A Participatory Approach to Redesigning Games for Educational Purposes
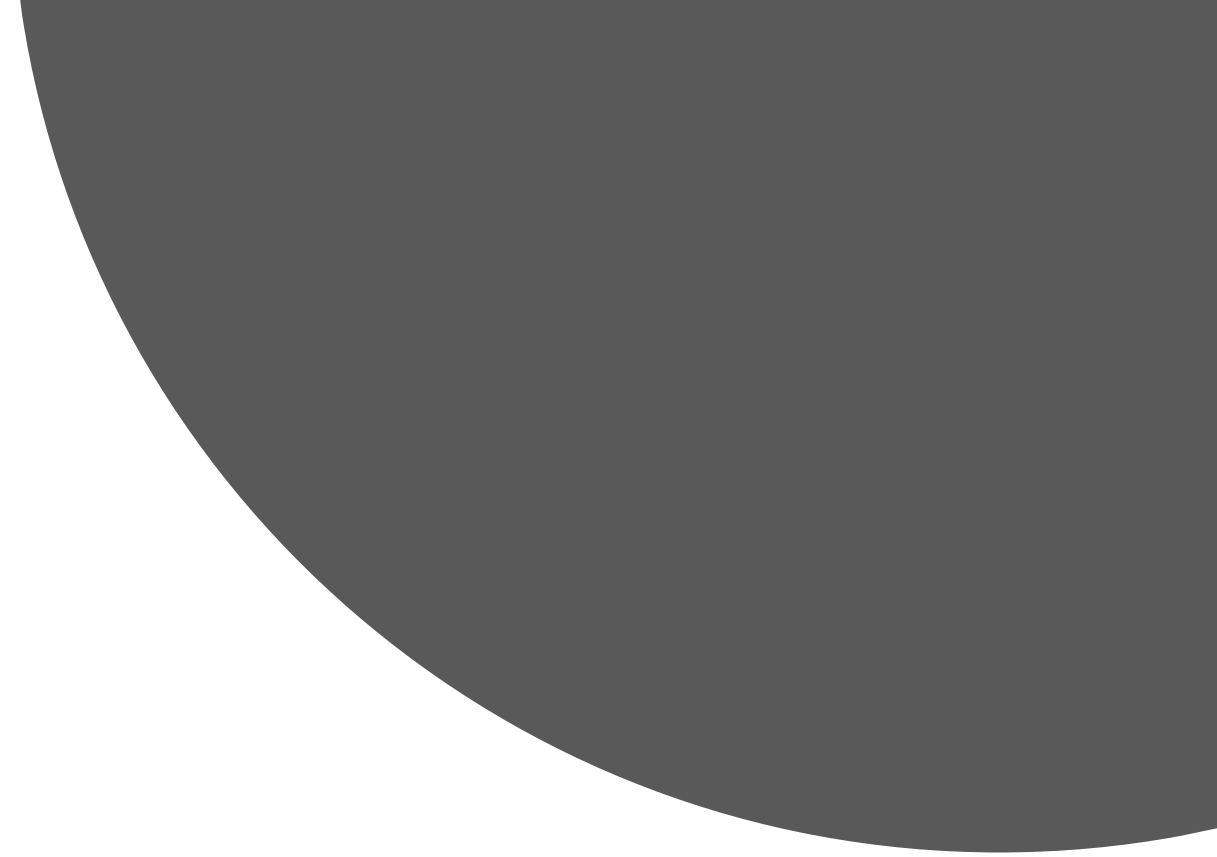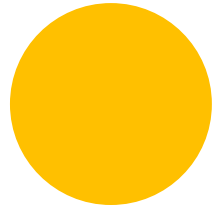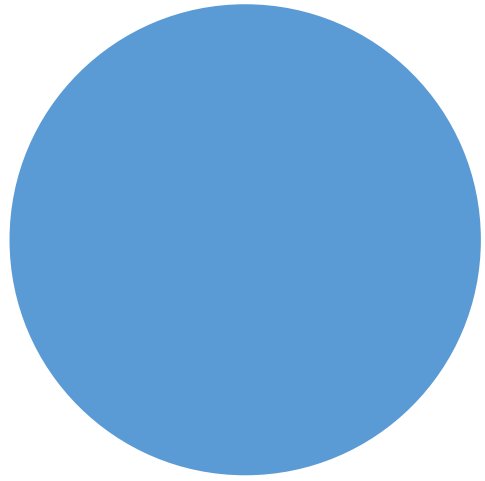
Stamatia Savvani| *University of Essex*

