



## Ludic Language Pedagogy Playground

#2 (2020)

<https://www.llpjournal.org/>

# 👩‍💻 How to teach languages with “Among Us”

James York \*

Tokyo Denki University

### ⌚ Item Details

#### History:

Submitted: 2020-09-29

Open peer reviewed: ✓

Published: 2020-10-25

#### Keywords:

Among Us  
Casual game  
Discord  
Empowering Teachers  
Game-based teaching  
Guide  
How to  
Mobile game

#### Peer reviewers:

Carolyn Blume  
Jonathan deHaan  
D.M. Jones  
Blair Matthews  
Niall McFadyen  
Adam Sheard  
Fabio Spano

### 🔑 Key points

- **What is this?** A guide to using the popular multiplayer game “Among Us” for teaching languages
- **Why did you make it?** Having played the game myself, I recognised its potential as a language learning tool and expect other teachers would appreciate a guide on how to use it.
- **Who is it for?** Teachers that would like to harness the social and cultural capital that students possess through knowledge of modern, online, multiplayer video games.
- **What did you include?** Post-play worksheets and a number of reasons explaining WHY a teacher may want to use such games in their context<sup>1</sup>

### Tweet synopsis

I taught English and Japanese with @InnerslothDevs’ #AmongUsGame. Here’s some tips on how you can teach languages with this popular social deduction game, too! #AmongUsLangTeach #Langchat #llpjournal #GBL

### View at the LLP Playground:

<https://www.llpjournal.org/2020/10/25/j-york-how-to-teach-languages-with-among-us.html>

<sup>1</sup> This section may be used as a general reference when attempting to bring games into the classroom, to persuade stakeholders and students themselves.

\* Corresponding author. Email address: [jamesyorkjp@gmail.com](mailto:jamesyorkjp@gmail.com) (Dr. James York)

## 1. 🎮 What is Among Us?

The following text explains the context of the game:

*Play with 4-10 players online or via local WiFi as you attempt to prepare your spaceship for departure, but beware as one or more random players among the Crew are Impostors bent on killing everyone!*<sup>2</sup>

As the above description makes clear, Among Us is a hidden role game. Other “hidden role” games which you may have heard of are: Werewolf, Mafia, Spyfall, and Two Rooms and a Boom.

These games typically pit a few “impostor” or “bad” players against a larger number of “villagers” or “good guys.” Game play progresses through conversation and a number of rounds where the good players are eliminated (read: killed/lynched/ejected) and information is gained regarding who the imposters may be. In Among us, crew members are collaborating to fix the many broken parts of a spaceship whilst an imposter is hellbent on killing all the crew members without being found out (for player actions, see Table 1).

The game is available for **free** on mobile ([iOS link](#) | [Android link](#)) and so can be utilized with students sitting in the same class, separately in different classes or even as part of remote teaching.<sup>3</sup> As Niall, a reviewer to this paper notes:

*“Recently I actually started playing Among Us with some of my students. What stands out to me is the ease of getting a game set up. Anyone with a phone can jump right in.”*

The game is also **cross platform** which means iOS users, Android users and PC gamers can all play together.

**Table 1:** Roles and actions

 Crewmates	 Imposter(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fix the various broken terminals in the ship</li><li>• Find dead crew members</li><li>• Hold emergency meetings</li><li>• Find the imposter</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kill crewmates</li><li>• Sabotage the ship</li><li>• Use the vents to quickly travel around the ship</li><li>• Close doors to limit movement of others</li><li>• Accuse others of being the Imposter</li></ul>

The language generated whilst playing this game can be used to teach the following:

- **Tenses.** Particularly:
  - Past: "Where were you?"
  - Past continuous: "I was fixing the terminal"
  - Perfect: "I haven't killed any crewmates!"<sup>4</sup>
- **Functions:** speculating, persuasion, question-formation, and giving and receiving advice.

This game is ideal for promoting the following skills: speculating, question-formation, and giving and receiving advice

<sup>2</sup> [https://store.steampowered.com/app/945360/Among\\_Us/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/945360/Among_Us/)

<sup>3</sup> Thank you to Niall for mentioning this as a particularly pertinent “selling point” during the pandemic.

<sup>4</sup> Thanks to Adam for these ideas!

