



## Games in the language learning classroom: Is the juice worth the squeeze?

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### ABSTRACT

This paper introduces a playful framing device, owning and operating a juice stand, to explore the costs and benefits of using games in language learning classrooms. Throughout, the needs of new and experienced game-based language teachers are addressed directly and reflective prompts from the field of business and economics are used to encourage game-based language teaching (GBLT) practice reflection. The paper begins by introducing a heuristic model to help you, language teachers, to carefully consider whether games are really worth implementing in your practice. To explore this question, this paper looks at game use costs and benefits, classroom implementation, teaching practice, personal/professional satisfaction, and professional development. In the penultimate section, the model's treatment of GBLT costs and benefits is summarized and two bulleted-checklists are provided to help you quickly evaluate and/or assess your GBLT practice. The final section acknowledges caveats and limitations related to the framing device used in this paper. The appendix provides a list of helpful GBLT resources for both new and experienced GBLT teachers under the heading 'GBLT Ingredients.' These items can be perused and used as desired. General categories and short summaries of resources have been provided to make the list more useful as a general GBLT practice reference tool.

### KEY POINTS

**Background:** Teachers are bombarded with messages, research, and claims about games and GBLT, while receiving scant guidance about how to go about doing it.

**Aim:** Provide a GBLT heuristic device for helping teachers to evaluate if games are 'worth it' in their classroom.

**Methods:** Discussion is prompted using a lighthearted framing device, while veteran and new GBLT teachers are addressed separately.

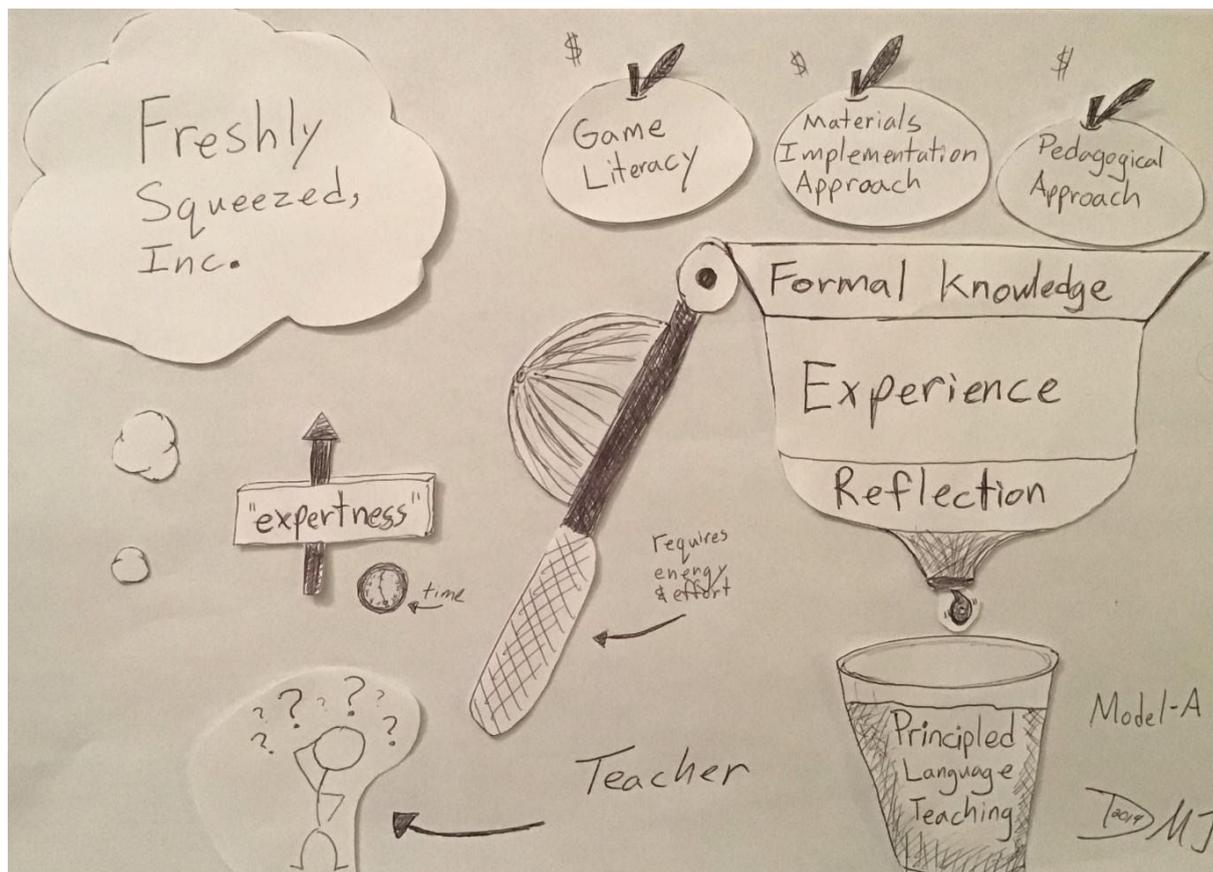
**Results:** Specific resources and suggestions are provided to support teachers.

**Conclusion:** Principled GBLT is a demanding, yet rewarding approach which, when done right, can be beneficial to both teachers and students.

### TWEET

The Freshly Squeezed, Inc. Model-A is a heuristic model intended to help you, language teachers, to carefully consider whether games are really worth implementing in your practice. After all, if the juice isn't worth the squeeze, why bother?  
#GBLTHEuristic

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**Figure 1** Freshly Squeezed, Inc. Model-A: Is the juice worth the squeeze?

## 1. Introduction: Is the juice worth the squeeze?

### 1.1 Purpose

The Freshly Squeezed, Inc. Model-A (see Figure 1) is a heuristic model intended to help you, language teachers, to carefully consider whether games are really worth implementing in your practice. After all, if the juice isn't worth the squeeze, why bother? To explore this question, this paper looks at game use costs and benefits, classroom implementation, teaching practice, personal/professional satisfaction, and professional development. In the penultimate section, two bulleted-checklists are provided to help you quickly evaluate and assess your game-based language teaching (GBLT) practice (Sections 6.2 and 6.3). The final section explores the limitations of Model-A for assessing the full worth of GBLT and related caveats. The appendix provides a list of helpful GBLT resources for both new and experienced GBLT teachers. This list is titled 'GBLT Ingredients.' Though these various resources are referenced throughout the paper, they are further described and unpacked in the appendix. Listed resources found in 'GBLT Ingredients' are divided into groups, each group has been given a descriptive heading, and brief summaries have been provided where possible. Please note that many, though not all, of the checklist items and resources are specifically focused on tabletop game use as this is the author's area of focus. Nevertheless, many of these resources are generally applicable or have parallels with other GBLT resources and many digital game resources are also included.

### 1.2 Audience

Those of you already using games can utilize this model as a reflective prompt for evaluating your GBLT practice. Those of you considering the potential use of games can use this model as a way to assess, shape, and focus your potential future GBLT practice. As experienced GBLT practitioners and beginning/potential GBLT practitioners have different needs, concerns, and levels of investment, both groups are addressed directly throughout this paper. **'Starting up'** is used to prompt discussion aimed at beginning/potential GBLT practitioners. **'In business'** is used to prompt discussion aimed at experienced GBLT practitioners. In various sections of the paper, quotes referring to economic or business concepts are introduced. Juice stand operators might leverage these concepts to predict,

increase, and maximize their profits. The purpose of introducing these quotes in this article is to provide teachers with some helpful and refreshing vantage points from which they can reflect on how these concepts connect to principled GBLT practice. These quotes are prompted by the term **'Reflection-ade.'**

'Starting up' is used to prompt discussion aimed at beginning/potential GBLT practitioners. 'In business' is used to prompt discussion aimed at experienced GBLT practitioners.

### 1.3 Framing

The broad framing device of this model involves viewing you, the game-using teacher, as a roadside juice stand operator who has a passion/interest in the craft of juice making. This imagery is inspired by a business book by George Casey, Jr. (2010) called 'Is the Juice Worth the Squeeze?' The key elements identified as inputs in this GBLT version of the model are game literacy, materials implementation approach, and pedagogical approach. These are represented as oranges in the model (you are free to imagine your own fruit of choice). These inputs need to be developed, picked, gathered, and/or prepared and this requires significant investments of time, energy, and effort. The key elements filtering and extracting the 'goodness' from these inputs are formal knowledge, experiential knowledge, and reflection. 'Goodness' here refers to the things that potentially support principled language teaching and 'language learning' flourishing of your students. Formal knowledge, experiential knowledge, and reflection are represented in the model as parts of the juicer and are considered key teacher cognition elements that shape and ensure the quality of the output. Extracting and filtering the juice with the juicer requires time, energy, and effort. The key output in the Freshly Squeezed, Inc Model-A is principled language teaching (supporting 'language learning' flourishing) through games and game-related learning. This is represented as a glass collecting what is, hopefully, delicious and refreshing orange juice. Note that the quality of the juice is related to both the inputs (oranges) and the processing tools (juicer). The final part shown in Model-A is the GBLT teacher. This is represented as the juicer operator (teacher). The skill (expertness) of the operator impacts the selection, quality, and volume of the inputs, processing, and outputs. So, as your GBLT teaching expertness increases, so does your ability to leverage personal, professional, materials, and learner benefits in increasingly efficient and effective ways. Thus, teacher expertness impacts all areas of the process.

Imagining this model extending over a period of time, the GBLT teacher can be thought of as someone running a roadside juice stand (developing a language teaching practice using games). Students, of course, are a crucial and fundamental element relating to the rationale and success of this endeavor. After all, if they do not enjoy, need, or see value in the juice, it may be difficult to justify continuing the juice stand. Freshly Squeezed, Inc. Model-A does not specifically include a representation of students as it is aimed at focusing attention on teachers and game-based language teaching. Nonetheless, the critical role of students is strongly implied and the connection should be borne in mind. The fuller teacher and student dynamic implied here is much more than a unidirectional supplier and consumer relationship.

The broad framing device of this model involves viewing you, the game-using teacher, as a roadside juice stand operator who has a passion/interest in the craft of juice making.

## 2. State of GBLT field

### 2.1 Allure, promise, and disarray

Game use for language learning is currently a hot topic for many educators and academics (deHaan, 2019; Reinders & Wattana, 2012; Reinhardt & Sykes, 2012; Reinhardt, 2019; Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013;

Thomas, 2012; York, 2019). Much has been made of the rich affordances and motivational potential offered by games and also of how games are poised to revolutionize both language teaching and learning. However, it seems that the long-promised 'Juice-o-matic 2100' is stuck in some kind of development hell. Some in the field champion game-based approaches, some wave the flag for game-enhanced, and others support game-informed approaches (Reinhardt & Sykes, 2012). A game-based teaching approach uses games specifically created for educational purposes. The intent guiding the design of this kind of game is significantly influenced by the goal of creating a game experience which targets specific language learning objectives (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013). A game-enhanced approach uses games designed for the commercial gaming market. Though these games were not designed with language learning purposes in mind, they can still be leveraged to provide a range of language learning opportunities through and around the games, for example, as cultural artifacts or as topics of affinity groups (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2013). A game-informed approach involves applying the theories of games and play to language teaching. It may include things like incorporating game-like goal-orientation or gamification (levels, leaderboards, badges, etc.) (Reinhardt, 2019). The rich and engaging qualities of games as materials are noted by supporters of the different approaches, though the emphasis on and utilization of these qualities often differs. In this paper, game-based is used more generally to refer to the use of games for language teaching purposes.

These various camps are not unified in their vision and often seem to disagree on fundamental elements of pedagogical import. On top of this, there are varying claims about how different types of games may impact teachers' practices. Does implementing games in the classroom mean less work for teachers? More work? Both perhaps, and at the same time? Do contemporary teachers need to use games or is it simply one material option among many? Should games even be considered as materials and, if so, are some games more 'appropriate' to use than others and how does the context of use affect 'appropriate use'? Are games even beneficial for supporting language learning and, if they are, how are they beneficial? Should games be thought of as drag-and-drop peripheral materials providing students with 'free practice' or should they be a central point around which classroom learning occurs? To arrive at sound answers to these questions, it will be helpful for you to begin with a clear understanding of your own core beliefs about teaching and learning in your own classroom. By nesting your consideration of games and GBLT within a pedagogically-focused and context-informed mindset, you will give yourself a powerful lens by which you can more clearly examine and assess GBLT claims, approaches, and implications.

