

**Gamification of Undergraduate French Courses:**

**A Qualitative Study**

**By**

Adam Robertson

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of  
Education

Middle Tennessee State University

May 2025

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Kim Godwin, Chair

Dr. Jim Rost, Member

Dr. Katie Kinney, Member

Dr. Sherica Clark Nelms, Member

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and friends. A special shout-out to my parents, David and Pam Robertson, who didn't need to ask too many questions when I needed time alone to read, write, and revise. I also appreciate my friends, Jennifer and B.J. Keeton, who helped me immensely by just being a place to go when I needed a break away from work and academic life.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank several people who were supportive through this portion of my life. First, my dissertation chair, Dr. Kim Godwin, whose patience and humor made the hefty task of completing a study and dissertation much more bearable. I would also like to thank Dr. Sherica Clark Nelms and Dr. Katie Kinney for serving on my dissertation committee. Both are amazing professionals that I am happy to have in my corner. Additionally, my supervisor, Cissy Holt, whose caring and understanding were appreciated when dissertation writing took center stage instead of being available at work. Next, my animal companions, Abby, Jasper, Lily, and Nora, who made taking breaks and time away from the computer so much better. And finally, my parents who made it an easy decision to study and write by taking care of meals and my pets when I was hyper focused.

## **Abstract**

In response to the need for enhanced engagement and motivation in language acquisition, this study examines the impact of gamification within undergraduate French courses at a public university located in southeastern United States. Gamification, which incorporates game-like components such as points, badges, and leaderboards, has been acknowledged for its capacity to enhance educational results by fostering motivation and participatory learning (Kapp, 2012).

Using a phenomenological approach grounded in Self-Determination Theory, Transition Theory, and Choice Theory, the research intends to document student experiences with gamified learning in foreign language education, a field that requires ongoing engagement and complex skill development (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Glasser, 1998).

Finding the advantages and possible disadvantages of using gamified content in language classes, as well as investigating students' motivational reactions, are significant goals for higher education faculty and staff. To provide a thorough understanding of how gamified features affect language learning results, qualitative data will be collected using surveys, interviews, and content analysis. This research contributes to a growing field by addressing the specific challenges of gamification in language acquisition and offering insights for educators aiming to implement gamification to enhance engagement and academic success in language learning (Hanus & Fox, 2015).

## Table of Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
List of Figures, Graphs, and Tables .....	vii
<b>Chapter I: Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Context, Purpose & Problem Statement .....	3
Purpose .....	4
Problem Statement .....	5
Research Questions .....	5
Definitions of Terms .....	6
Framework.....	8
<b>Chapter II: Literature Review .....</b>	<b>10</b>
History of Gamification .....	11
Student Motivation .....	12
Connection to Theories.....	14
Game Design & Elements .....	19
Foreign Language Learning and Acquisition .....	28
Technology Integration .....	31
Conclusion .....	32
<b>Chapter III: Methodology .....</b>	<b>35</b>
Restatement of Problem & Research Questions .....	36
Research Design .....	37
Population & Samples .....	38
Instrumentation .....	39
Data Collection .....	40
Data Analysis .....	41
Limitations .....	44
Trustworthiness and Rigor .....	45
Summary .....	47
<b>Chapter IV: Results.....</b>	<b>48</b>
Qualitative Analysis .....	49
Respondents.....	51

Thematic Analysis .....	51
Content Analysis .....	56
Summary .....	58
<b>Chapter V: Discussion, Reflection, &amp; Implications .....</b>	<b>59</b>
Discussions and Reflections .....	59
Research Questions Discussion .....	65
Student Engagement and Motivation .....	69
Choice Theory and Autonomy in Student Learning .....	71
Gamification and Learning Effectiveness .....	72
Inclusivity and Gamification .....	73
Implications for Practice and Policy .....	74
Recommendations for Future Research .....	77
Limitations and Delimitations .....	78
Summary .....	79
Conclusion .....	80
<b>References .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>98</b>
Appendix A: Interview Protocol.....	99
Appendix B: Student Survey .....	102
Appendix C: Informed Consent .....	104
Appendix D: FREN 1010 Syllabus.....	106
Appendix E: Open Educational Resource Textbook and Workbook Links.....	113

## Figures, Graphs, and Tables

<i>Figure 1. D2L Badging Example</i> .....	<b>22</b>
<i>Figure 2. Leaderboard and Points Example</i> .....	<b>23</b>
<i>Table 1. Logic of Research Design</i> .....	<b>43</b>
<i>Figure 3. Data Analysis of Qualitative Research</i> .....	<b>50</b>
<i>Table 2. Survey Respondent Classifications</i> .....	<b>52</b>
<i>Table 3. Coded Themes from Survey Responses</i> .....	<b>53</b>
<i>Figure 4. Bon Voyage Volume 1 Image</i> .....	<b>58</b>
<i>Figure 5. Example of H5P Interactive Video</i> .....	<b>59</b>
<i>Graph 1. Gamification Student Motivation</i> .....	<b>68</b>
<i>Figure 6. Intersection of Theories and Motivation for Gamified Student Success</i> .....	<b>82</b>

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Students face numerous challenges in advancing their education and careers in an ever-changing and competitive world. One innovative approach that has gained traction is gamification, which integrates game-like elements into non-gaming contexts to enhance learning experiences. In context of foreign language learning, gamification aims to motivate and support students by providing new perspectives on language acquisition and skill development (Kapp, 2012). This study focuses on applying gamification in undergraduate French courses, to understand its impact on student experiences, motivation, and skill development.

Gamification involves using game mechanics, such as points, badges, leaderboards, and challenges, to incentivize individuals to engage in activities related to skill development, communication, and goal setting (Kapp, 2012). It is important to distinguish gamification from game-based learning, which uses games as part of a learning objective and represents a broader aspect of gamification (Wiggins, 2016). Game-based learning is learning with a game, while gamification is learning made game-like (Deterding et al., 2011; Plass et al., 2015). This distinction is key for understanding how gamification can influence educational outcomes.

Despite the current generation's comfort with technology, language learning remains one of the least gamified disciplines in higher education (Reinhardt, 2019; Zheng et al., 2020). While students are increasingly plugged into digital environments outside the classroom, many foreign language courses still rely on traditional, text-heavy instruction methods that may fail to engage learners (Godwin-Jones, 2014). As faculty and administrators explore new strategies to increase student motivation and course completion, gamification has emerged as a promising pedagogical tool (Deterding et al., 2011; Landers, 2014). However, its implementation in college-level language instruction remains low, and its effects not fully understood.

This challenge is particularly urgent in foreign language education, where lack of student engagement is a concern (Peters et al., 2019). Unlike popular subjects or courses with perceived career benefits, foreign language is often seen by undergraduates as requirements to “get through” rather than skills to master. Many students struggle to stay motivated due to the demands of grammar memorization, vocabulary retention, and oral performance. Attrition rates in introductory language courses tend to be high, and students frequently cite anxiety, lack of confidence, and low engagement as barriers to success (Brown, 2014; Krashen, 1982; Horwitz et al., 1986). In this context, instructional approaches that promote curiosity, persistence, and a sense of personal investment are essential.

Gamification offers one potential solution. By integrating elements such as points, leaderboards, digital badges, and interactive challenges, educators can reframe language learning as an immersive, success-oriented experience (Hamari et al., 2014; Domínguez et al., 2013). While some students may thrive on competition and external rewards, others may be more motivated by collaboration, exploration, or personal meaning (Su & Cheng, 2015). Understanding how different students respond to various game-based elements is important for designing inclusive and effective classroom environments.

This study draws on three theoretical frameworks to explore these dynamics: Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Choice Theory, and Transition Theory. SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000) emphasizes the desire for autonomy, competence, and relatedness as core parts of motivation. When these needs are met through personalized choices, skill-building challenges, and collaborative engagement, students are more likely to be intrinsically motivated and persist through challenges. Choice Theory (Glasser, 1998) complements this by framing learning as a result of personal decision-making based on internal needs for freedom, fun, and power. Finally,

Transition Theory (Schlossberg et al., 1995) provides insight into how students adapt to unfamiliar learning formats, such as gamified content, especially in the early stages of their college experience.

Although the broader field of gamification has grown steadily in recent years, there is a notable lack of discipline-specific research especially in foreign language acquisition (Reinhardt, 2019; Zheng et al., 2020). Most existing studies focus on STEM fields or general education, where game-based tools are more commonly accepted and integrated (Dichev & Dicheva, 2017; Hamari et al., 2014). As a result, little is known about how undergraduate students in language courses experience gamified instruction, what elements they find most engaging, and how these tools influence their motivation and improve learning outcomes (Hung, 2017; Reinders & Wattana, 2015).

This qualitative study addresses that gap by examining the lived experiences of students enrolled in an undergraduate French course at a public university in the southeastern United States. Through surveys, content analysis, and thematic coding grounded in student voice, this research explores the benefits and challenges of gamified learning in a language setting. In doing so, it aims to inform future course design and provide actionable insights for educators interested in using gamification to improve motivation, engagement, and success in foreign language classrooms.

## **Context**

Despite its potential benefits, the application of gamification in undergraduate foreign language courses presents distinct challenges. Unlike other subject areas where the integration of gamified elements is more straightforward, language learning requires continuous practice and a deep understanding of grammar, vocabulary, and cultural contexts. The limited empirical

evidence on the effects of gamification in this setting underscores the importance of this study. While gamified systems can motivate and engage learners, they may also introduce distractions or create a competitive environment (Hanus & Fox, 2015).

This gap in research requires a closer look into how gamified learning influences student engagement and motivation in foreign language courses, particularly as these courses require more consistent and persistent participation compared to other subjects (Chung et al., 2019). Educators need a more balanced understanding of how gamified systems can be applied to foreign language education, as traditional teaching methods may not fully capture the potential benefits or address the specific challenges associated with gamification.

### **Purpose**

The primary aim of this research is to investigate how students in an undergraduate foreign language course perceive and experience gamification. Specifically, it examines the influence of gamified course content on student engagement and motivation. By identifying the benefits and challenges of gamification in this context, the research seeks to help educators enhance the use of gamified elements within their teaching strategies. Understanding these dynamics is not just significant but necessary, as it can lead to more effective and engaging language learning experiences. Ultimately, this can improve key student outcomes, such as foreign language acquisition, retention, and academic success.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on gamification in higher education by addressing the specific needs of foreign language learners. The insights gathered from this research will help educators make informed decisions about integrating gamification into the curriculum, ensuring it supports meaningful learning rather than superficial engagement.

## **Problem Statement**

Despite growing interest and evidence of potential benefits, applying gamification in undergraduate foreign language courses poses challenges. This study addresses the gap in understanding how gamification influences engagement, motivation, and skill development in language learning contexts (Kapp, 2012). While gamification integrates game-like elements to enhance learning experiences, it is important to note its unique effects from broader game-based learning to understand its educational value (Wiggins, 2016). This difference is important to the practical impact of gamified elements on educational outcomes. Settling these issues are important for educators seeking to integrate gamification into courses effectively, balancing engagement and meaningful learning while avoiding superficial or extrinsic motivations (Hanus & Fox, 2015). By investigating the advantages and challenges of gamified learning in undergraduate French courses, this research aims to provide insights that will optimize language education strategies, enhancing the role of gamification in higher education.

## **Research Questions**

### *Primary Questions*

- How do students in a foreign language course perceive and experience gamification in a college setting?

### *Secondary/Sub Questions*

- What influence does gamification have on student engagement and motivation?
- What are student's perceptions of challenges and benefits of integrating gamification into course content?

## **Definition of Terms**

**Adaptive Learning:** An educational approach that intertwines technology and data to create individualized learning experiences, helping identify learning gaps and adjust instructional content to create a more efficient and targeted learning process (Fisher, 2011).

**Badging:** A game design element representing achievement and skill acquisition. Badges motivate students by providing clear goals and a sense of accomplishment upon completion, increasing student engagement and persistence (Abramovich et al., 2013).

**Choice Theory:** A theory introduced by William Glasser emphasizes personal choice's role in behavior and motivation. It states that human behavior is driven by five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun (Glasser, 1998).

**Game Design Elements:** Integral components of a game or features typically associated with game design, such as badges, leaderboards, points, progress bars, turn-taking, and other rules and structures related to gameplay (Deterding et al., 2011).

**Gamification:** Integrating game-like elements into non-gaming contexts to enhance learning experiences, aiming to motivate and support students by providing new perspectives on language acquisition and skill development (Kapp, 2012).

**Intrinsic Motivation:** Motivation driven by enjoyment or interest in an activity, closely linked to self-efficacy and essential for higher education success (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

**Extrinsic Motivation:** Motivation driven by external factors, such as rewards, grades, or approval from others, rather than intrinsic enjoyment or interest in the task. Extrinsic motivation often involves performing an activity to achieve a separable outcome from the activity itself (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

**Foreign Language Acquisition:** The process by which individuals learn a language other than their native language, typically in a classroom setting or through immersive experiences. This process involves the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in the new language (Ellis, 1997).

**Leaderboards:** A game design element that fosters student competition and motivation by displaying individual or team rankings based on performance metrics (Iosup & Epema, 2014).

**Point Systems:** A strategy in gamification where points act as immediate feedback, rewarding students for completing tasks, participating in activities, and achieving milestones, thus enhancing engagement and motivation (Chapman & Rich, 2018).

**Self-Determination Theory (SDT):** A framework explaining human motivation in terms of three innate psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

**Simulations and Role-Playing:** Tools in gamification that provide immersive and experiential learning opportunities, placing students in realistic scenarios to apply their knowledge and skills, promoting active learning and critical thinking (Wiggins et al., 2016).

**Technology Integration:** Incorporating technology into educational practices to enhance learning experiences, provide access to resources, and prepare students for a modern workforce (Schultis et al., 2022).

**Transition Theory:** Nancy Schlossberg's theory focuses on how individuals process transition or change through three phases: moving in, moving through, and moving out (Schlossberg et al., 1995).

**Undergraduate:** A student at a college or university who has not yet earned a bachelor's or equivalent degree. Undergraduate education typically includes a range of courses leading to a degree in a chosen field of study (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

## **Framework**

The study incorporates Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Choice Theory elements to provide a deeper understanding of motivation within gamified learning. Self-determination theory, developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), highlights the role of intrinsic motivation in fostering autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are needed for successful language learning. Educators can possibly enhance motivation by integrating gamified elements, increasing students' engagement and persistence in language courses (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Similarly, Choice Theory by Glasser (1998) emphasizes the significance of personal choice and the satisfaction of basic needs in motivating behavior. In the context of gamification, these theories offer glimpses into how game mechanics can be strategically implemented to address students' psychological needs and improve learning outcomes. Schlossberg's Transition Theory provides an additional framework to understand how students cope with the educational changes associated with gamification, examining how these transitions impact their academic success and adapting to new learning environments (Schlossberg et al., 1995). By utilizing these theoretical perspectives, the study aims to identify the benefits and challenges associated with gamification, offering practical recommendations for optimizing its use in undergraduate foreign language courses and providing a foundation for further research into its broader application in language education.

## **Summary**

This research project explored the perceptions and experiences of students in an undergraduate foreign language course regarding gamification. It aimed to understand the impact of gamified course content on student engagement and motivation while identifying the benefits and challenges associated with this approach. The study gathered data from students involved in

undergraduate French courses at a university in the southeast using qualitative methods, including interviews, surveys, and content analysis. The research applied Schlossberg's Transition Theory (1995), Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self-determination theory, and Glasser's (1998) Choice Theory to analyze how students adapt to gamified learning environments. By comparing findings with previous studies and reviewing relevant literature, this study seeks to fill knowledge gaps and offer valuable insights into the effective implementation of gamification in higher education.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

It is challenging to narrow down the first game ever played. As time has passed, the objects used to play the world's first games no longer exist. However, one idea that emerged and gained traction in higher education over the last twenty years was the power of games and their mechanics in supporting learning. Bravelier, Greene, Kuhn, and McDermott (2003, 2008, 2011, 2014) pointed to gameplay to increase skill transferability and effectiveness of training. Gamified learning, or gamification, applies these mechanics in higher education to inspire and motivate students, and improve skill development, content and competency mastery (Kapp, 2012; Kingsley & Grabner-Hagen, 2015).

Today, gamification is often misclassified with video gaming; however, it is unique because it is not directly tied to a particular game or technology (Buckley et al., 2017). Gamified learning is more about using the elements and mechanics or rules surrounding playing games in a context unrelated to games (Simões et al., 2013). With technological advances over the decade, gamified learning has become a significant educational tool (Wu et al., 2012). With these improvements, gamification can contribute to higher education's pursuit of training and development of students (Chung et al., 2019).

Gamification can also address some engagement challenges educators face in higher education. Educators can create a more engaging and competitive learning environment that motivates students to participate consistently by incorporating leaderboards, badges, and progress tracking. Students who experience gamified learning environments report higher satisfaction and engagement levels than those in traditional classrooms (Chung et al., 2019). These experiences can lead to improved academic performance when students find the learning fun and rewarding.

## **History of Gamification**

The history of gamification in higher education is rooted in the ever-changing pedagogical strategies to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. The concept of gamification started gaining traction in the early 2000s. This period saw educators exploring innovative ways to motivate students by integrating point scoring, leaderboards, and competition into the learning process. Gamification was first formally defined by Deterding and colleagues in 2011 as using game-like elements in non-game settings. Since then, researchers Lee and Hammer (2011), Domínguez et al. (2013), and Hamari et al. (2014) have looked into how gamification could make education more engaging and enjoyable.

The initial adoption of gamification in higher education was met with enthusiasm and skepticism. Proponents argued that gamification could address the lack of student engagement and low motivation by using the motivational aspects of games (Hamari et al., 2014). Early implementations focused on using gamified elements in course management systems and classroom activities to foster a more engaging learning environment. For instance, using badges and achievements in online courses became a popular method to recognize and reward student progress (Domínguez et al., 2013). These early efforts laid the groundwork for more elaborate gamification applications in higher education.

The skepticism regarding gamification revolves around several points, including concerns about its long-term efficacy, the potential for superficial engagement, and the risk of trivializing academic content. Gamification can initially boost student motivation and engagement, although these effects may not be sustainable over the long term. Boller and Kapp (2017) highlight that gamified elements may retain their novelty with thoughtful integration into the curriculum, leading to diminished returns in student engagement and learning outcomes. They suggest

educators be cautious about relying too heavily on gamified techniques without ensuring they are deeply connected to educational goals and content.

As gamification continued to evolve, its application expanded beyond simple game mechanics to include complex, game-based learning environments. Researchers began to explore the psychological and educational theories underlying gamification, such as self-determination theory and intrinsic motivation. This period saw the development of comprehensive gamified platforms to provide holistic learning experiences. Notable examples include role-playing games to teach history and interactive simulations to explain scientific concepts (Landers, 2014). These advanced applications demonstrated the versatility of gamification in catering to diverse educational needs and disciplines.