## 2. 🌐 The language learning potential of *Among Us* or [insert game here]

The previous section briefly introduced the game. But I still haven't answered why you might want to teach with Among Us, or any other game for that matter. What are the affordances (potential) of this game for language learning? I will answer this question in detail here. **This is a section on the benefits of game use for language teaching. Yes, I pulled you in with the title, and now you are here**, why not read this section for tips on **how to persuade your program director** into letting you experiment with Among Us in your classroom!

 Read this section for tips on **how to persuade your program director** into letting you experiment with Among Us in your classroom!

### 1. Leveraging students' gaming capital

**N00b LLPer:**<sup>5</sup> GAMES ARE POPULAR!

**L33t LLPer:** Wait... That's not enough to convince most program directors, I'm sure.

The popularity of games is a **solid argument** for why games should be used in the classroom. **But it does not quite get at the core benefit of using a "popular" form of media for instruction**. As written by Blume (2019a; Chik, 2014), many educators perceive gaming as a leisure pursuit rather than an appropriate academic activity. The reason for this skepticism towards gaming is not easy to explain. One would assume age or perhaps gender being a primary reason, but as Blume (ibid) writes, results of qualitative studies on such topics appear contradictory. It may however be due to one or more of the following:

1. **Teachers just don't play games** as much as the "general" populous (Blume 2019b)
2. Language teachers may **fear that language learning is already perceived as a "less serious" pursuit**, and the use of games may exacerbate this (Thomas, 2012).
3. **Learners can push back** against game use when usage does not seem properly aligned with curricular goals (Reinhardt & Zander, 2011).

Regardless, as the title of this section notes: games are another avenue for students to exercise their social and cultural capital within the classroom. Rather than having a teacher choose a media which *they* are familiar with (and excluding games), by adding games as *another* source of learning, the teacher is providing additional opportunities for students to use a media *that many of them will be familiar with* to achieve academic goals. In other words, many **students have gaming capital (social and cultural knowledge tied to the experience of engaging in game play practices)** which can be leveraged in the classroom towards learning. Game use is therefore considered to be "valuing students' pre-existing capital" (Blume, 2019a, p.30) and meeting students *where they are* (see deHaan, 2020b). If we do not recognize, respect, or utilize students' knowledge, habits, values and practices, we set up "digital divides" that may marginalize students of particular socioeconomic groups. Thus, it is argued here and elsewhere that, as educators, games deserve our attention.



<sup>5</sup> I am not referring to anyone or group or demographic in particular here. I hope these sections come across as playfully poking at the terms: LLPer = a teacher engaged in ludic language pedagogy (as a field of inquiry, not the journal specifically). N00b = newcomer/wannabe. L33t = elite/experienced.

## 2. Affective benefits

<b>N00b LLPer:</b>	KIDS LOVE GAMES! THEY'RE SO MUCH FUN!
<b>L33t LLPer:</b>	Yeah, games may be fun, but all play and no work makes Jenny and Johnny dumb. Why is fun important and how can it be leveraged towards learning goals? That's the teacher's job: transforming the fun allure of games into pedagogical tools for scaffolded and collaborative learning. <sup>6</sup>

Games are engaging. I know! But why are they engaging? They offer the following experiences:

- Clear feedback on performance
- Clear, structured goal orientation (pushing one into a flow state)
- A connection to and communication with other players (in affinity spaces)
- Puzzle-solving, level-clearing dopamine hits
- Information gaps that drive curiosity
- A feeling of accomplishment (e.g. beating a boss **after failing over and over**).<sup>7</sup>

If one considers Among Us, it has these features: Clear feedback (you vote, get kicked or kick a player getting more information which will help you solve the game), goal (find the imposter OR kill all other crewmates), communication (through avatar movement, interaction and chat), a sense of accomplishment (you win or lose), puzzle-solving (mini-games and figuring out who the imposter is), information gap (not one single player has all the information). As reviewer Fabio ponders: When we suggest a popular game like Among Us, we do it because we hope that its popularity means that students might know it (related to the gaming capital point above). Additionally, we could also assume that the game became popular because it aligns with the bullet points above.<sup>8</sup>

