

MatPorBib

The MatPorBib Escape Room was designed by Adelina Moura and Idalina Lourido Santos and was held in the 2018/2019 school year in two primary and secondary schools in the North of Portugal. The participants were 60 students from two 7th school year classes. The escape room was carried out based on the Mathematics, Portuguese Language and Writing Workshop of the school curriculum, with the support of the School Library and the Autism Unit (integrated in the school context).

Particularities

In the beginning, all students were introduced to an initial challenge, the creation of different narratives, and then the most appropriate narrative was chosen. Based on this, the escape room designers created a scenario of abduction of the Maths teacher, in which the students helped to release the victim. The MatPorBib Escape Room integrated Mathematics and Portuguese subjects in the curriculum of the 7th school year, and was included in the School Library Activities Plan. The puzzles related to the subject of algebra and to a literary work of an author, whose exhibition was held at the School Library.

The students were divided in 6 teams of 5 students. Each group was provided with a tablet by the School Library and a student's smartphone so that they were able to solve the puzzles. The puzzles included diversified activities such as deciphering codes and alphabets, access to websites, QR codes, crosswords, gap-filling, etc. The game consisted of 4 challenges, which followed a sequential pattern. In the beginning of the escape room, the students were given challenges 1 and 2 (9 puzzles) and then another set of 4 puzzles for the completion of the third challenge. Finally, the last enigma led to the key that meant 'liberation'. It is worth mentioning that all the six keys were created by the autistic students who are part of an Autism Unit integrated in the school.

Why is it relevant to teach languages

The escape room described offered a paradigm shift from the traditional classroom methodology to an innovative, immersive experience. In this case, this new teaching approach was based upon the interdisciplinary teaching methodology that involved both different subjects (algebra and language) and school structures, namely the School Library and the Autism Unit.

Resource

Moura, A. and Santos, I.L. (2019). 'Escape room in education: Gamify learning to engage students and learn maths and languages' in Silva, Bento Duarte, Lencastre, José Alberto, Bento, Marco, Osório, António J. (Eds.) Experiences and perceptions of pedagogical practices with game-based learning & gamification, Braga: Research Centre on Education (CIEd) Institute of Education, University of Minho, pp.179-193.

