Searching as strategic exploration: using escape rooms to teach information literacy
Context

ACRL Framework

Escape room 101

Assessment and lessons learned
Library orientation

One of three sessions
Engage with the library and its services
Learn basic information literacy skills
ACRL Framework

Searching as strategic exploration

Research as inquiry
Knowledge practices

utilize divergent (e.g., brainstorming) and convergent (e.g., selecting the best source) thinking when searching

design and refine needs and search strategies as necessary, based on search results

use various research methods, based on need, circumstance, and type of inquiry

understand how information systems are organized in order to access relevant information
Learning objectives

Navigate the catalogue
Use electronic resources (Kanopy, ebooks)
Locate books using call numbers (on the shelves/in reserve)
Find information in books
Explore the library
Evaluate sources
Familiarize themselves with APA citation style
What is an escape room?

Escape rooms are “live-action team-based games where players discover clues, solve puzzles, and accomplish tasks in one or more rooms in order to accomplish a specific goal (usually escaping from the room) in a limited amount of time” (Nicholson, 2015).
Why an escape room?

- Active learning
- Teamwork
- Critical thinking
- Problem-based
Logistics

- Space
- Budget
- Time
- Staff

- Audience
- Narrative
- Clues
- Test
Space
Basic components
Narrative

You were caught plagiarizing on an assignment. The Associate Dean of Student Affairs sent you to the library to learn how to find and use scholarly sources. He said you had one hour to prove that you have learned your lesson or you will be expelled.
Clues

Can be anything:

Something missing
Ciphers
Word/math puzzles
Etc.
Puzzle flowchart

Starting pack

- Librarian's business card
- Librarian's office
- Group study room
- Real/fake news challenge

Scrambled APA

- Missing info
- Touchtable puzzle
- Find book in CR
- Acetate

Math problem

- Find call number
- Find book on shelf

Watch movie

- Find ebook in catalogue
- Find table in ebook

Padlock

Number

Open locked box
Rules of the activity

- Everything you need is on this floor
- Do not move stuff around; all clues are clearly identified
- Do not write on clues
- No running in the library
- No yelling; it’s a library, please be considerate of others!
- Each team has 3 hints, use them wisely!
- Teams all have different clues and puzzles
- To “escape” all teams have to solve their clues.
  If your team is done, help the others
Rules of the activity

- Everything you need is on this floor
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Find the spiderman card in the first room, close the door behind you. It’s really useful especially for the number of flats per year. Make sure to pick up your cards (there are 5 of the spiderman card on a board, for participants to one of the mentioned drawers).
What is your password?

tap to edit
Navigate catalogue
Cash-strapped farmers feed candy to cows

by Aaron Smith  @AaronSmithCNN

October 20, 2023, 3:29 AM ET

Kentucky cows chow down on candy

Cattle farmers struggling with record corn prices are feeding their cows candy instead.

That's right, candy: Cows are being fed chocolate bars, gummy worms, ice cream sprinkles, marshmallows, bits of hard candy and even pacifier-shaped chocolate milk, according to cattle farmers, beef nutritionists and commodities dealers.

"It has been a practice going on for decades and is a very good way to for producers to reduce feed cost, and to provide less expensive food for consumers," said Kio Fanning, a livestock nutritionist with Great Plains Livestock Consulting, Inc.
Assessment

When asked what they enjoyed most about the game:

“I liked the teamwork and that we were trying to focus and help each other”

“It played with your mind and made you think”

“How we had to explore for ourselves”
Assessment

88% would recommend it to other students
68.5% said the game helped them learn about the library

“I learned how to find books…”
“afterwards it made me learn a lot even though it didn't feel like it at the time”
“There is just not books at the library”
“Go ask the librarian for help!”
Assessment

“I’ve learned that librarians are tricky!”
Lessons

Testing is important
Be clear about the rules
Let students struggle
Calculate the time it takes to reset the game
Puzzles can break
Interested? How can you start?

Go to a local escape room to experience it for yourself
Breakout EDU
Read about other educational escape rooms
Take a look at what you already have
References


Thanks for attending!

Any questions?
You can contact me at mylene.pinard@mcgill.ca