## 2.2 State of thirst

Can GBLT quench your thirst for a principled, effective, and rewarding classroom approach and practice? In short, there are a lot of different and sometimes conflicting messages about what game use really means for students and teachers. From research on teacher game use and related cognition (Jones, 2020), it seems that many language teachers have at least some kind of thirst, interest, or stake in improving their classroom utilization of games and GBLT practice. What then is the way forward for boots-on-the-ground teachers interested in using or already using games in their classes? How can you understand if the outcomes, promised and actual, are/will be worth the time, energy, and effort?

## 3. Cost-benefit analysis and general fit to GBLT

### Reflection-ade: cost-benefit analysis

One way of addressing this last question involves conducting an informed and detailed cost-benefit analysis (Layard, 1994) related to the decision to use or not use games in your classroom.

The basic notion is very simple. If we have to decide whether to do A or not, the rule is: Do A if the benefits exceed those of the next best alternative course of action, and not otherwise. If we apply this rule to all possible choices, we shall generate the largest possible benefits, given the constraints within which we live. (p. 1)

### 3.1 Cost-benefit analysis introduction for GBLT

If you have an interest in implementing GBLT, you have an interest in ensuring that it helps you to accomplish goals related to student learning, your teaching context, and your practice. Your decision to implement GBLT should be based on an accurate assessment of benefits outweighing costs. Costs related to your GBLT practice will involve significant investments of time, energy, and effort. You should not be fooled into thinking of games as a quick-and-easy solution to solve teaching time management woes or a way of making language learning and teaching effortless. The heralding of games as being some sort of just-add-water fix is not new to the field. And neither is the skeptical reaction to this position, nor the middle-ground perspective acknowledging both the richness of game affordances and the need for pedagogically sound support and implementation (Davis & Hollowell, 1977). Costs stemming from principled implementation often overlap and mingle, thus making it difficult to parse out the details. It may also take you time to develop your ability to appreciate and leverage benefits appropriately. As you consciously shape and develop your GBLT practice, your ability to more accurately evaluate, identify, and leverage benefits will hopefully increase. Cultivating a habit of reflecting on the costs and benefits in your GBLT practice will help to ensure that you are hitting your targets and staying in the 'black' (i.e. profitable). This may also be a useful tool for helping you to evaluate and assess your GBLT approach as your circumstances change (class, school, etc.). Therefore, there is value for both new and experienced GBLT practitioners in implementing a GBLT cost-benefit analysis.

**Starting up:** This kind of analysis can be especially difficult to do when you are beginning to develop your game knowledge and/or GBLT knowledge. Why? Well, this is a challenge for two key reasons: a) the 'costs' may not be clear to you and may not be properly estimated, and b) the 'benefits' may be difficult for you to evaluate, predict, and secure. Thus, if you are considering the use of games, you may face challenges related to conducting even basic cost-benefit analyses and may benefit from support from experienced GBLT practitioners. Two especially useful tools/supports are communities of game-using language teachers (online or otherwise) and published research/accounts detailing game use in language learning classrooms. Lists of these resources are found in 'GBLT Ingredients' (GBLT Communities, GBLT Published Resources, and GBLT Classroom Accounts).

**In business:** Honest and accurate analysis can sometimes be a challenge for teachers already using games in their language learning classrooms. Why? People who have already invested in something can become vulnerable to evaluating future decisions/actions based on a sunk cost fallacy (Arkes & Blumer, 1985). For example, simply having invested a lot of time in gaming or GBLT practice development does not on its own justify GBLT implementation. Considering costs, the decision to continue using an approach or a specific implementation should not be based on prior sunk costs, but rather the present and future outcomes. Teachers should try to ensure their rationale for using games in the classroom is both relevant and based on an awareness of the present incremental costs. It can be difficult to implement rigorous and regular audits and inspections with impartiality. However, audits are necessary to ensure the bottom-line is being met and inspections are required to ensure the process quality is assured/controlled. Classroom implementation and learning outcomes are two especially important areas worth monitoring with these tools. Experienced game-using language teachers should plan and conduct regular reviews and monitor their practice through useful mechanisms that not only fit their context, but are also easily implemented. Suggested resources are listed in 'GBLT Ingredients' (Journals, Blogs, and Reflection, GBLT Audits and Inventories, and Audit and Inventory Tips).

#### **Reflection-ade: sunk cost effect**

The Sunk Cost effect is described in Arkes and Blumer (1985) as:

[The Sunk Cost effect] is manifested in a greater tendency to continue an endeavor once an investment in money, effort, or time has been made. The prior investment, which is motivating the present decision to continue, does so despite the fact that it objectively should not influence the decision. (p.124)

## 4. GBLT lesson costs and benefits

### Reflection-ade: cost-benefit analysis

Discussing the scope and limits of Cost-Benefit Analysis, Boardman, Greenberg, Vining, and Weimer (2017) note:

It is important to try to include the full range of consequences of each project. However, from a practical perspective, analysts can consider only a manageable number of important impacts [inputs and outputs]. (LOC 461 of 2932)

The key cost/benefit areas identified in this paper as being related to GBLT lessons are pedagogy, game literacy, and materials. These are highlighted as they shape the way in which you use games in the classroom and, consequently, influence the outputs (teaching and learning).

### 4.1 Pedagogy

The use of games in your classroom should be coordinated and supported/framed by a cohesive pedagogical approach (deHaan, 2019; Filsecker & Bündgens-Kosten, 2012; Sykes & Reinhardt, 2012; York, 2019). This is the business plan that establishes the rationale of your business, outlines how you focus your efforts to achieve the targets, and shows how you will become profitable. Your chosen pedagogical approach shapes how the material is used and it influences the learning experience.

Implementing a classroom approach supporting the principled use of games requires research, trial and error, and careful reflection on pedagogical fit. As such, GBLT pedagogical practice development requires effort. Actually, more than that, it requires sustained effort as your practice is cultivated over time. The cultivation of your GBLT pedagogical practice can be helped along by a variety of experiences, practices, and resources. This includes accruing experiential knowledge based on approaches and materials (Borg, 2015), reflecting meaningfully on successes and challenges (Watanabe, 2016), interacting with others in communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Zagal, 2010), forging relationships in “passionate affinity spaces” (York, deHaan, & Hourdequin, 2019), and expanding formal knowledge around approaches, implementation, and pedagogy (Borg, 2015). Borg emphasizes that expert language teacher cognitions are characterized by formal and experiential knowledge operating in a holistic, synergetic, and integrated fashion. This allows expert teachers to see learning potential, anticipate problems, and respond in an increasingly appropriate fashion. Thus, developing GBLT expertise requires a sustained investment. Investing in the development of your GBLT pedagogy also yields significant benefits. This includes incremental benefits to your classroom teaching practice and other benefits related to professional development, personal satisfaction, and learning opportunities for students.

GBLT pedagogical practice development requires effort. Actually, more than that, it requires sustained effort as your practice is cultivated over time.

**Starting up:** If you are just starting or considering the use of games, it might be useful to begin by reflecting on your pedagogy. Maybe this is something that you have thought before, maybe this is something you are revisiting, or maybe this is something you are discovering. Filsecker and Bündgens-Kosten (2012) provide a very helpful overview of GBLT pedagogy, so that may be a helpful resource to consult (access information is provided in ‘GBLT ingredients’). After that, it will be helpful to explore some frameworks for classroom implementation. Some possible implementation models include The Kotoba Rollers Framework, Explore-Examine-Extend (EEE), the Game Terakoya framework, Task/Project-based approaches, and Present-Practice-Produce (PPP). Blogs and discussion forums may provide further details and discussion related to specific implementation. Links to examples of blogs exploring frameworks (The Kotoba Rollers Framework and Explore-Examine-Extend) are provided in the ‘GBLT ingredients’ section. Jones (2020) suggests that formal GBLT pedagogical knowledge and training play a significant role in supporting expert GBLT classroom implementation. As such, expanding your GBLT knowledge in this area will pay dividends. Further information on GBLT

pedagogy and frameworks is presented in 'GBLT Ingredients' (GBLT Pedagogical Publications and GBLT Frameworks).

**In business:** If you are already cultivating a GBLT practice, it may be useful to keep a journal/blog to explore your GBLT experiences, challenges, and breakthroughs. This can help you to understand both your practice development and the current state of your practice and identify new things you may want to explore (e.g. new frameworks/approaches). Moreover, being open to and mindful of feedback from your classroom implementations may help you to find necessary tweaks. Journaling/blogging can prompt you to examine this valuable feedback more thoroughly. Journaling is an approach that has significant utility for fostering professional development (Gebhard, 2017) and cultivating a reflective practice (Watanabe, 2016). This can be done on your own, with interaction from the public, or as part of a community. An example of a reflective journal resource and information on reflective practice/reflection is provided in the 'GBLT ingredients' section (Journals Blogs Reflection and GBLT Classroom Accounts). Additionally, some community resource links for revisiting GBLT pedagogy, frameworks, and GBLT communities are also provided in 'GBLT Ingredients' (GBLT Communities). Getting feedback on your practice from GBLT peers and learning from the experience/approaches of others will help you to both define and refine your practice.

## 4.2 Game literacy

Another area of investment for teachers is the development of game literacy. This involves spending time learning how to play games, understanding games in relation to other games, and, perhaps, developing a deeper understanding of game design (Zagal, 2010). Zagal further notes that understanding games involves understanding them within culture and according to design-related elements/experiences. This kind of understanding can allow you to better leverage deeper and broader learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Interestingly, Zagal also notes that familiarity with some elements of game literacy may contribute to 'blind spots' related to other areas. Acquiring expertise in playing does not equate to the acquisition of comprehensive game literacy and, in some cases, gameplay expertise may link to assumptions which can hinder expanded game literacy, for example, hyper-focusing on one game type or overvaluing your personal game-related perspectives in a way that undervalues the fuller range of perspectives and affordances. This does not mean that familiarity with games and playing them is bad in itself, but rather that thoughtfully playing games and reflecting on them are key activities illuminating the way to increased game literacy. Your game literacy will also impact your access to games. Being familiar with game access channels and understanding the pros of cons of specific games is an important part of practical GBLT practitioner game literacy. Clearly, it requires a significant investment of time and effort to find, learn, and play new games, engage in gaming communities, stay abreast of the gaming news/media, and examine the nature of your own game literacy. Having an interest and curiosity in these endeavors will make this undertaking much more enjoyable for you. You do not need to become a die-hard gamer to implement GBLT, but investing in improving your game literacy will pay off in the classroom!

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Game materials selection, also supported by game literacy, is a complicated business and requires informed consideration of the materials and learning objectives (Becker, 2017). Being familiar with and/or contributing to game recommendation lists will help to ensure you have access to curated games options. Other implementation factors need to be considered as well. Should the students pick the game? If so, when and how will they be supported and how will the implementation be coordinated (York, 2017)? Learning about games and their selection, implementation, and limitations involves a cost of time and effort, but it has clear benefits in terms of classroom implementation.

**Starting up:** Expanding your game literacy involves playing games, learning about games, following game-peripheral media (e.g. videos, podcasts, or articles about a game or game-related element), and connecting with game-related communities. Growing your understanding of these areas will not only allow you to learn about games and expand your resource awareness, but will also help you to better understand games as cultural artifacts. For example, watching game reviews or video playthroughs may help you identify games that you may like to research further or purchase. Also, engaging in online discussion forums or face-to-face game groups may help you to better understand gaming culture and interpersonal dynamics. This may open up new teaching and learning opportunities, depending on your pedagogical approach. Playing more games and reflecting on your experiences is a great way to build your game literacy, which will in turn help to support classroom implementation. For example, being familiar with the rules of a specific game will help you to troubleshoot problems during implementation. More than that, increasing your general game awareness will help you to anticipate problems and understand how to resolve them quickly (e.g. forums, FAQs, rulebook). Accessing games may be an issue for you depending on your location and budget. Even experienced GBLT practitioners with large personal game collections can find the process of purchasing games for their classes to be a bit tricky, while others may have access to generous school funds to purchase games or a school-provided gaming library (Jones, 2020). Improved game literacy will put you in a better position to make the most of your resources. Some options for accessing games without purchasing new games include visiting game cafes/stores, visiting a game meet-up, or thrifting second-hand games. Links to game-related communities, resources for learning about games, game access tips, tips for expanding game literacy, and game-related media and peripheral media are provided in 'GBLT Ingredients' (Game Related Communities, Resources for Learning About Games, Game Access Tips, Tips for Expanding Game Literacy, Game Related Media and Peripheral Media). Some general tips related to implementation and selection are also provided (Tips for Implementing Games).