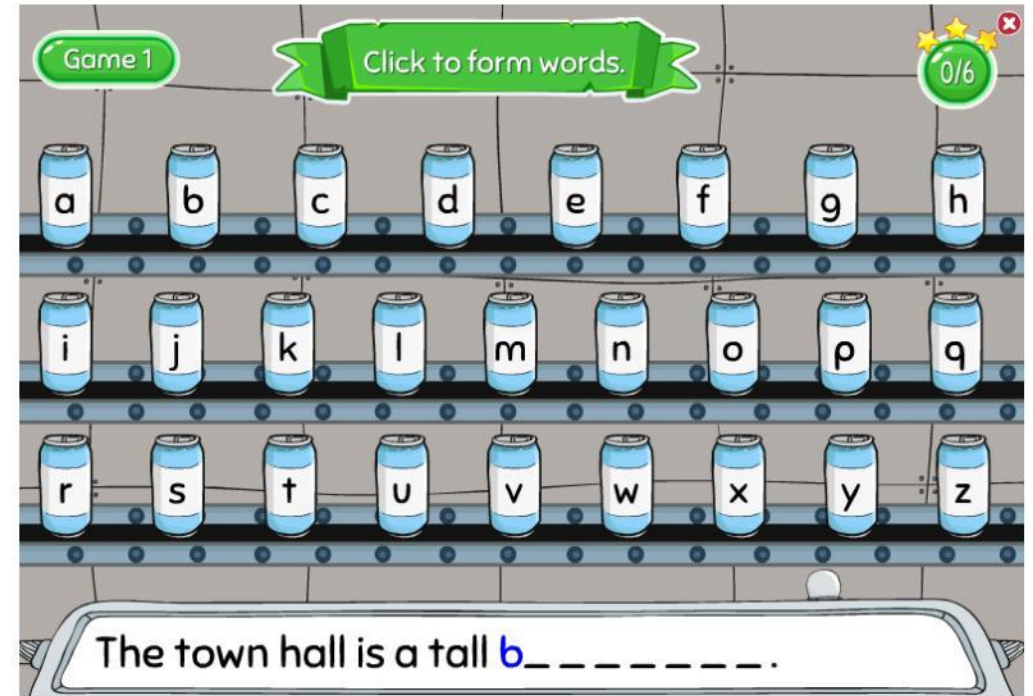Antonios Liapis| *Institute of Digital Games, UoM*

Preview

- Participatory Game Redesign is about teachers and students making games together