For language learning in particular though, scholars have argued that due to the “magic circle” of gameplay, games occur in a space separate to reality (Huizinga, 1955; Salen & Zimmerman, 2004). Bogost also writes about the magic circle: “*A magic circle, a circumscribed, imaginary playground in which the limitations of the things we encounter—of anything we encounter—can produce meaningful experiences*” (2016). This “other” space is often considered a safe place to test hypotheses, try on other identities and experience meaningful encounters with others. In this way, games may help lower the *affective filter* and promote learners to engage in a task (see Palmer & Rodgers, 1983). For Among Us then, if the language used during gameplay aligns with standards, the textbook, or if the gameplay is something that students themselves want to explore as a language learning activity, the game offers the opportunity to:

- Act as a colourful astronaut fixing or destroying a spaceship,
- Use the target language to accuse or back up a fellow player<sup>9</sup>,
- Test hypotheses relating to the target language such as how to use specific tenses, give a convincing argument, persuade another player, and piece information together using metalinguistic terms.
- Reflect on the gameplay experience with other classmates as a lived, embodied, hopefully FUN experience.

However, we must be careful to translate/transfer what students do during the game to non-gameplay contexts. This is because gameplay may be considered as a venue of *situated meaning-making*, where language use during gameplay is tightly connected to that experience. In other words, just as a boxer removes their gloves after a fight, once students step outside of the magic circle of gameplay, their use of the target language may end also.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Thanks to Jonathan and Adam for the suggestions in this section.

<sup>7</sup> Linked to this is reviewer Carolyn Blumes point that accomplishment is “manageable due to scaffolding, circular skill-building loops, and managed risks. All of the items of the list can thus be linked to inducing a flow state in players.

<sup>8</sup> Not verbatim. Thanks for the comment Fabio.

<sup>9</sup> Back up because there can actually be two or more imposters in this game, allowing for comradery to develop between the “imposter team.”

<sup>10</sup> DM Jones: There is a connection to Marcus Aurelius here and the difference of being a swordsman and a wrestler. The wrestler always has his ‘tools’ with her/him.

Following up with post-play activities which utilize the language spoken during gameplay creates a link between the game world and the students real life context. As teachers, we need to keep engagement high after gameplay has ended!

Just as a boxer removes their gloves after a fight, once students step outside of the magic circle of gameplay, their use of the target language may end also.



### 3. Cognitive benefits

**N00b LLPer:** I GET 90% STUDENT SPEECH TIME IN CLASS!

**L33t LLPer:** This is not a competition. Put your percentage back in your pocket and bring me some meaning instead!

Getting students to talk in the target language during class is a difficult task. **OF COURSE, having students enjoy speaking** whilst playing a game (due to its affective affordances) is really satisfying as a teacher. We did it! We cracked the wall of silence! (I'm totally serious). **BUT:** Please consider WHY we want students to speak to each other in the target language. For a deeper exploration of the WHY of language teaching with games, consider reading the introduction section of deHaan's article in LLP (2019). Additionally, also consider what your students do AFTER speaking with each other as they play.

From an **interactionist perspective** to language teaching, **interaction is the secret sauce that drives development**. So, having students talk with one another means that:

- They have many chances to hear the TL being spoken, which can become part of the student's interlanguage over repeat encounters (Input Hypothesis - Krashen, 1977).
- They have ample opportunity to speak themselves, testing hypotheses and receiving feedback on their mistakes (Output Hypothesis - Swain & Lapkin, 1995).
- They are *forced* to speak when they are the one accusing or being accused, thus drawing on learned knowledge and bolstering their procedural memory (Forced output - Swain, 2000; Skill Acquisition Theory - DeKeyser, 2015).
- They are exposed to breakdowns in conversation which promote a negotiation of meaning, subsequent recasts, and eventual internalization of language (Varonis & Gass, 1985).
- They practice the same expressions multiple times in the same class (the game is short) and so are given the opportunity to develop a repertoire of formulaic expressions and competency in rules of the target language (the first of Ellis's instructed SLA principles, 2014)

I have only touched on some cognitive benefits here. Readers may also be screaming<sup>11</sup> at me: "What about benefits from a *sociocultural perspective*!?" and yes, you'd be right. Please write a paper on these benefits!



