

Escaping from lockdown in Spanish classes

I teach **Spanish** in a **secondary school** in a **town of Poland**.

17

age of pupils
on average

600

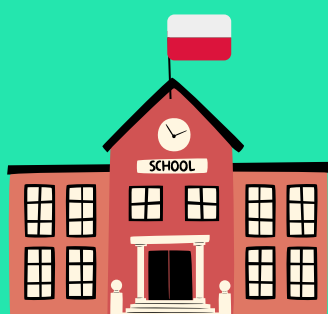
pupils

22

pupils per class
on average

23

classes

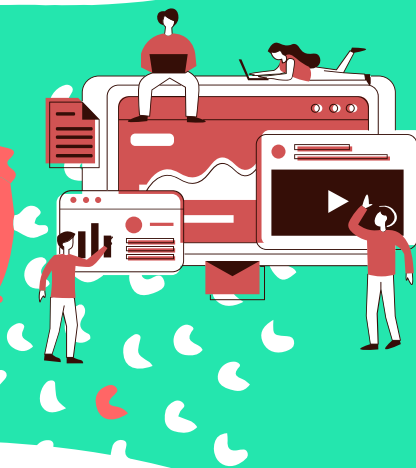


Teaching environment

My school is the **largest and oldest** secondary school in the area. It is a traditional school with a good reputation (high position in the rankings). Most of the students **commute** to school daily from the surrounding villages.

Digital tools

It was possible to use the school's space, which provided **rooms with equipment**. The school had access to an older version of Moodle, but it was not used. We also had access to online materials developed by the publishers of the **language textbooks** that the school was using.



Experience with digital tools before Covid-19

I was familiar with a number of platforms and applications for **online communication and teaching** (e.g. Moodle and Zoom). I had participated in e-learning training, webinars and courses on online didactics at my university and abroad. I had already introduced **hybrid forms of teaching** and I was frequently using technology in the teaching process.



Educational escape rooms

<https://genial.ly/>

Educational escape rooms are based on a gamification mechanism, combining fun with knowledge acquisition and forms of skills testing.



Needs for this new teaching practice

Students needed **engaging lessons**. They needed freshness, motivating and appealing methods based on gamification to **combat boredom**.

Needs solved

Educational escape rooms were the perfect way to solve all these needs, as it provided me with a **fun and dynamic way** to gamify my lessons.



Audience targeted

Escape room activities were available for both **individual students and small teams of several students**. I sometimes designed the escape rooms for individual students and sometimes for group work.



Organisation

Before the pandemic, I taught Spanish lessons in the form of **escape rooms in the classroom**. So, during the pandemic, I decided to prepare them online using various applications - these included quizzes, puzzles, **interactive exercises** (prepared, for example, with Quizlet, Kahoot, Wordwall and Didaski), elements of coding, language searches and definitions. Sometimes I **used ready-made escape rooms** provided by other teachers (e.g. designed on Genially).

For each activity usually done in the room, I managed to find a website or application that allowed me to carry out the particular game online (puns, hangman, wheel of fortune, etc.). **I am keen on designing escape rooms** for lessons aimed at consolidating knowledge, vocabulary and skills acquired. This type of lessons can be labour-intensive for teachers - **it takes several hours to prepare such an escape room**. The use of online tasks, quizzes, materials, exercises when designing the escape room or the use of ready-made escape rooms **reduces the teacher's workload**.



Practice activity

Escape rooms require a **high degree of independence** from the students, who take a journey through tasks, individually or in groups. Solving successive exercises, puzzles and quizzes allows students to obtain particular elements of the password or clues to solve subsequent stages of the task.

While going through the escape room, **students strive to solve the riddle that I devised**. The whole process is subordinated to the logic of discovery - the lesson consists of small activities to be performed by students, all activities leading to the unraveling of the main problem.

