



# **Gaming for Mutual Learning in Elder Care GAMLEC**

## **IO 3.2. Short version of Educational Framework**



## Document information

This document presents short version of theoretical and methodological perspectives of Educational Framework for GAMLEC board game.

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The results of the Erasmus+ project GAMLEC consist of this Short version of the Educational Framework, of a guide to the design of format of the card content, of the rules of the learning board game for the game version with Game Coach, of the rules of the learning board game without Game Coach, of the learning game cards for adults about the quality of life of nursing home residents, a Compendium, the learning goals, and objectives of the learning board game, the rules of the learning board game, an instruction manual for the game version with Coach, Guidelines for the learning board game, and an interactive E-learning platform. The results are available in English, German, Italian, Dutch and Lithuanian at [www.gamlec.eu](http://www.gamlec.eu).



## INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Educational Framework is the most essential supporting educational structure, and when designed correctly, it becomes the foundation upon which everything else is built. Item, the educational framework that transforms a vision into a plan of action. In the GAMLEC project a learning board game is used as an educational offer for care workers, volunteers and committed family members of dependent residents in care homes.

The Educational Framework for the learning board game integrates approaches from the theory and practice of game-based learning (GBL). Schrier (2014) argues that the design of game for learning requires knowledge of game design and of instructional design. Also, a learning game must be designed to meet pre-specific learning objectives.

Educationalists put forward that the educational framework is equally important as the game design. Others refer to this integration as relations between learning components (pedagogy) and game components (game itself), and to the aspect that high-level pedagogical intents can be translated and implemented through low-level game mechanics. For the elaboration of the educational framework (EF) for the purposes of this project, several theoretical perspectives including Huizinga's (1971) theory of play (as it relates to learning), and Vygotsky's (1978) idea of a social constructivist pedagogy will be considered.

The experiential learning theory is used as some authors underline that this theory is a fruitful basis for integration game play and pedagogy. The experiential learning theory is a basis of the exploratory learning model developed by de Freitas and Neumann (2009) that is also a component of pedagogy of serious games as well. In this model learning has progressed from didactic to dynamic and collaborative experience; learning is cyclical; learning is exploratory; learning is about constructing and testing ideas and meanings; learning benefits from feedback; learning is motivational; learning is self-regulatory and autonomous; and learning can give rise to feelings of flow in certain circumstances.

The Educational Framework for the learning board game relates to an approach to the role of trainers in game-based learning. A culture of participation and empowerment is of the essence. In the Educational Framework, these theoretical ideas are considered in elaboration of the role of game coaches.

Finally, the educational framework is oriented at the learning outcome approach as introduced in the European Qualification Framework. Learning outcomes are defined as 'statements of what a learner knows, understands and what they are able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences' (CEDEFOP, 2014). Learning outcomes makes it easier to assess the match between needs for learning (GAMLEC project's IO1) and the content of a board game (GAMLEC project's IO2).



## LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Historically, play is something unserious, an activity that opposes work or occupation, which requires hard effort. Play is usually associated with freedom, activity based on free will that cannot be imposed. Play is mostly associated with leisure time for relaxation, or time out of work. From the perspective of the development of civilization, if work is done out of necessity, then play is excess, something that does not have material necessity.

According to Huizinga (1992) who published his book “Homo Ludens” in 1938, play is the essential element of culture, one of “the great archetypal activities of human society”. Huizinga discusses the notion of playing man, *homo ludens*, as opposed to the idea of producing man, *homo faber*, which is related to duty and rigorous work, seriousness, control over nature. Having performed an historic analysis of elements of play in a systematic way, Huizinga aims to prove that numerous forms of culture – poetry, art, performance, dance, religious cults, speech, music, sports – are based on the logic of play, just as they would have been in the past. Play is also present in the roots of such serious activities as war, philosophy, politics, and courts of law. Finally, Huizinga’s theory of playing man notes the importance of play in any activity, including learning.

Huizinga provides universal, recurring principles and elements of play. Play is a free activity, experienced as “make-believe” and situated outside of everyday life, but nevertheless capable of totally absorbing the player; an activity entirely lacking in material interest and in utility. It transpires in an explicitly circumscribed time and space, is carried out in an orderly fashion according to given rules, and gives rise to group relationships which often surround themselves with mystery or emphasize through disguises their difference from the ordinary world. Another feature mentioned by Huizinga that characterizes play is fictiveness. Play activity seems to happen in real life but is in fact not real. Play deals with uncertainty: its course cannot be determined, nor its outcome reached in advance, a certain latitude for innovation being left necessarily to the initiative of the player (Huizinga, 1992).

According to Mažeikienė and Gerulaitienė (2015) the most important cultural function of play is that it happens because of communication and because of being together. Play happens in a certain space and time, has its own physical and symbolic space, with its own internal order. Rules create the world of play. Play possesses a certain course; rules of the play create the story – stress, equilibrium, balancing, contrast, variance, rising and falling action. Stress is the most important element that creates suspense and instability, chance and opportunity. Play ends with overcoming the stress and resulting in relief and relaxation. Moreover, play implies winning, placing bets, a prize, an award. Therefore, competition and struggle for the first place must be present in play. Evidently, elements of play are implemented through simulation games. However, simulation games are primarily designed with a pedagogical outcome in mind. This brings us to the concept of learning through play, which combines elements of play and seriousness.



Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism gives us an important theoretical basis that helps to conceptualize the game as a learning mediator (Vygotsky, 1978; 1987). Vygotsky's theory was elaborated with a specific focus on children's cognitive development, however, some of his concepts can be meaningfully applied to other contexts as well. If play forms the basis of the cultural activity as Huizinga has explained, then, according to Vygotsky, it could be argued that play is an activity that transfers valuable knowledge accumulated by society. A game (as a concrete form of play) could be seen as a mediator and artifact, as a cultural and educational tool to be used in the zone of proximal development. It is a tool that could be used to mediate social environments and to internalize knowledge and develop skills in play for various groups of learners.

Certain developmental models in education of intercultural competence, have identified more progressive stages in the process of learning and personal development, which is a life-long process. Hence, Vygotsky's idea about the possible educative role of social interaction could be basically applicable in adult education. In adult education facilitators/teachers aim to encourage the development of players' social skills and moral development, and to lead players towards another level of development of social competence, because they understand the concept of development of intercultural competence and possess certain didactic skills, knowledge and information about logic and the principles of organization of the game to be played, as well as complete information about the game (unlike the players).

## THE CONTEXT OF LEARNING

De Freitas (2014) states that many authors argue that '*the context of learning plays an extremely important role in the processes of learning*'. Author discusses the education system on national and regional level and indicates socio-political, institutional and disciplinary contexts that do influence a learning process. Using de Freitas logic 'board game' for staff in residential care is part of the training system in long-term learning process on national level.

- In Lithuania there are formalized systems for raising qualification of employees working in residential care. All programs offered for the residential care system have to be accredited in the Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labor.
- The Netherlands have several educational provisions to become a qualified formal caregiver in residential care. The training in The Netherlands is divided in two mainstream offers: theoretical learning with internships and learning on the job with 1 day per week theory. Both are available on applied sciences level or on VET level. The national Ministry of Education defines the standards of learning; the Inspectorate of Education continuously monitors the quality of the educational offers.
- In Italy, continuous training and updating of professionals working in healthcare services – and among them professionals working in residential care homes – is compulsory. Specific training programs are defined by the Italian Ministry of Health guidelines and ruled by regional accreditation systems.



Homes for old age people are institutions that incorporate structure of 'embodied' roles occupied by human persons (de Freitas, 2014, p.19). "GAMLEC" board game in residential care organizations as an informal education program brings a learner role for staff involved in training. As argue de Freitas (2014), in the modern models of education a learner has to have an active role and has to be not isolated from the wider context of learning.

Further, physical and virtual space has to be considered in any learning process. Playing 'game board' in residential care is possible when players (staff, volunteers) have physical space convenient to engage in the game, and also, has all the necessary technological environment (computers, tablets, Internet, etc.). Time dimension is extremely important because we talk about staff members that have a very intensive timetable in their working day.

### **INTERACTIVITY IN GAME-BASED LEARNING**

Based on the model of game-based learning by Garris, Ahlers and Driskell (2002) it is important to consider how and when learning occurs when learners interact and play a game. The main characteristic of an educational game is the fact that instructional content is blurred with game characteristics. The game should be motivating, so that the learner repeats cycles within a game context; Garris et al termed this persistent reengagement, where the player returns to the task unprompted. While repeating to play a game, the learner is expected to elicit desirable behaviors based on emotional or cognitive reactions that result from interaction with and feedback from gameplay.

Csikszentmihalyi (1993) developed the concept of flow and identified the following nine factors as accompanying experiences of flow: **1. Clear goals** (expectations and rules are discernible and goals are attainable and align appropriately with one's skill set and abilities). **2. Concentrating and focusing**, a high degree of concentration on a limited field of attention (a person engaged in the activity will have the opportunity to focus and to delve deeply into it). **3. A loss of the feeling of self-consciousness**, the merging of action and awareness. **4. Distorted sense of time**—one's subjective experiences of time is altered. **5. Direct and immediate feedback** (successes and failures during the activity are apparent so that behavior can be adjusted as needed). **6. Balance between ability level and challenge** (the activity is neither too easy nor too difficult). **7. A sense of personal control over the situation or activity.** **8. The activity is intrinsically rewarding so there is an effortlessness of action.** **9. People become absorbed in their activity, and the focus of awareness is narrowed down to the activity itself.**

**For final remarks.** The aim of the Educational Framework of "GAMLEC" board game is to construct learning components that support learning through board game for promotion of awareness for the quality of life of care home residents through self-reflection, critical thinking and empathy of paid staff, volunteers and relatives of care home residents. To implement the aim of Educational Framework curriculum design was elaborated. To know more about Educational Framework you can read a full version, available in English here: [www.gamlec.eu](http://www.gamlec.eu).

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