<sup>11</sup> Nobody hears you scream in space, though!

#### 4. Connection with a global audience

**N00b LLPer:** THIS GAME IS GETTING STUDENTS ENGAGED IN THE CLASSROOM!

**L33t LLPer:** How about getting students to engage with classmates, and a global community of game players?

After class, students may feel empowered to play online with target language speakers online. If they don't, why not prompt them to do so? After all the language they learnt in class can be used outside of the class with a genuine audience. I have conducted a course which asked students to engage in game communities on Reddit for example (York, 2020b). Games like Among Us that have such a global appeal are fantastic tools to connect students' interests with academic goals, the target culture, as well as open students up to intercultural communication. Lessons around popular media (pop music, comics, movies, etc.) do not need to be restricted to the classroom. There is a global audience looking at these same cultural items. Let's use students' interests to explore the world.



##### **In terms of Among Us:**

If lots of students are playing this game, **they already know how to play**. But do they know about memes, in-jokes, celebrities or guides in their target language? This is an opportunity to leverage their sociocultural capital for extended language learning activities using the myriad of resources on the internet.

Some examples of memes and culture surrounding this game in English speaking communities are included below. All of these resources offer a glimpse into the popular culture that has been generated around the game. It can be tapped into as a discussion point, "Does the same meme/joke exist in your own language/culture?" as authentic instances of the target language in use, or as models for students to create their own versions, transforming their knowledge of the game and culture into the target language domain.

- An **image** comparing the workload of the game to the amount of homework they get ([source](#)).
  - Students could be asked about their own homework load, linking it to COVID-19 lockdowns and the reformulation of homework to be more report-driven.
- An **image** likening the game to the US presidential debate ([source](#)).
  - This could be used as the starting point for a discussion on how people can find parallels between the "real world" of politics and gameplay. Could students link other games and game scenarios to real life events?
  - The post also features a comment asking for clarification on the meaning of the image ([source](#)), which could be used to start a discussion on US politics.
- A **video** of an unlucky player caught at the wrong time ([source](#)).
  - This post generated 46 comments on Reddit where people posted on the quality of the BGM, editing, the unfortunate situation and the players name.
  - The video could be used as a starting point for students to create their own "machinima," developing target language skills and digital literacies as part of the project.<sup>12</sup>
- A Reddit post as a **guide** to playing the Imposter ([source](#)).
  - Students could be asked to create a similar guide in the language they are studying.
  - Students could discuss the content of the guide, commenting on what they would change.
- A **Discord server** for finding people to play with ([source](#)).
  - Students could use this server to find groups of players to play with in the target language.
- A "50 best tips" for playing the game ([source](#)).
  - Again, students could generate their own "tips" video, comment on this one, or discuss which tips really are important in a "ranking" system.
- A famous YouTuber's "best Imposter" play video ([source](#)).
  - This video can be mined for language to use in their own play sessions.
  - Comments can be referred to also.

<sup>12</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machinima>



### 3. 🎮 The teaching model (including worksheets)

There are of course many different approaches to teaching languages. The model used here is a **reduced version** of my “board-games meet TBLT” instruction model known as Kotoba Rollers. I have written about it in much more detail in the following places:

- In my LLP walkthrough paper [here](#) (York, 2019).
- On my blog [here](#).
- On the elt.training blog [here](#).

The framework is a simple example of the pre-task, task, and post-task cycle. This framework was inspired by two things: 1) my training in applied linguistics and TESOL and 2) my reading of the literature on games and language teaching, specifically: the similarities between the games and the pedagogical principles of TBLT. I have written about these similarities in York and deHaan (2018).