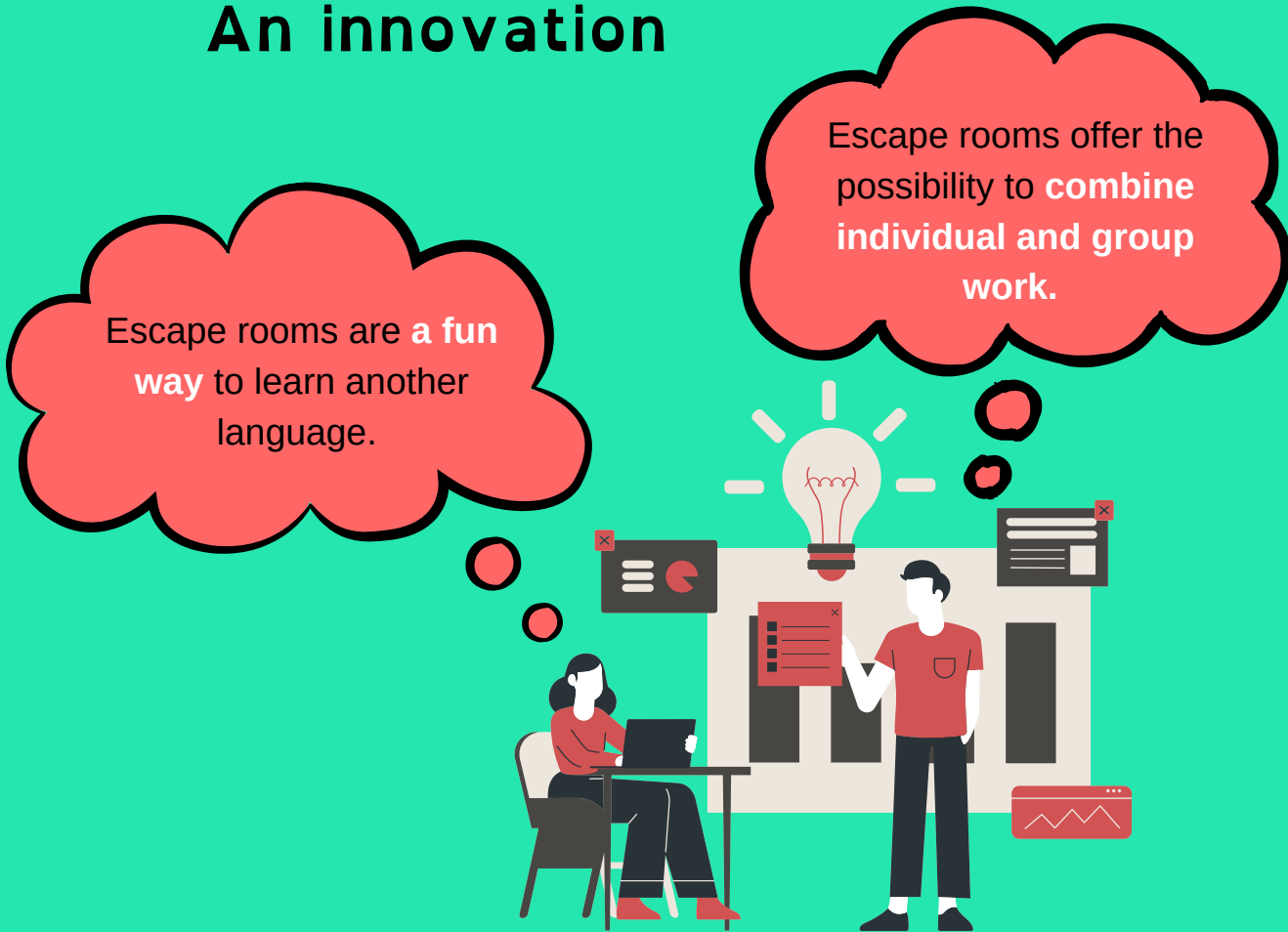


Impact of the practice

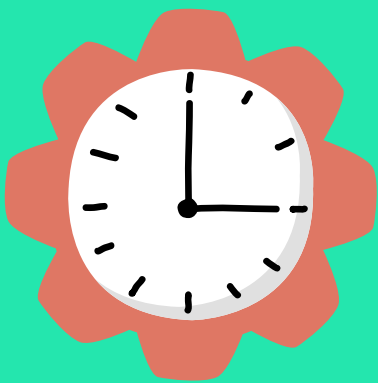
An innovation

Escape rooms are a fun way to learn another language.

