

Escape Rooms in Higher Education. The case of *English for Specific Purposes* in technical degrees

Miguel Fernández Álvarez

Universidad Politécnica de Madrid

ABSTRACT

Innovation in educational techniques and methodologies, such as experiential learning, are gaining ground in current language teaching. This means that teaching methodologies have to evolve and adapt to the new student profile of the 21st century. One of the new challenges that arise is the use of escape rooms in the classroom, which implemented correctly, help to enhance skills that students must develop for future use in the workplace. They consist of solving a mystery looking for clues and keys to get out of a place in a certain time. The clues and keys to exit are achieved by solving small problems or logic games. This presentation focuses on a project conducted with engineering students at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid in the subject *English for Professional and Academic Communication*, where they study English for Specific Purposes that focuses on technical English in different fields. The main goal of the project is to foster cross-curricular skills - such as collaboration and team-building, problem-solving, lateral thinking, and creativity - through the use of escape room experiences. Results in this project with students in several technical and engineering degrees demonstrate that the following objectives have been achieved: (1) promote active involvement and motivation in the subject through game, (2) improve oral proficiency in English, (3) learn technical vocabulary and (4) encourage collaborative work.

Keywords: collaboration; critical-thinking; gamification; motivation; problem-solving