- Moving away from playing games and gamified quizzes

- Demonstration of two games created for EFL purposes, by EFL learners

Existing Games in EFL
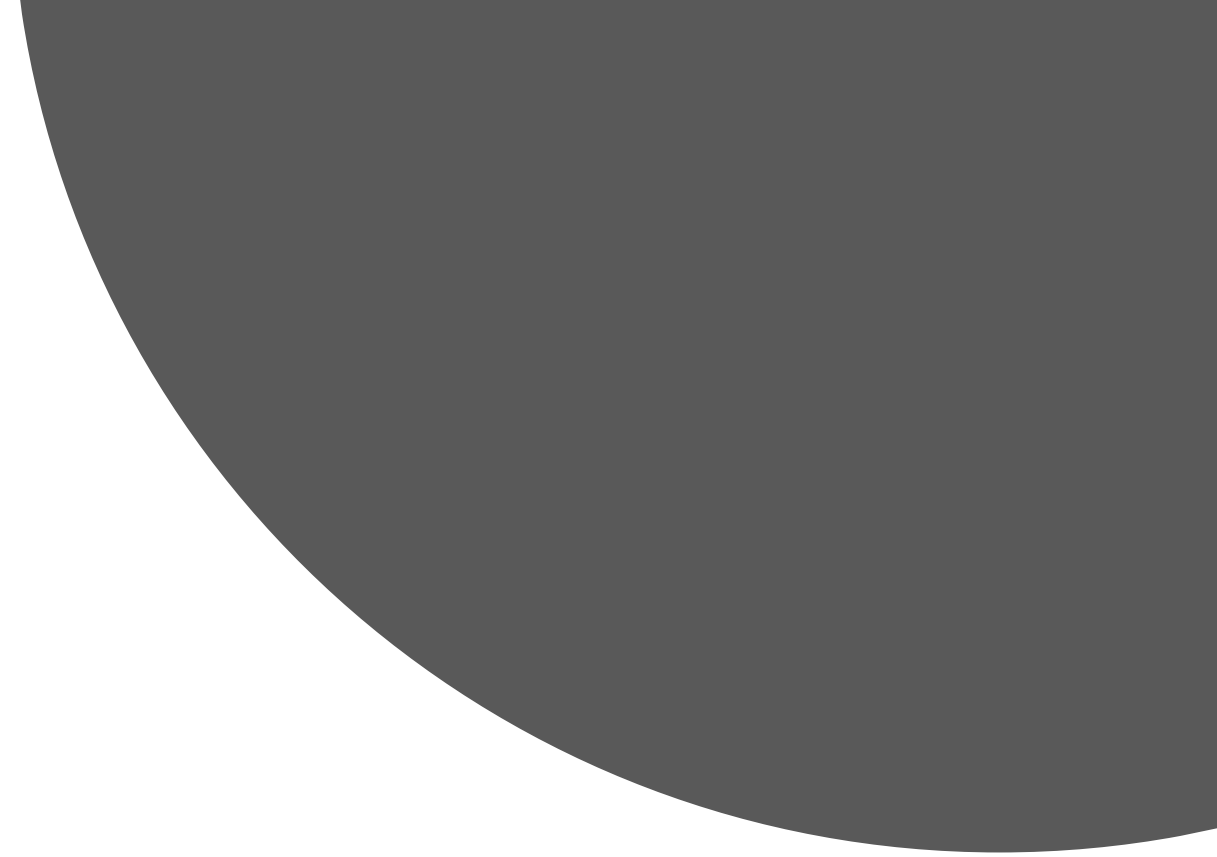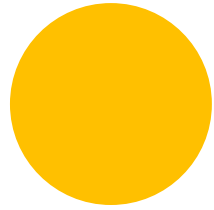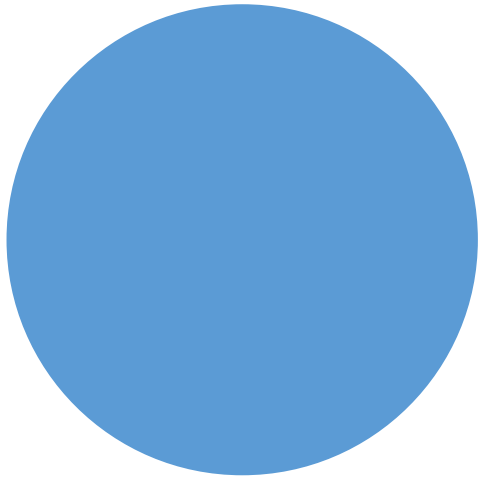
Vocabulary/ Grammar gamified exercises

Quiz game show

Gamification

- Behaviorist in nature
- Gamified quizzes
- Emphasis on rewards
- Individual practice

Participatory Game Redesign

The approach

Participatory Game Redesign

- In literature, PD is a *democratic process that involves all stakeholders in the design, to ensure the final product meets the users' needs*

