Beyond Tours:

Empowering First-Year Students through the Library Mystery Game

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Content Preview

- Introduction
- Development of the Library Mystery Game
- Successes and Challenges
- Repurposing and Adaptation
- Interactive Experience
- Best Practices

Created by richad
from Noun Project

About the Illinois Institute of Technology

- Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago
- Private, non-profit
- STEM
- Bachelor's-PhD programs
- Many Mies van der Rohe buildings

About our Students

- Students-**8,549**
  - 3,304 undergraduate
  - 3,829 graduate
  - 864 law
  - 550 business
- 105 different countries represented
- 37% female
- 63% male

About the Library

- Upper Level: Study areas, Main Stacks, Reference Desk
- Lower level: Group Study Suite, Exploration Space, Archives, Offices, Circulation

LIBRARY MYSTERY GAME

Work as a team to solve puzzles and crack clues in 40 minutes. Win Prizes! 🎉🏆

Join us anytime between 1:30-3 PM on any of the following Fridays: 8/18, 8/25, 9/1

HTTPS://IIT.LIBCAL.COM/CALENDAR/GALVIN/MYSTERY

The Mystery Game

A student-led curriculum for the university FYE class

Introduce first-year students to library spaces, resources, and services

Help students develop fundamental search skills

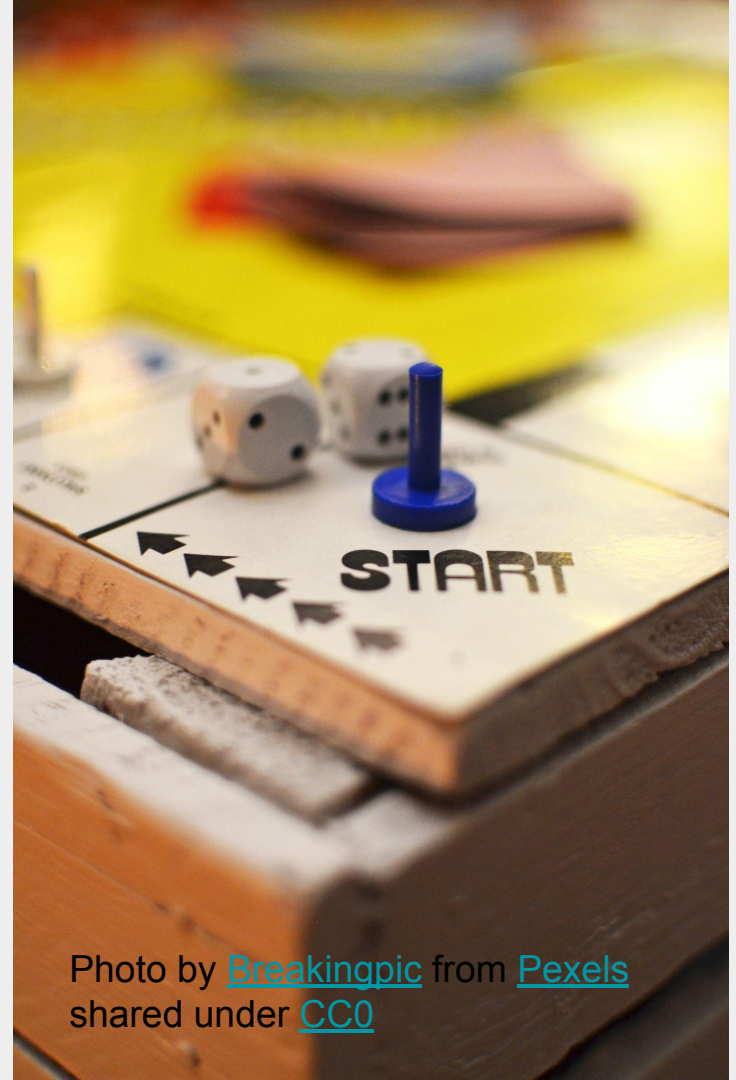Help lessen library anxiety

Get students back in the library

Meet Our Team of Game Designers

2021

GraceAnne Roach, Information Literacy and Instruction Librarian

Nichole Novak, Online Learning and Instruction Librarian

Yi Han, Head of Research and International Services
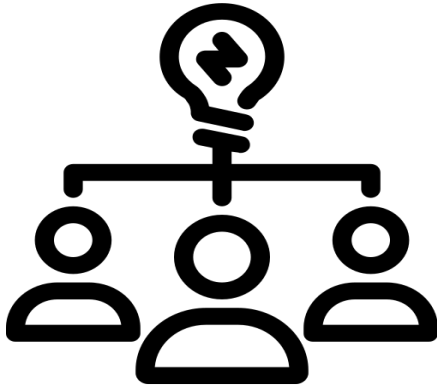
2023

