

# Games and Engaging Activities in the ESP/EAP Classroom

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## Abstract

Both teaching and learning a foreign language requires hard work and a great deal of effort on both sides. The traditional chalk-and-talk approach to teaching and reviewing English grammar and vocabulary may be supplemented by other activities like (online) puzzles, crosswords, quizzes, games, experiments, QR codes, etc. The aim of this paper was twofold. We wanted to find out whether ESP teachers working at universities in the Republic of Croatia use such activities in their classes at all, and, if they do, how often, in which part of their classes, and which of these activities are most commonly used. For the purpose of this research, a total of 27 Croatian ESP teachers took part and filled out their surveys online. The results showed that all respondents use a wide array of games and other engaging activities that contribute to the acquisition of the content being taught and increase the effectiveness of language learning and teaching. Our research findings indicated that these engaging activities encourage creativity in ESP classes and support teachers' efforts to increase student motivation and engagement in class. Finally, the analysis of our results points to both the potential of games and other engaging game-like activities in ESP/EAP teaching and potential drawbacks.

## Introduction

There are several factors teachers have to bear in mind and be careful about when selecting games or any similar (online) engaging activity, e.g., which game or activity should be used and when, how it could relate to the syllabus, textbook, topic, or context, and to what extent it is beneficial for students. These activities, when selected carefully and appropriately, contribute to the acquisition of the content being taught and increase the effectiveness of language learning and teaching. Although there are both advantages and shortcomings of using such activities in (ESP/EAP) teaching, generally speaking, they support teachers' efforts to increase student motivation and engagement in class. As there is an abundance of activities that can be used in ESP/EAP classes, it is important to stress that most of them, though sometimes (slightly) modified, can be used in ESP/EAP classes of any type and at any level.

There exists a wide array of definitions of a game (and an engaging game-like activity), and all of them share the three key words: rules, fun and outcome (for an overview of the existing definitions of game, see, e.g., Gruss, 2016: 84 and Frydrychova Klimova, 2015: 1158).