In recent years, the integration of gamification into higher education has become more intricate and data driven. The rise of digital learning platforms and analytics has enabled educators to track student engagement and learning outcomes with greater precision, allowing for the fine-tuning of gamified elements to maximize their effectiveness (Huang & Soman, 2013). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of online learning technologies, providing a rich ground for the widespread implementation of gamified learning. As a result, gamification has firmly established itself as a valuable tool in the higher education landscape, continuously evolving to meet the needs of modern learners.

### **Student Motivation**

Motivation plays a crucial role in a student's success in higher education. We draw on two types of motivation: intrinsic and external. Intrinsic motivation, as defined by Deci and Ryan (1985), is driven by an enjoyment or interest in each activity. A student's intrinsic motivation is closely linked to their self-efficacy, as Bandura (1997) pointed out, which is a crucial factor in

higher education success. Positive correlations were observed between increased intrinsic motivation, positive self-efficacy, and self-perceived effort (Busse & Walter, 2013). Intrinsic motivation is self-reliant, while external motivation derives from sources outside the individual (Morris et al., 2022). Gamification utilizes both intrinsic and external motivation. Students can increase their internal motivation by doing well in points and leaderboards. Gamified elements can also provide external motivation to faculty and classmates, challenging them to strive for achievement and improve their interest in learning (Sun & Hsieh, 2018).

Student motivation is critical to student success in gamification. In Fernandez-Reyes, Clarke, and Hornback's (2018) presentation on the impact of gamification in a course development, they found that overall motivation significantly correlated with better grades in courses that used gamification. Additionally, Garcia-Lopez et al. (2023) and Lister's (2015) looked into student motivation and gamification and found that students who engage in gamification perform better academically.

Intrinsic motivation is crucial to student success in gamification in higher education because it drives students to engage in learning activities out of genuine interest and satisfaction rather than external rewards. This type of motivation fosters deeper engagement, persistence, and a willingness to tackle challenging tasks, leading to better learning outcomes and knowledge retention (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Gamification elements such as mastery-based challenges, narrative-driven quests, and opportunities for self-expression can enhance intrinsic motivation by making learning enjoyable and personally meaningful (Deterding et al., 2011). When intrinsically motivated, students are more likely to invest effort and time into their academic studies, resulting in higher academic achievement and overall success.

This leads to another concern of gamification: encouragement of superficial engagement rather than a focus on learning. Hanus and Fox (2015) found that while gamified elements such as leaderboards and badges can motivate students to participate more actively, they may also promote competition over collaboration and extrinsic rewards over intrinsic motivation. This shift can lead students to focus on earning points and rewards rather than genuinely understanding and internalizing the material. The risk is that the learning process becomes a series of tasks to complete for rewards rather than an opportunity for genuine intellectual growth.

### **Connection to Theories**

Mixing Transition, Self-Determination, and Choice Theory with gamification in higher education can create a strong framework for enhancing student engagement and success. Transition theory, which focuses on the psychological adjustments individuals make during significant life changes, can guide the design of gamified experiences that support students through academic transitions, such as entering university or advancing to higher-level courses (Schlossberg et al., 1995). Self-determination theory, which emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness for intrinsic motivation, aligns well with gamification strategies that offer students choice, opportunities for skill development, and social interaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Choice theory, which hypothesizes that behavior drives the need to satisfy basic needs like power, freedom, and fun, can be addressed through gamified elements that give students control over their learning paths, opportunities for achievement, and enjoyable, interactive learning activities (Glasser, 1998). By combining these theories, gamified learning environments can engage and motivate students, support their psychological needs, and facilitate smooth transitions through their educational journey.

## *Transition Theory*

Nancy Schlossberg's (1995) transition theory focuses on how individuals process transition or change through three phases: moving in, moving through, and moving out. Gamification and Transition Theory can be combined in through the lens of higher education to enhance student success by addressing student engagement and the challenges associated with significant life changes. Transition Theory focuses on understanding and supporting individuals through various life transitions (Schlossberg, 1995). In higher education, this theory can be applied to help students navigate the shift from high school to college or university, adjusting to new academic expectations and social environments (Schlossberg et al., 1995). Educators can create more engaging and supportive environments by incorporating gamification into programs to support these transitions. For example, gamified orientation programs can help new students learn about campus resources and build connections with peers, easing their transition and fostering a sense of belonging (Dowling-Hetherington & Glowatz, 2017).

Integrating gamification with Transition Theory provides continuous support throughout a student's academic journey. As students move through different phases of their education, gamification can provide ongoing motivation and rewards for achieving milestones. At the same time, Transition Theory offers a framework for understanding and addressing the emotional and psychological challenges they may face (Goodman et al., 2006). For instance, gamified mentoring programs can support students as they transition to more advanced courses or prepare for graduation, offering practical guidance and motivational incentives. This integrated approach enhances student engagement and performance and ensures students receive the holistic support needed to succeed academically and personally.

## *Self-Determination Theory*

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a well-established framework that explains human motivation in terms of three innate psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In the context of gamification, SDT provides valuable insights into how game design elements can be structured to meet these needs, thereby enhancing intrinsic motivation and engagement. Autonomy refers to the feeling of choice and self-direction, where competence involves the sense of efficacy and achievement, and relatedness pertains to the experience of connection and belonging with others. Gamified learning environments that address these needs can create a more motivating and satisfying educational experience.

Gamification supports autonomy by allowing students to choose their learning paths, select tasks that align with their interests, and set personal goals. Features such as customizable avatars, branching scenarios, and open-ended challenges can empower students to take control of their learning process, enhancing their sense of autonomy (Rigby & Ryan, 2011). In a gamified course, students might choose between different types of assignments or projects, enabling them to pursue topics they are passionate about. This choice fosters a greater sense of ownership and commitment to their studies, as they feel more in control of their educational journey.

Competence is supported in gamification through methods like immediate feedback, incremental challenges, and recognition of achievements. Elements such as points, badges, and leaderboards provide evidence of progress and skill development, boosting students' confidence and encouraging continued effort (Kapp, 2012). For example, a leveling system that requires students to master foundational skills before progressing to more complex tasks can help them build a strong sense of capability. Additionally, the social aspects of gamification, such as team-based activities and peer recognition, can fulfill the need for relatedness by fostering

collaboration and a sense of community. When students collaborate and develop meaningful relationships within their courses, they improve their overall motivation and engagement (Hamari et al., 2014).

Relatedness, one of the core components of self-determination theory (SDT), is essential in supporting gamification in higher education by fostering a sense of connection and belonging among students. SDT theorizes that relatedness is important for intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In gamification, relatedness is often enhanced through social interactions, collaboration, and a sense of community within the learning environment. Students are more likely to engage deeply with the material and persist in their studies when they feel connected.

In addition to enhancing motivation, gamification can positively impact students' engagement and persistence in their studies. Educators can create a more stimulating and enjoyable learning environment by integrating game mechanics such as challenges, rewards, and feedback. This approach helps students develop a deeper connection to the material and promotes a growth mindset, encouraging them to embrace challenges and view failures as opportunities for learning and improvement (Dweck, 2006). In her work, Dweck (2006) explains that individuals with a growth mindset are more likely to embrace challenges, persist, see effort as a path to success, learn from criticism, and find inspiration in the success of others. This mindset fosters a love of learning and resilience essential for significant accomplishments (Dweck, 2006). Gamification can also help students with skills such as time management, critical thinking, and collaboration, which are crucial for their success inside and outside the classroom.

By incorporating gamified elements into the curriculum, educators can create a more supportive and encouraging learning environment that fosters students' sense of belonging and

community (Warsito et al., 2023). This sense of belonging can be essential for first-year students who may struggle with the transition to higher education and feel overwhelmed by the demands of their coursework (Morris et al., 2022).

### ***Choice Theory***

Choice Theory, introduced by William Glasser (1998), pairs with the principles of Self-Determination Theory by emphasizing the role of personal choice in behavior and motivation. According to Choice Theory, all human behavior is driven by five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun (Glasser, 1998). In higher education, gamification aligns well with these needs by providing students with a sense of control over their learning (freedom), opportunities for recognition and achievement (power), and an enjoyable learning experience (fun). Integrating Choice Theory into gamified learning environments helps explain why giving students the autonomy to choose their learning activities can enhance motivation and engagement.

The application of Choice Theory in gamification is particularly evident in how game elements accommodate the need for freedom by offering students a variety of choices regarding how they engage with the material. For example, allowing students to choose from different assignments, select their learning paths, or decide how they complete tasks can significantly increase their intrinsic motivation (Garris et al., 2002). This sense of freedom supports the SDT principle of supporting autonomy, as students who perceive control over their learning are more likely to be engaged and motivated.

Likewise, gamification can fulfill the need for power and recognition through points, leaderboards, and badges. These elements provide students with clear indicators of their progress and achievements, fostering a sense of competence and accomplishment (Kapp, 2012).

Additionally, the social aspects of gamification, such as collaborative challenges and team-based activities, can satisfy the need for love and belonging by promoting peer interaction and a sense of community. This combination of choice and recognition can make learning more engaging and meaningful, as students are motivated by personal achievements and their contributions to a group (Przybylski et al., 2010).

In summary, integrating Transition Theory, Choice Theory, and Self-Determination Theory can provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the motivational benefits of gamification in education. Transition theory helps design transitional experiences for students that successfully assist them in navigating significant changes. By addressing students' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (SDT) and their desires for freedom, power, and fun (Choice Theory), gamified learning environments can create a more motivating and practical educational experience. This holistic approach helps educators design gamified interventions that engage students and support their overall well-being and academic success (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

### **Game Design and Elements**

Game design elements are integral components of a game or features typically associated with game design (Deterding et al., 2011). In the context of gamified learning, these elements often take the form of badges, leaderboards, points, progress bars, turn-taking, and other rules and structures related to gameplay (Kapp, 2012). The focus is on creating a spirit and sense of game atmosphere. When these game design elements are incorporated into courses in higher education, they can provide students with a sense of achievement and intrinsic motivation in addition to adding a tool for faculty to gauge their students' competency levels (Fischer & Barabach, 2020). Other design elements, such as teamwork, can help foster the social competencies necessary for success beyond the classroom (Kramer, 2002). It can include team

quests, general teamwork, and team leaderboards. Another example is leveling. A leveling system integrated into a course may involve completing specific tasks in a particular order to unlock access to the next set of content or receiving a badge to certify completion. As Zichermann and Cunningham (2011) put it, “leveling systems are intrinsic to games and provide players with increased status, access or power within a game environment.”

Implementing game design elements can promote a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. By offering diverse challenges and rewards, educators can serve different learning preferences and preferences, ensuring that all students can succeed. For instance, some students may be motivated by competitive elements such as leaderboards, while others may prefer collaborative activities like team projects. By providing a variety of game design elements, educators can create a more personalized learning experience that meets each student's unique needs and interests (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011).

### ***Point Systems***

Assigning points in higher education has become a popular strategy to enhance student engagement and motivation. Points act as immediate feedback, rewarding students for completing tasks, participating in activities, and achieving milestones, as seen in Figure 2. This system transforms traditional educational practices by incorporating gaming elements, making learning more interactive. According to Chapman and Rich (2018), using points in education can significantly increase student motivation, as it provides visual evidence of progress and accomplishment. Point systems can cater to various learning preferences and paces by allowing students to track their progress and strive for improvement.

Point systems in gamified learning environments also promote healthy student competition, fostering a sense of achievement and camaraderie. Leaderboards and ranking

systems, often associated with points, encourage students to perform better as they see their peers' progress and strive to surpass them. This competitive element can lead to higher levels of engagement and participation, as students are motivated to earn more points and improve their standings (Bai et al., 2021). However, it is essential to balance competition with collaboration to ensure that all students benefit from the gamified learning environment. Educators can foster individual accomplishment and cooperative learning by combining points with team-based challenges and group projects (Chou & He, 2017).

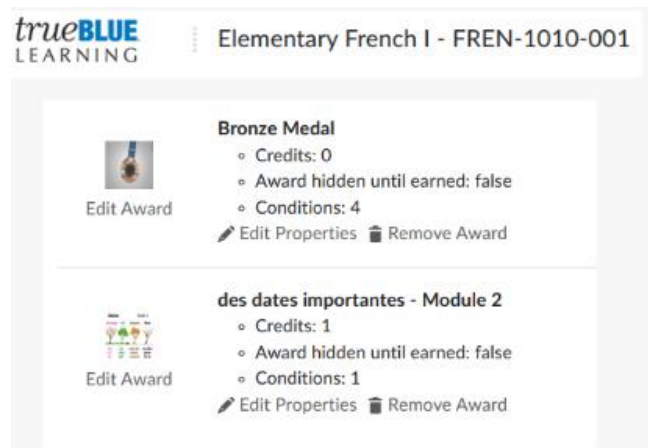
Implementing a point system in higher education can aid educators with understanding of student performance and engagement. By analyzing point data, educators can identify trends and patterns in student behavior, allowing for more targeted interventions and support. For instance, students who consistently earn low points can be identified early and provided with additional resources or assistance to improve their performance. Additionally, points can be used to personalize the learning experience, offering differentiated tasks and challenges based on individual student needs and abilities (Dowling-Hetherington & Glowatz, 2017). This personalized approach can help address diverse learning preferences and ensure that all students can succeed. Ultimately, using points in higher education gamification enhances student motivation and engagement and supports a more data-driven and personalized approach to education.

### ***Badging***

Badging, a specific game design element, represents achievement and skill acquisition as shown in Figure 1. Badges can motivate students by providing clear goals and a sense of accomplishment upon completion. Badges in educational settings can increase student engagement and persistence (Abramovich et al., 2013). When students receive badges for

completing specific tasks or demonstrating competencies, they are more likely to feel recognized for their efforts, boosting their motivation to continue learning. Additionally, badges can serve as a form of micro-credentialing, allowing students to showcase their skills and achievements to potential employers or academic institutions (Gibson et al., 2015).

*Figure 1. D2L Badging Example*



*Sample badge from Dr. Joan McRae's FREN 1010 D2L course shell.*

Badges can facilitate a more personalized learning experience by allowing students to progress at their own pace and choose the skills they wish to develop. This flexibility can cater to diverse learning preferences and preferences, making education more inclusive and accessible. The visual and social aspects of badging can also foster a sense of community and collaboration among students, such as displaying badges on digital profiles or sharing them on social media. As students work towards earning badges, they may engage in peer learning and support, further enhancing the educational experience (Glover, 2013). Educators can create an environment that supports growth and achievement by integrating badges into the curriculum.

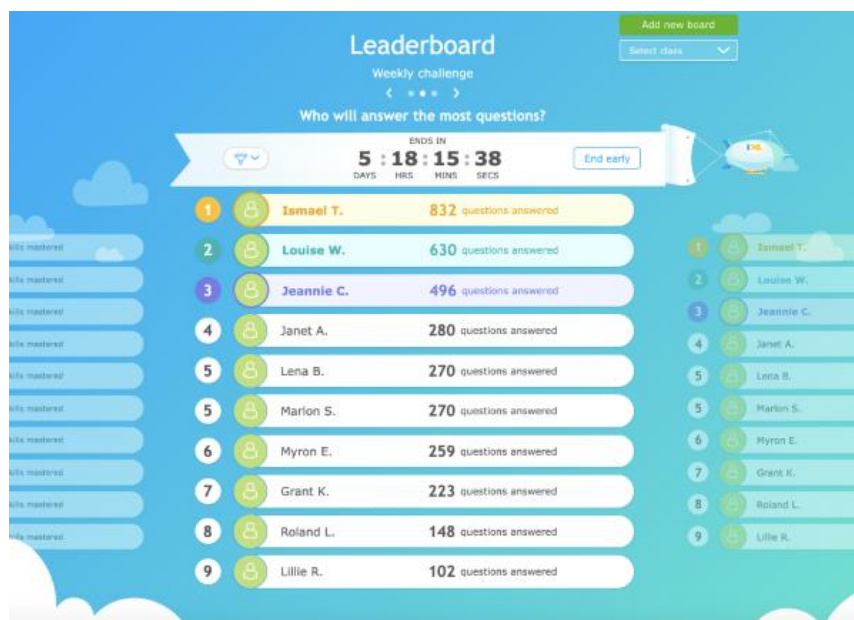
Using digital badges in higher education can contribute to students' overall success by increasing motivation and engagement and establishing something visual tied to learning outcomes. Dowling-Hetherington and Glowatz's (2017) study found that badging aided students

in organizing their studies, tracking their progress, and engaging more deeply with course content. Ultimately, badging contributes to student success by facilitating experiential learning and sharing and fostering employability and communication (Miller et al., 2020).

### **Leaderboards**

Leaderboards, another critical game design element, play a significant role in gamified learning environments by fostering competition and motivation among students as shown in Figure 2. Leaderboards display individual or team rankings based on performance metrics, encouraging students to strive for higher positions. Leaderboards can significantly boost student engagement and performance by creating a sense of competition and achievement (Iosup & Epema, 2014). When students see their progress relative to their peers, it can motivate them to put in extra effort to improve their standing. This competitive atmosphere can drive higher participation and commitment to learning activities.

*Figure 2. Leaderboard and Points Example*



*A leaderboard example from IXL (n.d.) Help Center on leaderboards.*

However, the effectiveness of leaderboards can vary based on their implementation and the context in which they are used. While leaderboards can motivate high-performing students to excel further, they may discourage those who consistently find themselves at the bottom. To mitigate this, strategies such as anonymizing leaderboard data or grouping students into teams foster a more collaborative and less intimidating environment (Deterding, 2011). Additionally, combining leaderboards with other motivational elements, such as badges or progress bars, can create a more balanced approach that supports diverse student needs and encourages continuous improvement (Domínguez et al., 2013).

Gamification can play a crucial role in addressing student success. By incorporating gamified elements into the curriculum, educators can create a more supportive and encouraging learning environment that fosters a sense of belonging and community among students. This sense of belonging can be essential for first-year students who may struggle with the transition to higher education and feel overwhelmed by the demands of their coursework (Morris et al., 2022).

Regarding student success, leaderboards can positively impact students by encouraging goal setting and motivation. Philpott and Son (2022) and Karadag et al. (2015) found that leaderboards can increase student performance by fostering competition through peer-to-peer motivation. In contrast, Bai, Hew, and Gonda (2021) showed that students preferred relative leaderboards, comparing their past performance against themselves. The study noticed that students preferred reduced peer pressure and could focus on their goals instead of being compared to others.

### ***Simulations and Role-Playing***

Simulations and role-playing are potent tools in higher education gamification, providing students with immersive and experiential learning opportunities. These methods allow students to engage with course content by placing them in realistic scenarios where they must apply their knowledge and skills. Simulations create an environment for students to experiment, make mistakes, and learn from them without the consequences that would occur in real life. For example, medical students using patient simulation software can practice diagnosing and treating illnesses, enhancing their clinical skills and decision-making abilities (Lateef, 2010). Conversely, role-playing enables students to assume various characters or roles, fostering empathy and a deeper understanding of different perspectives within a given field (Gaba, 2004).