**Table 2.** The teaching model.

<b>1. PREPARE</b> ↓	💡 Learn the rules <sup>13</sup> together. 💡 Consider vocabulary and phrases that are necessary to play the game in the TL. 💡 Play the game a few times in your native language to get familiar with how the game works.
<b>2. PLAY</b> ↓	💡 Use the target language (TL) as much as possible BUT... 💡 DO NOT PENALISE use of the mother tongue.
<b>3. REFLECT</b> ↓	🚀 What could you <u>not</u> say in the TL? → <u>Translate it into the TL</u> . Transcribe audio and then write down the discourse on <a href="#">this worksheet</a> . 🚀 What mistakes did you hear? 🚀 What do <u>target language speakers</u> say when they play? Watch games in the TL and <u>make notes</u> ( <a href="#">worksheet</a> )! 🌐 <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eicARxnB-M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eicARxnB-M</a> 🌐 <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fi-BVypAW58">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fi-BVypAW58</a> 🌐 <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-uo_RAyocs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-uo_RAyocs</a> 🌐 <a href="https://youtu.be/sQ9ER0VkdE">https://youtu.be/sQ9ER0VkdE</a> + YOUR LANGUAGE HERE. 🚀 What else could you do post-task? Check deHaan (2020a) for some more options.
<b>4. REPEAT FROM PART 2</b> ↺	🔄 This game is short so there are lots of opportunities to improve your use of the TL over repeated play sessions. 🔄 Use the notes made in the REFLECT stage in your follow-up games to increase TL usage.
<b>5. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES</b> 💪	Why not: 🤔 s l o w d o w n and reflect before becoming engaged in gameplay again (York, 2020). 🤔 Create a short essay based on gameplay (dramatising it). 🤔 Get involved in an online community around Among Us ( <a href="#">See Section 1.4 above</a> )

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.sportskeeda.com/esports/how-play-among-us-beginner-s-guide-tutorial-frequently-asked-questions>

## 4. 🛡 Procedure

So what do you need to know about Among Us in order to play? What happens during a typical game? Read on.

First, you will need to install the game on either student or institution devices. As linked above, the game is available for **free** on mobile ([iOS link](#) | [Android link](#)). It can also be purchased on [Steam](#) for Windows. Students should have one device each, or you could pair up students so that they take it in turns: one watching, one playing. This allows them to give feedback to each other once a game has finished. The watcher may notice something the player didn't.

### 0. 📜 Match language used in the game with course or textbook goals.

Before playing a game with students, you must consider how it fits in with your teaching goals.

- Perhaps you want to use the game as an object of authentic target language culture (using the various online resources such as YouTube videos, reddit posts, or twitter “memes”)?
- Do the **language functions** match up with what you are doing in your textbook? If so, **make it clear to students** from the start in order to 1) increase student buy-in, and 2) drive home that you expect learning to occur from gameplay.

#### ⚠ TEACHING TIP

Make it clear to students from the start in order to 1) increase student buy-in, and 2) drive home that you expect learning to occur from gameplay.

### 1. 🎩 Wear a hat



Players can change their character colour, but other than this they all look the same, which has sparked some criticisms regarding its lack of accessibility to the colourblind<sup>14</sup>.



As a way to more clearly identify oneself then, I recommend using hats, a number of which can be used for free.

**One issue remains however:** the hats are not visible during the emergency meeting or on the dead bodies, so if you do teach a colour-blind student, care should be given to support them during gameplay. For example, playing in pairs could alleviate this issue.

#### ⚠ TEACHING TIP:

Review colours, and hat items before playing.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.reddit.com/r/AmongUs/comments/iv4vsq/colorblind\\_oc/](https://www.reddit.com/r/AmongUs/comments/iv4vsq/colorblind_oc/)

<sup>15</sup> Jonathan: The level of DETAIL in this “lesson plan” is beyond amazing. SUPERB, OVER THE TOP work, as always, James!

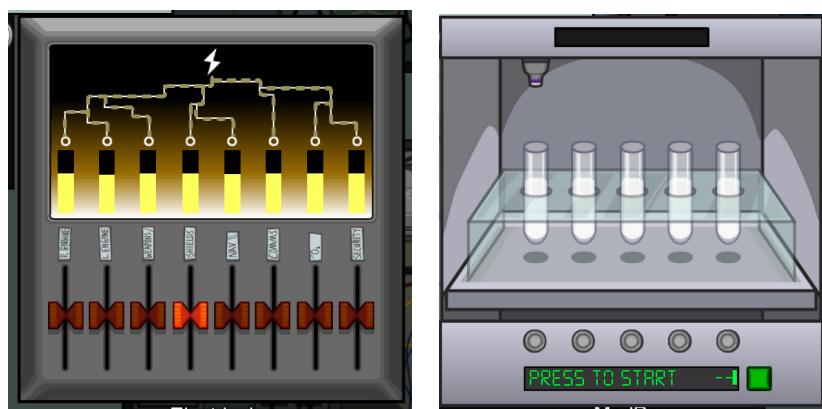
## 2. 🗺 Translate the map locations

The map is available in the top right of the screen. It also shows a player which area of the map they have to fix (the yellow !). It is a good idea to **memorize** the names of locations on the map as soon as you can. Consider **translating** the different room names into the target language before playing also.



