


SUNY CIT 2019 Conference on  
Instruction & Technology  
SUNY Purchase, May 29, 2019



# Thinking Outside the Box: Fostering Collaboration and Critical Thinking Mindsets with Breakout EDU

---

Kelsey O'Brien, University at Albany  
Trudi Jacobson, University at Albany  
Jenna Pitera, Skidmore College



# Overview

---



## University at Albany

- Mostly implemented with first year students in WCI
- Various themes: zombie apocalypse, Ready Player One, heroes



## Skidmore

- “Save Scribbler” orientation activity
- Often implemented in “Scribner Seminars” but used in upper level courses as well

# Why Breakout EDU?

---

# Team Building

---

*“This exercise helps to show us that using the help of your peers is a very valuable tool when it comes to problem solving, or even writing. Using ideas from others can help to create new thoughts using a combination of both minds. Sometimes the solution can’t be seen by one but can be seen by another.”*



# Problem Solving

---



*"This exercise taught us that to solve a problem we shouldn't ignore our attempts, because there is no downfall in trying different things."*

*"Let's just start over with an open mind."*



# Inquiry

---

*“This exercise taught us exactly what inquiry is, gathering ideas and thoughts in order to evaluate a situation. It also helped me realize that inquiry, writing and research are all tied together. In order to write you need to gather thoughts and ideas which is inquiry. On top of that, sometimes you need to research in order to gather some of those ideas.”*



# Inquiry

---

*“Most of all, this exercise taught me to use every clue that came into my head because why not. The more ideas you have, the better you can dwindle down to a few really good ones.”*





# Fostering the Growth Mindset

---



*"This exercise showed us that it is okay to fail sometimes. It isn't going to be the end of the world. It taught us that exploring new options that didn't lead to success but did lead us to a different path was successful. If one thing didn't work we tried again."*

# Engaging Students

---

- Allows more advanced students to take leadership roles
- Introduction to librarians as a resource, and to library resources



# Lessons Learned

---

# Game Design

---

- ★ The hardest part!
- ★ Opportunity for creativity
- ★ Brainstorm with a colleague or course instructor
- ★ Vary level of difficulty to get to solutions
  - Consider a two-step solution
  - Gmail out of office message
- ★ Build in red herrings

# Before the Class

---

- ❑ Double check all kits complete and locks correctly set
- ❑ Give others a heads up (e.g. Email librarians on chat reference)
- ❑ Make sure there is at least one computer for each team