The effectiveness of simulations and role-playing in promoting active learning and critical thinking has been well-documented. Wiggins, Tschannen-Moran, and Van Houten (2016) sum up that these approaches encourage students to think critically and solve complex problems, skills essential for success in any discipline. Students develop a realistic understanding of theoretical concepts by simulating real-world challenges, bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world application (Errington, 2011). Role-playing can also enhance communication and teamwork skills, as students often work in groups to navigate scenarios and achieve common goals. This collaborative aspect of learning prepares students for the scenarios they will encounter professionally (Chernikova et al., 2020).

Simulations and role-playing serve diverse learning preferences and can increase student motivation and engagement. These methods provide an alternative to traditional lectures, making learning more dynamic and interactive. Students are more likely to retain information and remain engaged when actively participating in learning (Salas et al., 2009). Gamified elements of

simulations and role-playing can create a more motivating learning environment, such as immediate feedback and the opportunity to review and retry scenarios (Anderson & Lawton, 2009). Incorporating these strategies establishes a more inclusive and effective educational experience.

### ***Adaptive Learning***

Adaptive learning is an educational approach that intertwines technology and data to create individual learning experiences. It helps identify learning gaps and adjust instructional content to create a more efficient and targeted learning process (Fisher, 2011). These experiences can help identify patterns in student data to predict the most effective strategies (Pachler et al., 2010). Core elements of adaptive learning include personalization, real-time feedback, data-driven insights, and continuous assessment (Graesser et al., 2005; Fisher, 2011; Johnson et al., 2015; Pachler et al., 2010).

Johnson, Adams Becker, Estrada, and Freeman (2015) discuss how adaptive learning platforms can adjust content to suit individual student needs, making education more accessible and effective for a diverse student body. The primary benefit of adaptive learning is its ability to personalize the learning experience. Adaptive learning creates an individualized plan for each student based on their performance, preferences, and learning pace. Personalization ensures that students engage with the most relevant and challenging material for their current level of understanding, which fosters student success.

Another element of adaptive learning is the use of real-time feedback. This type of feedback helps students understand their mistakes and learn from them. Real-time feedback informs students about their progress and areas that need improvement, which is essential for continuous learning and motivation. Formative e-assessment in adaptive learning emphasizes

that timely feedback can significantly enhance the learning experience and improve student outcomes (Pachler et al., 2010).

Likewise, adaptive learning systems collect and analyze student performance and behavior data, providing valuable insights for educators. These data-driven insights help identify patterns and trends in student learning, allowing for more targeted interventions and support. Fisher (2011) illustrates how adaptive learning technology can improve pass rates by identifying areas where students struggle while providing additional resources to address gaps. This targeted approach enables educators to implement more effective teaching strategies and allocate resources where needed most.

Continuous assessment is another core element of adaptive learning that contributes to student success. Ongoing evaluation via various forms allows adaptive systems to adjust the difficulty and type of content provided to students, ensuring they are working at the right level. Continuous assessment in adaptive learning can provide a supportive educational environment tailored to individual student needs, reducing stress and enhancing learning outcomes. (Graesser, et al., 2005).

Adaptive learning platforms often incorporate gamification elements such as points, badges, and leaderboards to increase student engagement and motivation. These gamified elements make learning more cooperative and enjoyable, encouraging engagement. Huang and Soman (2013) discuss how gamification in education can boost student motivation by making learning experiences more dynamic and rewarding. Gamification offers a powerful approach to enhancing student success in higher education. Adaptive learning systems support student success by personalizing learning experiences, delivering real-time feedback, utilizing data-

driven insights, and integrating continuous assessment and gamification to provide the necessary resources for academic growth.

### **Foreign Language Learning and Acquisition**

Foreign language learning and acquisition are influenced by several key principles rooted in cognitive, social, and linguistic theories. Krashen (1982) focuses on exposure to language that is slightly beyond the learner's current level to assist in acquisition, especially when combined with meaningful interaction. Similarly, Ellis (2005) believes that the primary goal of language learning should involve explicit instruction in attention to form while maintaining communication. Theories of second language acquisition also propose that motivation and emotional factors play a significant role. For instance, Brown (2014) discusses how anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation directly impact a learner's ability to internalize new language. Research has also highlighted the role of real exposure to language, with Andersen (1988) stating that the distinction between natural and classroom-based learning significantly affects language acquisition.

Another important consideration is the interaction between implicit and explicit learning. Klein (1986) suggests that while implicit learning occurs through immersion and subconscious recognition, explicit learning involves direct instruction and conscious understanding of grammar. This aligns with Krahnke's (1983) thoughts that explicit instruction does not always directly contribute to acquisition but can help in developing language awareness. Additionally, Vassallo and Telles (2006) explore how social interaction and tandem learning, where learners engage in reciprocal teaching of their native languages, enhance acquisition through peer support and contextualized communication. These principles collectively highlight that successful

language learning is multifaceted, relying on quality, interaction, emotional factors, and a balance between implicit and explicit learning.

Gamification has become a valuable tool in foreign language learning, offering an interactive and motivational approach that enhances student engagement and retention. Traditional language learning methods often rely heavily on memorization, repetitive exercises, and structured grammar lessons, which can sometimes become repetitive for learners. By incorporating game elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and progress tracking, gamification transforms the learning process into a more dynamic and enjoyable experience by (Kapp, 2012). These elements not only make learning fun but also provide immediate feedback, helping students assess their performance and understand areas that need improvement in real-time (Deterding et al., 2011).

One of the most significant advantages of gamified foreign language learning is its ability to foster engagement and motivation, both of which are crucial for language acquisition. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) suggests that students are more likely to engage in learning when they experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Gamified learning environments support these needs by allowing students to make choices in their learning paths, experience a sense of achievement through earned rewards, and interact with peers in competitive or collaborative challenges (Hanus & Fox, 2015). Moreover, the integration of role-playing scenarios and simulations in gamified language learning provides students with authentic contexts for practicing their language skills, reinforcing real-world application and cultural understanding (Reinders & Wattana, 2015).

Gamification also enhances the cognitive aspects of language learning by promoting active recall and reinforcing memory retention. The use of spaced repetition techniques in game-

based language learning applications, such as Duolingo and Memrise, allows students to revisit vocabulary and grammar concepts at ideal intervals, strengthening long-term retention (Werbach & Hunter, 2012). Additionally, gamification elements such as point systems and progress bars act as motivational drivers, encouraging students to persist through challenges and complete more complex linguistic tasks (Iosup & Epema, 2014).

From a social constructivist perspective, gamification fosters collaboration and interaction, which are essential for language development. Many gamified language learning platforms integrate discussion forums, peer challenges, and group tasks, allowing learners to practice communication skills with real people rather than relying solely on textbook exercises (Hwang et al., 2016). By engaging in multiplayer language games, students experience immersive environments where they can negotiate meaning, correct their errors in real-time, and build confidence in their speaking and comprehension abilities. This aspect of social learning is particularly relevant for foreign language acquisition, as real-world language use is inherently interactive and communicative (Hamari et al., 2014).

Despite these advantages, the application of gamification in foreign language learning also presents challenges. Some studies suggest that over-reliance on extrinsic motivators, such as points and badges, may shift students' focus away from intrinsic learning goals (Hanus & Fox, 2015). If not carefully implemented, gamified elements can lead to superficial engagement rather than deep language comprehension. Additionally, competitive aspects of gamification, such as leaderboards, can sometimes discourage lower-performing students or create an overly stressful learning environment (Domínguez et al., 2013). To mitigate these challenges, educators must design gamified learning experiences that balance competition with collaboration and ensure that game mechanics align with meaningful learning objectives (Chung et al., 2019).

In conclusion, gamification presents a promising approach to enhancing foreign language learning by integrating motivational, cognitive, and social elements that support language acquisition. By leveraging game mechanics effectively, educators can create engaging, interactive, and student-centered learning experiences that not only increase motivation but also improve linguistic proficiency. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of gamification on language retention and the effectiveness of different game mechanics in diverse language-learning contexts (Werbach & Hunter, 2012).

### **Technology Integration**

Gamification's inherent use of technology has accelerated its incorporation into course content and curriculum (Schultis et al., 2022). Computers, tablets, smartphones, smartboards, and a litany of internet-connected devices and online platforms have provided many faculty with an avenue for integrating gamified learning. Gamified learning platforms such as learning management software and computer/mobile applications can positively affect classrooms by improving a faculty member's didactic management (Schultis et al., 2022).

Integrating technology in gamified learning also allows for real-time data collection and analysis, where faculty can monitor student progress and make data-driven decisions. By utilizing analytics and reporting tools, educators can find areas where students are having issues and help overcome challenges. Additionally, technology can create personalized learning, allowing students to go at their own pace and focus on areas that require additional attention. This personalized approach can lead to more effective learning outcomes and student satisfaction.

Technology integration in gamified learning can extend beyond the classroom, providing students with plenty of learning and engagement opportunities. Online platforms and mobile

applications enable students to access content, participate in interactive activities, and collaborate with classmates from anywhere. This flexibility can be particularly beneficial for non-traditional students or those with busy schedules, as it allows them to easily fit learning into their lives. Technology can help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, providing students with hands-on experiences and simulations that prepare them for real-world scenarios (Schultis et al., 2022).

Technology integration in higher education is essential to student success because it enhances learning experiences, provides access to a wealth of resources, and prepares students for a modern workforce. Technology creates more interactive and engaging learning environments; utilizing tools like virtual labs, online simulations, and multimedia presentations can cater to various learning preferences and increase student engagement (Johnson et al., 2015). Additionally, technology provides students access to vast information and learning resources that support their studies, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of their subjects (Bowen, 2012). Incorporating technology into the curriculum helps students develop critical digital literacy skills necessary for success in today's technology-driven world, preparing them for their future careers (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004).

## **Conclusion**

Although there is a growing body of research and publications on gamification, the field is still in its infancy regarding discipline-specific applications. Further investigation is needed to understand how gamification can be tailored to meet the unique needs of different academic disciplines and content areas. This research could explore how specific game mechanics can be effectively integrated into various subject areas to enhance learning outcomes and student engagement.

Future studies could examine the long-term impact of gamified learning on student performance and retention. While existing research has demonstrated the short-term benefits of gamification, there is a need for longitudinal studies to assess its sustained effects over time. Additionally, researchers should consider gamification's potential challenges and limitations, such as the risk of over-reliance on extrinsic rewards and ensuring that game elements are appropriately aligned with educational objectives. By addressing these gaps, gamified learning can continue to provide insights into the most effective strategies for enhancing education. Gamification has emerged as a powerful tool in higher education, leveraging game design elements such as badges, leaderboards, points, and progress bars to enhance student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes significantly. By incorporating these elements into the curriculum, educators can create more interactive, dynamic, and personalized learning experiences that cater to diverse student needs. The positive impact of gamification on cognitive abilities, problem-solving skills, and knowledge retention has been well-documented, making it a valuable strategy for improving educational outcomes (Kapp, 2012; Abramovich et al., 2013).

Despite the significant benefits, the implementation of gamification in higher education also presents challenges. The effectiveness of gamified elements like leaderboards can vary, potentially demotivating lower-performing students if not carefully administered. Strategies such as anonymizing data and fostering teamwork can mitigate these issues, creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment (Deterding, 2011; Domínguez et al., 2013). However, the long-term effects of gamification on student performance remain an area for further exploration and should be a priority for future research. Understanding how gamification can be tailored to specific disciplines and integrated sustainably into curricula is crucial for maximizing its potential benefits.

Looking ahead, the continued integration of technology in education will play a pivotal role in the evolution of gamified learning. Advanced analytics and personalized learning pathways enabled by technology can further enhance the effectiveness of gamification, providing real-time feedback and support to students (Schultis et al., 2022). As the body of research on gamification grows, exploring its application across various academic disciplines and contexts is essential, ensuring that it meets the unique needs of different student populations. By tackling these issues and using the full potential of gamified learning, educators can foster a more engaging, motivating, and effective educational experience for all students.

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

The literature review has comprehensively explored gamification in education, highlighting its potential to significantly enhance student engagement, motivation, and, most importantly, learning outcomes (Kapp, 2012; Hamari et al., 2014; Deterding et al., 2011). Various studies have demonstrated the benefits and challenges of integrating game design elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and simulations into the learning process. These gamified elements have been shown to foster intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, create a competitive yet collaborative learning environment, and support students' psychological needs as outlined by Self-Determination Theory, Choice Theory, and Transition Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Glasser, 1998; Schlossberg et al., 1995). Despite promising findings, the literature also reveals gaps in understanding the specific effects of gamification in foreign language courses, particularly at the undergraduate level (Hanus & Fox, 2015).

Building on the insights from the literature review, this study aimed to bridge these gaps by focusing on the phenomenological experiences of students in undergraduate French courses at Middle Tennessee State University. The research used a robust and comprehensive social constructivist framework to examine student perspectives and motivation through gamified experiences. The methodology chapter detailed the procedures for conducting interviews, surveys, and content analysis to capture the degree of understanding and the impact of gamification (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach ensured a comprehensive exploration of how gamified learning environments influence student engagement, motivation, and language acquisition, providing valuable insights for those wanting to optimize gamification strategies in higher education (Chung et al., 2019).

This study utilized a phenomenological approach to explore the impact of gamification on student experiences in undergraduate French courses. This approach aligns with examining students' lived experiences, as it allows for an in-depth understanding of how gamification elements like points, badges, leaderboards, and simulations influence motivation, engagement, and skill development (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology emphasizes the importance of capturing individuals' subjective perceptions and interpretations, making it a powerful tool for investigating how students interact with and respond to gamified learning environments. By focusing on the essence of participants' experiences, this framework seeks to uncover how gamification affects language acquisition and supports the development of communication skills (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This theoretical framework works with the study's goals, which aim to comprehensively explore gamification's influence on student's educational outcomes and their perceived value of learning French through gamified content.

### **Restatement of Problem and Research Questions**

Regardless of gamification's growing interest and potential benefits, its application in undergraduate foreign language courses presents unique challenges and doubts. The central problem this study seeks to address is the lack of a comprehensive understanding of how gamification influences student engagement, motivation, and skill development in these contexts (Kapp, 2012). While gamification aims to enhance learning experiences by integrating game-like elements, it is fundamental to distinguish its impact from broader game-based learning methodologies (Wiggins, 2016). This characteristic helps to grasp how these elements can be used to improve educational outcomes effectively. Addressing these challenges is essential for educators to make informed decisions about integrating gamification into the curriculum, ensuring that it supports meaningful learning and not merely superficial interactions (Hanus &

Fox, 2015). By exploring the benefits and potential drawbacks of gamified content in undergraduate French courses, this research aims to provide valuable insights that can significantly enhance the overall effectiveness of language learning strategies, benefiting the higher education community.

#### *Primary Questions*

- How do students in a foreign language course perceive and experience gamification in a college setting?

#### *Secondary/Sub Questions*

- What influence does gamification have on student engagement and motivation?
- What are student's perceived challenges and benefits of integrating gamification into course content?

### **Research Design**

This study is grounded in a phenomenological research design framework, which aims to explore and understand the lived experiences of individuals within a specific context. As a qualitative research approach, phenomenology seeks to uncover the essence of participants' experiences by focusing on their subjective perceptions and interpretations (Moustakas, 1994). This framework is particularly well-suited for investigating how students perceive and experience gamification in undergraduate foreign language courses, as it allows for an in-depth exploration of their engagement, motivation, and skill development. By utilizing phenomenological methods, the study will provide rich, detailed insights into how gamified elements influence the educational experiences of college students (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In addition to its phenomenological foundation, this study incorporates a social constructivist framework, which suggests that knowledge is constructed through social

interactions and shared experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). This perspective is essential for understanding how gamified learning environments often involve collaborative activities and how peer interactions shape student perceptions and learning outcomes. By integrating social constructivism, the research acknowledges the importance of the social context in which gamification occurs and aims to capture the collaborative and interactive dimensions of students' experiences (Gergen, 1995). This combined approach of phenomenology and social constructivism ensures a comprehensive understanding of the impact of gamification, considering both individual and social factors.

Data was collected interviews, surveys, and content analysis to capture students' diverse perspectives and experiences in gamified undergraduate French courses. Interviews will provide detailed insights into students' subjective experiences, while surveys will offer a broader view of engagement and motivation levels. Content analysis will deepen the findings by examining relevant documents and artifacts within the gamified learning environment (Patton, 2015). This approach ensures a robust and comprehensive analysis grounded in phenomenology and social constructivism principles, thereby contributing valuable insights to the scholarly discourse on gamification in higher education.

### **Population and Samples**

The population for this study consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in foreign language courses, specifically French, at a large public university in Tennessee. The focus on undergraduate French courses ensures that the study captures experiences related to language acquisition and applying gamified learning in a specific educational context. This population was chosen to provide insights into how gamification impacts student engagement, motivation, and skill development in a foreign language setting. The study aimed to survey twenty-five students

within multiple sections of FREN 1010 offered in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 and perform individual interviews with several students of those sections. Twenty students started the survey with fourteen completing. Participants were provided informed consent before participating in the study, found in Appendix C.

A large four-year public university in the United States is typically characterized by its substantial enrollment numbers, various academic offerings, and significant research activities. These institutions, often state-funded, provide a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs across many fields of study, catering to tens of thousands of students each year. Public universities are often strongly committed to accessibility and affordability, providing financial aid and scholarships to support students from diverse backgrounds (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Additionally, these universities typically have extensive facilities, including libraries, research labs, and athletic complexes, contributing to a comprehensive educational experience that prepares students for various professional and academic pursuits (U.S. Department of Education, 2023).

The sampling procedures used in this study involved convenience sampling techniques. Convenience sampling draws participants from those who are readily available and willing to participate in the study. This approach ensured a manageable and accessible sample while still aiming to represent the broader population of students enrolled in these courses (Patton, 2015).

### **Instrumentation**

The primary instruments include semi-structured interviews, surveys, and content analysis of relevant course materials. The semi-structured interviews (Appendix A) are designed to obtain detailed responses from participants regarding their experiences and perceptions of gamification in their French courses. The interview protocol includes open-ended questions

focusing on specific constructs such as engagement, motivation, and skill development. For example, a sample interview question asks, "Can you describe a gamified activity that significantly impacted your motivation to learn French?" The survey instrument (Appendix B) comprises of Likert-scale and open-ended questions on students' engagement levels and gather qualitative feedback on their experiences (Patton, 2015). For instance, a sample survey item was how much do you agree with the statement: 'Gamified elements in my French course increase my motivation to participate?'" Content analysis (Appendix C) involves examining course materials, such as syllabi and assignment descriptions, to identify the presence and implementation of gamified elements. These instruments collectively provide a framework for data collection, ensuring the study's findings are well-grounded and comprehensive. Full versions of these tools are available in the appendices for reference.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

**Step 1: Participant Selection-** The first step involved selecting participants using convenience sampling techniques. Purposive sampling ensures that participants actively engaged with gamified learning elements in their French courses are included, providing rich, relevant data. Convenience sampling is employed to recruit participants who are readily available and willing to participate. The target sample consists of undergraduate students enrolled in French courses at MTSU during Spring 2025.

**Step 2: Data Collection-** Data collection uses three primary instruments: semi-structured interviews, surveys, and content analysis.

*Semi-structured interviews* (Appendix A) are designed to elicit detailed, qualitative responses about participants' experiences and perceptions of gamification. Interviews are conducted in person or via video conferencing, recorded, and transcribed for analysis.

