen und Aktivitäten im Zusammenhang mit dem Projekt zu machen, die im Rahmen des Schultages und während seines Aufenthaltes in Köln bis zum 27. März 2020 durchgeführt werden.
- Ich erlaube Gerard Casas, einem Studenten der Universität Vic, keine Foto- und Videoaufnahmen zu machen und keine Aktivitäten im Zusammenhang mit dem Projekt durchzuführen, die während des Schultages und während seines Aufenthaltes in Köln bis zum 27. März 2020 durchgeführt werden.

Unterschrift der Eltern oder des gesetzlichen Vertreters des Schülers

## 7.5 Voice recording

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fSt5jOY2smquxkRYgTz\\_d8hPdWpHIFgt/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fSt5jOY2smquxkRYgTz_d8hPdWpHIFgt/view?usp=sharing)