Escape rooms offer the possibility to combine individual and group work.



An efficient practice



- The escape room formula increases the **unpredictability of lessons**, which creates a more engaging and more attractive learning environment.
- The wide range of exercises used and the variety of activities in the course of the escape room makes it possible to **combine the elements of acquiring and testing knowledge**, as well as the ability to use it in practice, during the lesson.

Keys to success

Use a **variety of tools** and exercises when designing the escape room.

Design your own exercises and use ready-made materials provided by other teachers.

Plan a minimum of a **two-hour lesson**.

Design the escape room as a **fun and adventurous** activity.



Benefits



Students can work **individually or in groups**.



Students practice **different skills** during one lesson.



The **variety of applications** used allows a constant level of involvement.

Ready ?

Escape rooms are an extremely engaging and emotional format for students. Preparing an escape room is a demanding, time-consuming task for teachers, but it is worth it in the end!



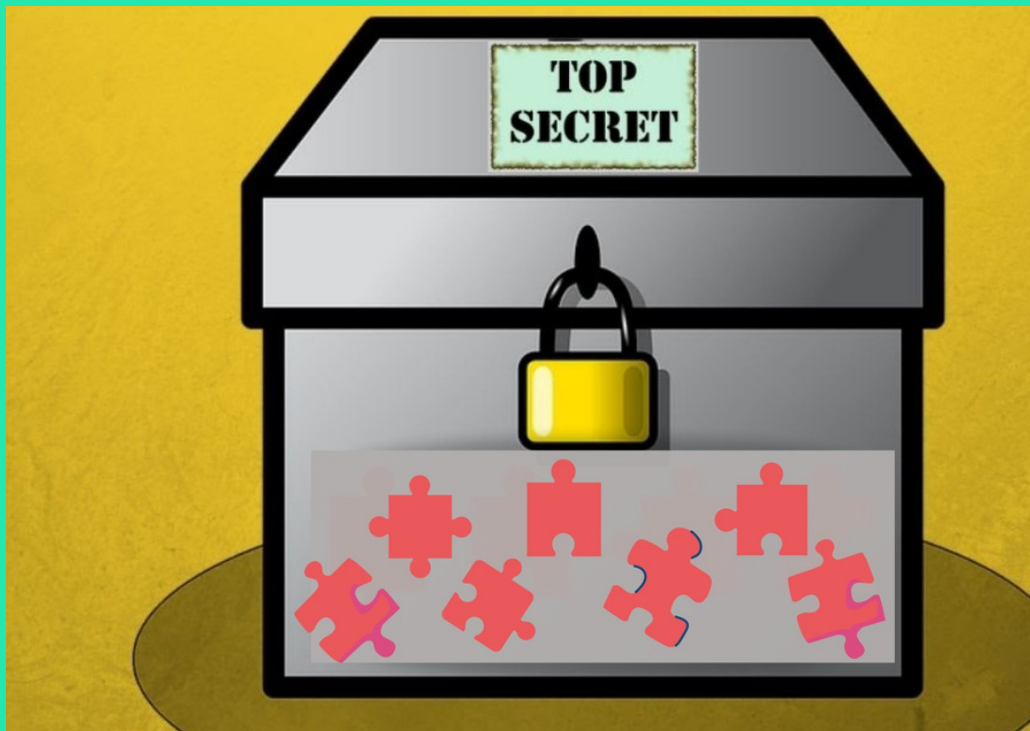
Resources

Screenshots

Example of a scavenger hunt



Example of a mission students have to resolve



This portrait gives a representation of the teacher's choices which are not our own. The statements in this portrait are not direct quotations but have been adapted from an interview which took place in 2022.