**In business:** Try to avoid being overly 'game' focused such that it interferes with or distracts from your focus on teaching/learning. You may have gotten into GBLT because you love games, but that should not overshadow your attention to teaching (at least not in the classroom!). As a teacher with a high level of game literacy, try not take your students' game familiarity or interest for granted. This may cause you to create or encounter implementation gaps and problems in your lessons (Jones, 2020). These might include problems such as game selection or jargon-related comprehension problems during implementation. If you are passionate about games and devote a lot of time to them, it is easy to forget that others may be only just discovering them or may not like them. Give options and choices that will empower the students in your classes. This includes giving them opportunities to voice dislikes and concerns about both GBLT and impact classroom implementation (e.g. game/materials selection). It may be useful to curate or provide a list of games to students. This was reported as an approach taken by expert GBLT teachers in Jones (2020). Links to curated game lists are provided in 'GBLT Ingredients' (Curated Games Lists). Frame the games as supporting language learning and be careful/proactive with your language so that it emphasizes rich learning opportunities (Jones, 2020). A basic example might include referring to a game rulebook as a 'text' when using it in class. Continue to research games and stay familiar with related resources/media. This will help to expand your game literacy and your range of potential classroom materials (games, media, and related communities). Tips on expanding game literacy are provided in 'GBLT Ingredients' (Tips for Expanding Game Literacy). Be active in gaming communities and GBLT communities of practice. This is a great way to learn about new games, forge personal connections, and sustain your personal GBLT motivation. You can also contribute to the GBLT community by mentoring new GBLT teachers and interacting with established GBLT practitioners. Lists of communities and leadership resources are provided in 'GBLT Ingredients' (Game Related Communities, GBLT Communities, and Expertise in Leadership). Play more games! Playing games is essential game literacy research that will expand your game literacy and support your GBLT practice. It is important that expertise in the playing of a game should not be equated with expertise in teaching with games and that your game play should be supported by thoughtful reflection (Zagal, 2010). Tips related to accessing and implementing games are presented in 'GBLT ingredients' (Game Access Tips and Tips for Implementing Games).

You may have gotten into GBLT because you love games, but that should not overshadow your attention to teaching (at least not in the classroom!).

### 4.3 Materials

An informed materials perspective must account for broader considerations related to context, learners, and oneself (Tomlinson, 2013). Integrating a game into lessons in a principled fashion uses significant amounts of time, energy, and effort. This will often involve creating or finding supplementary scaffolding materials, planning activities to promote targeted language learning and connections to greater learning, managing classroom play, assessing learning outcomes, and taking on a variety of other materials-related roles and responsibilities (Jones, 2020; Marklund & Taylor, 2016; Miller & Hegelheimer, 2006; Molin, 2017; Ranalli, 2008; Shintaku, 2019; York & deHaan, 2018). Additionally, your ability to select, implement, modify, support, leverage, and use materials in your GBLT classroom will be greatly affected by both your GBLT pedagogy and game literacy. Using games and game-related GBLT materials as resources can afford a number of powerful teaching and learning opportunities. How you use and support resources/materials will shape the translation of the potential into tangible outcomes. You need to extract the juice, as it were. Simply having the choicest ingredients does not guarantee the delivery of a great product and fair-to-middling ingredients in skillful hands can be used to produce something wonderful.

**Starting up:** If you are a new GBLT practitioner, you may benefit greatly from using or modifying support materials and suggestions developed by experienced GBLT practitioners. As these materials have had the benefit of being tested in classrooms, they may be able to save you some time and headaches. Still, you may want to change the materials to suit your classes. Of course, the materials approach will need to align with your pedagogical approach and will be informed by your game literacy. Sharing the materials that you have developed with GBLT peers is a great way to sharpen your materials abilities. Additionally, reflecting critically on feedback related to implementation will help immensely. A list of places to find game selection, GBLT materials, general materials information, and peer support in GBLT communities is provided in 'GBLT Ingredients' (Game Selection, GBLT Materials, General Materials Information, and GBLT Communities).

**In business:** If you are an experienced GBLT practitioner, you should consider creating and sharing a collection of GBLT materials and engaging with GBLT peers. Contributing to GBLT practice will help you develop professionally and will help others in their implementation efforts. You will develop professionally by placing yourself in positions where you have to explain, justify, and get feedback on your GBLT practices. This will help you to sharpen the blade, as it were. Additionally, as you take on new and more complex professional opportunities, you may gain new and helpful perspectives on your classroom practices (e.g. GBLT academic/expert teacher, workshop facilitator, panelist, research collaborator, GBLT materials/game expert, etc.). Blogs or online GBLT teacher communities are two ways of sharing your resources and experiences online. Giving workshops where you can provide materials is also a way of supporting future and current GBLT practitioners (Jones, 2020). Game selection resource examples, GBLT workshop and presentation tips, blog sharing information, GBLT materials information, general materials information, and GBLT community information is provided in 'GBLT Ingredients' (Game Selection, GBLT Workshop and Presentation Tips, Blogs, GBLT Materials General Materials Information, and GBLT Communities).

### 4.4 Final thoughts on GBLT lesson costs and benefits

If you are interested and/or invested in the principled use of games in language learning, much like a roadside juice stand operator, you need to periodically assess the situation and take stock. Do, or will, your benefits justify your costs? To do this you ought to consider and develop your pedagogy/approach, game literacy, and GBLT materials expertise. How are you investing in the cultivation of your GBLT classroom implementation? What do you need to work on to hit your targets and establish new ones? How will you sustain and expand based on current constraints, future goals, and specific objectives? Will you be opening the roadside juice stand again tomorrow? Will you close

up shop and move on to a new business? Will you consider expanding your locations or your menu options? Is a particular investment reasonable, wise, and prudent? Will people buy the prune juice you bought on discount? How can you make better margins on the kind of juice flavour that people most want? How much of a joy/pain is it to make the juice? What can you learn from other juice makers? You should have goals, a plan to help you achieve them, and a critical self-awareness that will help you to assess both and make adjustments as needed.

### **Reflection-ade: business plan**

According to Honig and Karlsson (2004):

Business plans are based on the premise of the rational economic actor. From this perspective, the business plan is a rational activity that assists the owners of new firms (entrepreneurs) to earn larger profits through efficiency gains and/or increased sales. (p. 35)

## **5. Costs and benefits for your GBLT practice**

### **Reflection-ade: different investment criteria**

Perspective, as noted by Mason and Stark (2004), may greatly impact investor expectations and actions:

...different funders will look for different types of information in a business plan, have different expectations about what information should be included and will interrogate the business plan in different ways. Their decision on whether to proceed will also be based on different weightings of criteria. Entrepreneurs (and their advisers) therefore need to be aware of the need to customize their funding proposal according to [the kind of funding they are seeking]. (p. 242)

Considering your broader GBLT practice involves looking at longer-term costs and benefits by shifting the focus from the classroom implementation toward your professional development and personal satisfaction as a GBLT practitioner. The context in which you implement GBLT will have a huge impact on both your classroom implementation and your practice development. Connecting to this, by engaging in the continued cultivation of your GBLT practice, it will change and develop over time. As it does, not only will you be better able to leverage it for classroom purposes, but also for professional development and growth. Finally, your personal satisfaction in your GBLT practice is an essential component worth considering. After all, teaching is sometimes referred to as the 'lonely' profession and teacher burnout is well documented. Feeling satisfied about your practice and seeing its development as a meaningful endeavor will help to sustain and focus your efforts.

### **5.1 Context**

All classes exist within a context (Richards, 2001) and principled game use within this context will require consideration of the constraints and supports. The potential benefits of principled game use in your class may be limited or challenged by particular contextual constraints. For example, using games in your classroom may cause you to face skepticism or opposition from your administration, teaching peers, and/or students (Jones, 2020). You may also encounter pressure to use specific textbooks or teach in specific ways. Finally, you may have concerns about GBLT fitting into your specific classroom context (study purpose, level, culture, etc.). Challenges like these may require you to invest time and energy in justifying or defending your GBLT practice within the context. This is not to say that the contextual challenges make developing/continuing a GBLT practice impossible, but it may necessitate special care and navigation. Conversely, you may have great freedom and/or support in terms of implementation options and professional exploration (Jones, 2020). This may provide you with some fertile ground for growing your practice. Your GBLT practice needs to account for these contextual factors, costs, and benefits. How much support and autonomy do you have within your institution? What will your GBLT practice help you to achieve professionally? How is GBLT likely to be perceived? Like a roadside juice stand operator, you ought to clearly understand context-related opportunities and challenges. What kind of support or opposition will you face because of your GBLT approach? How will various stakeholders perceive and react to your GBLT practice (students,

teachers, school administration, community, government/society, etc.)? What expectations, constraints, opportunities, and challenges are at play in your specific context that will shape and inform your GBLT practice?

**Starting up:** If you are starting your GBLT practice, it may be wise to consult with experienced GBLT practitioners in online communities. This will allow you to get a better understanding of contextual challenges and potential supports related to implementing GBLT. Being able to predict the challenges and supports stemming from stakeholders and/or contexts will enable you to be proactive. For example, assuaging skeptical teaching peers, administrators, and students by demonstrating the pedagogical usefulness of your approach may both save you some headaches and garner you some support. Additionally, there may be stakeholders within your school who would be interested in joining/supporting your GBLT efforts. In short, when first starting GBLT, you should be proactive in overcoming/avoiding challenges and attracting/leveraging support. Resources for connecting with experienced GBLT practitioners and 'tips' for supporting/justifying your practice related to its context can be found in 'GBLT Ingredients' (GBLT Communities and Tips for GBLT Support in Context).

**In business:** For you experienced GBLT practitioners, it is important to reflect on and assess the feedback you have received from your implementation. Has it worked in your context? Are you continuing to invest energy in justifications or garnering support? How is this impacting your job satisfaction and professional development? The scale of these long-term costs on your time and energy need to be considered and be found justifiable based on the benefits. Participating in GBLT communities will allow you to share your hard-earned wisdom, obtain feedback, and sustain your motivation. Teaching has been referred to as the 'lonely' profession due to its potential for fostering professional isolation. Jones (2020) identifies how this can negatively impact the professional satisfaction and development of even expert GBLT practitioners. As your practice grows over time, engaging with others will help you to minimize this professional loneliness and may help you to avoid burnout. Engagement may be focused at your school as a champion of GBLT, it could be through a dedicated online GBLT community, or a blend of both. Resources for connecting with GBLT communities, tips for cultivating GBLT support in context, and 'tips' for overcoming professional loneliness can be found in 'GBLT Ingredients' (GBLT Communities, Tips for Overcoming Professional Loneliness, and Tips for GBLT Support in Context).