## 3. ✎ Complete tasks in game

There are a host of different tasks to complete on the ship. None of them are very difficult, so get familiar BY PLAYING lots of games! This relates to the point made in York, deHaan & Hordequin (2019, p.) about **game literacy** being one of the key skills a *game-based language teacher* needs when contemplating game use in the classroom. Not only does a teacher need content and pedagogic knowledge, but game knowledge is also paramount. It allows the teacher to consider how a game aligns with curricular goals, what difficulties students may have when playing, and what pre and post-activities will best support learning from a game. So get playing, and become an expert..!



#### 4.👉 Start accusing others

The game centers around finding dead bodies of crew members and emergency meetings where players are free to accuse people of being the imposter. During this phase, players are brought to a terminal to discuss what they saw and who they think is the imposter (Figure 2).



Figure 2 Terminal presented to players during the discussion phase.

Players can use the chat bubble in the top right to join the discussion via text-based communication (Figure 3). Encourage students to write in as much detail as possible (Also, see “👉 Advanced Tip” below).

	Red	→		I saw red near the body.
	No	→		It wasn't me!
	you	→		I'm sure it was you.



Figure 3 An example discussion.

**TEACHING TIP**

Don't worry if your students used a lot of their mother tongue in the first session. This is valuable language to be translated into the target language after playing.

Once all players have voted (or skipped voting), a player is ejected from the ship. If that player was the imposter, congratulations, crew members, you win. If not, play continues. The conditions for winning are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3** Win conditions for each party.

Crew Win	Imposter win
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All impostors are ejected.</li> <li>• All tasks are completed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are an equal number of crew and impostors.</li> <li>• The crew fails to stop a sabotage.</li> </ul>



One issue brought up by a reviewer to this paper, and as I have alluded to above is that Among Us players use very short phrases and common internet slang during the emergency meetings. Here is a short excerpt from a game of my own. Screenshots visible [here](#).

**Table 4** An excerpt of Among Us emergency meeting dialogue

Line	Speaker	Content
1	LIME	Red
2	WHITE	Eyyy
3	Me	What did you see?
4	Me	Why red?
5	RED	Why? I was watching purple clear asteroids
6	LIME	Hebstood afk at the meteor task
7	RED	Yes so what?
8	LIME	Thats sus
9	RED	Vote lime after me lol
10	WHITE	I'm just gonna vote red he's sus
11	RED	Lime is a 13year old boy accusing for no reason
12	Me	I skipped. Nothing solid
13	BROWN	He is fifteen
14	RED	Yea these players are 13
15	BLUE	Just see if its white
16	Me	What now?
17	WHITE	It's lime bro

The conversation in this game was relatively civil compared to some games I have played. No cuss words were used<sup>16</sup>, though insults were thrown (line 11). The key word that is used as part of Among Us gameplay appears on line 8: "sus" which is short for suspicious. Another abbreviation appears on line 17 also: "bro" for brother or more colloquially "friend." Finally, the acronym "afk" appears on line 6, which stands for Away From Keyboard. One may also notice the lack of punctuation throughout.

*Such specific, "broken" language use is not unique to games like Among Us, but appears in any txt-based communication, esp when their r time limits on interaction and teh author cant go bk n edit there input.*<sup>17</sup> Whether it is useful to expose this kind of language is debatable, but "netspeak" (Crystal, 2001) is only going to become more prevalent in our computer- or mobile-mediated, text-based society. Additionally, if we presume that text-based communication (during game play sessions??) is the most likely way that our students are going to communicate with members of the target language, it is paramount that they "learn the lingo" of the internet. Therefore, again, it is paramount that teachers are aware of what linguistic practices and terminology exist in internet communities and, as focused on here, gaming communities.