*Surveys* (Appendix B) include questions to gather qualitative feedback. Surveys are distributed electronically to all participants.

*Content analysis* (Appendix C) involves reviewing course materials, such as syllabi and assignments, to identify and evaluate the implementation of gamified elements. This multi-method approach ensures a robust and comprehensive data collection process (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

**Step 3: Data Analysis-** Data analysis included coding the interview transcripts and survey responses to identify key themes and patterns related to student engagement, motivation, and skill development. Thematic analysis categorizes and interprets the qualitative data, while descriptive statistics are used to analyze the survey results. Content analysis of course materials help contextualize the findings by examining how gamification is applied in the curriculum. Trustworthiness is ensured through triangulation, member checking, and maintaining an audit trail, which enhances the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015).

### **Data Analysis**

Ensuring trustworthiness in data analysis is critical to the credibility and reliability of qualitative research. This study employed several strategies to establish trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study enhances credibility by incorporating multiple data sources, such as interviews, surveys, and content analysis, to corroborate findings. Member checking is also conducted, where participants review and provide feedback on the preliminary findings to ensure their experiences and perspectives are accurately represented (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied to other contexts. This study provided detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and procedures, allowing readers to determine the applicability of the findings to their situation (Merriam, 1998). The study promotes transferability by documenting the research process and maintaining detailed records. Additionally, purposive sampling ensures that the participants represent a diverse range of experiences and perspectives, further supporting the transferability of the findings.

Dependability and confirmability are addressed through a rigorous and transparent research process. An audit trail and reflective journal are maintained, documenting all stages of data collection, analysis, and interpretation, enabling external reviewers to assess the consistency and replicability of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Reflexivity is practiced, with the researcher continually reflecting on potential biases and their influence on the research process and findings (Patton, 2015). Peer debriefing sessions are conducted to provide external checks on the research process and interpretations, enhancing the study's dependability and confirmability (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These strategies collectively ensure the trustworthiness of the data analysis, contributing to the overall credibility and reliability of the study's findings.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The data collected in this study will be analyzed using thematic and content analysis. These tools are chosen to comprehensively examine the qualitative data gathered through interviews, surveys, and course materials. Each tool serves a specific purpose in addressing the research questions and providing an understanding of the impact of gamification on student engagement, motivation, and skill development.

Thematic analysis is used to analyze the qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and survey data. This method involves coding the interview transcripts to identify recurring

themes and patterns that reflect students' perceptions and experiences of gamification (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis allows for a in-depth exploration of the participants' lived experiences and identifies key concepts related to engagement, motivation, and skill development. By systematically organizing and interpreting the qualitative data, thematic analysis provides rich insights into the subjective aspects of gamified learning environments.

Content analysis is conducted on the surveys and course materials, such as syllabi and assignment descriptions, to evaluate the implementation and presence of gamified elements. This method categorizes and codes the content to identify the types and frequency of gamified activities and levels of motivation and engagement (Krippendorff, 2018). Content analysis helps contextualize the findings from interviews by providing an objective measure of the extent and nature of gamification in the curriculum. This approach ensures that the study considers both the designed intent and the application of gamified learning strategies.

*Table I. Logic of Research Design*

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Corresponding Source of Information</b>	<b>Corresponding Data Analysis and Reporting Procedures</b>
RQ 1: How do students in a foreign language course perceive and experience gamification in a college setting?	Semi-Structured Interviews Survey Peer Debriefing Sessions	Thematic Analysis

RQ 1a: What influence does gamification have on student engagement and motivation?	Semi-Structured Interviews Survey Peer Debriefing Sessions	Thematic Analysis
RQ 1b: What are student's perceived challenges and benefits of integrating gamification into course content?	Content Analysis Peer Debriefing Sessions Survey	Content Analysis

**Limitations**

Some notable limitations may impact the reliability and validity of the findings. One major limitation is the reliance on secondary sources, which may introduce biases and limit the ability to capture the nuanced experiences of students in gamified learning environments (Hanus & Fox, 2015). The literature review primarily focuses on existing literature and studies conducted in different educational contexts, which may not fully align with the specific dynamics of undergraduate foreign language courses (Kapp, 2012). The study methodology may lack the depth needed to understand the complex interactions between gamification elements and student learning outcomes, especially in the context of foreign language acquisition (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While the literature review highlights various theoretical frameworks such as Self-Determination Theory, Choice Theory, and Transition Theory, it does not dig into how these theories are specifically applied or tested in gamified language learning environments (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Glasser, 1998; Schlossberg et al., 1995). This limitation underscores the need for research combining methods to capture students' lived experiences and assess the impact of

gamification on their engagement, motivation, and language development (Patton, 2015). Finally, the literature review may not sufficiently address the challenges and limitations of gamification, such as potential issues related to extrinsic motivation and superficial engagement, which are critical for understanding its broader educational implications (Hanus & Fox, 2015).

Qualitative research, in general, offers valuable insights into the subjective experiences and perspectives of individuals but is also subject to several limitations that can affect its generalizability and reliability. One significant limitation is its inherent subjectivity, as qualitative research relies heavily on the researcher's interpretations, which can introduce bias and affect the findings' objectivity (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since qualitative studies often involve small, non-random samples, the findings may not represent larger populations, making it difficult to generalize results beyond the specific contexts studied like the use of gamification in foreign language courses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The flexibility of qualitative research designs can lead to challenges in maintaining consistency and rigor across studies, as different researchers may employ varied methods and criteria for analysis, making it difficult to replicate findings (Maxwell, 2013). Despite these limitations, qualitative research remains valuable for exploring the human experience.

### **Trustworthiness and Study Rigor**

This study utilized multiple strategies to ensure trustworthiness and rigor by following Guba's four criteria outline by Shenton in 2004: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These strategies were integrated into the research design and analysis to support the validity and transparency of findings.

To promote credibility, this study used triangulation across three data sources: student surveys, open-ended reflection responses, and analysis of course materials. This convergence of

evidence strengthened the accuracy of interpretations and reduced reliance on a single perspective. Additionally, member checking was employed through follow-up communications where participants were invited to review summaries of their reflections and confirm or clarify their intended meanings. These efforts helped ensure that the data authentically reflected student voices and experiences, addressing Shenton's (2004) emphasis on fidelity to participant reality.

Transferability was supported through thick description of the course context, including details about the institutional setting, instructional methods, and specific gamified elements used (e.g., digital games, leaderboards, interactive applications). Rich narrative and student survey quotes were presented in the findings to allow readers to evaluate how the study context compares to their own (Shenton, 2004). Although generalizability is not the primary goal of qualitative research, the depth of context enables readers to determine the relevance and applicability of the findings to similar educational environments.

To establish dependability, a clear audit trail was maintained, documenting research procedures from participant recruitment through data collection, coding, and interpretation. This included versioned coding documents, reflections, and organization of all data sources. Detailed descriptions of methods such as the timing and structure of surveys and the analytic framework used for thematic coding were included to ensure that future researchers could replicate or adapt the study design (Shenton, 2004).

Finally, confirmability was addressed using reflective journaling throughout the research process. The researcher maintained a log of decisions, interpretations, and personal reflections to monitor potential bias and to bracket subjective influence. In addition, findings were presented alongside direct student quotes and grounded in the data, allowing readers to track conclusions back to original responses. These strategies support Shenton's (2004) recommendation that

qualitative researchers present findings shaped by participants' experiences rather than researcher biases. Collectively, these efforts contributed to a reliable and thorough qualitative study that respected student perspectives while following the established criteria for qualitative research integrity.

## **Summary**

This study utilized a phenomenological research design to investigate the impact of gamification on student engagement, motivation, and skill development within undergraduate French courses at public university in the southeastern United States. The research explored how interactive and collaborative gamified elements influence students' learning experiences and outcomes through a social constructivist framework (Vygotsky, 1978). Participants focused on those who have interacted with gamified activities in their courses. Data collection methods include ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research questions through semi-structured interviews, surveys, and content analysis of course materials (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These approaches provide insights into the students' subjective experiences, exploring the advantages and obstacles associated with gamified learning environments.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic and content analysis to interpret qualitative data. By integrating thematic and content analysis, the study aims to reveal the complex dynamics of gamified learning and its effects on student outcomes. This methodological framework ensures the credibility and reliability of the findings, paving the way for an in-depth examination of how gamification can enhance educational experiences in higher education. Readers can anticipate discovering valuable insights and practical implications from this research, which will contribute significantly to the gamification of higher education courses.

## **Chapter IV: Results**

Foreign language learning requires sustained practice and high levels of motivation, making it a suitable context for gamified learning interventions. This study explored how gamification elements in undergraduate French courses influence student engagement, motivation, and skill development. Using survey data collected from students enrolled in a university-level French course, this research aims to answer the following questions:

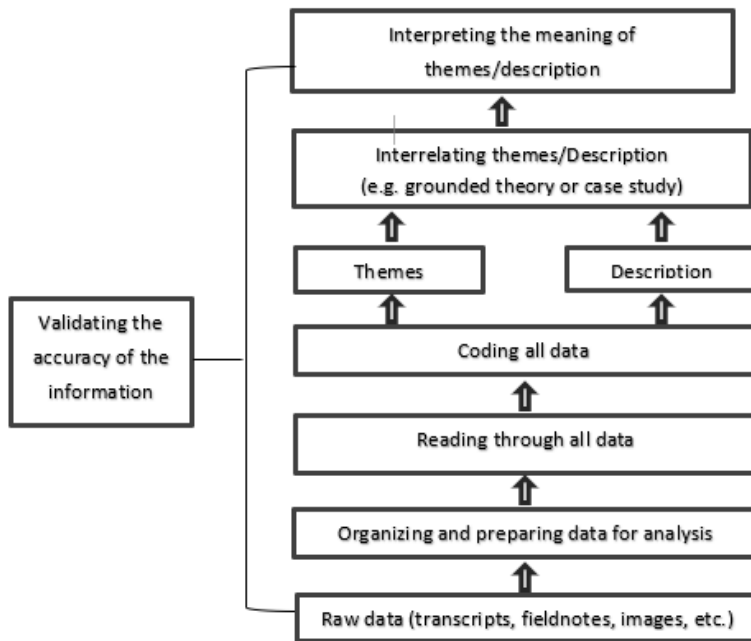
1. How do students in a foreign language course perceive and experience gamification in a college setting?
2. What influence does gamification have on student engagement and motivation?
3. What are students' perceptions of the challenges and benefits of integrating gamification into course content?

By analyzing student responses to these questions, this study contributes to a growing body of research examining the effectiveness of gamification in language learning contexts. The findings should inform educators on how to best implement gamified elements to enhance student engagement while addressing potential drawbacks associated with game-based learning strategies.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

To collect qualitative data, an online gamification survey was created (Appendix B) using Qualtrics. The link and directions for the survey were provided to a French faculty member who had incorporated gamification into their curriculum. Additionally, the course syllabus, online book, and workbook were provided for content analysis (Appendix D & E). The survey data was anonymized, and In Vivo and descriptive coding were completed for thematic analysis. Qualitative analysis followed Cresswell & Creswell's flow in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Data Analysis in Qualitative Research



Note. From "Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches by Cresswell & Cresswell" (5th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Survey questions were developed to understand student perceptions and motivations of gamification incorporated into their course. Questions included:

- Question 1: Think about your overall experience with gamification in your courses. What elements were most engaging or challenging, and how did they impact your learning and motivation throughout the course?
- Question 2: What types of gamification elements were used? (e.g., points, badges, leaderboards, challenges)
- Question 3: How did gamification affect your engagement with the course material?

- Question 4: Can you provide specific examples of how gamification motivated you to participate more actively?
- Question 5: Can you tell me how you felt more or less motivated than any other instructional methods you have encountered?
- Question 6: Level of agreement with 'Gamified elements in my French course increase my motivation to participate?'
- Question 7: Do you feel that gamification impacted your learning? How so?
- Question 8: Can you share any instances where gamification helped you better understand a concept or skill?
- Question 9: Were there any gamification elements that you found particularly helpful or unhelpful?
- Question 10: Did you encounter any challenges or drawbacks with the gamification elements? If so, what were they?
- Question 11: Were there any aspects of gamification that you found frustrating?
- Question 12: Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience with gamification?

The survey was sent via email and posted in the attributed French D2L course for both Fall 2024 and Spring 2025. Due to timing, only Spring 2025 students completed the survey. There were no incentives to complete the survey, and participants could provide their email address if they chose to complete an interview about their experience. As noted earlier, there were no interviews completed.

## Respondents

Using convenience sampling, participants were students who had participated in gamification during the Spring 2025 semester. Participants could decline to complete the survey and interview at any point during the study. Although interviews were initially part of the methodology, none were completed due to no participant following through with interview requests.

Respondents were from an introductory French course during the Spring 2025 semester. There was a total of 20 surveys that were started, with 14 being complete. The sample included seven freshmen, one sophomore, three juniors, and two seniors (Table 2). The survey was provided to the instructor of the course to be posted in the D2L course and emailed to students.

*Table 2. Respondent Classifications*

<b>Respondent Classification</b>	<b>Number</b>
Freshman	7
Sophomore	1
Junior	3
Senior	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>

## Thematic Analysis

In Vivo coding was used in this study as a method that captures participants' exact words or phrases to generate themes and categories directly from the data (Saldaña, 2021). This approach is particularly useful when analyzing responses from open-ended survey questions, as it ensures that the coding process remains closely tied to participants' lived experiences and perspectives (Miles et al., 2020). By preserving the authenticity of student responses, In Vivo

coding allows researchers to gain deeper insight into the natural language students use to describe their experiences with gamification.

Descriptive coding, on the other hand, is a method that assigns summarized labels to qualitative data, categorizing responses into broad themes based on their meaning rather than the exact wording used by participants (Saldaña, 2021). This approach helps in organizing qualitative data into a structured format that facilitates further analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Unlike In Vivo coding, which focuses on direct quotations, Descriptive coding allows researchers to generalize and categorize responses based on key ideas.

Coding was used to develop interrelated themes that were broad and encompassing. Multiple attempts at coding and analysis were performed to ensure relevant themes were identified and connected to the study’s objectives. Other frequent patterns such as effectiveness and challenges were noticed and placed in corresponding broader categories that were identified: Game Elements, Motivation, and Engagement that is reflected in Table 3 below.

*Table 3. Coded Themes from Survey Responses*

Respondent	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
1	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements
2	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements
3	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements
4	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements
5	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation
6	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement
7	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation
8	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement
9	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation
10	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation
11	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements
12	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation
13	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements	Game Elements
14	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation

***Theme 1: Game Elements Identified from Respondents***

Respondent 1 stated, “*leaderboards*” as a key feature of the gamified activities. Respondent 2 mentioned, “*Points, challenges*” as elements that contributed to their learning experience. Respondent 3 identified “*fortune wheel, booklet, workbook*” as gamified tools used in the course. Respondent 4 noted that “*Trivia is very helpful,*” indicating that quiz-based

activities played a role in their engagement. Respondent 5 shared, *“Gamification allows me to use applications to learn in a way that is fun and interactive.”* Respondent 6 reflected on participation, stating, *“Using fortune wheels made me participate more.”*

Respondent 7 highlighted the role of interactive exercises, stating, *“I found the drag and drop kinds of games helpful.”* Respondent 8 emphasized competition as a motivator, stating, *“I want to win the games, so I study hard so I can remember the material.”* Respondent 9 noted, *“Last class when we did time in French I was memorizing better,”* indicating that gamification supported recall. Respondent 10 said, *“It’s always been a strong positive. For quick recall, it works best.”* Respondent 11 commented, *“No, not really because the games were straightforward.”* Respondent 12 expressed a concern, stating, *“Sometimes they feel more catered toward children.”* Finally, Respondent 13 simply added, *“It’s fun.”* These responses illustrate the range of perspectives on the use of game elements in the course.

### ***Theme 2: Motivation Identified from Respondents***

Respondent 1 stated, *“Gamification allows me to use applications to learn in a way that is fun and interactive,”* indicating that game elements encouraged engagement with course materials. Respondent 2 shared, *“It gave me an outlet to review things more,”* highlighting how gamification provided structured opportunities to revisit course content. Respondent 3 expressed that gamification *“made it easier to understand and recall material,”* suggesting that interactive elements improved retention and comprehension. Respondent 4 stated, *“It made me want to study the material in my free time,”* reinforcing the idea that gamification contributed to intrinsic motivation for learning. Respondent 5 noted, *“I learn mostly through interactive games and such,”* emphasizing that engagement in gamified activities positively influenced their learning process.

Respondent 6 remarked, *"I was more motivated because the games provided a fun way to engage with the material,"* demonstrating how enjoyment in learning contributed to motivation. Respondent 7 explained, *"Games always make it more freeing and less intimidating,"* suggesting that gamification reduced stress and made participation more comfortable. Respondent 8 stated, *"If I lose, I want to study more, and if I win, I feel accomplished,"* showing how gamification fostered a sense of competition that drove further learning. Respondent 9 shared, *"It's always been a strong positive. For quick recall, it works best,"* emphasizing the effectiveness of gamification in knowledge retention. Respondent 10 concluded, *"It makes me competitive to understand what it is,"* reinforcing how game elements encouraged deeper cognitive engagement with the material.

### ***Theme 3: Engagement Identified from Respondents***

Respondent 1 stated, *"It's the best thing we could do to help us learn the material,"* emphasizing that gamification played a crucial role in their engagement. Respondent 2 mentioned, *"The most gamification used is likely the random wheel,"* indicating that interactive tools contributed to their participation. Respondent 3 expressed, *"Using fortune wheels made me participate more,"* suggesting that the inclusion of chance-based elements encouraged classroom involvement. Respondent 4 stated, *"I want to win the games, so I study hard so I can remember the material,"* demonstrating how competition in gamified learning increased engagement. Respondent 5 noted, *"Competing against classmates made learning more engaging,"* reinforcing that competitive elements helped sustain interest in the course.

Respondent 6 explained, *"It helped with my engagement because I had to pay more attention to what was happening,"* suggesting that gamification prompted active listening and participation. Respondent 7 stated, *"Having timed questions that the whole class took part in*

*made me stay focused,*" indicating that time-based activities enhanced engagement. Respondent 8 remarked, *"Yes, I'm more interested in the subject,"* highlighting the influence of gamification on subject matter interest. Respondent 9 reflected, *"It's always been a strong positive. For quick recall, it works best,"* emphasizing gamification's effectiveness in keeping students engaged with the material. Respondent 10 shared, *"Yes, it has impacted my learning because it made me more engaged in class,"* further demonstrating that game elements played a role in maintaining attention and involvement.

### ***Less Frequent Themes Identified by Respondents- Challenge & Effectiveness***

Respondent 1 stated, *"Sometimes they feel more catered toward children,"* indicating that some game elements were perceived as overly simplistic. Respondent 2 mentioned, *"Not really because the games were straightforward,"* suggesting that the level of challenge in the gamified activities was not high enough to provide deeper engagement. These responses reflect concerns about the complexity and appropriateness of the gamification tools used in the course.