## 5.2 Return on investment

As you invest time, energy, and effort in developing your practice around principled game use, your expertness expands and grows. From a teacher cognition perspective, this is linked to the building of formal knowledge, experiential knowledge, reflection and integration (Borg, 2015). This quest for teacher expertness related to game use may be compared to a journey (i.e., a process) of continuous improvement, also known as '*kaizen*' (Masaaki, 1986), rather than a journey that ends with the acquisition of a specific object or finish line. The treasure is the cultivation of your own practice and the fruit it bears through iterative improvements. This is a tremendous potential benefit for your GBLT practice. In *kaizen*, another important principle is that 'the next operation is the customer' (Coimbra, 2009). This is significant as it relates to both the quality of output and the fiduciary duty of the supplier to the customer in terms of delivering value. In this sense, the students are customers, but their needs drive and shape the responsive supplier (teacher) to provide value (principled language teaching and learning opportunities). Thus the customer should not be thought of as passive and the customer's voice should figure prominently in your teaching process. In the classroom this will often include direct student engagement. Making space for this in your practice will help to ensure you have a practice that values the needs of your students. Moreover, students interact not only with the teacher as customers, but also as suppliers! This non-binary understanding of the suppliers and customers is further reflected in student interactions in classroom and with other stakeholders. Thus, a *kaizen* framing views the teacher and students in a complex and interdependent relationship. Prudent GBLT practice development allows you to increasingly maximize the benefits of game materials, limit unnecessary costs, and, hopefully, increase your personal/professional fulfillment. That is, the materials are utilized to greater effect in terms of promoting student language learning and greater learning, and you engage in a rewarding personal and professional enterprise. Are you willing to commit to exploring your own GBLT practice? If your GBLT practice lacks this spirit, or the seed of it, it may be worth reconsidering/rediscovering your practice motivation.

Your leadership growth within the GBLT field should also be considered as a potential path of professional expertise and development. This is a way for you to share practical resources and advice, while helping to shape the future of GBLT. The GBLT field will continue to need leadership in the future, and there is a case to be made that it needs leadership now more than ever. Teachers and researchers, former and current, within the GBLT field play a valuable role in providing this leadership and shaping the future of GBLT. By sharpening your GBLT leadership expertise, you increase your potential contribution to the field and expand your own career growth. There are different ways to lead, so you may want to explore research on the topic in order to consider, based on your practice, what contributions you can and want to make. By investing wisely in your practice over time, you will see a good return. In short, the juice stand is profitable as well as successful and the roadside juice stand operator is excited about both the business plan and the job to be done.

GBLT practice development also allows you to increasingly maximize the benefits of game materials, limit unnecessary costs, and, hopefully, increase your personal/professional fulfillment.

**Starting up:** A spirit of exploration will serve you well as you start GBLT (and in your teaching practice in general). One key concept from *kaizen* is that you should not wait until everything is perfect. Instead, get your hands a bit dirty and then make improvements based on the feedback. Iterative improvements are your friends! Additionally, grounding your implementation in teaching and learning rather than the materials (games) is critical to reaping rewards. Familiarizing yourself with different approaches and implementations will help you develop a broader GBLT understanding. Connecting to this, it is strongly recommended that you question your own assumptions about games/GBLT and challenge yourself to explore new ground (e.g. exploring beyond GBLT predicated on pasted-on 'roll-and-moves' or exploring game design and teaching affordances in ways that may challenge you). This kind of professional exploration, development, and self-challenging aligns, in a general sense, with Gebhard & Oprandy (2005) and Gebhard (2017). Otherwise, you may be investing your time in a stale, stunted, or stagnant practice (e.g., facilitating gameplay instead of language learning based in and around game play or not daring to deepen your own understandings related to your practice). Resources related to developing teacher expertise and *kaizen*, as well as GBLT practice development through publications and communities are provided in the 'GBLT ingredients' section (*kaizen* and Developing Teacher Expertise, GBLT Pedagogical Publications, GBLT Published Resources, GBLT Communities, Tips for Professional Exploration and Development).

Additionally, grounding your implementation in teaching and learning rather than the materials (games) is critical to reaping rewards. Familiarizing yourself with different approaches and implementations will help you develop a broader GBLT understanding.

**In business:** Mentoring other teachers, collaborating with researchers/peers, and pushing yourself to continue to develop professionally are the key things that will help you continue to leverage your GBLT practice. Building off of this point, you should 'check in' with yourself from time to time. Journaling and peer discussion are both two common ways of exploring your practice morale. Are you going through the motions or stuck in a rut? Are you alive with professional ambition and joy at sharing your new lesson refinement/finding? Are you taking on new professional challenges related to leadership within the GBLT field? Resources on *kaizen*, GBLT communities, reflection, professional exploration are provided in 'GBLT Ingredients' (*Kaizen*, Expertise in Leadership Expertise, GBLT Communities, Reflection, Tips for Professional Exploration and Development).

### 5.3 Personal satisfaction

A large difficulty in determining your personal GBLT practice costs and benefits is that different teachers may have different personal interests. In other words, your own perspective will influence and shape your evaluation of the benefits related to both personal and pedagogical impact. If you have limited interest in games, teach in a GBLT-unfriendly context, and prefer a pedagogical approach/outlook that does not easily leverage game materials, you may not see enough value in the game-use benefits for your practice. And that, quite frankly, is a reasonable assessment to which some may arrive. Conversely, if you have an interest in gaming, a supportive context, and a pedagogical approach/outlook which can effectively leverage the game materials, you may see tremendous game-use benefits for your practice.

In Jones (2020), interviews were conducted with six expert users of tabletop games in language learning classrooms. Based on the descriptions of their GBLT practices, I categorized the interview participants according to the robustness of their GBLT practice and game use (multi-class vs. single-class use, supporting activities [before and after gameplay], leveraging of games as a cultural artifacts, assessment, and explicitness of pedagogical framework). Interview participants #1, #2, and #5 had the most robust GBLT practices (multi-class approaches). Interestingly, participants #2 and #5 described increasing their formal pedagogical GBLT knowledge as part of their formal education and training, and participants #1, #2, and #5 increased their formal pedagogical GBLT knowledge through personally initiated GBLT research. Interview participants #4 and #6 had less robust approaches, but still showed evidence of well-defined GBLT practices (single-class approaches). Interview participant #3 had the least developed GBLT practice. This practice used a single-class implementation, focused mainly on the game experience only (not including support activities before or after play), lacked a clear framework, and often seemed to highlight purposes other than language learning. Several participants noted how personal experiences of using games to learn a language informs part of their support and motivation for game use. Finally, the interview participants described a wide range of personal benefits related to both games and GBLT (enjoyment, relationships, etc.). These brief participant outlines will perhaps help to show you that GBLT practices, motivations, and beliefs can differ greatly between teachers.

In terms of specific professional development impact, the following points were mentioned by each of the interview participants. Interview participant #1 described delivering multiple workshops/presentations related to games, an increased interest in GBLT research, and personal satisfaction and connections related to introducing students and others to games and game-based learning. Interview participant #2 described the use of table top games in his classroom as bringing about a complete change in the way he teaches, the research he does, and his whole life trajectory as an academic. He also described his GBLT practice as providing more interest and satisfaction than the previous materials and the related established approach that he inherited in his teaching context. Interviewee #3 mentioned that game use has garnered her some recognition, support, and collaborative opportunities within her school (teachers and other staff). Interview participant #4 mentioned giving numerous GBLT workshops, increasing her creativity through the use of games, and supporting her professional awareness and abilities for professional positions unrelated to teaching (materials editing). Interview participant #5 described publishing a blog on his practice, staying abreast with GBLT research, and engaging with other teachers, albeit usually teachers not cultivating a GBLT practice, in an effort to reflect on his own practice. This interview participant also described having to contend with significant professional resistance to his GBLT practice from teachers at his school. He commented that he does not see himself continuing as a teacher given his professional frustration and constraints. His description fits with descriptions of professional isolation and/or loneliness. Interview participant #6 described receiving governmental recognition for his GBLT efforts related to classroom teaching, GBLT workshops with teachers, and other game-related expertise.

The costs involved in supporting principled GBLT implementation need to be worth the investment. Moreover, your personal interests/experiences can also affect beliefs regarding what kinds of games and implementations are appropriate for learning classrooms (Chik, 2011). For example, you may be interested in using commercial games designed for the gaming public, you may be interested in using educational games designed specifically for language learning, or you may be interested in creating your own games for your classroom. These choices have huge implications on the learning affordances for students, so you should explore your own GBLT practice motivations and have a clear understanding of the related costs and benefits. Also, your perceptions of value and ability to

capitalize on opportunities are not static, but rather change through experience, knowledge, and reflection (Borg, 2015). By cultivating deeper understandings of both games and classroom use, you will be able to envision new possibilities and conjure new opportunities. Stagnancy and ignorance, willful or otherwise, have the potential to make your practice miserable and/or a dead end. You certainly don't want these sentiments hanging around your juice stand.

**Starting up:** On a personal level, you should start by thinking about what interests and motivations are supporting your start-up of a GBLT practice and also consider the steps you can take to grow these investments. This might include forming bonds in game-related or GBLT-related communities of practice, nurturing and appreciating the joys and successes stemming from your classroom GBLT through a journal, and developing your practice by actively expanding your formal knowledge. Informed curiosity will help you explore GBLT and learn about how it fits into your practice. Information on GBLT/game-related communities of practice (CoPs), reflecting on GBLT, and professional development through expansion of formal knowledge are found in 'GBLT Ingredients' (GBLT Communities, Game Communities, Reflection, GBLT Published Resources, Tips for Professional Exploration).

**In business:** As a seasoned GBLT practitioner, you should consider your interest and motivation level stemming from GBLT/game-related CoPs, satisfaction from classroom implementation, and professional fulfillment. You should be on guard for signs of burnout, isolation, and alignment drift. This last point refers to how you will, over time, drift away from your personal and professional goals and objectives due to a variety of influences, changes, and challenges. Implementing regular checks/inventories will help you to be proactive in realigning your GBLT practice, improving your GBLT implementations, and enhancing your personal enjoyment/satisfaction. Information on how to perform checks/inventories and connect with GBLT CoPs are provided in 'GBLT Ingredients' (GBLT Audits Inventories, GBLT Communities, Game Communities, and Tips for Professional Exploration).

#### 5.4 Final thoughts on GBLT practice costs and benefits

Benefits of game use for specific teachers, classrooms, and students are unclear and may be highly dependant on context, individual factors, and implementation. They may relate to specific language learning and language teaching affordances (professional and personal). Context is a key factor with which teachers should consider and contend. Given the highly individualized nature of potential game use 'value' for a given teacher, educators should consider their own preconceptions, motivations, experiences and development opportunities. Finally, practice development often involves iterative learning/development, exploration, and personal growth/investment.

##### **Reflection-ade: frame of reference, sunk costs, and opportunity potential**

Weinberg and McCann (2019) state:

By holding on to a loss too long, you are misallocating time or money that could be better used on another opportunity. Similarly, by walking away after a sure but small gain, you may be missing out on a potentially better opportunity. (p. 91)

## 6. GBLT: Making a stand

##### **Reflection-ade: managerial function**

Baumol (1968) states:

It is necessary for us to differentiate between the entrepreneurial and managerial functions. We may define the manager to be the individual who oversees the ongoing efficiency of continuing processes. It is his task to see that available processes and techniques are combined in proportions appropriate for current output levels and for the future outputs that are already in prospect. He sees to it that the inputs are not wasted, that the schedules and contracts are met, he makes routine pricing and advertising outlay decisions, etc. (p. 64-65)

Managing your GBLT juice stand involves making realistic evaluations of your GBLT performance, approach, and practice, as well as ensuring both specific classroom implementation and overall principled delivery of game-based language teaching that is useful and satisfies the teacher and students (customers). Management helps ensure your 'game plan' is implemented and is successful.

## 6.1 Summary: back to the juicy bits

Is using games in your language classroom worth it for you or for your students? Providing an accurate answer to this question requires you to deeply consider and understand the costs and benefits for your teaching practice, class, context, and students. Teachers seeking to use games in a principled way should be reflective and adventurous in exploring their own motivations and beliefs, conscientious and open-minded while expanding their formal knowledge (e.g. game literacy, implementation framework, etc.), as well as principled and objective while expanding their experiential knowledge. By doing these things, they invest in themselves and their practice. This journey does not need to be undertaken alone, nor all in one go. A GBLT practice is something that teachers can grow and develop over time as part of a common professional community that is unified by a commitment to making juice that is worth the squeezing. This does not mean that the GBLT community will ever be unified in the specific details of implementation or approach, but having basic common ground is a foundation for growing our shared knowledge, holding each other accountable, and learning from each other. Educators today have many resources to help them assess both the costs and the benefits of game use in their language learning classroom, provide support for increasing principled implementation, and reflect upon factors related to their game-related practice. For example, teachers can:

- seek/support game-focused professional development opportunities,
- cultivate a rich reflective practice which helps you put things in perspective,
- engage in personal/professional/peer exploration related to games and teaching in your practice/implementation,
- join and engage in communities of practice (professional and/or game-related)
- and expand their knowledge (experiential and formal) through teaching resources and/or academic publications.