- In the classroom, Participatory Game Design concerns the design of games, by involving both the teacher and the users/students.
  - Varying degrees of participation
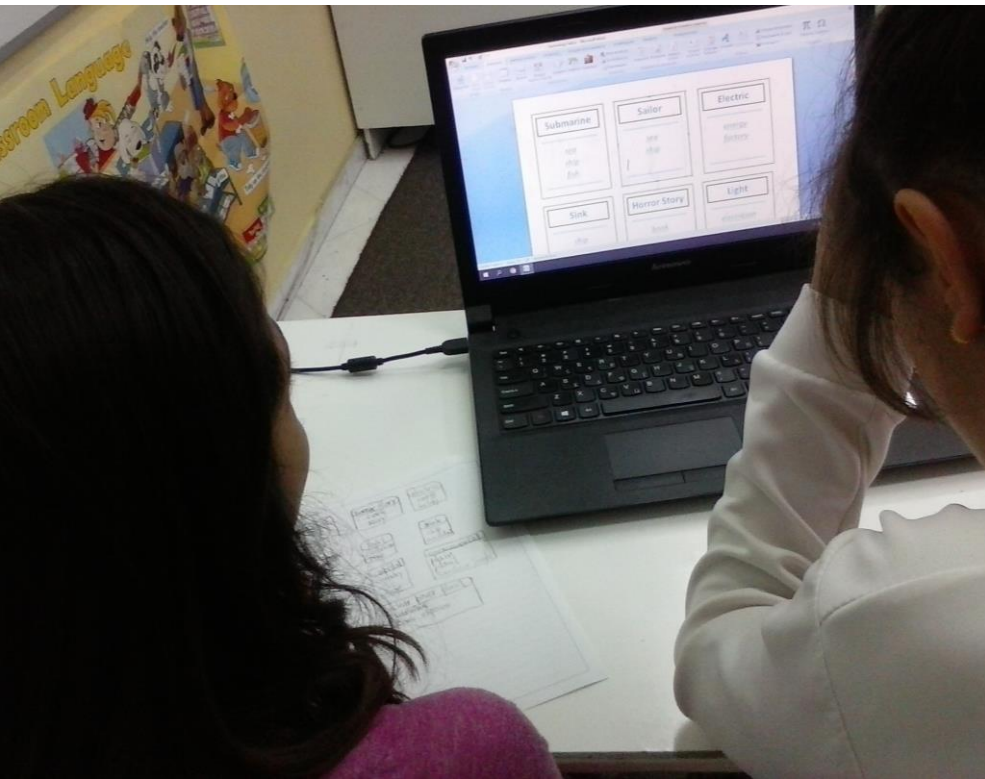
Future Design User
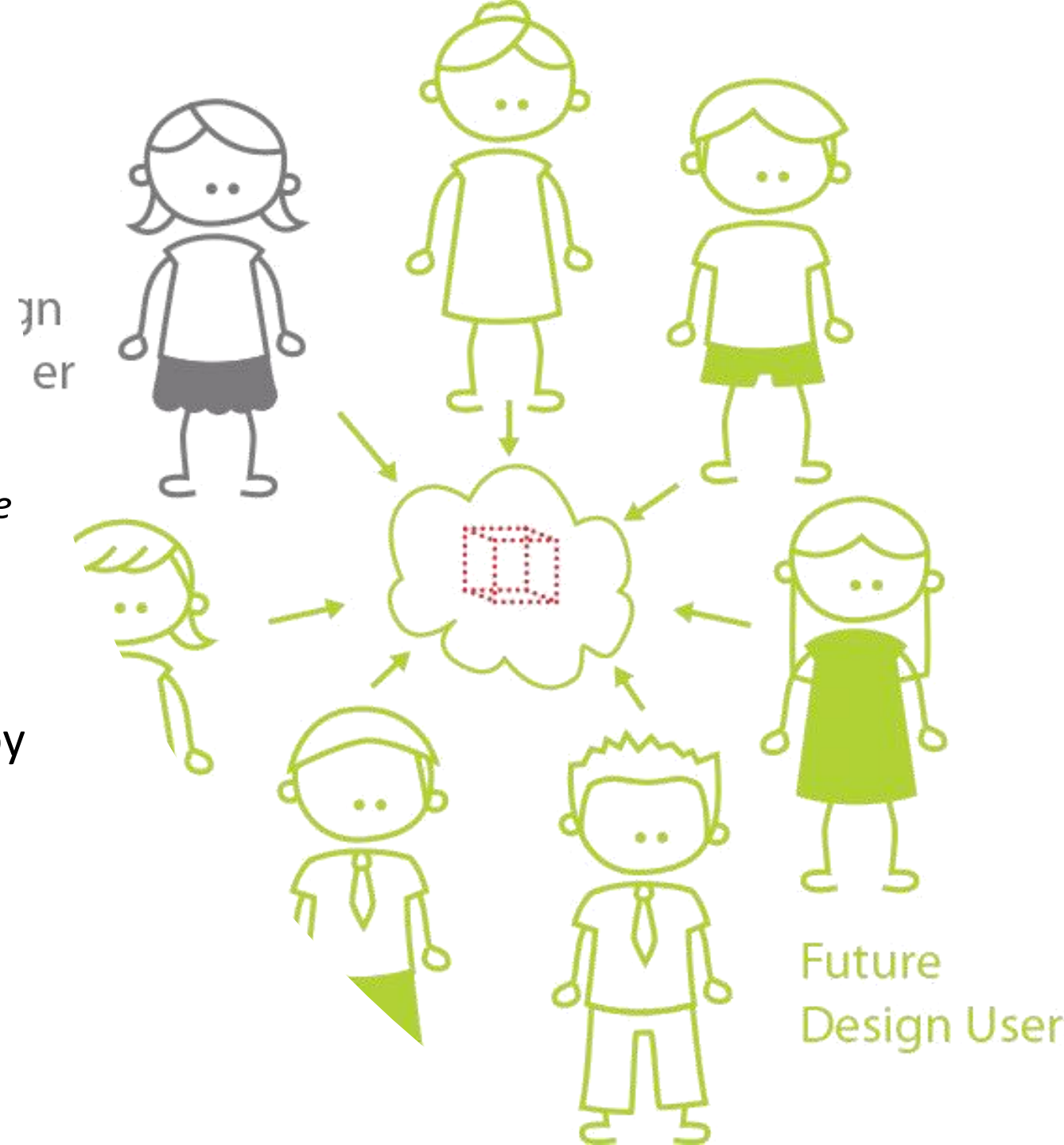
Participatory Game Redesign