Respondent 3 expressed that *"It was too easy,"* implying that the gamified exercises did not provide enough difficulty to enhance learning. Respondent 4 noted, *"Some of the games felt repetitive,"* highlighting that some activities lacked variation, potentially leading to disengagement. Respondent 5 remarked, *"I wish there were more levels of difficulty,"* suggesting that a tiered gamification approach may have been more beneficial. These responses illustrate the need for a more adaptive and challenging gamified learning structure that accommodates different proficiency levels.

Respondent 1 stated, *"It gave me an outlet to review things more,"* indicating that gamification provided structured opportunities to reinforce course material. Respondent 2 mentioned, *"made it easier to understand and recall material,"* highlighting the role of game-

based learning in improving knowledge retention. Respondent 3 shared, *"It allows me to recall the information better because I am reviewing it in an engaging way,"* reinforcing the impact of gamified elements on comprehension and recall. Respondent 4 stated, *"It's always been a strong positive. For quick recall, it works best,"* emphasizing the effectiveness of game elements in reinforcing previously learned concepts.

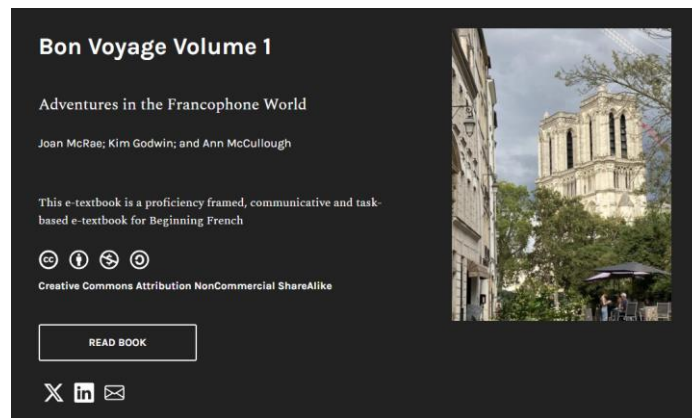
Respondent 5 reflected on a specific learning instance, stating, *"Last class when we did time in French I was memorizing better,"* suggesting that gamification enhanced the ability to retain new vocabulary and structures. Respondent 6 noted, *"Gamification helped me in my French class when reviewing verb conjugations,"* demonstrating that game-based methods contributed to practicing complex linguistic structures. Respondent 7 stated, *"I found the drag and drop kinds of games helpful,"* reinforcing those interactive activities improved learning effectiveness. Respondent 8 simply stated, *"Trivia is very helpful,"* showing that quiz-based approaches played a role in reinforcing knowledge retention. Respondent 9 added, *"No, all were pretty useful,"* indicating that they found all gamified elements beneficial to their learning experience.

### **Content Analysis**

This analysis examined the use of gamified elements within the course's syllabus and *Bon Voyage Volume 1* (McRae et al, 2024), an Open Educational Resource (OER) textbook designed for novice-level French language learners, along with its associated interactive workbooks shown in Figure 4. The course also implemented eleven badges and awards to students as they completed tasks. The study explored how these elements align with pedagogical objectives and enhance the language-learning process. The French syllabus (Appendix D) incorporates structured assignments, such as D2L VideoNotes and discussion-based

participation. Additionally, MT Engage assignments require students to reflect on their learning progress. The syllabus also outlines a grading structure that includes homework, discussions, and collaborative projects.

**Figure 4. *Bon Voyage Volume 1***



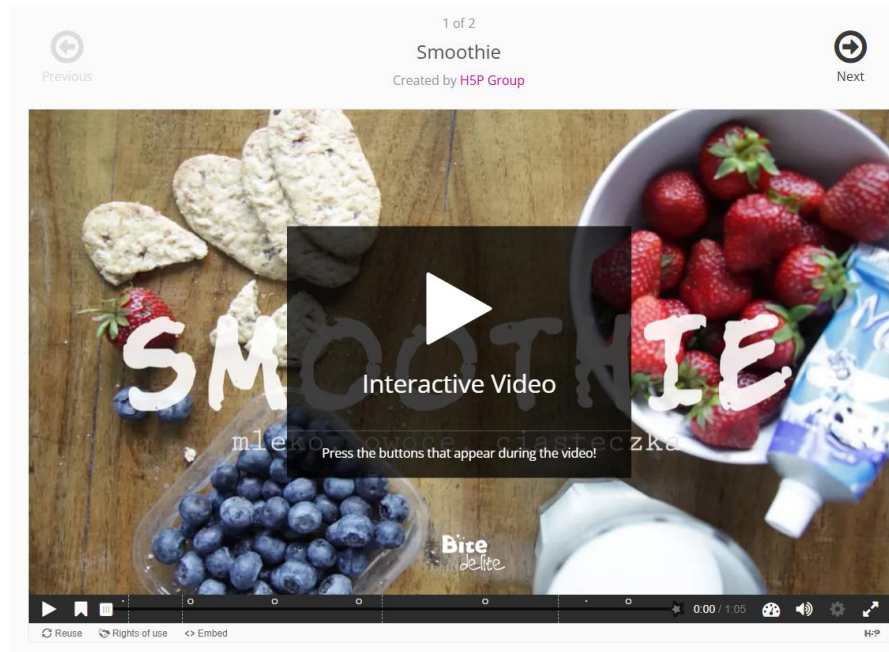
*Image from Open Educational Resource Textbook for FREN 1010 at MTSU.*

*Bon Voyage Volume 1* and workbooks in Appendix E are structured to facilitate the acquisition of fundamental French language skills while adhering to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards. The textbook and its workbooks emphasize the development of interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication skills, guiding students toward achieving Novice-Mid proficiency.

The *Bon Voyage Volume 1* textbook and its workbooks (Appendix E) utilized H5P-based digital activities, including drag-and-drop exercises, multimedia content, and quizzes. H5P or HTML5 Package is an open-source content creation tool that gives users the ability to create multimedia-based activities for online courses that can be embedded into learning management systems like D2L such as the example shown below in Figure 4. The eleven badges and awards reinforce for students to track their progress through a structured reward system. In sum, there

were a combination of structured progression, interactive exercises, and digital engagement tools in the syllabus, textbook, and workbooks.

**Figure 5. Example of H5P Interactive Video**



*Image from <https://h5p.org/>*

## **Summary**

Chapter IV outlined and detailed the qualitative findings from a survey given to students enrolled in an undergraduate French course at MTSU during the Spring 2025 semester. The respondents were anonymized, and the responses were coded through thematic analysis. Course materials such as the syllabus, textbook, and workbook were reviewed to ensure elements of gamified learning were in place in accordance with the objectives of this qualitative study.

## **Chapter V: Discussion, Reflection, & Implications**

The integration of gamification in education has been widely studied as a means of enhancing student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes (Kapp, 2012). In foreign language learning, where sustained engagement and consistent practice are critical to language acquisition, gamification presents an opportunity to create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment. This study explored the perceptions, engagement, and motivation of students enrolled in an undergraduate French course where gamified elements such as leaderboards, points, and interactive games that were incorporated into the curriculum.

The findings from this study indicate that gamification positively impacts student engagement and motivation, with students reporting increased participation, knowledge retention, and enjoyment of learning activities. However, individual differences in motivation styles, concerns over competitiveness, and the perception that some games were too simplistic highlight areas for improvement in gamification implementation. This chapter discusses key reflections, implications for educational practice and policy, recommendations for future research, and the limitations of the study, providing insights for educators and policymakers interested in optimizing the use of gamification in higher education.

### **Discussion and Reflections**

#### ***In Vivo Coding Review***

The In Vivo coding of the survey responses revealed key phrases that directly reflected students' perceptions of gamification in their French language learning experience. Several participants used phrases such as *"I want to win the games, so I study hard so I can remember the material"* and *"made it easier to understand and recall material."* These responses suggest that gamification fosters a competitive drive that enhances motivation and retention (Deci & Ryan,

2000). Additionally, students mentioned specific game elements that contributed to their engagement, such as *"using fortune wheels made me participate more"* and *"Trivia is very helpful."* These findings align with previous research indicating that interactive and challenge-based activities increase learner engagement by reinforcing active participation and immediate feedback (Kapp, 2012).

The In Vivo coding analysis highlighted varying perspectives on gamification's impact. While many responses indicated enthusiasm for gamified learning, some students expressed neutral or negative sentiments. For instance, one respondent stated, *"it wasn't very different,"* suggesting that not all students perceive gamification as a significantly transformative learning method. Others critiqued the simplicity of some gamified elements, with one participant noting that *"sometimes they feel more catered toward children."* This variation in responses underscores the importance of differentiated gamification strategies that cater to diverse learning preferences (Hanus & Fox, 2015). By analyzing the precise words students used in their feedback, In Vivo coding provides a deeper understanding of how students internalize gamification, highlighting both its strengths and areas for improvement in instructional design.

### ***Descriptive Coding Review***

The descriptive coding process categorized student responses into three themes: Engagement, Motivation, and Game Elements. Many students described gamification as a motivating factor in their studies, with frequent references to *"wanting to study more,"* *"engagement in material,"* and *"making learning more freeing and less intimidating."* These statements align with research suggesting that gamification enhances intrinsic motivation by making learning feel less like a chore and more like an interactive experience (Hamari et al., 2014). Similarly, many responses fell under the Effectiveness category, with students explicitly

stating that gamification *"helped them recall material better"* and *"made learning easier to understand."* These findings support studies demonstrating that gamified learning improves knowledge retention by incorporating active recall techniques (Reinders & Wattana, 2015).

However, the Challenges category revealed that not all gamified elements were equally effective for all learners. Some students felt that leaderboards and competitive mechanics *"created too much pressure,"* while others found certain game elements to be *"too simple and not challenging enough."* This aligns with critiques in the literature that over-reliance on extrinsic motivators, such as points and rewards, can lead to superficial engagement rather than deep learning (Hanus & Fox, 2015). Additionally, while Game Elements such as leaderboards, points, and trivia were frequently mentioned in positive responses, some students expressed a preference for more collaborative and personalized gamified experiences. These insights indicate that a balanced approach—blending competition with collaboration—may optimize gamification's impact on student learning (Werbach & Hunter, 2012). The descriptive coding analysis highlights the diversity of student experiences, reinforcing the need for flexible and adaptive gamification strategies in foreign language education.

## **Content Review**

### ***Syllabus Review***

The French 1010 syllabus in Appendix D integrates several gamification elements that enhance student engagement and motivation through interactive participation, reflection, and structured progress. The course's MT Engage Designated Course classification encourages students to actively engage with the material beyond traditional assessments by requiring participation in reflective assignments that assess learning growth (McRae, 2025). This aligns with gamification principles, where reflection on progress serves as a motivational tool, like

progression mechanics in games (Kapp, 2012). Additionally, the requirement for VideoNote, an internal video recording in the D2L campus learning management system, and interactive discussions, which accounted for 15% of the overall grade, mirrors reward-based gamification strategies that use incremental challenges to sustain engagement (Deterding et al., 2011). These features contribute to a structured, game-like approach where students earn progress by actively engaging in course content, reinforcing the principle that learning is an interactive and participatory.

Furthermore, the syllabus's grading structure and assessment design incorporate elements of competition and self-assessment, both of which are integral components of gamification in education. The homework and tests, which account for 50% of the final grade, function similarly to traditional game challenges, providing structured checkpoints that assess progress (McRae, 2025). The inclusion of discussions and reflective presentations, making up an additional 35% of the grade, further gamifies the course by emphasizing collaborative engagement and knowledge reinforcement, elements commonly found in cooperative and competitive game mechanics (Hamari et al., 2014). Moreover, the expectation of participation in threaded discussions and team projects fosters a sense of community and collaboration, aligning with social gamification strategies that drive engagement through peer interaction and shared achievement (Werbach & Hunter, 2012). These elements demonstrate how the course design leverages gamification principles to create an immersive and motivating learning environment for language acquisition.

### ***Open Educational Resource Textbook & Workbook Review***

*Bon Voyage Volume 1* and its accompanying workbooks in Appendix E are designed to support foreign language acquisition while adhering to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards (ACTFL, 2022). The textbook and workbooks

emphasize the development of interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication skills, guiding students toward achieving Novice-Mid proficiency. Several gamification elements embedded within these materials align with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), Schlossberg's Transition Theory (1981), and Choice Theory (Glasser, 1998), all of which emphasize autonomy, motivation, engagement, and structured progression as key factors in student success.

One of the most prominent gamified features is the use of interactive exercises, designed using the H5P platform, which connects with Self-Determination Theory by encouraging active participation and intrinsic motivation through immediate feedback and self-paced learning (Deci & Ryan, 2000). These activities include drag-and-drop tasks, quizzes, and interactive videos, fostering autonomy and competence by allowing students to engage with material in a way that reinforces their understanding. The Chapter 1 workbook, for example, features vocabulary-matching exercises that encourage students to actively recall foundational words and phrases, an approach consistent with retrieval-based learning principles (Kapp, 2012). The immediate feedback loop, apparent in Chapter 2, aligns with Choice Theory, which suggests that students engage more deeply when they feel a sense of control over their learning process (Glasser, 1998). By receiving real-time feedback and correction opportunities, students develop self-regulation skills and motivation to improve their language proficiency.

Another critical gamified element in *Bon Voyage Volume 1* is the incorporation of progressive challenges, which connects with Schlossberg's Transition Theory by structuring learning in a way that supports students through different stages of skill acquisition (Schlossberg, 1981). The textbook is organized into gradually increasing levels of complexity, mirroring game-level progression, where each stage builds upon previously acquired knowledge. For example,

Chapter 3 introduces identity-related vocabulary and sentence structures, expanding upon fundamental concepts introduced earlier in the text. This ordered structure reduces cognitive strain and supports engagement, helping students remain motivated and confident as they transition through different proficiency levels (Hamari et al., 2014).

*Bon Voyage Volume 1* also integrates multimedia resources to accommodate a wide-ranging array of learning preferences, supporting engagement and retention through multi-sensory learning (Mayer, 2009). The workbooks include audio clips for pronunciation practice and videos that simulate real-world conversational scenarios, aligning with Choice Theory, which emphasizes the importance of student autonomy in selecting how they engage with content (Glasser, 1998). In Chapter 4, multimedia resources immerse students in real-life situations, such as navigating an airport in France, reinforcing language retention through experiential learning.

The gamified elements in *Bon Voyage Volume 1* strongly intersect with Self-Determination Theory, as they emphasize learner autonomy, competence, and motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The interactive exercises promote active application of language skills, reinforcing communication abilities in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Additionally, the cultural experience provided through multimedia content allows students to develop a deeper appreciation for francophone traditions and customs, which is a core goal of the ACTFL framework (ACTFL, 2022).

Schlossberg's Transition Theory (1981) implies that structured support systems help students adapt to new learning environments, and *Bon Voyage Volume 1* achieves this by incorporating gamified progression, immediate feedback, and interactive elements that make language acquisition less intimidating and more engaging (Schlossberg, 1981). The combination

of self-assessment tools and progressive challenges fosters independence, self-regulation, and intrinsic motivation, supporting Choice Theory principles (Glasser, 1998). By allowing students to progress at their own pace and engage in active, game-based learning, the textbook encourages a sense of ownership over their educational journey, making language acquisition both effective and enjoyable.

In sum, *Bon Voyage Volume 1* effectively integrates gamification principles to create an engaging and interactive learning environment for novice French learners. The inclusion of interactive exercises, immediate feedback mechanisms, progressive challenges, and multimedia elements aligns with established educational theories, reinforcing the psychological, motivational, and structural components that support language learning and retention. Future research should explore the long-term effects of these gamified strategies to assess how they influence student proficiency, engagement, and motivation over time.

### ***Research Question Discussion***

#### **1. How do students in a foreign language course perceive and experience gamification in a college setting?**

The survey data reveal that students generally have positive perceptions of gamification in their French course. Most students described their experiences as interactive and engaging, with many mentioning specific gamified elements such as leaderboards, points, challenges, and quizzes (e.g., Booklet, fortune wheels, and drag-and-drop exercises) as particularly impactful. One respondent stated, "*Gamification allows me to use applications to learn in a way that is fun and interactive,*" while another noted that "*Using fortune wheels made me participate more.*" However, not all students reported strong enthusiasm for gamification. Some students expressed neutrality regarding its impact, with one respondent mentioning that "*it wasn't very different*"

from traditional learning approaches. This suggests that while gamification is generally well-received, its effectiveness in engaging students may depend on individual learning preferences and prior experiences with game-based learning (Hanus & Fox, 2015).

## **2. What influence does gamification have on student engagement and motivation?**

A significant number of survey respondents indicated that gamification had a positive impact on their engagement and motivation, as outlined in Graph 1. Several students highlighted that gamification encouraged active participation and increased their willingness to study. One student reported, *"I want to win the games, so I study hard so I can remember the material,"* illustrating how competition and rewards can drive engagement. Another student mentioned that *"Games always make it more freeing and less intimidating, which helps me learn."* These responses align with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which suggests that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are key factors in intrinsic motivation. Gamified elements such as leaderboards, progress tracking, and interactive challenges contribute to these psychological needs by empowering students with choice, fostering a sense of achievement, and creating a supportive learning environment.

Schlossberg's Transition Theory (1981) provides additional insight into how gamification supports student engagement during educational transitions. This theory posits that students' ability to adapt to new learning environments is influenced by the support systems and coping mechanisms available to them. Gamification, by making learning more interactive and rewarding, provides a structured yet flexible environment that helps students transition into new academic challenges with reduced anxiety. The responses also align with Choice Theory (Glasser, 1998), which emphasizes that students are more engaged when they feel a sense of control over their learning process. Gamification enhances autonomy by allowing students to

progress at their own pace, select tasks that align with their strengths, and engage in a way that suits their individual learning preferences. The motivational impact of gamification is therefore not only driven by immediate rewards and engagement mechanics but also by its ability to support students through transitions, provide autonomy in learning, and create a safe environment where participation feels enjoyable.

*Graph 1: Gamified Student Motivation*



*Graph showing students' perceived motivation level using gamified elements.*

The responses also indicated that gamification improved students' ability to recall information. One student noted, *"It allows me to recall the information better because I am reviewing it in an engaging way,"* while another stated that gamification *"made it easier to understand and recall material."* These findings support previous research demonstrating the effectiveness of gamified learning in reinforcing memory retention and knowledge recall through repeated exposure and interactive learning (Reinders & Wattana, 2015).

### **3. What are students' perceptions of the challenges and benefits of integrating gamification into course content?**

#### ***Benefits***

Students widely agreed that gamification contributed positively to their language learning experience. One of the primary benefits cited was the interactive and engaging nature of

gamified activities, which made studying less stressful and more enjoyable. A student shared, *"It's the best thing we could do to help us learn the material,"* emphasizing the effectiveness of game-based learning strategies.

Another advantage highlighted was the variety of learning methods that gamification provides. Respondents mentioned that different game formats such as trivia, points-based challenges, and fortune wheels allowed them to interact with the material in diverse ways, accommodating different learning preferences (Kapp, 2012). This finding aligns with prior research indicating that gamification fosters a multisensory learning experience that appeals to a broad range of students (Huang & Soman, 2013).