# Remove the Chairs

---

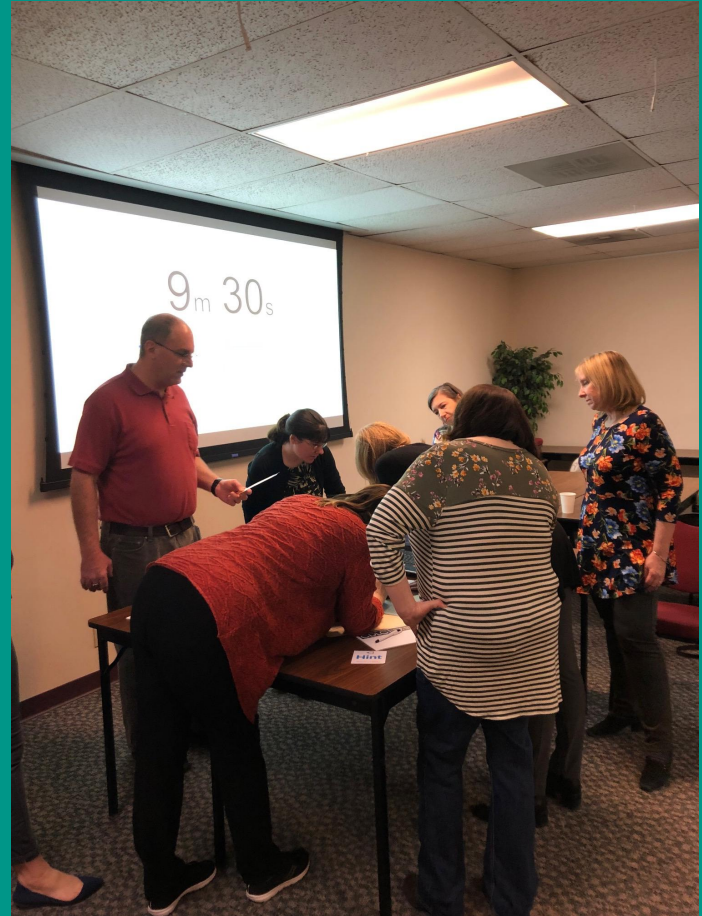


- Encourages students to move around and work together
- Ensures that everyone has access to the clues

# Instructors Work in Pairs

---

- Monitoring teams
- Resetting locks in between sessions
- Librarian and Instructor or 2 Librarians



# Give Hints, Not Answers



## Good Hints:

- Everything you need is right in front of you. Have you looked closely at all of your clues?
- What kind of solution do you need to open the lock? A 3-digit number? A 5-letter word?
- What resources might you use to find the information you need? (e.g. zombie librarian)

# Scaffold Lesson with Pre & Post Assignments

metaliteracy + 110 • 1yr

## Failure Wall

Describe a time when you failed and reflect on what you learned from that experience.

**In high school I failed to build meaningful and quality relationships which I regret. I thought that me and my friends are "forever" and got each others' backs but we barely talk now. I understand and recognize failure on my part where I could be more supportive and proactive. However, this failure learned me to value friendship more and build better, stronger ones in college.**

**Getting into my Top Choice**

Last year, I failed to get into my top choice of college. From this failure I learned to not fear rejection and to brush it off with grace because it's not the end

**AP English Disasters**

I always considered myself a good writer. Writing essays came naturally for me, so I obviously applied for AP English in 11th grade. I always loved to be ahead in whatever I'm doing. I should've known the teacher would be a difficult one when she failed me on my opinion based essay. I guess she didn't agree with my opinion. Nevertheless, I continuously tried to get into her good graces. It never worked, though. She always hated my essays, saying I'm bad at explaining my evidence. I lost my honor roll streak, which I've held since 3rd grade, because I was 1 point too low in her class. My next flaw was asking the teacher if she'd be my reference for college. Naturally, I was the

Failing Better challenge

**UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES**  
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY - STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Ask Us!  
IM/Text | Email | Phone


University at Albany Libraries LibGuides **Zombie Survival Guide** Survival Information

## Zombie Survival Guide: Survival Information

In the case of a zombie apocalypse you'll want to stock up on supplies. But good research skills could be your best asset. Be prepared with some helpful tips and resources from the University at Albany Libraries.

Survival Information Find Web Resources Find Books Find Articles Cite Your Sources **Zombie Entertainment**

Use Your Research Skills to Survive

 In the case of a zombie apocalypse good research skills could be your best asset. Be prepared with some helpful tips and resources

**Survival Search Tips**


*Need information on how to survive in a disaster zone?*

It can be useful to search for books about surviving other types of disasters, such as tornadoes, shipwrecks and virus outbreaks. Knowing basic survival skills can help you in the case of a zombie attack.

Use the tabs above to learn about searching for [web resources, books and articles](#).

**Stay Safe!**

**Are you prepared?**



*Night of the Living Dead. 1968. USA. Directed by George A. Romero [Public domain]*

Zombie Apocalypse Survival Guide

# Include Small Prizes

---



**WE BROKE  
OUT!**

 BreakoutEDU  #BREAKOUTEDU





# Resources

- [Zombie Apocalypse Trello Board](#)
  - [Breakout EDU](#) (tutorials, facilitation tools, game design resources, etc.)
  - Detwiler, S., Jacobson, T., & O'Brien, K. (2018). [BreakoutEDU: Helping students break out of their comfort zones](#). *C&RL News*, 79(2).
-