Anri Brod, Online Learning and Instruction Librarian

Kylie Eastman, Information Literacy and Instruction Librarian

Nichole Novak, Head of Reference and Instruction Services

Yi Han, Assistant Dean for Student Engagement

# Developing the learning goals for the library mystery game

Created by IconMark
from the Noun Project

1. Students will be able to look up a book in the catalog and find it on the shelf.
2. Students will be able to check out a book on reserve.
3. Students will become more comfortable asking librarians for help by interacting with friendly librarians.
4. Students will be able to use the library website to find important information.
5. Students will gain familiarity with the library's physical layout.

Creating Puzzles/Riddles

- Created 6 clues with puzzles and riddles
- Each clue took teams to a different space within Galvin Library
- Librarians staffed each space to hand students their next clue and gave hints as necessary
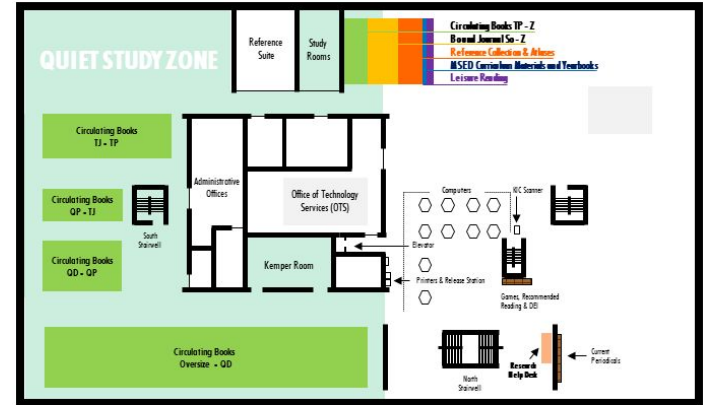
Upper Level
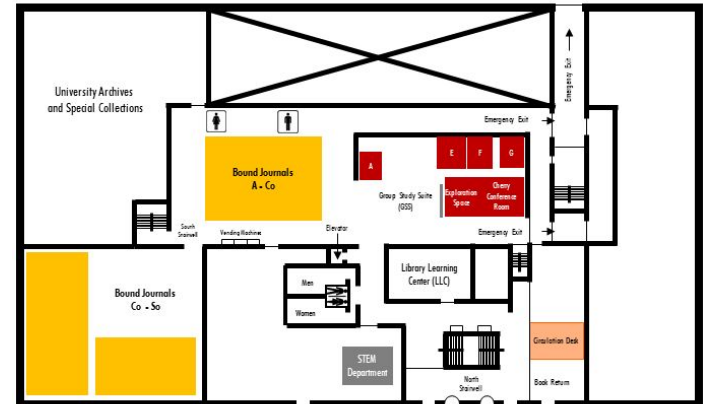
Lower Level

Riddles & Puzzles

1. Bibliography with a hidden message
2. Book cover puzzle
3. Cipher
4. Invisible ink clue
5. Word scramble
6. A photograph of one item in one of the game locations. Students need to find the location based on the photo or using the secret code on the photo.

Team and Location Rubric

Red	Green	Blue	Orange	Purple	Black (accessible)
GSS	UASC	RHO	Reserves	Stacks	Stacks
Stacks	RHO	Reserves	UASC	GSS	RHO
Reserves	Stacks	GSS	RHO	UASC	Reserves
RHO	GSS	UASC	Stacks	Reserves	GSS
UASC	Reserves	Stacks	GSS	RHO	UASC
Kemper	Kemper	Kemper	Kemper	Kemper	Kemper

Test runs: student workers & librarians

Revised clues based on feedback.