Students and teacher's roles:

- actively participate, evaluate, make decisions, create, collaborate, test, and **reflect**
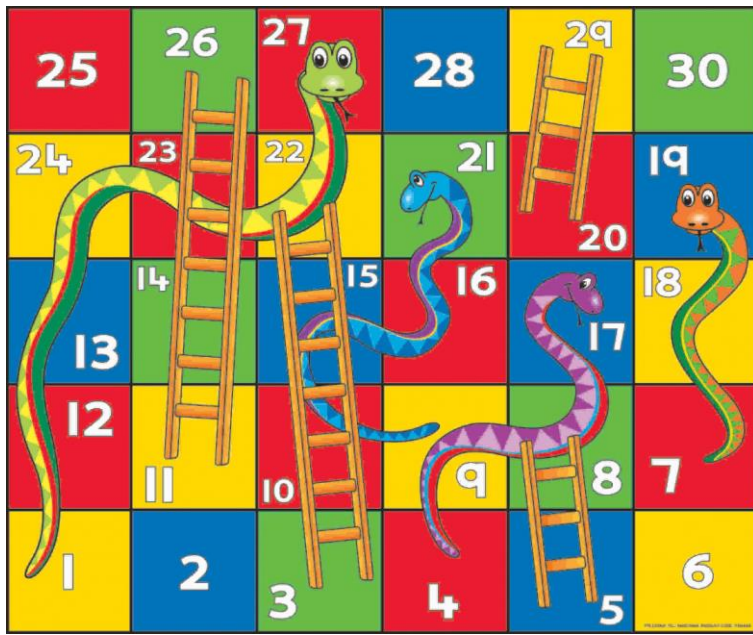
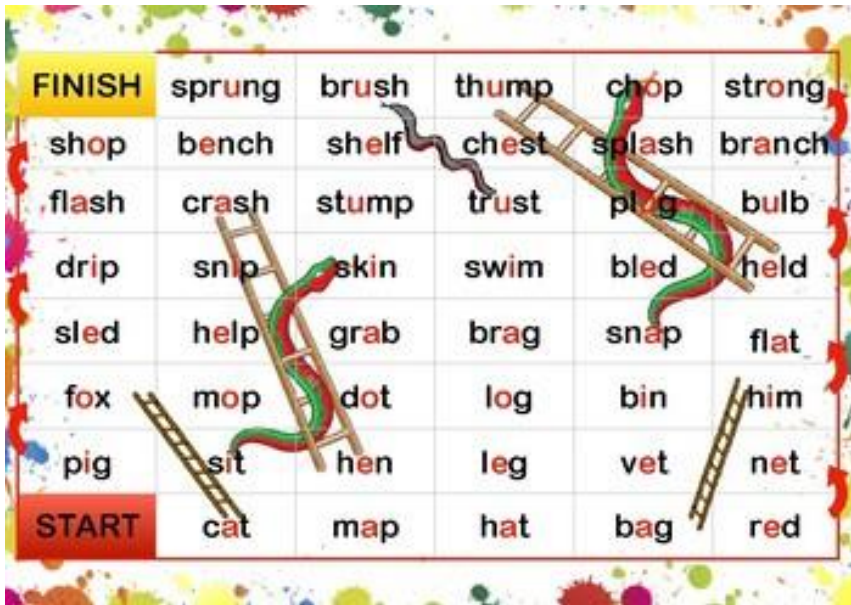# Participatory **Game** Redesign

Games that are:
- Non-digital (physical aspect, realia)
- Popular amongst students (relatedness)
- No programming skills required ☺

