Unlocking the library: Escape room as library induction

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Background

- Post-pandemic, many students have less library experience and confidence.

  (Dalal et al., 2022; Matook, 2020)

- This requires reflection on how we induct these students into the library.

- Library tours are a common industry standard, but these are not the most effective learning experience.

  (Nourse Reed & Miller, 2020)

- Gamification is an increasingly popular method of creating more engaging experiences.

  (Felker, 2015; Nourse Reed & Miller, 2020)

- Gamified inductions may help students to better absorb information and decrease library anxiety.

  (Calderwood Veach, 2019; Chesworth, 2019; Mac Gregor, 2018; Wise et al., 2018)

Designing the game

Identify the skills that you want participants to learn

Think of how to have participants demonstrate each skill in an escape room-style puzzle

Decide on an overarching narrative

Fit the puzzles around the narrative and integrate them with one another

Use of OPAC / keyword searching

Understanding class numbers

Identifying exact editions/volumes

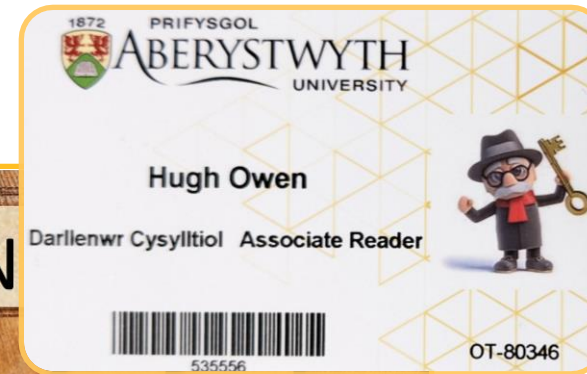Use of Click and Collect service / knowing to ask library staff for help

Judging source reliability

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R26.1 .X15

F6.95 100

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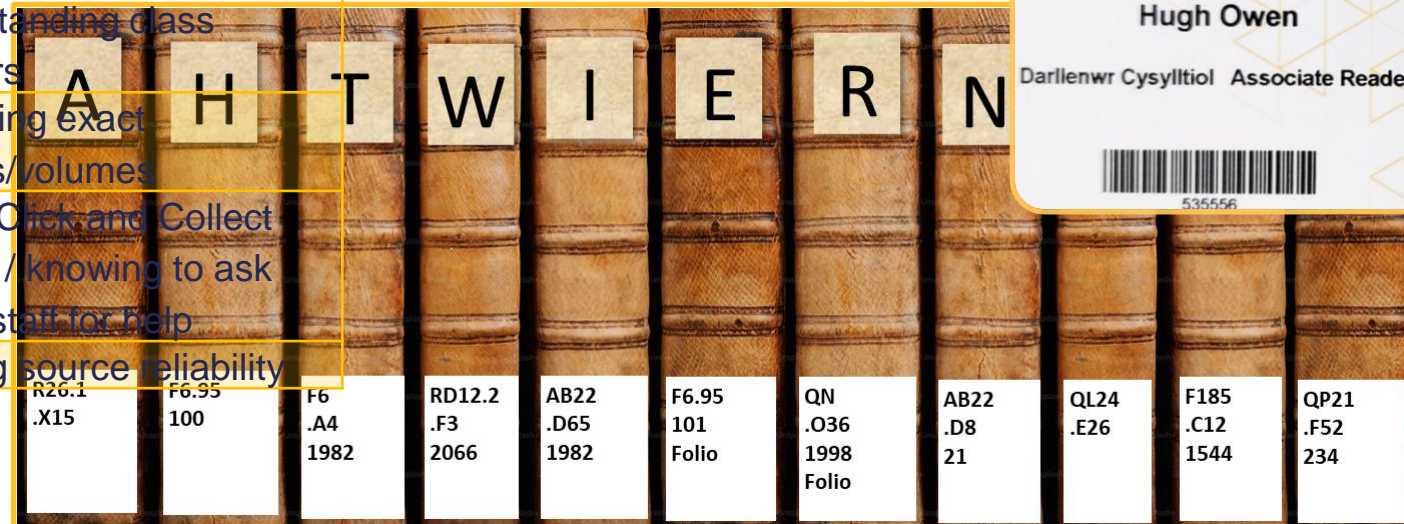
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Solve **Puzzle 1** to find clue for Puzzle 2

Solve **Puzzle 3** to find equipment for Puzzle 4

Solve **Puzzle 2** to enter Room 2

Solve **Puzzle 4** to find Puzzle 2

Solve **Puzzle 5** to finish

Practical considerations

Things to consider when designing the game:

- **Number of students:** How many students do you want in each session?

- **Time:** How long do you want the room to take?

- **Staffing:** How many staff can be spared to run the game, and for how long?

- **Space:** Do you have a separate space to use?

- **Equipment:** How much can you use that you already have?

Virtual Escape Room

You enter what looks like a messy academic's office

2 things immediately stand out: a briefcase with a 3-digit code, and a stack of books lined neatly in a row - a big contrast to the mess in the rest of the room.

You see a letter on the table in front of them:

Welcome to my office. You'll need these books - but not all of them! I like my students to only use the newest information...

What is the code for the briefcase? *

- Distance learning students may benefit from a virtual version

- This gets around certain practical considerations

- Although, it does have its own issues

- It's designed around the specific needs of distance learners:

| |
|---|
| Use of OPAC / keyword searching |
| Use of online resources |
| Identifying exact editions/volumes |
| Use of postal loan service |
| Judging source reliability |
| Managing references |
| Following recommended resources to find new sources |

Conclusions

- Escape rooms are a fun and effective method of library induction

- It doesn't need too many resources and is a fun, creative exercise

- A virtual option is easier in some ways

- Test it on your colleagues

- More challenges will come up when running the game

- Hopefully, this will encourage others to try something similar
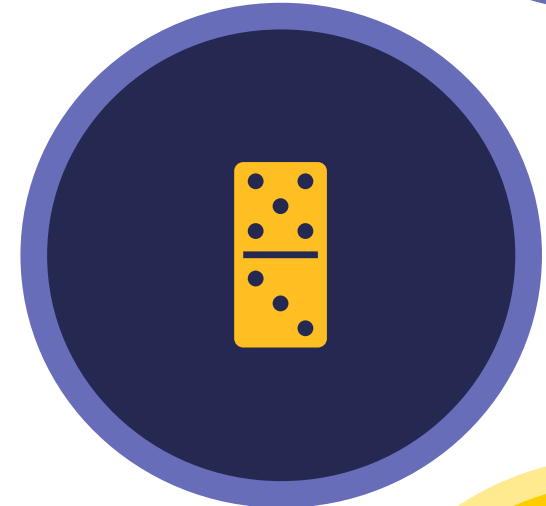
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