A GBLT practice is something that teachers can grow and develop over time as part of a common professional community that is unified by a commitment to making juice that is worth the squeezing.

The Freshly Squeezed, Inc. model is not perfect and it is not intended to be a precise formula or recipe. Hopefully you have found it somewhat helpful as a contemplative prompt and rough framing device for exploring the hows and whys of your GBLT practice. Frankly, this paper is not so much an attempt to convince everyone that GBLT is right for them, as it is an attempt to persuade those who are already doing GBLT/considering doing GBLT to carefully consider their investment in their own practice. Principled use and exploration of GBLT is a key area of interest for many teachers whose curiosity has been piqued by this challenging yet rich resource. Following the 'starting up' and 'in business' sections below, two bulleted-checklists (one for experienced GBLT practitioners and one for new GBLT practitioners) are provided to help you assess your practice. After the checklists, you will find a final caveats section. Additionally, the appendix contains a detailed resource list called 'GBLT Ingredients.' I hope that this light-hearted exploration of GBLT practice has managed to whet your appetite for principled GBLT!

**Starting up:** If you are considering exploring game use for your classes, I encourage you to do so in a way that will help you build a principled practice. This will involve learning about and exploring your pedagogy and game use, learning about and exploring materials implementation, and learning about and exploring game literacy. Seeking online resources and communities related to game use for language learning may help you to accelerate your practice and also navigate the challenges that you will face. By doing these things, you will become better equipped to understand if game use is worth it for you, your students, and your context. When pondering these points, you may notice that your

beliefs change and consolidate over time. Also, you may notice that your reflection on your deepening GBLT practice generates new questions!

**In business:** If you already use games, I hope you are embracing the spirit of continuous improvement (*kaizen*) and also building relationships with others engaged in this exciting and rewarding endeavor. This path can be both fulfilling and rewarding on a personal and professional level. Sharing your wisdom, challenges, and concerns will help to keep you motivated, engaged, and connected to the field. Hopefully you find the juice to be worth the squeeze.

### Reflection-ade: entrepreneurial function

Baumol (1968) states:

The entrepreneur (whether or not he in fact also doubles as a manager) has a different function. It is his job to locate new ideas and to put them into effect. He must lead, perhaps even inspire; he cannot allow things to get into a rut and for him today's practice is never good enough for tomorrow. (p.65)

Demonstrating entrepreneurship in your GBLT juice stand enterprise involves seeking out and discovering new practice innovations, committing to an attitude of continuous improvement, and orienting your practice with an intentional direction/vision. As such, it allows you to grow and expand your practice in new and interesting ways, while situating your current GBLT practice within the narrative of your broader GBLT journey: your opening, your current position, and your next moves.

## 6.2 General 'starting up' bulleted-checklist

### Pedagogy

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**Have I familiarized myself with basic GBL and GBLT theory?**

- Am I reading books, articles, or online publications from a variety of sources and variety of viewpoints?
- Am I using my previous professional training and/or judgement to gauge the GBLT pedagogical approaches?
- Am I being open-minded, while also asking critical questions about claims, approaches, and outcomes?

**Have I researched various GBLT frameworks to assess them for my own potential use?**

- Do I understand the potential pluses and minuses?
- Do I understand the general fit for me and my class?
- Do I understand what implementation will 'look like' and will involve in terms of my class (potential, challenges, and benefits)?

**Have I built and expanded my formal knowledge about GBLT by learning from existing research, teachers, and teaching accounts?**

- Am I consulting published GBLT/GBL resources?
  - Am I learning from the experience of others (teacher implementation accounts or blogs)?
  - Have I joined/followed GBLT communities of practice?
- 

### Context

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**Have I considered GBLT in relation to the needs of my students?**

- Have I considered the needs of my students and how GBLT helps to meet these needs (language learning, curricular, course, career, social, motivation and engagement, and personal as well as inter-personal development)?
- Do I know how to sell/frame the learning benefits of GBLT?

**Have I considered GBLT in relation to my workplace and career satisfaction?**

- Do I have reason to believe that GBLT will provide me with professional motivation/satisfaction?
  - Have I determined if my school will support, resist, or ignore my GBLT efforts and am I prepared to navigate this situation?
  - Do I know how to sell the benefits of GBLT?
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## Professional Development

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**Have I considered GBLT in relation to professional development within my current career/position?**

- Will GBLT contribute to my professional isolation or connection?
- Will GBLT generate new professional learning and networking opportunities at my school or in my area/country?

**Have I considered GBLT in relation to professional development within my broader career and practice?**

- Will exploring GBLT help me grow professionally?
- Does GBLT pique my interest or challenge me in terms of professional development?
- Will deepening my understanding of GBLT position me to engage with teaching professionals, students, and other stakeholders?

**How am I reflecting meaningfully on my GBLT development and practice?**

- How am I exploring my GBLT practice (private journal, blog, peer observation/discussion, personal reflection)?
  - Am I engaging with other GBLT practitioners (local or online)?
  - Am I considering possible connections to GBLT perspectives while engaging with other professional language teachers/researchers?
- 

## GBLT Community

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**Have I joined or followed game-based language teacher communities of practice?**

- What communities have I engaged in and at what level?
  - What resources do these communities have?
  - How can I build new professional relationships with other new and experienced GBLT practitioners?
- 

## Materials

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**Have I considered my roles and responsibilities related to use of GBLT materials?**

- Do I know how/where to access a variety of GBLT materials?
  - Do I know how to select GBLT materials?
  - Do I know what modifications I will need to make or how to learn more about modifying games?
  - Have I established a foundation of general 'materials' knowledge and made connections to GBLT materials?
  - Have I explored GBLT materials 'in action' through teacher accounts or reports or have I asked veteran GBLT practitioners about potential implementation pitfalls/issues?
- 

## Game Literacy

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**What am I doing to access and play games?**

- What channels do I have to access and play games (school budgets, meetups, cafes, online, personal game groups, thrifting, game stores, conventions, etc.)?
- What relationships and interactions have I noticed during and around gameplay (and how does this connect to GBLT affordances)?

**How am I learning about games and game-related media?**

- Am I increasing/expanding my game literacy through gaming and game-related media (reviews, podcasts, playthroughs, forums, etc.)
- Am I learning about game types, designs, and elements?

**What game-related communities am I connecting with?**

- How can this connect with my classroom GBLT practice?
  - What elements of gaming community membership are relevant for GBLT learning affordances?
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### 6.3 General 'in business' bulleted-checklist

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#### Practice Evaluation

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**How am I regularly taking stock of my practice and readjusting?**

- Am I using audits/inventories to analyze my GBLT practice (pedagogy, curriculum, materials, outcomes, game literacy, PD, satisfaction, etc.)?
  - Am I using reflective practice (journal, blogs, peers, etc.) to consider my broader GBLT practice?
- 

#### Pedagogy

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**How am I tracking the development and changes in my GBLT pedagogy?**

- How am I reflecting on pedagogy and classroom implementations (challenges, questions, insights, and breakthroughs)?

**How am I following, contributing to, or supporting GBLT field pedagogical development?**

- Am I sharing my experiences and/or research?
  - Am I curious about other GBLT pedagogical perspectives and engaging with the supporters of these perspectives?
  - Am I staying abreast of new research and new ideas?
- 

#### Context

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**How am I ensuring my GBLT practice meets the needs of my students/school?**

- Am I getting their feedback, addressing their concerns, and proactively framing GBLT in the best light possible?
- Am I sure that my GBLT practice is not simply a vanity project or attempt to shoehorn my hobby into my work? Am I ready to meet this criticism/concern with a clear, grounded, and pedagogically-supported rationale backed up by evidence of learning and outcomes (implementation, assessment, learning, etc.)?

**How am I engaging with my school/peers/other GBLT practitioners in my context?**

- Am I sharing my wisdom, obtaining feedback, and sustaining my motivation (gaming/gaming demos, workshops, peer observation, journaling, meetings, etc.)?
  - How am I engaging in GBLT communities/other teaching communities (in-person or online)?
  - How am I staving off 'professional loneliness' (in-person or online)?
  - How am I engaging earnestly and collaboratively with those who may hold different/skeptical perspectives on GBLT (challenging myself and others to deepen our understanding)?
  - How am I doing at predicting GBLT challenges and opportunities based on my context and how am I doing at meeting/leveraging these elements?
  - How am I gathering, evaluating, and considering feedback from students, teachers, school administration, and other stakeholders?
- 

#### Professional Development

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**How am I developing myself professionally related to my long-term GBLT practice?**

- Am I engaged in the 'continuous improvement' (kaizen) of my GBLT practice?
- Is my practice personally and professionally satisfying?
- Am I exploring my current practice, new practices, and challenging myself?

**How is my practice contributing to the GBLT field for myself and others?**

- Am I contributing to the GBLT field (funded projects, workshops, publications, research, materials, discussion, etc.)?
  - Am I collaborating with other GBLT practitioners?
-

<b>How am I reflecting meaningfully on my GBLT development and practice?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Am I offering/open to constructive feedback aimed at deepening our mutual understanding as GBLT practitioners?</li> <li>● How am I framing GBLT and balancing its different elements (pedagogy, materials, etc.)?</li> <li>● How am I exploring my GBLT practice (private journal, blog, peer observation/discussion, personal reflection)?</li> <li>● Am I engaging with other GBLT practitioners (local or online)?</li> <li>● Am I connecting with other GBLT practitioners to provide mentorship, exchange ideas, and foster a supportive GBLT community?</li> </ul>
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### **GBLT Community**

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<b>How am I connecting with other GBLT practitioners, Teachers, and Researchers?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How am I cultivating personal and professional GBLT relationships (online and/or in person)?</li> </ul>
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### **Materials**

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<b>How am I sharing my GBLT materials wisdom, and knowledge?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Am I sharing/curating the materials that I create?</li> <li>● Am I engaging in discussion on the materials that I use?</li> <li>● Am I engaging with others about their materials contributions or use?</li> </ul>
<b>How am I being thoughtful with my GBLT materials use?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Am I revising, changing, modifying and adjusting my materials and materials approach thoughtfully (based on my classes)?</li> <li>● Am I staying current with general materials research and making connections with my GBLT materials use?</li> <li>● Am I promoting/supporting broader principled GBLT materials use and development?</li> </ul>

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### **Game Literacy**

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<b>How am I supporting broader game literacy outreach?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Am I being helpful and encouraging, while also understanding the need to meet others 'where they are' on their game literacy path (not being dismissive or making assumptions about their needs/understandings/perspectives)?</li> <li>● Am I providing/directing others to useful resources (games, websites, stores, workshops, etc.)?</li> </ul>
<b>How am I expanding my own game literacy in a way that enhances my practice?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Am I sensitive to the fact that high game literacy does not equate to expertise in GBLT and that game literacy expertise may lead to certain blind spots in my GBLT practice?</li> <li>● Am I continuing to play games and learn about them in a way that expands and deepens my game literacy?</li> <li>● Am I participating in or expanding the discussion of games and their affordances?</li> </ul>

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## **7. Caveats**

The driving question of this paper is 'is GBLT worth it?' In this paper, Model-A is presented as a way to explore this question while focusing on your classroom, your practice, and your profession. However, it is my position that a Model-A perspective alone is not sufficient to fully answer this question. Acknowledging this limitation does not diminish the value of the Model-A exploration, but rather it points to yet another important GBLT-related dimension which needs exploration. Consequently, the author is working on a companion paper to explore this aspect of GBLT. This paper will introduce a

Model-B framing based on a web of economic connections and will focus on GBLT as it relates to individual and social flourishing. By examining the long-term implications of GBLT decisions on individual/social impact and transformation, the paper will look at GBLT as a powerful force within the classroom and beyond. These areas must be considered and reckoned with when determining the question of GBLT 'worth' from a fuller perspective. It is the author's earnest hope that by approaching GBLT through and with both perspectives, Model-A and Model-B, a compelling and circumspect case for principled and empowering GBLT will be provided as a clear answer to the driving question.

