

Scenario

Our staff broke themselves into teams of 3-6 members, chose a team name, and selected an Escape Session. This program served as both a team building exercise and an internal competition to see who could get out and who could do it the fastest.

All team members had to work together to solve puzzles, clues, decipher codes, and earn their way out. Prizes were awarded to the escaping teams with a grand prize going to the team with the fastest escape.

We had 7 teams compete in one hour sessions scheduled over a two week time period.

Our Process

Once deciding we wanted to try an escape room and ruling out the financial burden of outsourcing the design or traversing to an Escape Room venue, we elected to try designing in-house. Our basic step by step process is provided here in 2 parts; RESEARCH and DESIGN.

RESEARCH

1. Research- Foundational research to learn about general structures of Escape Rooms
2. More Research- Finding tips for creating clues, puzzles, etc.
3. Room Location- In-house meant we had to find a suitable location. Investigating a number of rooms inside the building, taking into account the room set-up, décor, furniture, layout, technology present, etc. are all key to choosing an appropriate location.
4. Challenges- Generate a list of potential puzzles, tasks, clues, etc. these could be specific to your theme, age specific, and incorporate challenges specific to your chosen room.

Escape Room! In the Library

Gary Marks, Jr.

David & Lorraine Cheng Library, William Paterson University
A Staff Development Program

What did we do?

As a part of our yearly staff development programming we entertained the idea of creating a team building exercise based off of the growing popularity of Escape Rooms. With a limited budget to work with (< \$20) we designed our own Library Escape Room. Our staff enjoyed a fun and exciting team building experience, and we eventually let everyone out! ☺

Our Process (cont.)

DESIGN

1. Flow Chart- It was best to create a flow chart of our selected challenges, visualizing the step by step process Escapers must follow in order to solve each challenge and be directed to the next.
2. What-if's- While designing a step by step flow chart of challenges was ideal, understanding that Escapers may not follow the process you lay out, may stumble upon clues they weren't meant to find at a given time, or may solve a clue without a clue you thought would be necessary, is a reality. Understanding this enables you to visualize "what if" scenarios and repurpose clues or challenges as necessary to insure that even if some challenges are found or solved by accident, the overall room challenge still holds its integrity.
3. Test- Put your room together according to your flow chart, utilize as much of the everyday items in the room as possible, place all of your clues, props, puzzles, devices, etc. as desired and bring in a test team. The room designer should watch and take notes during the test groups attempt in order to determine if any challenges are too easy, too hard, or if clues have been made too hard to find.
4. Adjust and Go Live- Make adjustments as necessary and get ready for the fun to begin.

Results

- ❖ We had 7 teams participate in the Escape Room, with a total of 25 staff members and one team of 6 student "testers".
- ❖ 2 teams Successfully Escaped! Within the 60 minute timeframe (48 min and 56 min).
- ❖ Reviews from staff were Overwhelmingly positive as requests were made for future Escapes during Spring Staff Development Workshops.
- ❖ Our next Escape is scheduled for May.

Cipher Codes

Puzzles

Riddles

Red Herring

Combination Locks

Hidden Keys

Morse Code

Color Codes



Design Resources

NOWESCAPE Blog
Braingle.com
Escaperoomtips.com

Lockpapersissors.co –download your own Escape room Kit

Design Tools

Bike Locks, iPad, Padlocks, Hollow Books, Periodic Table, Clocks, Lock Boxes, Chess Board, Water Bottles, Magnifying Glass, Pictures or Posters, Candy, etc.