**How to deal with such language then?** → In post-gameplay consciousness raising, teacher-led activities, which is the topic of the next section.

#### TEACHING TIP

Therefore, again, it is paramount that teachers are aware of what linguistic practices and terminology exist in internet communities and, as focused on here, gaming communities.

### 5. 😊 Debrief and get ready to play again

As mentioned in the teaching model above, the debriefing session is an essential part of teaching with games and should not be neglected here. The game is fun, and you may want to jump straight back in, and indeed you probably will need to play three to five games until you have a good understanding of how the game works, what emergent properties it has, and which strategies are good or bad. Therefore, you should play a few games until everyone is comfortable, familiar and has some talking point to share. At this point, you can start to analyze gameplay in post-game activities. Therefore, after playing a game, resist the urge to start playing again straight away, and take time to do some of the activities presented in Table 2.

**As this step is the most important, I am reposting the various activities I suggest you do after playing:**

- 🚀 What could you not say in the target language? → Translate it into the TL
- 🚀 What mistakes did you see<sup>18</sup> or hear<sup>19</sup>? → Discuss corrections as a group
- 🚀 What do target language speakers say when they play? → Watch videos and make notes!

Example gameplay videos in other languages:

- 🇺🇸 [AMONG US AMONG US INDONESIA](#)
- 🇺🇸 [THEY CHOKED?!? \(Among Us Gameplay\)](#)
- 🇯🇵 [\[Among Us 実況\] え!?日本語ないの!? シンプルな宇宙雪山で遊んでみた！！\[Vtuber 霧島 韶希 日本語 어동어스\]](#)
- 🇫🇷 [Among Us, I bait my crew !! \(french\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> Such words are automatically replaced with asterisks in the default setting.

<sup>17</sup> Yes, I spelled words incorrectly on purpose here. But, you could understand it, right?

<sup>18</sup> Thanks to Fabio for the suggestion that on Windows, WINKEY+G will record gameplay video for post-task analysis. Smartphones also have a record screen function, too.

<sup>19</sup> ...if using Discord or Zoom as suggested in the "Advanced Tip" section.

## 5. 💪 Advanced Tip

Play face-to-face OR using a synchronous voice chat platform such as Discord, Skype or Zoom.

In my (and reviewers<sup>20</sup>) opinion, the in-game chat terminal is clunky and limited in functionality (such as not allowing for Japanese or Chinese characters for a start...) and it is not easy to tell what a person is thinking when all you see is their text. Using voice and video opens up the game to feel much more “authentic” in terms of the social interaction between players. As an imposter, you must keep a better “poker face,” and as crew members you are hyper-sensitive to how others are reacting. In my opinion, then, this does a lot more than just allow students to practice speaking the target language.

As a counterpoint, however, and, as mentioned by reviewer Carolyn, written communication does have its place. As shown in studies on computer mediated communication, text-based interactions have both cognitive and affective affordances: allowing for equal turn-taking (Warschauer, 1996), lower-anxiety due to the reduced time demands (Beauvois, 1992), being linked to improvements in oral production (Satar & Ozdener, 2009). It also allows equal opportunities to gamers who do not feel safe in gaming communities (women, members of non-cis-communities, players with disabilities, and non-native speakers by offering anonymity (Collister, 2016).

In order to set up a game to do this, you will need to host a **private** game and invite other players with the invite code (Figure 4):



Figure 4 The start up screen showing the unique game code below the “START” button.

Playing with voice-chat in this way, you will need to make sure that microphones are muted until the discussion phase (the emergency meeting) to avoid giving away any information (e.g., gasping when killed, laughing when causing chaos, etc.).

## 6. ? Got questions?

You can get in touch with me and other LLP members over on the [LLP Slack](#) (priority) or [Discord server](#) any time.

You can learn more about my MORE ROBUST framework for teaching languages with games [here](#).

Thanks for reading. And, if you DO decide to try and teach a language with Among Us, please let me know by tagging me on Twitter: [@cheapshot](#).

Thanks!



James, the pink crew member.

<sup>20</sup> Thanks to Niall for the suggestion.