### ***Challenges***

Despite the benefits, some students mentioned potential drawbacks of gamification in their language learning experience. One student expressed that some gamified elements *"feel more catered toward children,"* indicating that the design and complexity of gamification tools may need to be adjusted to better suit college-level learners. This aligns with criticisms of gamification suggesting that over-simplification or excessive use of rewards can reduce engagement and lead to superficial learning (Hanus & Fox, 2015).

Additionally, while competition was seen as a motivator for some students, others preferred more collaborative or low-pressure gamified activities. A few students mentioned concerns about leaderboards creating unnecessary pressure, which supports previous findings that competitive gamification elements can sometimes be discouraging rather than motivating (Domínguez et al., 2013).

## **Student Engagement and Motivation**

The Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) provided a useful framework for interpreting the study's findings. Students who participated in gamified elements generally reported that these activities enhanced their autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are three psychological needs essential for intrinsic motivation. Survey responses demonstrated that students felt more engaged and more likely to study because of gamified activities. One student mentioned, *"I want to win the games, so I study hard so I can remember the material,"* illustrating how competitive elements can serve as motivators.

However, a subset of students reported neutral or limited effects from gamification, indicating that one-size-fits-all approaches may not be effective. Some students felt that certain game elements were more suitable for younger learners, while others preferred a collaborative learning environment rather than competition-based gamification. These findings align with previous research cautioning that overemphasis on leaderboards and competitive mechanics may hinder motivation for some learners (Hanus & Fox, 2015; Domínguez et al., 2013).

Participants frequently mentioned being motivated by the competitive elements of gamification, like leaderboards (extrinsic motivation), but many also highlighted the enjoyment and engagement they experienced in activities such as simulations and role-playing (intrinsic motivation). This combination of responses supports Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, indicating that gamification's primary strength is its capacity to cater to both types of motivation, depending on how tasks are structured and the learner's preferences.

Student responses from the study provide clear evidence of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, which aligns closely with Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory. Several participants indicated that competitive elements such as leaderboards and points were

key motivators, which show extrinsic forms of motivation. For instance, one student highlighted “leaderboards” as a major feature that encouraged engagement, while another specifically mentioned “points” and “challenges” as elements that enhanced their learning experience. Another respondent noted, “I want to win the games, so I study hard so I can remember the material,” and elaborated further, “If I lose, I want to study more, and if I win, I feel accomplished.” These responses demonstrate how gamification leverages external incentives such as performance and peer-to-peer comparison to influence student effort and engagement.

In contrast, many students also expressed intrinsic motivation, describing how the gamified elements made learning enjoyable, immersive, and personally meaningful. One participant stated, “Gamification allows me to use applications to learn in a way that is fun and interactive,” while another explained, “I was more motivated because the games provided a fun way to engage with the material.” These remarks suggest that the students were not solely motivated by external rewards but by genuine interest in and enjoyment of the activities. Another student emphasized, “Games always make it more freeing and less intimidating,” underscoring how gamified learning supported psychological comfort and reduced anxiety which are key components of autonomy and relatedness within Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Likewise, one respondent shared, “It made me want to study the material in my free time,” which highlights a deeper, self-directed characteristic of intrinsic motivation.

Taken together, these responses support the view that gamification’s greatest strength lies in its ability to appeal to both extrinsic and intrinsic motivational types, depending on task structure and individual learner preferences (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The presence of enjoyment-driven and reward-based responses among students reinforces the theoretical frameworks

between gamification and the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness identified in Self-Determination Theory.

### **Choice Theory & Autonomy in Student Learning**

Choice Theory, developed by William Glasser (1998), reasons that all human behavior is driven by the desire to meet five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun. Gamified learning environments that incorporate student choice can help meet these needs, particularly freedom and fun. Student responses from this study consistently reflected these basic motivators. One student commented, “*Games always make it more freeing and less intimidating,*” which reflects the desire for autonomy and a friendly learning environment.

Another shared, “*Gamification allows me to use applications to learn in a way that is fun and interactive,*” supporting the idea that choice and enjoyment are central to student engagement.

The course design included interactive elements such as digital fortune wheels, trivia games, and optional challenges as tools empower students to engage with content in ways that suited their preferences. These features align with Glasser’s framework, suggesting that when students are given meaningful options around learning, their motivation to participate and perform increases.

Autonomy, a shared focus of both Choice Theory and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), appeared as a key influence in how students experienced gamification. Content analysis revealed that course materials incorporated various game mechanics that allowed for student input and decision-making, including challenge-based assignments and point-earning activities that could be completed in different formats. Several students expressed appreciation for this flexibility. For instance, one participant noted, “*I learn mostly through interactive games and such,*” while another emphasized how gamified activities “*made me want to study the material in my free time.*” These responses highlight the motivational power of autonomy, as

students felt more in control of their learning and were thus more likely to engage meaningfully with the material. When students perceive that they have ownership over their educational choices, they are less likely to feel forced and more inclined to persist through challenges (Glasser, 1998).

This autonomy-driven engagement contributes to deeper learning and improved academic persistence. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), environments that support autonomy foster greater internalization of learning goals. This was echoed in the study, where multiple students reported studying not for grades, but because the gamified elements made learning enjoyable. One student stated, *“If I lose, I want to study more, and if I win, I feel accomplished,”* illustrating how the choice to engage driven by freedom, and a sense of agency encouraged a cycle of self-directed motivation. These findings highlight how well-designed gamified activities, rooted in the principles of Choice Theory, can support learners who are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. By offering choice, educators do more than accommodate learning preferences, they empower students to take meaningful ownership of their educational journey.

### **Gamification and Learning Effectiveness**

Survey responses also suggest that gamification improves recall and comprehension of course material. Students who engaged with gamified activities in class reported that it helped them retain and apply their knowledge better. One student mentioned, *“Using the fortune wheels made me participate more, which helped me understand better.”* This finding supports constructivist learning theories (Vygotsky, 1978), which emphasize the role of active engagement in the learning process.

Despite these benefits, the effectiveness of gamification depends on the quality and design of the gamified elements. Some students felt that certain gamified activities were

repetitive or lacked challenge, echoing concerns in the literature about the potential for gamification to become a superficial learning experience (Chung et al., 2019; Werbach & Hunter, 2012). To maximize the impact of gamification, course designers should ensure that game mechanics align with pedagogical goals rather than being used as mere engagement tools.

### **Inclusivity and Gamification**

Gamification offers unique opportunities to encourage inclusivity in higher education by supporting varied learning preferences, reducing performance anxiety, and providing flexible pathways for student engagement (de-Marcos et al., 2014; Nah et al., 2014). Unlike traditional language instruction that often relies heavily on lecture or memorization, gamified activities engage multiple learner preferences through multimedia, interaction, and movement (Hung, 2017; Su & Cheng, 2015). For example, students using drag-and-drop grammar activities in H5P or participating in real-time quizzes via Kahoot that matched their cognitive preferences, increasing comprehension and retention in return (Wang, 2015; Licorish et al., 2018).

Likewise, gamified learning environments often incorporate low-stakes experiences, interactive tasks, and retry-friendly formats, which are key features that benefit students who experience anxiety particularly in oral communication (Zarzycka-Piskorz, 2016). One student in this study stated, “*Games always make it more freeing and less intimidating,*” suggesting that the gamified format reduced the emotional pressure typically associated with performance in language classes. This sense of safety is particularly beneficial for English language learners, first-generation and neurodiverse students who may feel disregarded by conventional instructional methods (Whitton, 2011; Baran et al., 2021).

Gamification also promotes self-paced progression, allowing students to revisit activities, track their improvement, and engage with content on their own schedules. This flexibility is

useful for non-traditional learners, including those balancing work, caregiving, or varying time zones. As Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) brings up, learning environments that support autonomy and competence are more likely to result in sustained motivation and deeper learning. Similarly, Choice Theory (Glasser, 1998) highlights that individuals are more likely to engage when they feel empowered to make meaningful choices that meet their needs. By incorporating optional challenges, multiple pathways, and personalized feedback, gamified instruction creates an inclusive structure that adapts to students not the other way around. Gamification is not merely engaging but equitable by design. It offers a variety of entry points and supports mechanisms that enable all students, regardless of background or learning preferences, to participate meaningfully and succeed.

## **Implications for Practice and Policy**

### ***Best Practices for Implementing Gamification in Language Courses***

Educators and instructional designers should strive to balance competition and collaboration when integrating gamification into language learning. While leaderboards and points can motivate some students, others prefer cooperative gamification elements such as team-based challenges and interactive storytelling. A mixed approach that includes both competitive and collaborative elements may be most effective in meeting diverse learning needs (Hamari et al., 2014).

Ensuring that gamified activities are age and level appropriate is also crucial for maintaining engagement. Some students found certain gamified activities too simplistic, suggesting that instructors should implement scaffolded challenges that increase in complexity as students' progress. This approach can help maintain motivation and provide an optimal level of challenge for learners at different proficiency levels (Huang & Soman, 2013).

Gamification should also be used to enhance, rather than replace, learning objectives. Educators should ensure that gamified activities support language acquisition goals rather than serving merely as engagement tools. Effective gamification integrates meaningful content and interactive elements that reinforce key language skills (Chung et al., 2019).

Finally, providing flexibility in participation can accommodate individual differences in motivation and learning preferences. Not all students are equally engaged by gamification, and offering optional gamified activities or multiple modes of participation allows students to engage in ways that best suit their needs and learning preferences.

### ***Policy & Practice Recommendations***

The study's findings strongly support the integration of gamification into curriculum design, aligning with the policy recommendation that higher education institutions should provide faculty development programs to train instructors in strategic gamification practices. This recommendation is based on Kapp (2012) and Werbach & Hunter (2012), who emphasize that effective gamification requires intentional design and instructor training. The content analysis of the syllabus, online book, and workbooks in this study revealed that interactive exercises, immediate feedback mechanisms, and gamified challenges contributed to student participation and retention. Survey responses confirmed that students engaged more actively when exposed to game-based elements like leaderboards, trivia, and badges, which encouraged them to study consistently. These findings indicate that faculty need structured training on how to integrate gamification in ways that align with course objectives to maximize its benefits (Hamari et al., 2014).

Additionally, this study highlights the need for standardized gamification guidelines and long-term assessment through longitudinal study, while supporting policy recommendation that

institutions to establish frameworks for gamification best practices (Hanus & Fox, 2015). This recommendation aligns with previous research on gamification effectiveness, which stresses that gamified learning must be thoughtfully designed to avoid superficial engagement (Domínguez et al., 2013). The “challenges” theme identified in this study revealed that while many students found gamified activities beneficial, some felt that certain elements were too simplistic or repetitive. This supports the recommendation that universities should evaluate gamification’s impact on student performance, retention, and proficiency over time (Reinders & Wattana, 2015). By implementing structured evaluations, institutions can improve gamification strategies, ensuring they are both engaging and educationally sound in higher education settings.

In a similar vein, faculty development programs should encourage reflective teaching practices by helping instructors consider student motivation and how game-based strategies can support various learning preferences. Choice Theory (Glasser, 1998) underscores the importance of freedom and meaningful decision-making in learning environments. Instructors who offer students game-based options such as challenge modes, optional bonus tasks, or creative team activities can foster intrinsic motivation and increase overall engagement. Faculty training could include practical planning templates for using badges, leaderboards, or collaborative challenges into courses without overhauling the entire curriculum.

Curriculum designers, particularly in departments looking to modernize general education or introductory-level courses, can integrate gamification elements into program-level outcomes. For example, digital badges could be spread across multiple semesters to recognize skills development and encourage persistence. The results of this study showed that even simple recognitions like a participation badge had a significant emotional and behavioral impact on students, for instance, one student noted that *“getting a badge for logging in every day made me*

*want to keep up my streak.*” This supports the idea that minor changes in instructional design, when supported by learning theory, can lead to meaningful shifts in student engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Landers & Landers, 2014; Hamari, 2017).

Teaching and learning centers can play a pivotal role by integrating gamification workshops into their professional development offerings. These workshops should go beyond showcasing digital tools and instead focus on aligning game mechanics with specific course outcomes and motivational theories. Training sessions could demonstrate how Kahoot can be used to reinforce formative assessment and student competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000), or how H5P modules can support autonomy through low-stakes, self-paced learning. By explicitly tying these tools to Self-Determination Theory, faculty can better understand how gamification can meet student needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Ultimately, the findings suggest that gamification can be an inclusive and cost-effective tool when used intentionally and with theoretical grounding. Teaching centers and faculty development initiatives are uniquely positioned to lead the charge by not prescribing a single method, but by supporting educators in experimenting, adapting, and incorporating gamified strategies to meet diverse student needs and overall course objectives.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

While this study provides valuable insights into student experiences with gamification, additional research is needed to refine best practices and evaluate long-term outcomes. Future research should examine the effects of gamification on language retention over multiple semesters. Since this study focused primarily on immediate engagement and motivation, investigating the sustained impact of gamification on long-term learning outcomes could provide deeper insights into its effectiveness.

Comparative studies between gamified and non-gamified courses could further clarify the impact of gamification on student performance. A controlled study comparing student outcomes in gamified versus traditional foreign language courses would offer stronger causal evidence of the effectiveness of game-based learning strategies. Exploring personalized gamification models may also enhance engagement and learning outcomes. Adaptive gamification systems that tailor game elements to individual student learning preferences could provide a more customized and effective learning experience (Fischer, 2011).

## **Limitations and Delimitations**

### ***Limitations***

Several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings of this study. Because the study relies on student self-reports, responses may be subject to social desirability bias or individual perception differences (Patton, 2015). The study also measured engagement and motivation over a single semester, limiting the ability to assess the long-term effects of gamification on language retention and proficiency. Additionally, the study was conducted at a single institution and focused on undergraduate French courses, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other languages, institutions, or student populations.

### ***Delimitations***

The scope of this study was intentionally limited to undergraduate French courses, excluding graduate-level language courses and other subject areas. The study also focused primarily on student engagement and motivation rather than directly measuring language proficiency gains. Additionally, this research examined leaderboards, points, and interactive games but did not explore more advanced gamification technologies such as virtual reality or AI-

driven learning systems. Future studies could investigate how emerging technologies enhance or complement existing gamification models in language learning.

## Summary

The findings from this study indicate that gamification positively impacts student engagement and motivation in undergraduate French courses, though individual perceptions vary. Students generally responded favorably to gamified elements such as leaderboards, quizzes, points-based challenges, and interactive exercises, with many expressing that these features made learning more engaging and enjoyable. Through In Vivo coding, key phrases such as *"I want to win the games, so I study hard so I can remember the material"* and *"Using fortune wheels made me participate more"* illustrate the role of competition and interactivity in reinforcing participation and knowledge retention. However, some students found gamification *"not very different"* from traditional learning, suggesting that its effectiveness depends on individual preferences and prior experiences with game-based learning (Hanus & Fox, 2015). These mixed perceptions highlight the need for differentiated gamification strategies that accommodate both competitive and collaborative learning preferences.

The Descriptive coding analysis categorized responses into Engagement, Motivation, Effectiveness, Challenges, and Game Elements, further refining the understanding of gamification's impact. Many students credited gamification with improving their ability to recall and apply language concepts, with responses like *"It allows me to recall the information better because I am reviewing it in an engaging way."* This aligns with research indicating that gamified learning enhances memory retention through interactive and repetitive exposure (Reinders & Wattana, 2015). However, some students found leaderboards and competition-based elements stressful, while others noted that some activities felt *"too simplistic and catered toward*

*children.*" These concerns align with criticisms that extrinsic motivation mechanisms, such as points and rewards, can lead to disengagement if not carefully designed (Domínguez et al., 2013). These insights reinforce the importance of balancing gamification approaches to foster both intrinsic motivation and meaningful engagement in language learning (Werbach & Hunter, 2012).

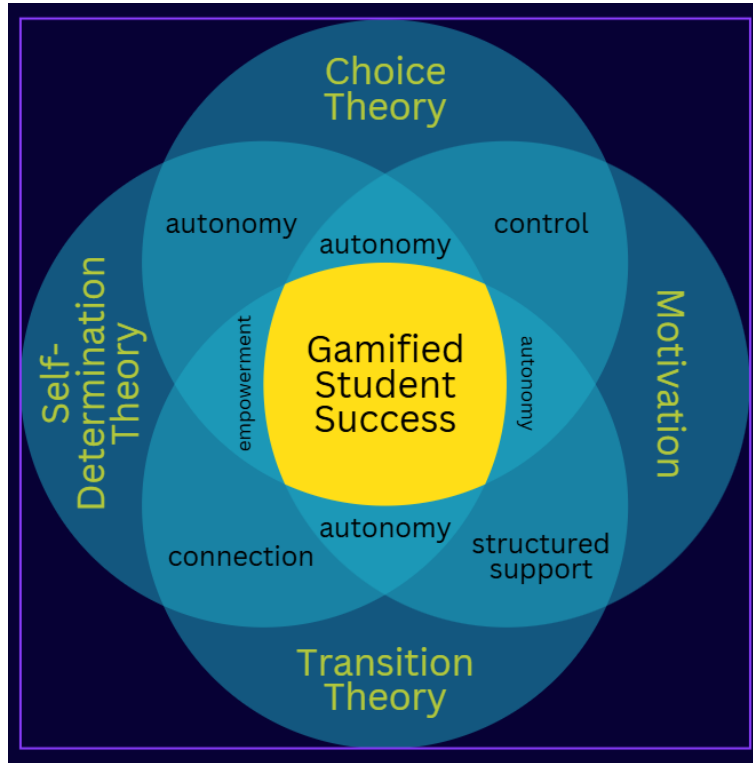
The syllabus analysis and content review of *Bon Voyage Volume 1* and its associated workbooks further illustrate how gamification principles are embedded into instructional materials. The syllabus incorporates MT Engage assignments, interactive D2L VideoNotes, and structured progress mechanisms, which align with gamification strategies that encourage active learning and reflection (McRae, 2025). Meanwhile, the OER textbook integrates H5P-based interactive exercises, multimedia resources, and progressive challenges that simulate real-life language use and reinforce cultural competence. These findings suggest that well-designed gamification can enhance foreign language acquisition by promoting learner autonomy and engagement. However, to optimize gamification's effectiveness, educators should consider implementing a mix of competitive and collaborative elements, personalized learning pathways, and more challenging gamified activities to cater to diverse student needs. Future research should explore long-term effects on language proficiency and retention to further refine best practices in gamified education.

## **Conclusion**

This study contributes to the growing field of gamified education by highlighting the positive impact of gamification on student engagement and motivation in undergraduate French courses. While gamification encourages participation and active learning, its effectiveness depends on careful design, alignment with course objectives, and student preferences. Moving

forward, educators, policymakers, and researchers must refine gamification strategies to ensure these tools are leveraged to their full potential in higher education.

**Figure 6. Intersection of Theories and Motivation for Gamified Student Success**



As noted in Figure 3, these theories collectively suggest that motivation is most effectively fostered when students experience autonomy, social connection, achievement, and structured support, particularly during times of change or challenge. A well-designed gamified learning environment that incorporates choice, autonomy, feedback, and community elements could meet these overlapping needs, leading to sustained student engagement and academic success.

