

Escape Room Pedagogy: Using Gamification to Promote Engagement, Encourage Connections, and Facilitate Skill Development in Undergraduate Students

Authors : Scott McCutcheon, Karen Schreder

Abstract : Higher education is facing a new reality. Student connection with coursework, instructor, and peers competes with online gaming, screen time, and instant gratification. Pedagogical methods that align student connection and critical thinking in a content-rich environment are important in supporting student learning, a sense of community, and emotional health. This mixed methods study focuses on exploring how the use of educational escape rooms (EERs) can support student learning and learning retention while fostering engagement with each other, the instructor, and the coursework. EERs are content-specific, cooperative, team-based learning activities designed to be completed within a short segment of a typical class. Data for the study was collected over three semesters and includes results from the implementation of EERs in science-based and liberal studies courses taught by different instructors. Twenty-seven students were surveyed regarding their learning experiences with this pedagogy, and interviews with four student volunteers were conducted to add depth to the survey data. A key finding from this research indicates that students felt more connected to each other and the course content after participating in the escape room activity. Additional findings point to increased engagement and comprehension of the class material. Data indicates that the use of an EER pedagogy supports student engagement, well-being, subject comprehension, and student-student and student-instructor connection.

Keywords : gamification, innovative pedagogy, student engagement, student emotional well being

Conference Title : ICELS 2024 : International Conference on Education and Learning Sciences

Conference Location : Quebec City, Canada

Conference Dates : July 15-16, 2024