

**Abstract:** This 10 minutes presentation outlines the development of an online escape room activity designed to enhance first-year library teaching. Using OneNote and PowerPoint, the activity promotes active, problem-based learning through collaborative information-seeking tasks. It offers a flexible format for in-person or online delivery, supporting teamwork, problem-solving and engagement. The presentation also considers practical challenges, including maintenance requirements, technology access and the need for structured evaluation of learning impact.

Hello my name is Cheryl Francis I am an academic liaison librarian for the schools of medicine and pharmacy and pharmaceutical science at the university of Sunderland.

Today I'm talking about Creating an engaging online escape room activity for first year library sessions

\*So you may ask - why build an escape room?

I've always been interested in activities in library sessions.

I started creating activities on paper with a set of questions for students to answer, I then moved on to using Microsoft Forms to create a quiz and that worked well.

Then I saw Dr Paul Cannon sharing using OneNote for an escape room that he'd created for teaching systematic review skills at the health libraries group conference in 2024.

I was really interested in this escape room idea and contacted Paul about using the same idea for the year 1 sessions to replace the MS forms quiz.

\*Both my and Paul's sessions use OneNote to create an escape room and PowerPoint to create a timer.

I have included the video Paul suggested I watch to help create the escape room and timer in the last slide in this presentation.

You need the desktop version of OneNote to create passwords to “unlock” the next question - for the sessions with year ones I use multiple choice questions format to reduce typing errors.

Students access the escape room via the web version of OneNote and they have view only access.

\*When I run these sessions I have 1 hour and 30 minutes - this is because the escape room runs well enough for me to consolidate several sessions into one where I see all 120 students together, so I use less time in the timetable altogether.

The session usually just takes just over an hour and it runs as follows:

I do a demo of the library website for about 15 minutes to give students the key places to look for information

I also provide students with a help PDF document in the VLE which has all of that demo information.

I then introduce the escape room activity, students have 20 minutes to complete it and at the end we round up with 20 minutes feedback and running through the answers and of course congratulating the winners and because it's a competition - the first team to escape wins.

Students can complete the escape room in groups, individually or in pairs - it's up to them how they engage.

This is a flexible format - you can run it in person or online sessions, change the session length and of course change the content as well.

\*These are examples of the slides the introductory slide then the link so I make sure that they're all onboarded with the link before we start the timer.

\*These are screenshots of the escape room as the students see it.

\*The benefits of this is that they are actively learning how to find the resources. they use and build on their transferable skills of teamwork and problem solving. Problem-based learning is Central to the medical school's curriculum. students engage well in the session and anecdotally they enjoy it. We get lots of interaction lots of interest and engagement.

\*The challenges here is that these kinds of materials are sensitive to changes in structure such as website and resource platform changes. so there's maintenance, such as checking questions and screenshots.

Like I've said, students find it fun, but I'm unsure how much they learn and retain about using library services, and I would like to do a structured evaluation of the escape room.

The other challenge is that students need a laptop or tablet - they are instructed to bring a laptop to the session and as they do it in groups, so if there is someone who hasn't bought a laptop they can join in by researching using their phone.

I thought the best way to show you how the escape room works is to create one for you to complete!

\*So this is the activity it's called "locked in" you just use the internet to answer the questions individually or in groups of two or three you'll need a tablet or a laptop to play.

one person needs to keep a record of all the letters used as answers because you'll need to need them at the end to escape so

when you go into the to the room make sure you are on the first page it should say "locked in" so we're not starting the timer just yet but this is the URL so that's tiny [url.com/tmchef](http://url.com/tmchef).