Drawing on Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), Choice Theory (Glasser, 1998), and Transition Theory (Schlossberg et al., 1995), the research brought to light how gamification can support not only student engagement, but also student psychological and emotional needs during the transition to college-level language learning. Three ideas emerged

from the data, grounded in both direct student responses and course content analysis. First, gamification served as a motivation amplifier, especially when feedback and recognition were embedded in instructional design. Digital badges awarded through the learning management system (D2L) were frequently cited by students as unexpectedly meaningful. One student explained, *“I didn’t think a digital badge would matter, but it felt surprisingly good to earn one. It showed me I was doing something right.”* This response points out the core principle of competence in Self-Determination Theory, particularly that students felt their progress was visible and valued, leading to increased persistence.

Second, autonomy and meaningful choice were strongly reflected in both student voice and content design. Interactive tools like H5P allowed students to complete vocabulary or grammar tasks at their own pace, with unlimited retries and instant feedback. As one student shared, *“It didn’t feel like failing—it felt like figuring it out.”* This shows Choice Theory’s emphasis on freedom and internal motivation (Glasser, 1998) and supports Deci and Ryan’s (2000) reasoning that self-directed learning enhances intrinsic motivation. Gamification, when offering flexible pathways and constructive feedback, empowered students to take control of their learning.

Third, gamified activities encouraged both competition and community, particularly through tools like Kahoot and challenge-based group tasks. Several students reported that the competitive elements drove them to prepare more thoroughly. One participant stated, *“I started studying more just so I wouldn’t be at the bottom of the leaderboard.”* However, the data also revealed that for some, these elements increased anxiety or reinforced feelings of inadequacy. This contrast is well-explained by Transition Theory (Schlossberg et al., 1995), which states that individuals experience changes differently depending on their support systems, sense of control,

and self-perception. The findings suggest that educators must find a balance by leveraging gamification to promote positive pressure while also creating space for students who are still adapting to academic expectations.

The implications of this research are clear: gamification is not a gimmick, it is a solid pedagogical strategy that, when aligned with motivation theory, can grow student engagement and improve skill acquisition. When course design incorporates elements that support autonomy, competence, and relatedness, such as personalized feedback, optional challenges, and team-based activities, students respond not only with enthusiasm, but with sustained effort and increased confidence in their abilities.

However, this study also highlights the need for future research, particularly longitudinal studies that explore how gamification influences long-term language retention, student persistence, and academic identity. While this project captured a single-semester snapshot, the ongoing impact of these strategies over time needs to be studied. Further investigation could also explore how gamified learning environments affect students with different motivational and learning preferences, and cultural backgrounds.

In sum, the findings establish that when gamification is rooted in theory and implemented with care, it has the power to transform not only how students engage with course content, but how they see themselves as learners. By integrating play, feedback, and meaningful choice into academic routines, instructors can create inclusive and motivating environments that support both cognitive growth and emotional resilience.

## References

- Abramovich, S., Schunn, C., & Higashi, R. M. (2013). Are badges useful in education? It depends upon the type of badge and expertise of learner. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 61(2), 217-232. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-012-9282-4>
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). (2022). *World-readiness standards for learning languages*. ACTFL.
- Andersen, R. W. (1988). Models, processes, principles, and strategies: Second language acquisition in and out of the classroom. *Issues and Developments in English and Applied Linguistics (IDEAL)*3, 111-138. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED345535>
- Anderson, P. H., & Lawton, L. (2009). Business simulations and cognitive learning: Developments, desires, and future directions. *Simulation & Gaming*, 40(2), 193-216. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1046878108321624>
- Bai, S., Hew, K., & Gonda, D. (2021). Examining effects of different leaderboards on students' learning performance, intrinsic motivation, and perception in a gamified online learning setting. *Proceedings of the 2021 IEEE International Conference on Educational Technology (ICET)*. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICET52293.2021.9563130>
- Boller, S., & Kapp, K. M. (2017). *The gamification of learning and instruction fieldbook: Ideas into practice*. Wiley. Retrieved from <https://www.wiley.com/en-us/The+Gamification+of+Learning+and+Instruction+Fieldbook:+Ideas+into+Practice-p-9781118674437>
- Bowen, W. G. (2012). *Higher education in the digital age*. Princeton University Press.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

- Brown, H. D. (2014). Principles of language learning and teaching: A course in second language acquisition (6<sup>th</sup> ed). Pearson.
- <https://thuvienso.hoasen.edu.vn/v/web/viewer.html?file=/bitstream/handle/123456789/12588/Contents.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Buckley, P., Doyle, E., & Doyle, S. (2017). Game on! Students' perceptions of gamified learning. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 20(3), 1–10.
- <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26196115>
- Busse, V., & Walter, C. (2013). Foreign language learning motivation in higher education: A Longitudinal study of motivational changes and their causes. *The Modern Language Journal*, 97(2), 435–456. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43651648>
- Chapman, J. R., & Rich, P. J. (2018). Does educational gamification improve students' motivation? If so, which game elements work best? *Journal of Education for Business*, 93(7), 314-321. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08832323.2018.1490687>
- Chernikova, O., Heitzmann, N., Stadler, M., Holzberger, D., Seidel, T., & Fischer, F. (2020). Simulation-based learning in higher education: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 90(4), 499-541. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654320933544>
- Chou, C., & He, S. (2017). The effectiveness of digital badges on student online contributions. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 55(8), 1220-1235.
- <https://doi.org/10.1177/0735633116649374>
- Chung, E., Lee, J., & Han, H. (2019). Gamification in education: A systematic literature review and future research agenda. *Computers & Education*, 135, 313-327.
- <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.03.003>

- Chung, C., Shen, C., & Qiu, Y. (2019). Students' acceptance of gamification in higher education. *International Journal of Game-Based Learning (IJGBL)*, 9(2), 1-19.  
<http://doi.org/10.4018/IJGBL.2019040101>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- de-Marcos, L., Domínguez, A., Saenz-de-Navarrete, J., & Pagés, C. (2014). An empirical study comparing gamification and social networking on e-learning. *Computers & Education*, 75, 82–91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.01.012>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25(1), 54-67.  
<https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1020>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227-268.  
[https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104\\_0](https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_0)
- Deterding, S. (2011). Situated motivational affordances of game elements: A conceptual model. In *Gamification: Using Game Design Elements in Non-Gaming Contexts* (Vol. 2011, pp. 3-7). <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICSDE.2013.33>
- Deterding, S., Dixon, D., Khaled, R., & Nacke, L. (2011). From game design elements to gamefulness: Defining "gamification". In *Proceedings of the 15th International Academic MindTrek Conference: Envisioning Future Media Environments* (pp. 9-15). ACM.  
<https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/2181037.2181040>
- Dichev, C., & Dicheva, D. (2017). Gamifying education: what is known, what is believed and what remains uncertain: a critical review. *International Journal of Educational*

- Technology in Higher Education*, 14(1), 9. Retrieved from <https://educationaltechnologyjournal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s41239-017-0042-5>
- Domínguez, A., Saenz-de-Navarrete, J., de-Marcos, L., Fernández-Sanz, L., Pagés, C., & Martínez-Herráiz, J. J. (2013). Gamifying learning experiences: Practical implications and outcomes. *Computers & Education*, 63, 380-392. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.12.020>
- Dowling-Hetherington, L., & Glowatz, M. (2017). The usefulness of digital badges in higher education: Exploring the students' perspectives. *AISHE-J: The All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 9(3). <https://doi.org/10.21427/D7Z13C>
- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. Random House.
- Ellis, R. (2005). Principles of instructed language learning. *System*, 33(2), 209-224. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2004.12.006>
- Errington, E. P. (2011). Mission possible: Using near-world scenarios to prepare graduates for the professions. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 23(1), 84-91. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ938570>
- Fernandez-Reyes, K., Clarke, D., & Hornbach, J. (2018, October 14). The impact of opt-in gamification on students' grades in a software design course. *Proceedings of the 2018 ACM Conference on International Computing Education Research*, 2-10. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3270112.3270118>
- Fischer, S., & Barabasch, A. (2020). Gamification.: A Novel didactical approach for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. In E. Wuttke, J. Seifried, & H. Niegemann (Eds.). *Vocational Education and*

- Training in the Age of Digitization: Challenges and Opportunities* (1st ed., pp. 89–106).  
Verlag Barbara Budrich. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv18dvv1c.8>
- Gaba, D. M. (2004). The future vision of simulation in health care. *Quality and Safety in Health Care*, 13(suppl 1), i2-i10. <https://doi.org/10.1136/qshc.2004.009878>
- García-López, I. M., Acosta-Gonzaga, E., & Ruiz-Ledesma, E. (2023, August 7). Investigating the impact of gamification on student motivation, engagement, and performance. *Education Sciences*, 13(8), 813. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13080813>
- Garris, R., Ahlers, R., & Driskell, J. (2002). Games, motivation, and learning: A research and practice model. *Simulation & Gaming*, 33(4), 441-467.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1046878102238607>
- Garrison, D. R., & Kanuka, H. (2004). Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 7(2), 95-105.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2004.02.001>
- Gergen, K. J. (1995). *Social construction and the transformation of identity politics*. In A. F. C. Berg & K. J. Gergen (Eds.), *The Self in Social Construction* (pp. 19-31). Sage Publications.
- Gibson, D., Ostashewski, N., Flintoff, K., Grant, S., & Knight, E. (2015). Digital badges in education. *Education and Information Technologies*, 20(2), 403-410.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-013-9291-7>
- Glasser, W. (1998). *Choice theory: A new psychology of personal freedom*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

- Glover, I. (2013). Open badges: Visual evidence for lifelong learning. In *Proceedings of the 13th International Conference on Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL 2013)* (pp. 433-434). <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICSDE.2013.33>
- Goodman, J., Schlossberg, N., & Anderson, M. L. (2006). *Counseling adults in transition: Linking practice with theory* (3rd ed.). Springer Publishing Company.
- Godwin-Jones, R. (2014). Games in language learning: Opportunities and challenges. *Language Learning & Technology*, 18(2), 9–19. <https://www.lltjournal.org/item/10125-44363/>
- Graesser, A. C., Chipman, P., Haynes, B. C., & Olney, A. (2005). AutoTutor: An intelligent tutoring system with mixed-initiative dialogue. *IEEE Transactions on Education*, 48(4), 612-618. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TE.2005.856149>
- H5P Group. (2013, June 10). *Interactive video*. <https://h5p.org/interactive-video>
- Hamari, J., Koivisto, J., & Sarsa, H. (2014). Does gamification work? A literature review of empirical studies on gamification. In *Proceedings of the 47th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (pp. 3025-3034). IEEE. <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/6758978>
- Hanus, M. D., & Fox, J. (2015). Assessing the effects of gamification in the classroom: A longitudinal study on intrinsic motivation, social comparison, satisfaction, effort, and academic performance. *Computers & Education*, 80, 152-161. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.08.019>
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x>

- Huang, W. H.-Y., & Soman, D. (2013). Gamification of education. *Research Report Series: Behavioural Economics in Action*. Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto. Retrieved from <https://www.rotman.utoronto.ca/-/media/Files/Programs-and-Areas/BEAR/Research/Gamification.pdf>
- Hung, H.-T. (2017). Clickers in language classrooms: Exploring students' perception of clicker-assisted language learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 30(6), 547–568. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4262680/>
- Hwang, G.-J., Sung, H.-Y., Hung, C.-M., & Huang, I. (2016). A learning style perspective to investigate the necessity of developing adaptive learning systems. *Educational Technology & Society*, 19(2), 240-253. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.19.2.240>
- Iosup, A., & Epema, D. (2014). An experience report on using gamification in technical higher education. In *Proceedings of the 45th ACM technical symposium on Computer science education* (pp. 27-32). <https://doi.org/10.1145/2538862.2538899>
- IXL Learning. (n.d.). *Can I create a competition for my students on IXL?*. IXL. <https://www.ixl.com/help-center/article/4011596/can-i-create-a-competition-for-my-students-on-ixl>
- Johnson, L., Adams Becker, S., Estrada, V., & Freeman, A. (2015). *NMC Horizon Report: 2015 Higher Education Edition*. The New Media Consortium. Retrieved from <https://www.learntechlib.org/p/160016/>
- Kapp, K. M. (2012). *The gamification of learning and instruction: Game-based methods and strategies for training and education*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

- Karadağ, E., Bektaş, F., Çoğaltay, N., & Yalçın, M. (2015). The effect of educational leadership on students' achievement: A meta-analysis study. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 16(1), 79-93. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S12564-015-9357-X>
- Kingsley, T., & Grabner-Hagen, M. (2015). Gamification: Questing to integrate knowledge, literacy, and 21st-century learning. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 59(1), 51–61. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44011217>
- Klein, W. (1986). *Second language acquisition*. Cambridge University Press. [https://pure.mpg.de/rest/items/item\\_77190\\_4/component/file\\_1075586/content](https://pure.mpg.de/rest/items/item_77190_4/component/file_1075586/content)
- Krahnke, K. J. (1983). [Review of *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*, by S. D. Krashen]. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17(2), 300–305. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3586656>
- Kramer, K. (2002). Promoting motivational teaching - starting points and barriers. Ph.D. thesis. Kiel: Christian-Albrechts-Universität. [https://macau.uni-kiel.de/receive/diss\\_mods\\_00000752](https://macau.uni-kiel.de/receive/diss_mods_00000752)
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. [https://www.sdkrashen.com/content/books/principles\\_and\\_practice.pdf](https://www.sdkrashen.com/content/books/principles_and_practice.pdf).
- Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Kühn, S., Romanowski, A., Schilling, C., Lorenz, R., Mörsen, C., Seiferth, N., Banaschewski, T., Barbot, A., Barker, G.J., Büchel, C., & Conrod, P. (2011). The neural basis of video gaming. *Translational Psychiatry*, 1(11), e53. <https://doi.org/10.1038/tp.2011.53>
- Kühn, S., Gleich, T., Lorenz, R. C., Lindenberger, U., & Gallinat, J. (2014). Playing super mario induces structural brain plasticity: Gray matter changes resulting from training with a

- commercial video game. *Molecular psychiatry*, 19(2), 265-271.  
<https://doi.org/10.1038/mp.2013.120>
- Landers, R. N. (2014). Developing a theory of gamified learning: Linking serious games and gamification of learning. *Simulation & Gaming*, 45(6), 752-768. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1046878114563660>
- Lateef, F. (2010). Simulation-based learning: Just like the real thing. *Journal of Emergencies, Trauma, and Shock*, 3(4), 348-352. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0974-2700.70743>
- Lee, J. J., & Hammer, J. (2011). Gamification in education: What, how, why bother? *Academic Exchange Quarterly*, 15(2), 1–5. [https://mybrainware.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Gamification\\_in\\_Education\\_What\\_How\\_Why.pdf](https://mybrainware.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Gamification_in_Education_What_How_Why.pdf)
- Licorish, S. A., Owen, H. E., Daniel, B., & George, J. (2018). Students' perception of Kahoot!'s influence on teaching and learning. *Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning*, 13(1), 9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41039-018-0078-8>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.
- Lister, M. (2015, December 3). Gamification: The effect on student motivation and performance at the post-secondary level. *Issues and Trends in Educational Technology*, 3(2), 1-17. [https://doi.org/10.2458/AZU\\_ITET\\_V3I2\\_LISTER](https://doi.org/10.2458/AZU_ITET_V3I2_LISTER)
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- McRae, J. (2025). *Introduction to French [Syllabus]*. Middle Tennessee State University.
- McRae, J., Godwin, K., & McCullough, A. (2024). *Bon Voyage Volume I*. Middle Tennessee State University Open Educational Resource by PressBooks.  
<https://mtsu.pressbooks.pub/jmcrac/>

- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Miller, K., Jorre de St Jorre, T., West, J., & Johnson, E. D. (2020). The potential of digital credentials to engage students with capabilities of importance to scholars and citizens. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 21(1), 61-74.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787417742021>
- Morris, L., Grehl, M., Rutter, S., Mehta, M., Westwater, M. (2022). On what motivates us: a detailed review of intrinsic v. extrinsic motivation. *Psychological Medicine*. 2022, July. 52(10):1801-1816. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291722001611>
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage Publications.
- Nah, F. F.-H., Zeng, Q., Telaprolu, V. R., Ayyappa, A. P., & Eschenbrenner, B. (2014). Gamification of education: A review of literature. In *HCI in Business* (pp. 401–409). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-07293-7\\_39](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-07293-7_39)
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). *Postsecondary institutions and cost of attendance in 2022*. U.S. Department of Education.  
<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2022/2022044.pdf>
- Pachler, N., Daly, C., Mor, Y., & Mellar, H. (2010). Formative e-assessment: Practitioner cases. *Computers & Education*, 54(3), 715-721. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2009.09.032>
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

- Peters, M. A., Besley, T., & Arndt, S. (2019). The rise of performative pedagogies: A case for new literacies in language education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 51(5), 473–484.
- Philpott, A., & Son, J.-B. (2022). Leaderboards in an EFL course: Student performance and motivation. *Computers & Education*, 180, 104605.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2022.104605>
- Plass, J. L., Homer, B. D., & Kinzer, C. K. (2015). *Foundations of game-based learning*. *Educational Psychologist*, 50(4), 258–283.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2015.1122533>
- Przybylski, A., Rigby, C., & Ryan, R. (2010). A motivational model of video game engagement. *Review of General Psychology*, 14(2), 154-166. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019440>
- Reinders, H., & Wattana, S. (2015). Affect and willingness to communicate in digital game-based learning. *ReCALL*, 27(1), 38-57.  
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/recall/article/abs/affect-and-willingness-to-communicate-in-digital-gamebased-learning/EF5A8CC0E13E6DF5F6DCC67B521E7EC6>
- Reinhardt, J. (2019). *Gameful second and foreign language teaching and learning: Theory, research, and practice*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rigby, C., & Ryan, M. (2011). *Glued to games: How video games draw us in and hold us spellbound*. Praeger. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026253>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25(1), 54-67.  
<https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1020>

- Salas, E., Wildman, J. L., & Piccolo, R. F. (2009). Using simulation-based training to enhance management education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 8(4), 559-573. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2009.47785474>
- Schlossberg, N. K. (1981). A model for analyzing human adaptation to transition. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 9(2), 2-18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001100008100900202>
- Schlossberg, N. K., Waters, E. B., & Goodman, J. (1995). *Counseling adults in transition: Linking practice with theory* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.
- Schultis, S., Ostariz, P., Costa, R. (2022). Gamification in higher education: An educational trend with digital needs. *Pedagogika. Studia*. 31:7-18. <http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/p.2022.31.01>
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22(2), 63–75.
- Simões, J., Díaz Redondo, R., & Fernández Vilas, A. (2013). A social gamification framework for a K-6 learning platform. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(2), 345–353. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.06.007>
- Smith, B. (2021, February 10). *What I learned from creating a digital badging strategy for my organization*. D2L. <https://www.d2l.com/blog/creating-a-digital-badging-strategy-for-my-organization/>
- Su, C.-H., & Cheng, C.-H. (2015). A mobile gamification learning system for improving the learning motivation and achievements. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 31(3), 268–286. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12088>
- Sun, J., & Hsieh, P. (2018). Application of a gamified interactive response system to enhance the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, student engagement, and attention of English

- learners. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 21(3), 104–116.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/26458511>
- Sundqvist, P., & Sylvén, L. K. (2016). *Extramural English in teaching and learning: From engagement to proficiency*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2023). *The condition of education 2023*. Institute of Education Sciences. <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/csa>
- Vassallo, M. L., & Telles, J. A. (2006). Foreign language learning in-tandem: Theoretical principles and research perspectives. *Revista de Estudos da Linguagem*, 14(1), 17-34.  
<https://revistas.pucsp.br/esp/article/download/6117/4438>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Wang, A. I. (2015). The wear out effect of a game-based student response system. *Computers & Education*, 82, 217–227. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.11.004>
- Warsito, W., Siregar, N., Gumilar, A., & Rosli, R. (2023). Stem education and the gender gap: Strategies for encouraging girls to pursue stem careers. *Jurnal Pendidikan Matematika*.7 (2). <https://doi.org/10.31000/prima.v7i2.8411>
- Werbach, K., & Hunter, D. (2012). *For the win: How game thinking can revolutionize your business*. Wharton Digital Press.  
[https://books.google.com/books/about/For\\_the\\_Win.html?id=lQePylwM-KgC](https://books.google.com/books/about/For_the_Win.html?id=lQePylwM-KgC)
- Whitton, N. (2011). *Game engagement theory and adult learning*. IGI Global.  
<https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-60960-495-0.ch002>
- Wiggins, G., Tschannen-Moran, B., & Van Houten, J. (2016). The power of role-play in learning. *Educational Leadership*, 74(1), 10-15. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1113336>

- Wu, W., Hsiao, H., Wu, P., Lin, C., and Huang, S. (2012). Investigating the learning-theory foundations of game-based learning: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 28: 265-279. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2729.2011.00437.x>
- Zarzycka-Piskorz, E. (2016). Kahoot it or not? Can games be motivating in learning grammar? *Teaching English with Technology*, 16(3), 17–36. <https://tewtjournal.org>
- Zheng, L., Zhang, X., & Gyasi, J. F. (2020). The effectiveness of gamification in computer-assisted language learning environments: A meta-analysis. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 51(6), 2005–2024. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12956>
- Zichermann, G., & Cunningham, C. (2011). *Gamification by design: Implementing game mechanics in web and mobile apps*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, Inc.