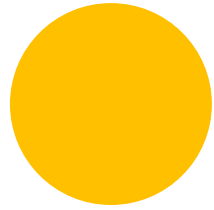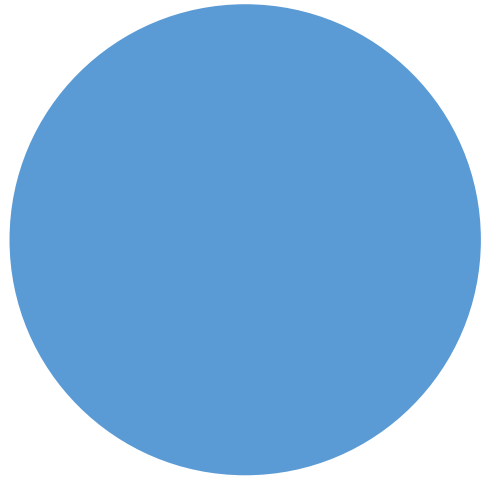# Participatory Game Redesign

- Designing from scratch takes time
- Editing is easier than creating
- Game/Task-based learning
- Higher order thinking skills

Application of PGR in the EFL class

- 11-13 Greek EFL learners
- Elementary-intermediate level
- Great Expectations; English language school, Kos

Participatory Game Redesign

The stages

6 Stages for Participatory Game Redesign

Teacher

Learner

Set learning goals

Choose a commercial game

Adapt the rules

Adapt the content

Craft the game

Playtest the game

Set the learning goals

Same as in lesson planning:

- What will I teach with this lesson-game? (aim)

- What will my students achieve? (outcome)

Example:

- Teach quantifiers in English (aim)

- Students will use quantifiers in sentences to describe pictures (outcome)

Choose a commercial game

Criteria:
- Popularity (students' interests)
- Playtime (classroom time)
- Complexity (feasibility)
- Theme (appropriateness)

Adapt the rules

- Remove unnecessary subsystems
- Modify/ simplify winning conditions
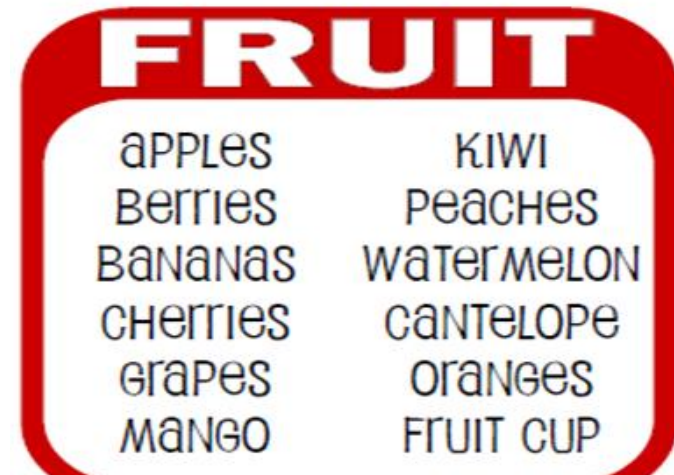- Introduce rules specific to the learning goals

E.g. in Tic-Tac-Toe rules were complexified; students had to produce a sentence to claim a place on the grid

Adapt the content

- Fit the learning goals
- pre-game design activity: Which words from today's lesson did you find most difficult?

E.g. in Tic-Tac-Toe students made list of food words (newly taught vocabulary)
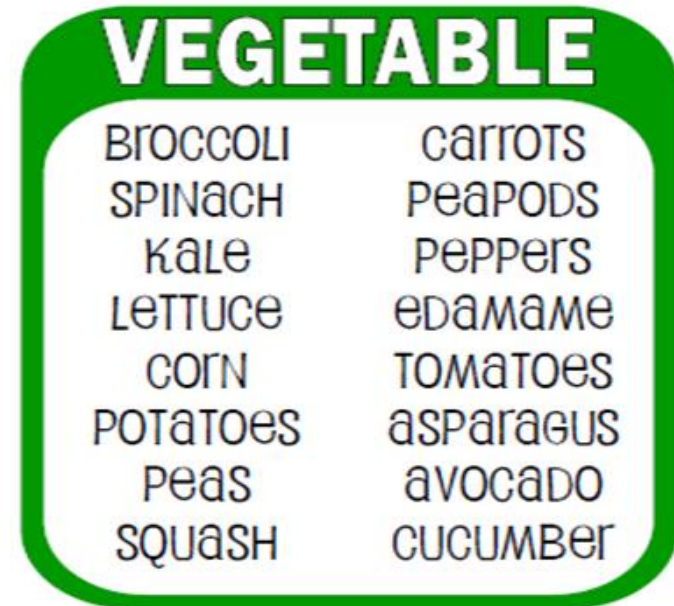
Craft the game & Playtest

- Learners' creativity
- Personalisation
- Skills (writing, collaborating)
- Time for reflection