As a final caveat, I would like to address two points related to the pairing of heuristic devices with analysis and checklists. First, the introduction of practice analysis and checklists is meant to help you ensure that you have a firm grasp on the essential parts of your principled GBLT practice. Second, the heuristic devices are meant to help you cut directly to the heart of the matter: is GBLT worth it for you and your students? As Gigerenzer (2007) notes, the great value of a useful heuristic is that it quickly hits upon the most important information and ignores the rest. Hopefully the pairing is complementary and helps GBLT practitioners!

## Acknowledgements

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## Appendix 1: 'GBLT INGREDIENTS'

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### #01 GBLT Communities

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#### **LLP Slack Group**

This is a private discussion Slack group where teachers and researchers who are interested in and/or contributing to Language Ludic Pedagogy journal can interact. Topics of discussion include, but are not limited to research, journal submissions, LLP journal organization, games, LLP podcast, teacher/researcher projects, etc. If you are interested in contributing to LLP and/or in joining the Slack discussion group, you can contact [info@llpjournal.org](mailto:info@llpjournal.org).

#### **Board Game Geek Forum Discussion**

<https://www.boardgamegeek.com/thread/2065934/those-exploring-or-researching-game-based-language/page/1>

This is a discussion forum area with discussion threads generated by registered users of the boardgamegeek (BGG) website. Some BGG users are also language teachers using games in the classroom. Discussion involves topics related to game selection and use, teaching approach, and other relevant topics. You do not need to register to view the forum and related discussion, but participation requires registering an account (free).

#### **Playful Learning Alliance Facebook Group**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1943083332372097/>

This is a private discussion group (300+ members) centered around the discussion of 'playful learning' through and around the use of games and game-like elements in the classroom. To participate and view the discussion, you will need to have a Facebook account and to request entry. A wide variety of pedagogical perspectives and approaches are represented.

#### **GBLTeaching Subreddit Group**

<https://www.reddit.com/r/GBLTeaching/>

This is an 'open' and anonymous discussion group area created by the author. It is a moderated space and all are welcome. The objective behind the creation of this space is to reserve an open online area for GBLT practitioners and people interested in GBLT to

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interact. It remains to be seen if this subreddit will attract members and/or facilitate discussion.

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## #02 GBLT Published Resources

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<b>Ludic Language Pedagogy Journal</b>	<a href="https://www.llpjournal.org/">https://www.llpjournal.org/</a> Ludic Language Pedagogy (LLP) is an open-access refereed journal focused on promoting innovative and thoughtful integrations of games and related play in language teaching contexts. Publication items can include specialized GBLT resources, discussion about resources, and references to resources. Journal editors are Dr. James York and Dr. Jonathan deHaan. LLP is currently seeking article submissions, peer reviewers, and readers. (ISSN: 2435-2349)
<b>Games2Teach Website Publications</b>	<a href="https://games2teach.uoregon.edu/download/publications/">https://games2teach.uoregon.edu/download/publications/</a> Papers act as 'introductions to specific issues related to game-mediated language teaching and learning.' These papers are pre-publication drafts and aim to help disseminate new ideas and concepts. Details about accessing and using the papers is found on the website.
<b>Academia Platform</b>	<a href="https://www.academia.edu/">https://www.academia.edu/</a> This is a platform for academics to share research papers. As such, it is a good way to learn about research papers related to your academic interests and share your own research papers. You can have suggested research notifications emailed to you related to 'GBLT' keywords. As the platform includes a wide range of research areas, narrowing the focus of your notifications will be helpful.
<b>Google Scholar Search Engine</b>	<a href="https://scholar.google.com/">https://scholar.google.com/</a> This is a freely accessible web search engine that allows you to search for scholarly publications across a wide array of publication organizations, formats, and disciplines. Please note that not all results are free to view or access. Also, using 'GBLT' keywords will help you to narrow and focus your results. Possible search terms should be tailored to fit your needs and interests. Possible GBLT search terms include 'game-based language teaching', 'games in teaching English', 'games in ESL' 'Second Language Acquisition and Game use', etc.
<b>Jonathon Reinhardt's Blog</b>	<a href="https://jonreinhardt.wordpress.com/">https://jonreinhardt.wordpress.com/</a> Dr. Reinhardt's blog discusses a wide range of pressing issues and topics facing the GBLT today. Entries on the BLOG frequently reference publications or work from academics and/or teachers within the field.
<b>Various Twitter Feeds Featuring GBLT Resources and Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• James York: <a href="https://twitter.com/hashtag/GBLTeaching?src=hash">https://twitter.com/hashtag/GBLTeaching?src=hash</a></li><li>• James York: <a href="https://twitter.com/cheapshot">https://twitter.com/cheapshot</a></li><li>• Jonathan deHaan: <a href="https://twitter.com/hashtag/gameterakoya?src=hash">https://twitter.com/hashtag/gameterakoya?src=hash</a></li><li>• Jeff Kuhn: <a href="https://twitter.com/jeffkuhn72?lang=en">https://twitter.com/jeffkuhn72?lang=en</a></li><li>• Graham Stanley: <a href="https://twitter.com/grahamstanley">https://twitter.com/grahamstanley</a></li></ul> <p>These Twitter feeds feature GBLT publication/resource references and discussion. The amount of GBLT content and focus varies greatly between feeds and changes according to the interest of authors.</p>

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### #03 GBLT Pedagogical Publications/Media

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<b>Ludic Language Pedagogy Podcast</b>	<a href="https://www.llpjournal.org/podcasts/">https://www.llpjournal.org/podcasts/</a> This podcast provides a place for discussion around recent LLP journal publications. Contributors to the journal are frequently interviewed and related GBLT topics and themes are explored in the podcasts.
<b>Digital games in language learning and teaching. (Reinders, 2012)</b>	This book presents various papers and related-research on the topic of game use for both language learning and teaching. As such, it considers games from both a language learning potential perspective and also a language teaching potential perspective.
<b>Language at play: Digital games in second and foreign language teaching and learning (Sykes, Reinhardt, Liskin-Gasparro, &amp; Lacorte, 2012).</b>	This book brings together perspectives in applied linguistics, GBL, and game studies to consider game use issues for language teachers and provide practical takeaway for practitioners.
<b>Gameful Second and Foreign Language Teaching and Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice (Reinhardt, 2018).</b>	This book provides a comprehensive examination of theory, research, and practice of the use of digital games for language learning and teaching. It aims at serving as a guide for researchers and teachers in the field and considers a wide range of approaches and perspectives on game use in language teaching and learning.

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### #04 GBLT Pedagogical Frameworks

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<b>Kotoba Rollers: Kotoba Rollers Framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">York, J. (2019). "Kotoba Rollers" walkthrough: Board games, TBLT, and player progression in a university EFL classroom</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Kotoba Rollers Presentation</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Board games at the core of a game-based language learning methodology: Kotoba Rollers</a></li><li>• <a href="#">JALT 2018 Presentation</a></li></ul> Developed by Dr. James York, this framework is part of a multi-class and multi-step Task-based approach that includes attention to learning the rules, playing, analyzing transcriptions of gameplay discourse, comparative discourse analysis, and completion of a project reflecting on the learning experience. As York (2019) notes, the Kotoba Rollers framework aims to "use games as a vehicle for language development, to improve students' literacy regarding language, games, and technology, to promote student agency in learning and an interest in English, and to produce a community of students, players, and content creators."
<b>Explore, Examine, and Extend (EEE) Framework/BA Cycle in TBLT</b>	<a href="#">Games2Teach</a> Reinhardt, J. & Sykes, J. (2011). Framework for Game-Enhanced Materials Development. Tucson, AZ: Centre for Education Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy. (Downloads can be requested directly).
<b>Blog detailing EEE implementation</b>	<a href="#">Using A Game-Design Enhanced Approach to TBLT: The Example of The Social Deception Tabletop Game "Coup"</a> EEE is a literacies-oriented framework for developing materials for game-enhanced materials L2 teaching and learning. It uses Bridging Activities and play to increase language awareness and learning through and around games.
<b>The Game Terakoya</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">deHaan, J. (2019). Teaching language and literacy with games: What? How? Why?</a></li></ul>

- [Game Terakoya Seminar 2019 - Game Lab at the University of Shizuoka 静岡県立大学ゲームラボ](#)
- [Game Terakoya Seminar 2018 - Game Lab at the University of Shizuoka 静岡県立大学ゲームラボ](#)

Developed by Dr. Jonathan deHaan, The Game Terakoya explores the integration of multiliteracies pedagogy with games, while also leveraging some elements of Bridging and EEE. It aims to develop students' literacy, intellectual, and participatory abilities. The approach uses texts, analytical activities, and participatory work in affinity spaces. As deHaan (2019) notes, it explores "various language and literacy aspects with and about games and connected game culture..." by integrating game use with "broader pedagogical, linguistic and sociocultural aims."

**PPP Framework  
(Presentation, Practice, and Produce)**

[PPP Framework: Presentation, Practice and Production](#)

The link above explains PPP in general and is not specifically framed in terms of GBLT implementation. However, Jones (2020) shows that PPP is a framework which is used among both 'expert' GBLT practitioners and perhaps other teachers using games in the language learning classroom. Classroom implementation of GBLT PPP is a single-class approach. It tends not to involve exploring games as cultural artifacts or related affinity spaces, and instead places emphasis on the game experience as practice and/or production. Given the more restricted use of games in terms of leveraging of game-related affordances and connection to greater learning, PPP GBLT may include the use of commercial games and/or educational games (either purchased or teacher-made). 'Educational games' have been criticized by some as providing drill-based learning couched within lack-luster gaming experiences (Nicholson, 2010). It must also be noted that Jones (2020) suggests that teacher game creation decreases as teacher game literacy increases and that the PPP GBLT approaches are generally less robust from a pedagogical perspective. Having said that, game materials used in PPP, commercial or otherwise, may provide a fun and enjoyable context for students to use language. Moreover, this kind of game material usage can be used to target specific language or language use (Reinhardt & Sykes, 2012).

**#05 Journals, Blogs, Reflections, and GBLT Accounts**

**Journal/reflection  
Value in Practice  
Exploration**

*Gebhard, J. G., & Oprandy, R. (2005). Language teaching awareness: A guide to exploring beliefs and practices. Cambridge University Press.*

This book discusses how language teachers can increase their awareness and explore their beliefs, attitudes, and practices. It is meant to introduce key themes related teaching awareness and exploration and also provide practical suggestions for teachers to use.

**Journal/reflection  
Value in Professional  
Development**

*Gebhard, J. G. (2006). Teaching English as a foreign or second language: A teacher self-development and methodology guide. University of Michigan Press.*

This book is aimed at providing language teachers with practical advice for developing themselves as teachers and tackling practical issues they may face.

**Reflective Journal  
Information**

*Boud, D. (2001). Using journal writing to enhance reflective practice. New directions for adult and continuing education, 2001(90), 9-18.*

This article explains how a reflective journal can promote reflection on experience related to experience anticipation, experience in the midst of action, and post-action experience. Attention is given to establishing reflection's important role in making sense, creating new understandings, and integrating new insights.

### **Reflective Journal**

*Bassot, B. (2016). The reflective journal. Macmillan International Higher Education.*

This book introduced critically reflective practice. It provides guidance, support activities, and reflective prompts. It provides practical tips and structure to help you to keep a reflective journal.

### **Reflective Practice Information**

*Watanabe, A. (2016). Reflective practice as professional development: Experiences of teachers of English in Japan. Multilingual Matters.*

Watanabe (2016) identified five categories of reflective engagement in her research. These were 'description', 'reconfirmation', 'hansei' (negative and reflective self-criticism for self-improvement), reinterpretation, and awareness. Watanabe implemented the reflective practice approach with a group of teachers and took great care to build off of their context-specific expertise and awareness. As such, the participants had significant ownership and participation in the process.

### **Teacher/Researcher Accounts and Discussion**

- [Kotoba Rollers 2018: A reflection of the first term](#)
  - [Kotoba Rollers 2018: A reflection of the second term](#)
- This is the personal blog of Dr. James York and it explores the use of play and games in language teaching. It features reflection on his Kotoba Rollers implementation and other content related to GBLT implementation.