## APPENDICES

## **Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol**

**Interviewer Name:** Adam Robertson

**Interviewee Name:**

**Date of Interview:**

**Location:**

**Duration:**

### **Introduction**

#### **1. Greeting and Purpose:**

- "Hello and thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. My name is Adam Robertson, and I am researching the impact of gamification on undergraduate French courses at MTSU. This interview aims to gain insights into your personal experiences and perceptions regarding the use of gamification elements.

#### **2. Confidentiality Assurance:**

- "I want to assure you that your responses will remain confidential and will be used solely for research purposes. Your name or any identifying information will not be included in my final dissertation."

#### **3. Consent:**

- "Do you have any questions before we begin? Are you comfortable with proceeding with the interview?"

### **Interview Questions**

#### **Section 1: General Experience with Gamification**

##### **1. Overall Experience:**

- "Can you describe your overall experience with gamification in this course? What were your initial thoughts when these elements were introduced?"
- Follow-up: "How have these experiences changed or evolved as the course went on?"

##### **2. Engagement:**

- "In what ways do you feel gamification has affected your engagement with the course material? Can you provide specific examples?"

##### **3. Motivation:**

- "Has the use of gamified elements impacted your motivation to learn French? If so, how?"

## **Section 2: Specific Gamification Elements**

### **4. Favorite Elements:**

- "Which gamification elements (e.g., points, badges, leaderboards, interactive activities) were most enjoyable or beneficial? Why?"
- Follow-up: "Can you share a specific instance where one of these elements positively impacted your learning?"

### **5. Challenges:**

- "Were there any gamified elements that you found challenging or less effective? What made them so?"
- Follow-up: "How did you overcome these challenges, if at all?"

### **6. Collaboration and Competition:**

- "How did gamification influence collaboration or competition among your peers? Can you provide examples of how this affected your learning experience?"

## **Section 3: Impact on Learning and Skills Development**

### **7. Skill Development:**

- "In what ways has gamification contributed to your development of French language skills, such as speaking, listening, reading, or writing?"

### **8. Learning Outcomes:**

- "Do you believe that gamification has improved your overall learning outcomes in the course? Why or why not?"

### **9. Retention and Application:**

- "Has gamification helped you retain and apply the French language outside the classroom? If yes, how?"

## **Section 4: Reflection and Suggestions**

### **10. Improvements and Suggestions:**

- "Based on your experience, what improvements or additional gamification elements would you suggest for future foreign language courses?"

### **11. Comparative Experience:**

- "How does your experience with gamification in this course compare to other courses that did not use gamified elements? What differences did you notice?"

## **Closing**

### **1. Final Thoughts:**

- "Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with gamification?"

### **2. Appreciation:**

- "Thank you very much for your time and insights. Your feedback is incredibly valuable and will contribute significantly to understanding the impact of gamification in language learning."

### **3. Next Steps:**

- "If you are interested, I can share the results of this study once it is completed. Would you like to receive a summary of the findings?"

## Appendix B: Survey Instrument

### Gamification Survey

#### Background Information

Semester: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Survey Questions

##### General Experience

- Think about your overall experience with gamification in your courses. What elements were most engaging or challenging, and how did they impact your learning and motivation throughout the course?
- What types of gamification elements were used? (e.g., points, badges, leaderboards, challenges)

##### Engagement and Motivation

- How did gamification affect your engagement with the course material?
- Can you provide specific examples of how gamification motivated you to participate more actively?
- Can you tell me how you felt more or less motivated than any other instructional methods you have encountered?

- On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you agree with the statement: 'Gamified elements in my French course increase my motivation to participate?' 1 being not much and 5 being very much. Circle the number that best describes your motivation.

1      2      3      4      5

### **Learning**

- Do you feel that gamification impacted your learning? How so?
- Can you share any instances where gamification helped you better understand a concept or skill?
- Were there any gamification elements that you found particularly helpful or unhelpful?

### **Challenges**

- Did you encounter any challenges or drawbacks with the gamification elements? If so, what were they?
- Were there any aspects of gamification that you found frustrating?

### **Wrap-Up**

- Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience with gamification?

## Appendix C: Informed Consent

### INFORMED CONSENT

Research Study: Gamification of Undergraduate French Courses

Protocol Number:

Approval Date:

Principal Investigator: Adam Robertson

Co Principal Investigator: Dr. Kim Godwin

Institution: Middle Tennessee State University

You are being asked to participate in a research project. The following information is provided to inform you about the research project and your participation in it.

1. The primary aim of this research is to investigate how students in an undergraduate foreign language course perceive and experience gamification. Specifically, it examines the influence of gamified course content on student engagement and motivation. By identifying both the benefits and challenges of gamification in this context, the research seeks to provide insights that help educators optimize the use of gamified elements in their teaching strategies. Understanding these dynamics is significant as it can lead to more effective and engaging language learning experiences. Ultimately, this can improve key student outcomes, such as foreign language acquisition, retention, and academic success.

2. You will be asked a series of questions on your experience with gamified course content.

3. This survey is short and should take no more than 10 minutes of your time. Additionally, a follow up interview will not take more than 10 minutes.

4. There is no compensation for participation in this survey.

5. Your rights as a participant include: a) Your participation in this research is voluntary. b) You may skip any item that you don't want to answer, and you may stop the research at any time. Note that if you leave an item blank, you may be warned of an incomplete response should want to go back. You may still choose to skip the question. Some items may be required to accurately present the study. c) There are no risks associated with your participation besides possible discomfort with some of the questions. d) The benefit to participating in this study is that you are contributing to engagement and motivation along with improved learning outcomes for gamified courses. e) You will **NOT** be asked to provide any identifiable personal information. f) All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private, but total privacy cannot be promised. Your information may be shared with people at MTSU (such as the MTSU Institutional Review Board) or other agencies (such as the Federal

Government Office for Human Research Protection) if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.

Contact Information: If you should have any questions about this research study please contact:

Principal Investigator: Adam Robertson, [ajr6z@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:ajr6z@mtmail.mtsu.edu)

For additional information about giving consent or your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) Office of Compliance at 615-494-8918 or via email at [irb\\_information@mtsu.edu](mailto:irb_information@mtsu.edu). (<http://www.mtsu.edu/irb>)

If you're ready to get started, please make your choice below before clicking the arrow button. Thanks again for volunteering your time to this project!

I have read the information above.

I am at least 18 years old. I believe I understand the purpose, risks, and benefits of the research, and I know what I will be expected to do as a study participant.

## Appendix D: French Course Syllabus

### FREN 1010: Introduction to French with Madame McRae 3 CREDIT HOURS

## Instructor Information

The instructor for this course is Joan McRae (Kleinlein is my married name that is sometimes attached). You can reach me through D2L email:

[jmcrae@elearn.mtsu.edu](mailto:jmcrae@elearn.mtsu.edu). Regular email is [joan.mcrae@mtsu.edu](mailto:joan.mcrae@mtsu.edu). Office hours in Honors 222 are held daily MW 10:30-12; TR 1:30-3, except Friday by appointment. The office for World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures is located in BDA 301.

## Course Information

### Description

This course will introduce you into the French and Francophone world. The method of language learning in this course has moved from a focus on grammar and translation toward effective communication, literacy, and cultural interaction in conjunction with ACTFL's World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. That means that we will be learning and acting as much as possible in the real world through videos and other media applications.

### **This course fulfills a True Blue Core requirement as follows:**

- Non-Written Communication (NWC) (3 hours)
  - For all catalogs 2024-2025 and beyond, this course satisfies the True Blue Core curriculum requirement (3 hours) for Non-Written Communication. To learn more about TBC requirements: <https://w1.mtsu.edu/truebluecore/core.php>.
  - For all catalogs prior to 2024-2025, this course may NOT be used to satisfy general education requirements. Students wishing to switch to the 2024-2025 catalog should see their advisors to discuss the implications of changing catalogs. To learn more about general education requirements for catalogs prior to 2024-2025: [https://w1.mtsu.edu/gen\\_ed/requirements.php](https://w1.mtsu.edu/gen_ed/requirements.php).
  - The TBC outcome for Non-Written Communication: Students communicate effectively through oral, embodied, or other mediated formats, considering organization, language (or other forms of expression), delivery, supporting material, a cogent central message, and audience.

### **This course is also a MT Engage Designated Course**

**MT Engage Designated Course:** Connect, Reflect, Engage! In this MT Engage course, you will be an active learner who participates in a beyond-the-classroom experience and makes connections across learning opportunities. You will complete reflections that help you make sense of your learning and its value to your educational and career goals. To support a developing sense of yourself as a learner, upload at least one assignment from this course involving reflection to your OneDrive and create a folder named MT Engage so you can easily locate all the work from your MT Engage classes. Then, look back on this collection of your work later to assess

your growth and identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities you have developed during your time at MTSU.

**ePortfolio Statement:** As part of the MT Engage program, students will build an ePortfolio presentation showcasing their ability to make connections across and reflect on various learning experiences. Students should be aware that ePortfolios are not to contain confidential personal information, and that a student's unauthorized storage or use of copyrighted works or proprietary information in an ePortfolio is prohibited. ePortfolio privacy: ePortfolios are private until the public link is shared (this access continues until the box is unchecked). ePortfolios are not internet searchable until they are posted to a host webpage.

### Objectives and Outcomes

Course objectives are organized according the standards set the by American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). We will be exercising Interpersonal, Interpretive and Presentational communication to achieve a level of Novice-Mid Proficiency. The World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages include five goal areas, the "5 C's". Specific student learning objectives are detailed in each module of the course.

1. Communication (Interpretive, Interpersonal, Presentational),
2. Cultures (including examining the products, practices and perspectives of the francophone cultures),
3. Connections to others,
4. Comparisons with our own culture, and
5. Communities of meaning.

### Prerequisites and Co-requisites

There are no prerequisites or co-requisites to this course.

## Course Materials

### Required Textbooks

The only requirement is a reliable computer with **video camera** and **microphone**, and internet that will open our access to the Francophone world. There is no need to buy a book as materials will be provided for you in the D2L shell.

### Other Required Resources

## Assessment and Grading

### Grading Procedure

Assignment details are listed in course content.

### Grading Scale

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Homework and tests	50
Discussions	15
VideoNotes	15
Presentation and Reflection Paper	20

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Range</b>
A	100-90%

B	89-80%
C	79-70%
D	69-60%
F	59% and below

Incomplete grades are given rarely and only in extenuating circumstances. The [MTSU Undergraduate Catalog](#) states: The grade "I" indicates that the student has not completed all course requirements because of illness or other uncontrollable circumstances, especially those which occur toward the end of the term. Mere failure to make up work or turn in required work on time does not provide the basis for the grade of "I" unless extenuating circumstances noted above are present for reasons acceptable to the instructor. Please refer to the Undergraduate catalog for the complete Incomplete Grade Policy.

### Feedback

- Submitted work will be graded and feedback provided within one week of submission (usually faster!) depending on the nature and length of the assignment. **You will find feedback either in the dialogue box (written) or by Video in the attachment just below the dialogue box. It will have your name and the module assignment number. Ex: Kylie6**
- Assignments must be submitted to the Dropbox or other specified location.
- Assignment deadlines are detailed on the home page and in the Assignments.

## Participation

### Class Participation

Student participation is required in all interactive aspects of the course. For example, you must:

- participate as required;
- communicate with other students in team projects is expected;
- communicate with the instructor as a learning resource;
- check the course bulletin board frequently for announcements;
- actively participate in threaded discussion events.

### Punctuality - Late Policy

Please adhere to the due dates for each activity so that students can progress through the course together. Assignments posted a week or more after the deadline will see a deduction of points unless arranged with your professor.

### Attendance Reporting

MTSU Administration requires that instructors complete an attendance report for each course each semester. Regular class attendance is required and will be monitored by:

- the D2L system report;
- participation in the discussion board;
- timely submission of course assignments.

If several class assignment submissions are missing, student attendance will be reported as “no longer attending.”

## Course Ground Rules

The following are expected of all students in this course:

- learning how to navigate in the learning management system (D2L) and our language platform (Lingco)
- using the course email address as opposed to a personal email address;
- addressing technical problems immediately; and
- observing course netiquette at all times.

## Email

Per the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#), all course communication will be conducted using D2L email. Faculty will not respond to student emails via a non-institutional assigned email account.

## Student Resources

### Technical Support

[D2L Resources](#) are available to MTSU Online Students.

## Students with Disabilities

Middle Tennessee State University is committed to campus access in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any student interested in reasonable accommodations can consult the [Disability & Access Center \(DAC\)](#) website and/or contact the DAC for assistance at 615-898-2783 or [dacemail@mtsu.edu](mailto:dacemail@mtsu.edu).

## Tutoring

MTSU Online supports multiple [Online Student Services](#).

## Hope (Lottery) Scholarship Information

Do you have a lottery scholarship? To retain the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. A grade of C, D, F, FA, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility.

If you drop this class, withdraw, or if you stop attending this class you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship, and you may not be able to regain eligibility at a later time.

For additional Lottery rules, please refer to your [Lottery Statement of Understanding form](#) or contact your [MT One Stop Enrollment Counselor](#).

## Grade Appeals

[University Policy 313, Student Grade Appeals](#), provides an avenue for MTSU students to appeal a final course grade in cases in which the student alleges that unethical or unprofessional actions by the instructor and/or grading inequities improperly impacted the final grade.

### Title IX

Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against or been the victim of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking should contact a Title IX/Deputy Coordinator at 615-898- 2185 or 615-898-2750 for assistance or review [MTSU's Title IX website](#) for resources.

MTSU faculty are concerned about the well-being and development of our students and are legally obligated to share reports of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking with the University's Title IX coordinator to help ensure student's safety and welfare. Please refer to [MTSU's Title IX website](#) for contact information and details.

## Schedule of Assignments

### Calendrier du cours et dates de remise des devoirs

#### Semaine du 26 août

- mardi. Introduction au cours. Chapter 1: Bonjour!
- jeudi. Chapter 1: Bonjour!

#### Semaine du 2 septembre

- mardi. Jour congé: Le jour de travail. (Pas de classe).
- jeudi. Chapter 1: Bonjour!

#### Semaine du 9 septembre

- mardi. Chapter 1: Bonjour!
- jeudi. Chapter 2: Préparons notre voyage

#### Semaine du 16 septembre

- mardi, Chapter 2: Préparons notre voyage
- jeudi. Chapter 2: Préparons notre voyage

#### Semaine du 23 septembre

- mardi. Chapter 2: Préparons notre voyage
- jeudi. Chapitre 3: Un passport, s'il vous plaît - Mon identité.

### **Semaine du 30 septembre**

- mardi. Chapitre 3: Un passport, s'il vous plaît - Mon identité..
- jeudi. Chapitre 3: Un passport, s'il vous plaît - Mon identité..

### **Semaine du 7 octobre**

- mardi. Chapitre 4: On arrive en France
- jeudi. Chapitre 4: On arrive en France

### **Semaine du 14 octobre**

- mardi. Congé d'automne
- jeudi. Chapitre 4: On arrive en France

### **Semaine du 21 octobre**

- mardi. Chapitre 4: On arrive en France
- jeudi. Chapitre 5: Visite à Paris

### **Semaine du 28 octobre**

- mardi. Chapitre 5: Visite à Paris
- jeudi. Chapitre 5: Visite à Paris

### **Semaine du 4 novembre**

- mardi Chapitre 5: Visite à Paris
- jeudi. Chapitre 6:

### **Semaine du 11 novembre**

- mardi. Chapitre 6:
- jeudi. Chapitre 6:

### **Semaine du 18 novembre**

- mardi. Chapitre 6:
- jeudi. Chapitre 7:

### **Semaine du 25 novembre**

- mardi. Chapitre 7
- jeudi. Le jour de merci-donnant. Bon appétit!

## **Semaine du 2 décembre**

- mardi. Chapitre 7
- jeudi. Chapitre 7

## **Semaine du 9 décembre**

- Examens finales

## **Félicitations! La fin du semestre!**

*Update: October 29, 2019  
MTSU Online  
University College*

## **Appendix E: Open Educational Resource Textbook and Workbook Links**

**Textbook:** <https://mtsu.pressbooks.pub/jmcrae/>

### **Workbooks:**

Chapter 1: <https://mtsu-aits.h5p.com/content/1292344204229468328>

Chapter 2: <https://mtsu-aits.h5p.com/content/1292360483578352178>

Chapter 3: <https://mtsu-aits.h5p.com/content/1292360527619789998>

Chapter 4: <https://mtsu-aits.h5p.com/content/1292426854050756878>