Materials

- Resource Bags
  - Cipher key
  - Rules sheet
  - How-to handouts
  - First clue
  - Map of the library
  - Marker
  - Pen
  - Notepad
- Buttons for all participants
- Library services flyer
- Fidget toys for winning team members
- Exit surveys
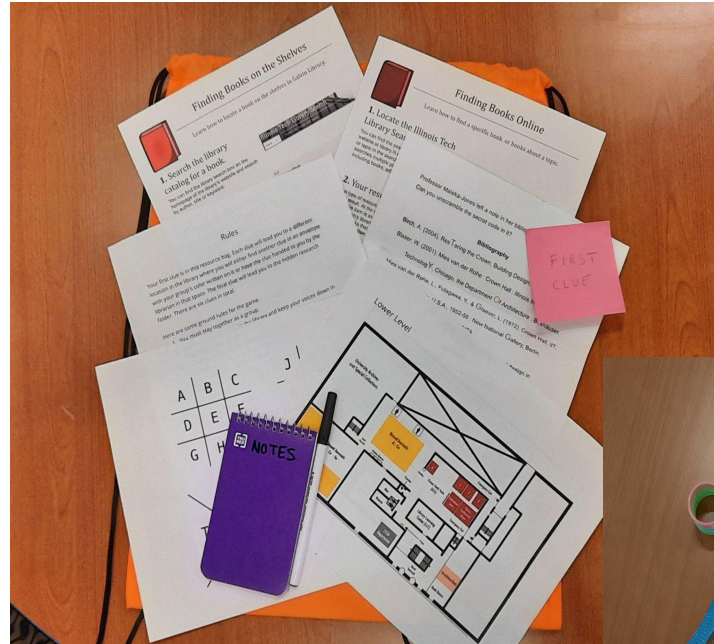
Assessment

Participants reassembled in the library's art gallery at the end of the game and were given an exit survey consisting of three questions:

1. What are the 3 most important things you learned in this lesson?
2. Do you feel more prepared to use the library after this lesson?
3. Is there anything you still have questions about? Include your name and email address with this question, and we will get back to you with an answer.

Pre-Game and Post-Game Checklists

- Run through pre-game checklist 30 minutes prior to start time
- Make sure each bag contained all the materials including the correct first clue
- Make sure none of the clues had any writing on them from previous groups
- Hand out clues to appropriate staff members
- Post-game return bags to office and record statistics in LibInsights

Image by OpenClipart-Vectors

from Pixabay shared under CC0

Running the FYE Mystery Game Session

Session Time: 1 hour (Introduction: 5 to 10 minutes, Game/activity 30 to 40 minutes, Wrap-up and QA: 5 to 10 minutes)

1. Divide students into groups of 5 depending on class size.
2. Set the Scene. Read the story and ground rules.
3. Hand out a resource bag to each group.
4. After the game started and the students left, one librarian would stay behind to give hints to groups as necessary.
5. The other participating librarian(s) would walk around and discreetly check on how the groups were doing.
6. Give out prizes to the winning team: fidget toys and buttons.
7. Wrap up discussion and highlight key services
8. Distribute library services handout and exit surveys

Questions?

Successes and Challenges

Successes

- The game addressed all learning goals
- A great team building activity: teamwork, collaboration, communication
- Helped lessen library anxiety
- Presented the library as a very welcoming environment
- Required a very small budget

Feedback from Students

"How to find books; the existence of Special Collections; the call number system"

"How to look up for a book; how the library is organized; where the help desks are"

"Where the group study rooms are, what the archive does, where to find books"

"How to use the library, how to find books, that librarians aren't scary to talk to"

"FYE meetings are fun, the library is bigger than I thought, there is tons of help in library"

Feedback from Students

"Teamwork; communication"

"Working together, trust, listen to others"

"Work together, take your time, ask questions, take risks"

"Working together is key, stay calm, look into the small details"

Super FUN!

Challenges

- The Game can only be played once
- Number of participants restriction
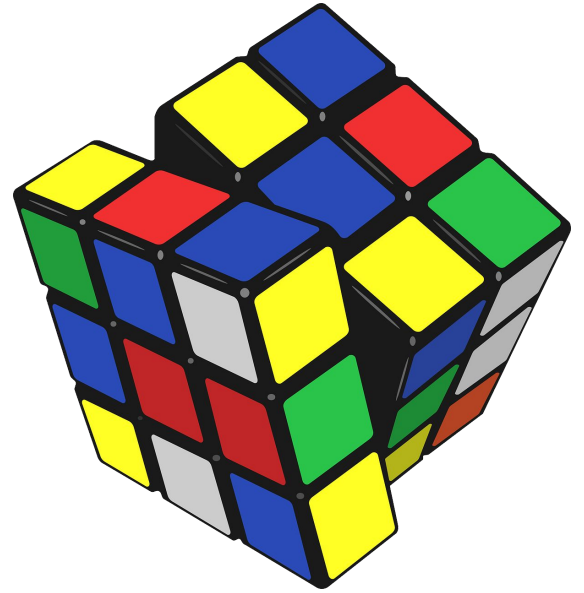- Completed the Game on time
- Student scheduling conflict

