

Using escape rooms to teach information literacy

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Introduction

How to make library instruction (LI) more relevant and engaging for students has been a question asked by many librarians. A traditional lecture, with demonstrations and a few active learning activities, has been used for years to teach new students of Farm Management and Technology (FMT), a cegep-level program, how to use find and use library materials. During the session, students exhibited a lack of interest, which manifested through chatting with friends or playing with their cellphones.

To engage students and make it more fun, I decided to create an educational escape room.

What is an escape room?

Originated in Japan, 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).

Each clue, puzzle and task required will build on each other to help students learn how to use new research tools, assess the credibility of the information they find and develop new searching skills in a playful manner.

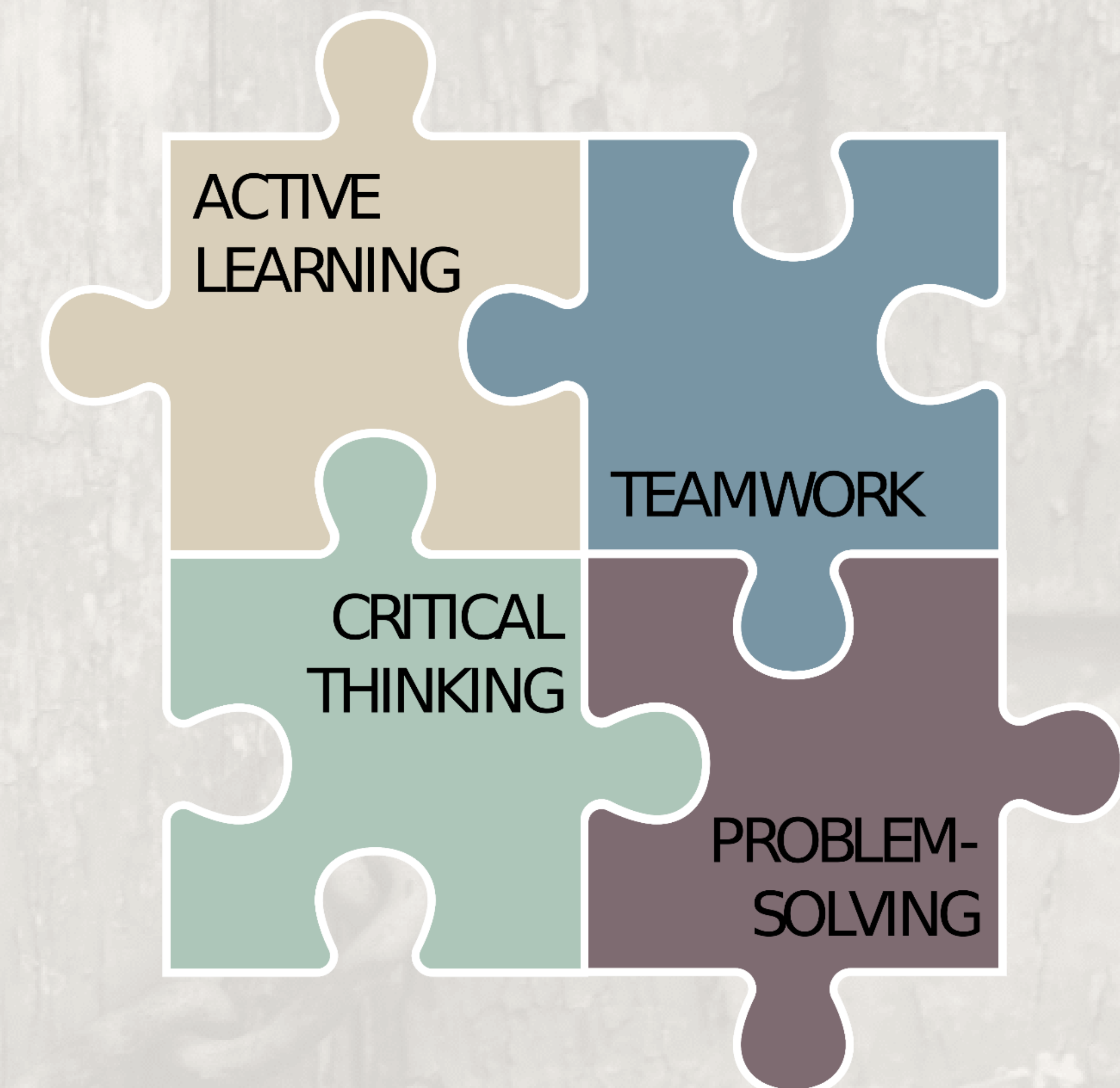


An example of clues: an old letter and keys

How?



Why an escape room?



This problem-based game would also give me a look into the information-seeking behavior of these cegep-level students.

Next steps

- Finish puzzle and clue flowchart
- Test escape room with first-year students before official run
- Pre- and post-test FMT students to determine if escape room is a success based on knowledge retention and interest

References

- Association of College and Research Libraries. (2016). *Framework for information literacy for higher education*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>.
- Nicholson, S. (2015). *Peeking behind the locked door: A survey of escape room facilities*. Retrieved from <http://scottnicholson.com/pubs/erfacwhite.pdf>
- Nicholson, S. (2016). Ask why: Creating a better player experience through environmental storytelling and consistency in escape room design. Retrieved from <http://scottnicholson.com/pubs/askwhy.pdf>

Image source:

Photo of keys by Nietjuh found on Pixabay

Photo of locked door by dimitrisvetsikas1969 found on Pixabay