E.g. in Tic-Tac-Toe students created the pictures to be used in the game
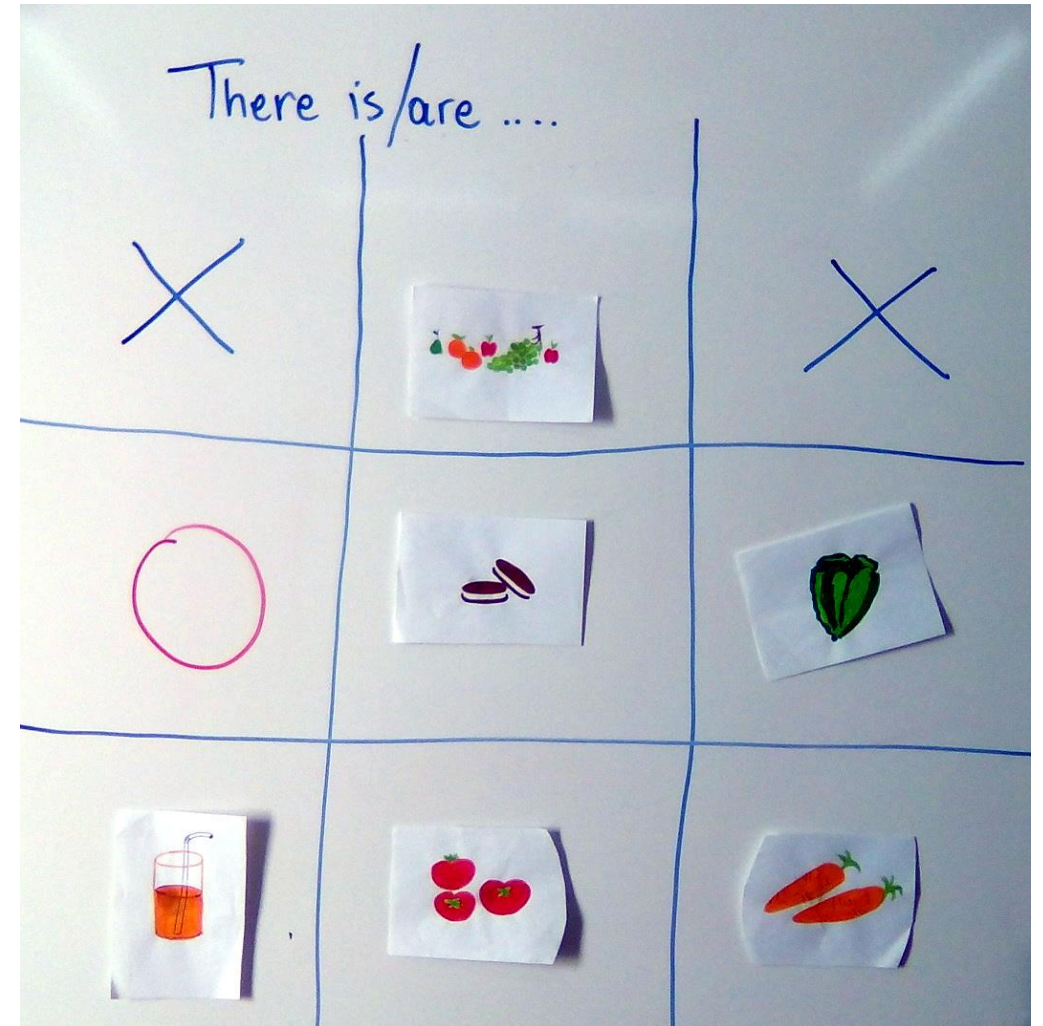
Participatory Game Redesign