Repurposing and Adaptation

Updated Game Plan in 2023

- Added more clues, riddles, puzzles
- Added locations
- Added more tasks: looked up information on the library website, write and perform a haiku, etc
- Added flexibility to the competition component

Repurposing

- [Library Open House during the 2023 Welcome Week](#)
- Annual Library Student Worker Training
- Introduction to the Profession Library Sessions

Are you ready to decode some secret messages?

Can you find the secret messages?

1

2

Cipher Sheet: https://shorturl.at/wAOTZ
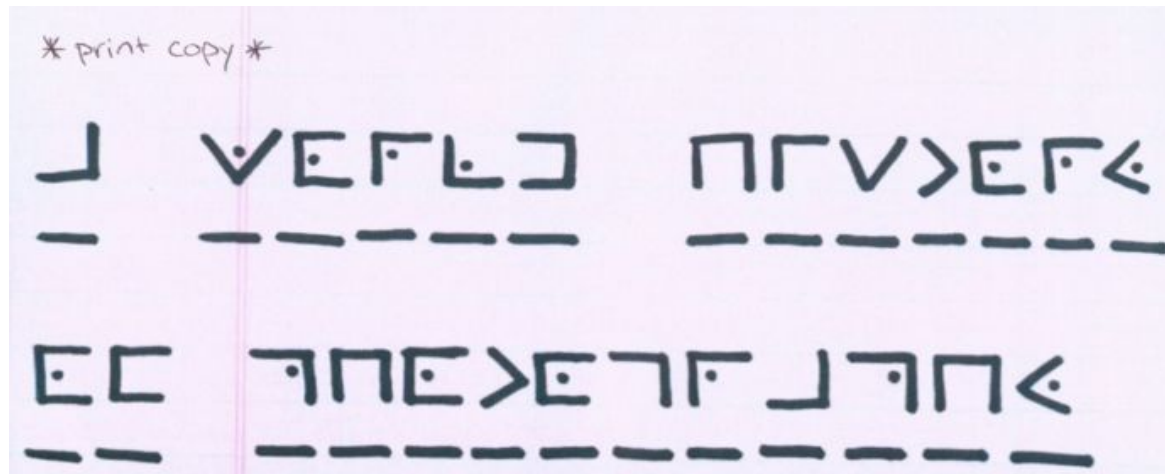
Pigpen Cipher

A World History of Photography

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-.. . ... -.-

Research Help Desk

A	.-	J	.---	S	...
B	-...	K	-.-	T	-
C	-.-.	L	.-..	U	..-
D	-..	M	--	V	...-
E	.	N	-.	W	.--
F	..-.	O	---	X	-..-
G	--.	P	.--.	Y	-.--
H	....	Q	--.-	Z	--..
I	..	R	.-.		

Professor Maleka Jones left a note in her bibliography, look at it closely. Can you unscramble the secret code in it? **GO TO GROUP STUDY SUITE**

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IFDN GONIAIRL OHOPTS   TA VHSRAEIC

NAD PIASELC   LOSECCLONIT

FIND ORIGINAL PHOTOS   AT ARCHIVES

AND SPECIAL   COLLECTIONS

Best Practices

Best Practices

- Have a diverse team of game designers
- Choose your audience, set clear learning goals
- Give yourself enough time to plan
- Seek campus collaborators, student workers
- Promotion and timing
- Include prizes for motivation and participation, eg earning badges, points, winning team prizes

Tips for Designing a Mystery Game

- 4-6 puzzles/riddles per game
- Keep team sizes to 5 students
- Add a competition component
- Give students a clear starting point
- Include how-to handouts, eg screenshots of a catalog search
- Test runs with staff first for feedback
- Prepare 1 or 2 hints for each clue
- A few challenging puzzles are okay, but not too difficult
- Have fun!

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Thank You!

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