#### [Kotoba Miners](#)

This is another site from Dr. James York. It has some earlier Kotoba Rollers material and accounts related to an earlier project, Kotoba Miners, which uses the game Minecraft. According to the website, "Kotoba Miners: a project exploring how to develop language learning tasks and games that utilise the affordances of virtual worlds."

<https://www.slideshare.net/yorksensei/2-rooms-and-a-boom-explanation>

This is a series of slides developed by Dr. James York to help explain and introduce a game to students. It provides an example of game-related materials development which GBLT practitioners may create to support classroom implementation.

#### [Games2Teach Blog](#)

Originally designed by Dr. Jonathon Reinhardt and Dr. Julie Sykes, this website exists as a resource to help instructors and learners interested in leveraging the learning benefits offered by games. The website has a blog (with featured contributors), downloadable resources, and information related to research and games.

#### [Jonathan Reinhardt Blog](#)

This is a blog maintained by Dr. Jonathan Reinhardt. One of the areas of focus is games and second language teaching and learning. A variety of topics are explored, including the classroom implementation of games.

#### [Mark Rasmussen's Blog](#)

This is a blog maintained by Mark Rasmussen and many posts detail and discuss his classroom implementation of GBLT. In particular, it has a very detailed post on the topic of EEE approach implementation using Coup (tabletop game).

[The Game Terakoya](#)

The Game Terakoya site descriptions and Twitter feed are maintained by Dr. Jonathan deHaan. They provide a window in his multi-class classroom practice, pedagogical approach, and GBLT materials. Resource examples are posted (e.g. rubrics, handouts, reports, project/assignment guides, etc.).

[TESOL Games and Learning Blog](#)

This blog belongs to Dr. Jeff Kuhn and explores a wide variety of topics in the field of GBLT (e.g. game design, classroom experiences, gamification, etc.). Entries introduce various topics and readers are able to engage in the comments section.

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## #06 Resources for Game-Based Learning

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**Gee, J. P. (2003). What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy**

This book looks at the learning principles in games and explores how these principles can be implemented in classrooms.

**Gee, J. P. (2007). Good video games + good learning: Collected essays on video games, learning, and literacy. Peter Lang.**

A collection of essays that explores how games teach using well-designed problem-based experiences. The essays also emphasize that leveraging the full potential of games in a game-based learning approach requires more than simply a focus on the game itself.

**Gee, J. P., & Hayes, E. (2012). Nurturing affinity spaces and game-based learning. Games, learning, and society: Learning and meaning in the digital age, 123, 1-40.**

In this chapter Gee and Hayes argue that educators using games for educational purposes ought to expand their focus to include social practices, affinity spaces, and other experiences outside the direct game experience.

**Harris, C. & Mayer, B. (2009). Libraries Got Game: Aligned Learning Through Modern Board Games.**

This book discusses the benefits of using commercial games over 'educational games.' The book makes links between board games and curriculum, provides suggestions for building game collection, and provides strategies relating to program development and implementation.

**Hébert, C., & Jenson, J. (2019, May 16th). Digital Game-Based Pedagogies: Developing Teaching Strategies for Game-Based Learning. The Journal of Interactive Technology & Pedagogy, 15.**

This paper presents research related to pedagogical strategies and development for supporting a particular digital game-based learning context. After analyzing the presented research, the authors advocate for pedagogical development sessions aimed at helping teachers cultivate pedagogical skills related to specific GBL implementation.

**Nicholson, S. (2010). Everyone Plays at the Library: Creating great gaming experiences for all ages.**

This book is aimed at librarians using games in related programs, however it has significant transfer for teachers. This includes determining student needs, stakeholder approval, student approval and engagement, building a collection, assessing program effectiveness, and creating a positive experience.

**Nicholson, S. (2012). Completing the Experience: Debriefing in Experiential Educational Games.**

This paper highlights the important role of debriefing in game-based learning and explores various models of debriefing. The author notes that educational games typically lack debriefing activities.

**Board Gaming with Education**

[Board Gaming with Education - Board Gaming with Education](#)

This is a podcast that explores the role of board games in education (sometimes language learning, but also other educational purposes). Some episodes feature special guests discussing relevant issues related to board game-related education, others look at specific games, and others feature general/specific discussion. Specifically, common topics include board games, game-based learning, gamification, and education.

**Hey Listen Games (What Can We Learn)**

[Hey Listen Games](#)

This website details the game-based learning curriculum (social studies, history, economics, and government) efforts of a high school teacher named Zachary Hartzman. It presents lessons and related materials connected to specific video games, subject, lesson plan, accompanying handouts, presentation slides, and reflective posts on lesson implementation. There is also a discussion lounge on the website. As such, the website provides access to a myriad of helpful resources and considers how these resources connect/work together, as well as reflecting on the utilization of games in education (challenges, successes, etc.).

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## #07 Resources for Learning About Games (General Media)

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**Board Game Geek**

[BoardGameGeek | Gaming Unplugged Since 2000](#)

This website contains a large game database, game rating system and game ranking system, forums for both games and topic discussion, and game-related media (reviews, how-to-plays, etc.). Membership is free.

**Watch It Played YouTube Channel**

<https://www.youtube.com/user/WatchItPlayed>

This channel focuses on tabletop game play-throughs. The videos explain the rules and then show a full play-through of the game to allow the viewer to better understand the actual gaming experience.

**The Dice Tower (website has various resources)**

<https://www.dicetower.com/>

The Dice Tower is a network of video and audio podcasts that promote the board and card game hobby. Network contributors provide video reviews, podcasts, and other content/material/support.

**Rahdo Runs Through YouTube channel (game run throughs and more)**

<https://www.youtube.com/user/rahdo>

This YouTube channel specializes in showing videos which demonstrate the 'flow of play' of a game. The host often explains basic rules and offers some commentary related to his opinion of the game.

**Shut Up & Sit Down (website has various resources)**

<https://www.shutupandsitdown.com>

This is a collection of videos, podcasts, articles, conventions, and other media focused on reviewing, playing, and discussing tabletop games.

<b>Drive Thru Games YouTube channel (reviews and more)</b>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/e3kmouse">https://www.youtube.com/user/e3kmouse</a> This YouTube channel specializes in providing tabletop game review videos. Game rules are explained, a flow of play is demonstrated, and then the reviewer provides his analysis.
<b>TableTop</b>	<a href="https://geekandsundry.com/shows/tabletop">https://geekandsundry.com/shows/tabletop</a> This is a video web series that features tabletop games. The rules of the games are introduced and then the viewer watches an edited version of gameplay. Special guest, including celebrities and tabletop game personalities, participate in the gameplay.
<b>Reddit (board games subreddit)</b>	<a href="https://www.reddit.com/r/boardgames">https://www.reddit.com/r/boardgames</a> This subreddit (online community) helps members share news, information, and opinions about modern board games and board game culture. It has over two million members.
<b>Reddit (gaming subreddit)</b>	<a href="https://www.reddit.com/r/gaming/">https://www.reddit.com/r/gaming/</a> This subreddit group (online community) promotes wide-ranging discussion and interactions related to games (video games, board games, card games, etc.). It has over twenty-four million members.
<b>Twitch TV</b>	<a href="https://www.twitch.tv/directory">https://www.twitch.tv/directory</a> Twitch is a live video streaming service which allows viewers to watch gameplay as well as related discussion and chat about about it live.

## #08 Resources for Learning About Games (Ludology)

<b>Woods, S. (2012). Eurogames: The design, culture and play of modern European board games. Jefferson, NC: McFarland &amp; Company.</b>	This book focuses on a particular type of tabletop board game called a 'eurogame.' It explores the history, design, culture/cultural impact, and community related to this type of game.
<b>Huizinga, J. (2014). Homo Ludens IIs 86. Routledge.</b>	This book establishes the key role of play in culture and society. It is an influential text in game studies and introduces some important concepts/terms (e.g. 'magic circle').
<b>Salen, K., Tekinbaş, K. S., &amp; Zimmerman, E. (2004). Rules of play: Game design fundamentals. MIT press.</b>	This book presents a model for examining, defining, and understanding games of all kinds. Conceptual frameworks for viewing games are introduced and important game studies concepts are defined.
<b>Sutton-Smith, B., &amp; Avedon, E. M. (1971). The study of games. New York: J. Wiley.</b>	This book, though not the most current resource, presents a comprehensive study of games. It considers the history of games, motivations of play, context of games, culture, game elements, and other points.
<b>Järvinen, A. (2008). Games without frontiers: Theories and methods for game studies and design. Tampere University Press.</b>	This book introduces important concepts, categories, and analysis methods for ludology and game design, as well as a deep consideration of the human element of gaming and the game experience.
<b>Analog Game Studies Journal</b>	<a href="http://analoggamestudies.org/">http://analoggamestudies.org/</a> This journal is dedicated to the academic and popular study of non-digital games. Articles are available for free on the website. Articles vary greatly in disciplinary perspective.

**Game Design Roundtable (podcast)**

<http://thegamedesignroundtable.com/>

This podcast is hosted by various game designers and focuses on topics related to game design. In particular, tabletop, digital, and role-playing games are the game types up for discussion. However, the discussion frequently connects game design to other topics of import.

**Ludology Podcast**

<http://ludology.libsyn.com/>

This podcast promotes analytical discussion on board games. It looks at game history, game design, players, and the gaming hobby. There are over 200 episodes available.

**Scott Nicholson (website)**

<http://scottnicholson.com/>

This website has a host of resources, research, and information from Dr. Scott Nicholson. He is a game designer, professor of game design and development, and director of the Brantford Game Network game lab (BGNlab). He has particular expertise related to library games programs, escape rooms, gamification, educational and serious game design, and board games.

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**#09 Game Access Tips**

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**Research and explore potential purchases**

- Explore school materials budget options with your school administrator (selling the benefits of games as rich, useful, and reusable resource).
- Watch game playthroughs (e.g. boardgamegeek or YouTube videos) and video reviews listed on the BGG game entry. Online forum discussion and reviews can also be helpful. BGG: <https://boardgamegeek.com/>
- Visit game stores or game cafes as a way of 'trying games before you buy them' and also expanding your game literacy.
- Be careful of 'hype' and excitement around hot new games as it can be difficult to predict if a game will 'work' in your context/group. Spending money on Kickstarters or 'hot' new releases may involve sinking your money into something that you haven't tested and don't have enough feedback about.
- Check prices at various online distributors and brick and mortar store sales/promotions. (search online for stores, locations, and inventory)
- Visit second hand stores to look for deals. BGG thrifting discussion: <https://boardgamegeek.com/guild/193>
- Consider trading games you no longer have a use for or which aren't being played. By trading with other board gamers, you can exchange a game that is collecting dust for one that you have been itching to play. Trade information can often be found on boardgamegeek in location-specific forum areas (under 'Game Groups' on the 'All Forums' page).

**Meet other board gamers**

- Join a local game group (e.g. MeetUp group or BGG guild) as a way to meet other gamers and play games.
- MeetUp: <https://salsa-dancing.meetup.com/topics/board-games/>
- BGG Guild: <https://www.boardgamegeek.com/guild/category/region>

**Go to a game convention**

[https://boardgamegeek.com/wiki/page/Game\\_Conventions](https://boardgamegeek.com/wiki/page/Game_Conventions)

**Explore print-and-play game options**

<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgamecategory/1120/print-play>

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## #10 Game-related Media and Peripheral Media

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<b>Spielbox Magazine (board games)</b>	<a href="http://www.nostheide.de/webshop3/index.php?cPath=3&amp;MODsid=0c3abf30d738935a393e6fe50c8a8ca1">http://www.nostheide.de/webshop3/index.php?cPath=3&amp;MODsid=0c3abf30d738935a393e6fe50c8a8ca1</a> This magazine is dedicated to publishing articles about board games and the board gaming hobby.
<b>BGG Gaming Article Forum</b>	<a href="https://www.boardgamegeek.com/forum/25/boardgamegeek/gaming-articles">https://www.boardgamegeek.com/forum/25/boardgamegeek/gaming-articles</a> Articles are published/shared touching on a wide range of issues directly and/or indirectly related gaming and the gaming hobby.
<b>BGG Gaming Publications Forum</b>	<a href="https://www.boardgamegeek.com/forum/37/boardgamegeek/gaming-publications">https://www.boardgamegeek.com/forum/37/boardgamegeek/gaming-publications</a> Features forum discussion related to specific board game media publishers (cartoon, magazine, etc.).
<b>Shut Up and Sit Down YouTube channel (reviews and more)</b>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyRhIGDUKdIOw07Pd8pHxCw">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyRhIGDUKdIOw07Pd8pHxCw</a> This is Shut Up and Sit Down's YouTube channel. It features videos focused on reviewing, playing, and discussing tabletop games.
<b>Dice Tower Network Podcasts (various podcast programs related to board gaming)</b>	<a href="#">All Dice Tower Network Podcast Episodes</a> This podcast channel features episodes that promote the board and card game hobby. It includes discussion about games, reviews, news updates, and other content.