## 7. References

- Beauvois, M.H. 1992. Computer-Assisted classroom discussion in the foreign language classroom: conversation in slow motion. *Foreign Language Annals*, 25(5), 455–464.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1992.tb01128.x>.
- Blume, C. (2019a). Playing by their rules: Why issues of capital (should) influence digital game-based language learning in schools. *CALICO Journal*, 36(1), 19–38. <https://doi.org/10.1558/cj.35099>
- Blume, C. (2019b). Games people (don't) play: An analysis of pre-service EFL teachers' behaviors and beliefs regarding digital game-based language learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2018.1552599>
- Bogost, I. (2016). *Play anything: The pleasure of limits, the uses of boredom, and the secret of games*. Basic Books.
- Chik, A. (2014). Digital Gaming and Language Learning: Autonomy and Community. *Language Learning & Technology*, 18(182), 85–100. <https://doi.org/10.125/44371>
- Collister, L. B. (2016). "At least I'm not Chinese, gay, or female": Marginalized voices in World of Warcraft. *English in Computer-Mediated Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110490817-016>
- Crystal, D (2001). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- deHaan, J. (2019). Teaching language and literacy with games: What? How? Why? *Ludic Language Pedagogy*, 1, 1-57
- deHaan, J. (2020a). 10 great classroom activities language teachers can do with games (in addition to helping students speak while playing!). *Ludic Language Pedagogy* (2), 70-74.
- deHaan, J. (2020b). Language and literacy teaching with games: the "who" and transformative actions. *Ludic Language Pedagogy*, 2, 162-186.
- DeKeyser, R. (2015). Skill acquisition theory. In B. VanPatten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition*, (2nd ed., pp. 94–112). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Ellis, R. (2014). Principles of instructed second language learning. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. M. Brinton, & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 31-45). Boston: Heinle.
- Huizinga, J. (1955) *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*. Beacon Press, Boston, MA.
- Koster, R. (2005). *A theory of fun for game design*. Scottsdale, CA: Paraglyph.
- Krashen, S. (1977) The monitor model for adult second language performance. In Burt, M., Dulay, H. & Finocchiaro, M. (eds.) *Viewpoints in English as a second language* (pp.152-161). New York: Regents.
- Palmer, A., & Rodgers, T. S. (1983). Games in language teaching. *Language Teaching*, 16(1), 2–21.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800009836>
- Reinhardt, J., & Zander, V. (2011). Social networking in an intensive English program classroom: A language socialization perspective. *CALICO Journal*, 28(2), 326-344. <https://doi.org/10.11139/cj.28.2.326-344>
- Salen, K. & Zimmerman, E. (2004) *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. In J. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language* (pp. 97–114). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1995). Problems in output and the cognitive processes they generate: A step towards second language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 16, 371–391.
- Thomas, M. (2012). Contextualizing digital game-based language learning: Transformational paradigm shift or business as usual? In H. Reinders (Ed.), *New language learning and teaching environments. Digital games in language learning and teaching* (pp. 11–31). London, England: Palgrave Macmillan.  
[https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137005267\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137005267_2)
- Varonis, E., & Gass, S. (1985). Non-native/non-native conversations: A model for negotiation of meaning. *Applied Linguistics*, 6(1), 71–90.
- York, J. & deHaan, J. (2018) A constructivist approach to game-based language learning. *International Journal of Game-Based Learning* 8(1).

York, J. (2020a). It's your mooooove: Why teaching with games should be like vaporwave (and not nightcore). *Ludic Language Pedagogy*, 2, 104-114.

<https://llpjurnal.org/2020/06/24/york-teaching-with-games-vaporwave.html>

York, J. (2020b). Engaging with the world: Reddit in the university classroom. JALT CALL Conference 2020, Tokyo, Japan, June 6th.

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1HOPYAP\\_veZYaPKkRY6BFn4H9k9TMs-qW1WrdL6Gb6s/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1HOPYAP_veZYaPKkRY6BFn4H9k9TMs-qW1WrdL6Gb6s/edit?usp=sharing)

York, J., deHaan, J., & Hourdequin, P. (2019). It's Your Turn: EFL Teaching and Learning with Tabletop Games. In H. Reinders, S. Ryan, & S. Nakamura (Eds.), *Innovation in Language Teaching and Learning* (pp. 117–139). Cham: Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-12567-7\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-12567-7_7)