Pandemic for CLIL and environmental awareness

Set Learning goals & Choose a commercial game

- Practice Vocabulary related to environment
- Reinforce environmental awareness

The game: Pandemic

Adapt the rules & content
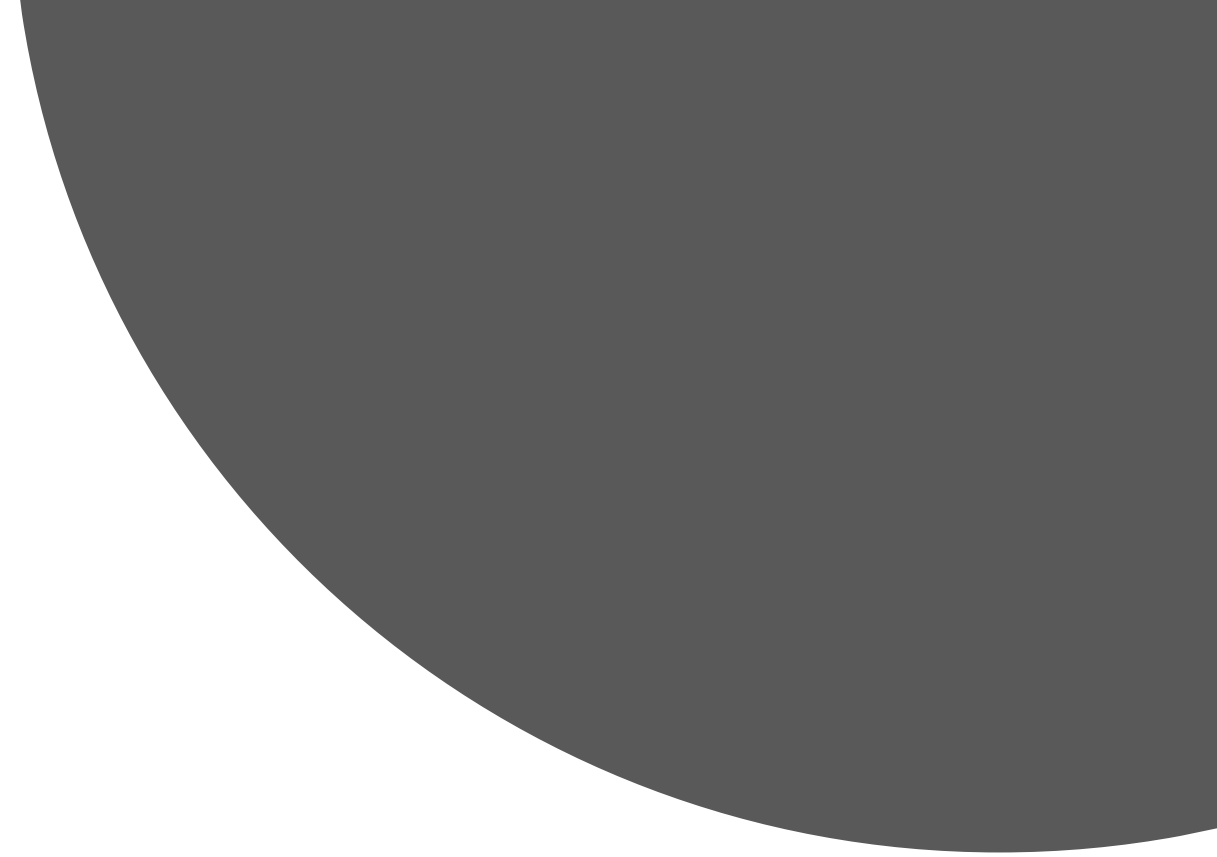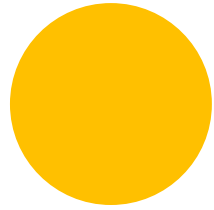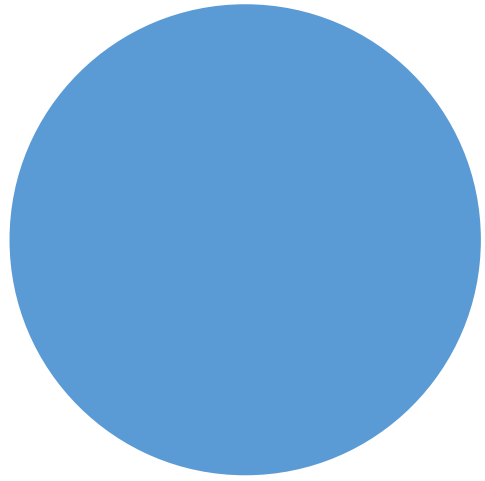
Adapt rules (Simplify):

- Reduce number of locations, remove infection cards, epidemics, disease cubes, simplify actions to two, new randomization and tracking of locations' threat, new winning condition, no losing condition

Adapt content:

- Locations, types of pollution (air, water, earth), solution cards based on environmental policies

Craft & Playtest

Crafting:

- Teachers' role: elicit environmental solutions from learners, choose number & types of cards, inspect language used

- Learners' role: brainstorm environmental solutions, design the board, craft cards with text and images

Before

After

Considerations

- Preparation from teachers' part
- Familiarity with games/game design
- Time consuming
- Not necessarily a finished product

Take-aways

- Redesigning is not easy, but easier than designing
- Involve students in creating: meaningful experience, materiality
- Application to other disciplines
- Products (even if not complete) can be used for future classes (Reflection cycle)

Thank you!

Questions?

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