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## #11 Tips for Implementing Games

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- Don't wait until things are perfect before starting, but aim high (do some research and prepare for success as reasonably makes sense, but recognize that developing your GBLT practice is an iterative process).
  - Learn the games and pedagogical framework thoroughly and attempt to predict, anticipate, and mitigate implementation issues (learn from the mistakes and suggestions of others when possible).
  - Proactively prepare a pedagogical justification for purposeful game use and learning. Be consistent and clear in your pedagogy such that it will indirectly demonstrate to others that your approach has been well-thought-out and grounded. Persuade stakeholders explicitly as required.
  - Connect the game to learning objectives and support it.
  - Track your experience and development in a way that helps you to reflect and improve future implementation (journal, blog, vlog, teacher log, etc.).
  - Get feedback from the students about what worked and what didn't.
  - Get feedback from peers about what they are doing and what you are doing.
  - Create and share artifacts from your class (videos, worksheets, etc.).
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## #12 Curated Game Lists

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<b>Games2Teach Game Evaluation List</b>	<a href="https://games2teach.uoregon.edu/download/game-evaluations/">https://games2teach.uoregon.edu/download/game-evaluations/</a> These are evaluations and reviews of commercially available games based on suitability for L2 teaching and learning. Though the list of reviewed games is not extensive, this concept of pooling standardized game evaluations holds great potential as a resource for new and experienced GBLT practitioners.
<b>Games2Teach Database List</b>	<a href="https://games2teach.uoregon.edu/resources/search-games/">https://games2teach.uoregon.edu/resources/search-games/</a> This database lists some games and provides details about these games to assist in evaluation of potential use (summaries, cost, language, theme, platform, etc.).

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## James York's BGG List

[Games I use as part of Kotoba Rollers \(game-based language learning\)](#)

This 'geek list' is provided on BGG by Dr. James York. It lists games that he has successfully used in his classroom context and with his Kotoba Roller framework. Each entry shows the BGG info for the game itself and Dr. York offers some commentary on the pluses and/or minuses of each game resource. BGG members can engage in discussion about each game resource. It is also possible to subscribe to the list and receive discussion notifications. This list provides an example of connecting game evaluation to both communities of practice and affinity spaces. This potentially increases engagement and crossover support between game literacy, the GBLT classroom, professional development, and motivation.

## DM Jones thesis

Details related to teacher game lists and selection efforts are detailed in Teacher Cognition Related to Tabletop Game Use in Language Learning Classrooms (Jones, 2020). A copy of this MA thesis can be requested by email at [danielmarcjones@gmail.com](mailto:danielmarcjones@gmail.com).

## Becker, K. (2017). *Choosing and using digital games in the classroom*. Springer.

Becker suggests using a comprehensive rating tool she calls 'the four pillars.' The game materials can then be assessed and evaluated (0-5 scale) according to each of the pillars. 'The four pillars' are:

- Gameplay (assessing the game in terms of fun, interest, aesthetics, etc.)
- Educational content (learning component and connection to educational objectives)
- Teacher support (support(s) teachers wishing to use a game can access)
- Balance (how various learning elements and affordances balanced)

## Sykes, J. E., Reinhardt, J., Liskin-Gasparro, J. E., & Lacorte, M. (2012). *Language at play: Digital games in second and foreign language teaching and learning*. Pearson Higher Ed.

This book, especially Appendices 2 and 3, detail key evaluation points related to 'game types and genres' (Appendix 2) and '(digital) game evaluation guide for L2 teaching and learning' (Appendix 3). Appendix 3 uses helpful question prompts to guide those evaluating games for potential classroom use.

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## #13 Tips for Expanding Game Literacy

### Zagal, J. P. (2010). *Ludoliteracy: defining understanding and supporting games education*. ETC Press.

This book looks at games, game literacy, ways to maximize learning experiences through and with games, and broader implications for games in education.

General Tips:

- Play a variety of games and types of games (challenge yourself to explore and try new things).
  - Engage with and avail yourself of game-related media (try to ensure this is expanding your game literacy needs from different perspectives).
  - Join game-related communities (forming personal bonds and tapping into valuable resources).
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- Find websites and online communities that centralize and distribute useful information about games and game-related media (subscription updates are your friends).
  - Discuss and reflect on games and game qualities with other game players.
  - Read books, articles, or postings related to games.
  - Teach others about games and seek to understand other perspectives about games (revisit and explore your assumptions about games).
  - Have fun! You don't need to learn everything all at once. Play some games and start enjoying the process of exploration.
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## #14 GBLT Materials and General Materials Information

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### Games2Teach Downloadable Classroom Activities

<https://games2teach.uoregon.edu/download/classroom-activities/>  
This is a collection of classroom activities related to specific games. The resources are free.

### The Game Terakoya (GBLT classroom materials examples)

[https://sites.google.com/site/gamelabshizuoka/home/gameterakoya\\_seminar\\_2019](https://sites.google.com/site/gamelabshizuoka/home/gameterakoya_seminar_2019)  
[https://sites.google.com/site/gamelabshizuoka/home/gameterakoya\\_seminar\\_2018](https://sites.google.com/site/gamelabshizuoka/home/gameterakoya_seminar_2018)  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ummazyOw6BQpYvOkxn2Tp6QCIEg7VNHl0P939VxaAtI/edit>

Links to materials used in The Game Terakoya are found within the course outlines. This material provides detailed examples of how materials can be connected to a larger pedagogical vision. Note that the materials are not simply game-specific and instead are threaded throughout all areas of learning and teaching.

### Tomlinson, B. (Ed.). (2013). Applied linguistics and materials development. A&C Black.

This text is a key resource on the topic of material development related to language teaching and applied linguistics. It presents research, theory, and considerations for practical classroom application. Though it is not specifically focused on games and GBLT materials, it provides a useful materials foundation for GBLT teachers and researchers.

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## #15 GBLT Workshops and Presentation Tips

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### General Tips:

- Attending GBLT workshops is a great way to both expand your GBLT knowledge and network with other GBLT practitioners
  - Check your local professional organization to see if there are any GBLT workshops, presentations, or special interest groups being offered around you
  - Explore online channels for workshops and presentations if local access is a problem
  - Consider putting on a GBLT workshop of your own (professional development)
  - Publicize and share your upcoming event
  - Focus on the needs, interests, and concerns of your audience when developing a GBLT workshop
  - Veteran GBLT practitioners who put on frequent workshops and presentations should consider sharing your resources online as artifacts
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## #16 Tips for Overcoming Professional Loneliness

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### General Tips:

- Seek to establish local GBLT relationships at your school or in your city. You may discover others already pursuing or interested in GBLT or you may form bonds with others. Additionally, this may help to reduce GBLT scepticism in some cases.
  - More information on the impact of professional support can be found in Teacher Cognition Related to Tabletop Game Use in Language Learning Classrooms (Jones, 2020). A copy of this MA thesis can be requested by email at danielmarcjones@gmail.com.
  - Join online GBLT professional communities.
  - Consider pursuing specific GBLT professional development (either formal or informal) and reach out to others in the field. Many GBLT researchers and teachers are open to responding to appropriately directed GBLT emails and they may be able to direct you to helpful professional resources.
  - Monitor your professional morale and assess it on a regular basis. Professional loneliness can contribute to burnout and decrease job satisfaction. Being aware of your morale means you can be more proactive in seeking out or creating professional connections.
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## #17 Kaizen and Developing Professional Expertise in Language Teaching/Education

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### Kaizen Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaizen>

This link provides some general information on kaizen (history, theory, and application).

### Imai, Masaaki (1986). *Kaizen: The Key to Japan's Competitive Success*. New York: Random House.

This book presents key kaizen management practices. It emphasizes implementation potential and rationale for utilization. Examples of use and case studies provide additional support.

### The Kaizen Way: One small step can change your life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHkOFs67d9A>

A video talking about some kaizen concepts applied outside of a management setting. This is not a detailed or in-depth look at the topic.

### Borg, S. (2015). *Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

This book explores language teacher cognition related to what they think, know, and believe. It also explores the relationship between cognition and teaching expertise.

### Christison, M., & Murray, D. E. (Eds.). (2012). *Leadership in English language education: Theoretical foundations and practical skills for changing times*. Routledge.

This book presents leadership theory and points of practice for effective leadership and leadership skills development. It considers leadership roles, characteristics, skills, and ELT-specific considerations. Though the text does not focus on GBLT, it has significant transfer relevance for GBLT leadership.

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## #18 Tips for Professional Exploration

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Gebhard and Oprandy (2005) detail nine points in their exploration-based approach to supporting language **teacher awareness and development**:

1. Taking responsibility for one's own teaching (teachers should take initiative and carry a sense of personal responsibility for exploration and self-development).
  2. Need of others (a rich self-development process requires engagement with others).
  3. Description over prescription (when possible, seek to understand and learn by describing, rather than by forcing teaching into predetermined pathways).
  4. Non-judgemental stance (limiting the ways in which our existing judgements may impede a fuller understanding of teaching and potential).
  5. Attention to language and behaviour (examining language and behaviour choices, both our own and those of others, with relation to possible implications for teaching, beliefs and knowledge).
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6. Various pathways to awareness through exploration (different ways of exploring teaching, such as problem solving, trying opposite approaches and random behaviours, seeing the results of contrast and beliefs related to actions, and clarifying feelings).
  7. Personal connections to teaching (integrating the whole-person in the self-development and exploration process by making connections and links to elements outside and inside the classroom).
  8. Attention to process and understanding the role that our growing awareness of teaching beliefs and practices can play in our teaching (being engaged in the ongoing, personalized, and dynamic process of exploration).
  9. Cultivate a beginner's mind (engage with others, our practice, and ourselves without the baggage of limiting preconceptions).

Gebhard (2017) identifies eight points as being central to principled language **teacher self-development**. A brief summary of these points is as follows:

1. Self-development takes time (teachers need to devote time to this endeavour and work through various processes).
  2. Development requires ongoing commitment (spans a career and can apply to exploring new ways of teaching and thinking about teaching).
  3. Engaged reflection (thoughtful and ongoing reflection on teaching beliefs, attitudes, assumptions and practices).
  4. Problem-solving (recognizing problems, developing solutions and considering results).
  5. Exploration for its own sake (cultivate interest, curiosity, and a willingness to experiment).
  6. Paying attention to and reviewing the fundamentals of language teaching (consider how these are borne out in the classroom and find ways to enhance their contribution to our teaching practice).
  7. Seeking out opportunities for development (taking the initiative to engage in behaviours that will enhance development like reading, talking with other teachers).
  8. Cooperating with others (understanding that self-development of teaching beliefs and practices requires engagement with others to provide feedback and help us to better understand ourselves).
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### #19 Tips for Implementing GBLT Audits and Inventories

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- Begin courses and classes with an audit/inventory (including classes/courses you have previously taught).
  - Standardize the prompts, items, and questions on your audits/inventories.
  - Schedule 'check-ins' ahead of time and ensure compliance/completion
  - Ensure your audits/inventories define specific follow-up actions needed and identify what is needed.
  - Collect feedback from the students and other relevant stakeholders and compare it with your own observations and impressions.
  - End each course with an audit/inventory.
  - Keep a file of these audits and inventories. Review the records regularly to look for trends and patterns.
  - Update and adjust the audit and inventory tools as needed (reflecting your teaching needs and context).
  - Connect the audits and inventories to reflective practices (e.g. discussions, journals, etc.).
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