

Escape room challenges

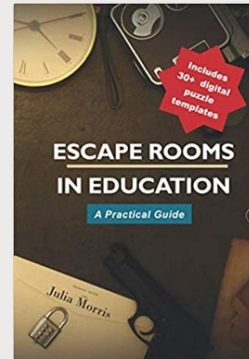
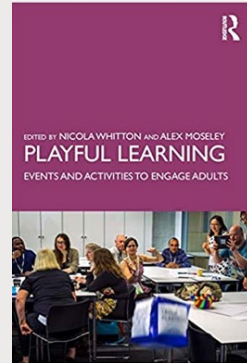


Dr Stian Reimers
stian.reimers@city.ac.uk

From playful learning to locked boxes

Thanks to Kathryn Drumm, Sarah Ney, and Natalia Czuba for input and feedback

- Playful learning approaches increasingly used in higher education
 - Engaging
 - (Intrinsically) Motivating
 - Safe
 - Social but goal-directed
 - Fun and rewarding
- Lots of commercial escape room activities for entertainment
 - Physical, themed, locked-room experiences for teams of 4-6
 - Online challenges: Going to different websites, social media to solve challenges and progress in the (often ropey) story
 - Escape room in a box: Booklet, materials, cipher, hint cards etc., for 2-4 players
- Escape challenges applied to university teaching
 - Brain in a box, locked box challenges – teaching about neuroscience
 - Virtual escape rooms as breakout activities – reviewing learned material
 - On-campus activities at open days – showing student facilities



The breakout room break-out challenge

Oh dear. This was not what you were expecting. At your professor's request, your group snuck into the Rhind Building during lockdown and crept down to the decision research laboratory to retrieve some files from the lab computer there.

Once you entered the room, the door shut and you heard an electric bolt swing across. They must have upgraded the security while everyone was away from the building. It looks like you're trapped.

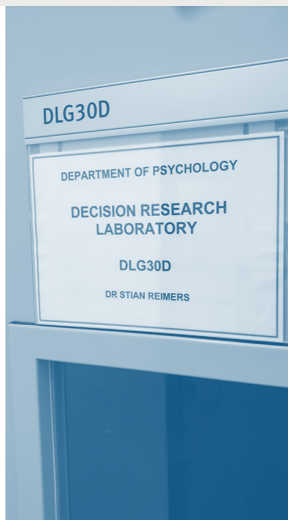
But wait, as your eyes get used to the semi-darkness, you see a few things – a computer, a keypad to unlock the door, and a sheet of paper.

This room has advanced security features. The code you require to unlock the door is available online, but you will need to prove you are a JDM psychologist to get it.

To get started, please go to <https://www.reimers.co.uk/validate> to test your eligibility.

I'd recommend using Google Scholar for this exercise. Although it's not perfect for all situations, it's a great way of finding papers with incomplete information and being able to access pdfs. It's what I use most now in my research. Which I still dimly remember: <https://scholar.google.com>

If you manage to find the code to get out, email it to stian.reimers@city.ac.uk as soon as you have it. Usual coffee rules apply.



1. Paul Slovic wrote that really interesting paper about psychic numbing and genocide. The second sentence of the abstract mentions a single number. What is it? [First digit]
4. In Week Two we looked at anchoring, and there was that study where people's ratings of an American football player's ability were affected by the number on his jersey. That paper had another experiment in, where participants estimated how much money they'd be likely to spend at a restaurant which either had a large two-digit number or a small two-digit number in its name. What was the large number? [Fifth and sixth digits]
6. Behind Stian in every live session you can see cactuses. They differ from week to week, but there are always the same number. How many? [Eighth digit]

- During fully online teaching, using breakout rooms
- Aimed to develop resource finding skills
- Each breakout group had to solve a series of puzzles by finding papers, videos and other resources
- Solving everything would give an 8-digit password
- That would unlock a webpage and reveal the word they needed to email to me to win

The virtual, asynchronous induction challenge

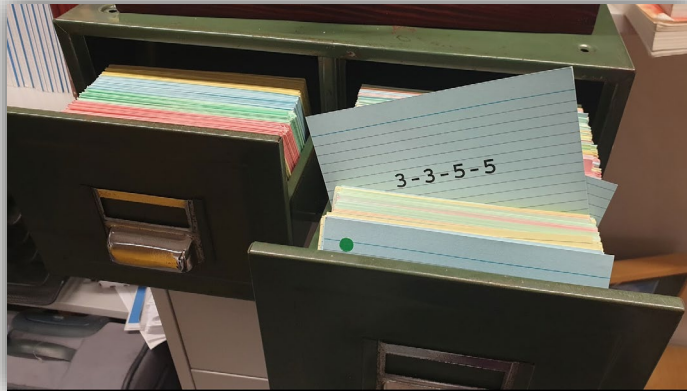
- Induction a blend of live activities and things done in own time
- Liked the idea of a narrative-driven way for onboarding virtual students
- Get students to visit various important City websites
 - Moodle
 - Library
 - Timetables
- Done in own time individually
- Set up in Qualtrics in a couple of hours (once the idea was there...)
- Didn't use it in the end, but clear potential



<https://bit.ly/3HTgwwq>

Break (back) into City

- One-hour challenge run on face-to-face induction day for all BSc years
- Classic open-the-box aims, but collaborative rather than competitive
- (Ropey) backstory is after a year of being locked down and locked out, it's time to open up City again. Need to get the key, which is locked away in the chest

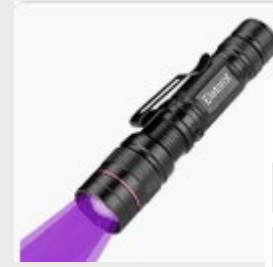


- The card is not green
- the cArD has a Sticker on it



Break (back) into City

- 6 small groups of 4-5 students – each find a different clue
- Variety of different challenges and media to work through
 - Maps, websites, physical spaces
- Find out about City and university life
- Run eight times in 2021/22 – new and returning students
- Very popular!
- Students engaged and enjoyed working together
- Increasingly effective with tweaks after initial sessions
- Used the collaborative aspect to give a take-home message
- Generally more effective when run after an icebreaker session rather than as an icebreaker itself
- At least one student found it a bit overwhelming



FILL IN THE RIGHT SEGMENTS
TO GET THE CODE

2	9	16
1 5	8 10	15 17
4	11	18
5 6	12 13	19 20
7	14	21



- 1: City was founded in 1894
City was founded in 1984
- 2: You are currently in the College Building
You are currently in the Drysdale Building
- 3: The Psychology Department is in the Rhind Building
The Psychology Department is in the Tait Building
- 4: This event is organised by LEAD
This event is organised by LEAD

WHAT REMAINS?

THE NORTH POLE
SIDLER'S GALLS THEATRE
THE BARBICAN
LEICESTER SQUARE
CANARY WHARF

