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March 2, 2022

Re: CAUL-CBUA Collaborative Research and Innovation Grant, 2017, *Inescapable Skills – Using Games to Improve Participation in Research Skills Retention Testing*, Final Report.

Dear Cynthia Holt,

Please find enclosed our final report on the project: Inescapable Skills. On behalf of Hannah and myself, we would like to thank CAUL for support of this project. You may remember that the study proposed to use a game format to gather data on student skills retention over the course of the program. Using an adaption of the popular Escape Room, student teams from all three years of the program solved a series of legal research problems to “escape.” We proposed to observe of the escape room sessions to evaluate research skills retention. The project was wrapped up in the summer of 2019, although a future publication is anticipated. Please find below the project timeline, budget, and a sample of the photos and publicity materials. This was truly a unique and fun research project, and we appreciate your involvement with us.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Michels' and 'Hannah Steeves'.

David Michels and Hannah Steeves

## **Project Timeline**

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
CAUL Grant Proposal	October 2017
CAUL Award Granted	December 2017
Dal REB Ethics Application	January 2018
Dal REB Ethics Approval	February 2018
Dal Funding Account Created	March 2018
Dalhousie Teaching and Learning Grant	March 2018
Project Design and Construction	March – May 2018
Design Testing	June – August 2018
Publicity	November – December 2018
Recruitment and Gameplay	January-February 2019
Public Presentations	May – June 2019
Analysis and Article Writing	September 2019 - Ongoing

We proposed to include in our sample first year students who had completed the Legal Research and Writing program which is offered in the Fall semester annually. Our timeline did not allow us to complete the Escape Room in time for Winter 2018, and we instead planned for Winter 2019. This allowed us to recruit test teams during the summer of 2018. We recruited a team of legal research instructors to give us feedback on the skill tests we can created. We also recruited a team of information professionals who had not completed a legal research course to act as a control group. The room and puzzle designs were adjusted based on the test group feedback.

Teams were recruited from all levels of the JD program, using social media and Eventbrite. Gameplay was video recorded during the winter semester 2019. We were able to provide initial results in presentations in the summer of 2019. A description of research dissemination efforts is below. Analysis and drafting of a full research article began in the Fall 2019. Regrettably, the pandemic of early 2020 interrupted our work. It is our hope that we can complete the article for submission to Partnership Journal in the summer of 2022.

## **Research Dissemination**

The “Escape Room” project was presented in a variety of venues including two conferences, a Dalhousie librarians’ workshop, a national webinar, and several facility tours. Citations are included below. We included in each of our presentations an acknowledgement of the CAUL funding. We also received attention through social media posts and newsletters. A sample of citations are below.

### *Presentations*

Michels, David and Hannah Steeves. “Gamification” Webinar, Canadian Association of Law Libraries, October 30, 2019.

Michels, David and Hannah Steeves. "Inescapable Skills: Using Games to Improve Participation in Research Skills Retention Testing", Dalhousie Conference on University Teaching and Learning, May 2, 2019.

Michels, David. "Fun and Games in the Law Library", Instruction Refresher, Dalhousie University Libraries, Halifax, NS, August 2, 2018.

Michels, David. "Using Games in Library Instruction", Canadian Association of Law Libraries National Conference, Halifax, NS, May 29, 2018.

### *Tours and Information Requests*

1 Canadian Professional Association

3 Canadian Academic Libraries

2 American Academic Libraries

1 Provincial Government Library

### *Social Media (Selected)*

Marlo Mackay, "Defeating the Mob in the Law Library", Dalhousie Libraries Libvine, May 7, 2019. <https://blogs.dal.ca/libraries/2019/05/defeating-the-mob-in-the-law-library-halifax-1946-gamifying-research-skills-testing-at-the-dalhousie-libraries/>

Marlo MacKay, "You'll never escape... the library?", Dal News, May 8, 2019. <https://www.dal.ca/news/2019/05/08/law-library-launches-fun-escape-room.html>

New York Law Institute, "You'll Never Escape...The Library? Escape Room Tests Research Skills of Law Students", June 10, 2019. <http://www.nyli.org/youll-never-escape-the-library-escape-room-tests-research-skills-of-law-students/>

### *Newsletters*

"News from Dalhousie", APLA Bulletin (Spring 2019) 82: 4.

"CALL/ACBD Conference", British and Irish Law Libraries Newsletter (July 2018).

### *Citations in Conferences*

Charlie Amiot, "The Meat Shower Mystery! - Teaching Soft Skills & Information Literacy Through Immersive Experiences", CALI Conference for Law School Computing, University of South Carolina School of Law, June 6, 2019.

## Budget

Funding was received from the CAUL (\$1000.00) and Dalhousie Centre of Teaching and Learning (\$900.00). The funding was spent on construction, room furnishings, puzzle parts, and student salaries. We were also able to use a portion of the combined funding to employ a MLIS student intern Emily Hines to assist with project development in the summer of 2018. She notes the range of skills she developed in her intern profile here:

<https://blogs.dal.ca/libraries/2018/09/intern-profile-emily-hines/>. Dalhousie University applied a research overhead cost of \$130.43. Due to a clerical error, there were residual unspent funds in the CAUL account of \$36.22 that were returned to the CAUL in April 2021.

Dalhousie Research Overhead: \$130.43

Unspent CAUL Funds: \$36.22 (returned to CAUL April 2021)

Student Intern Salary: \$900 (75 hours)

### Construction Design and Material Costs:

Vendor	Date	Cost	Item	Receipt Number
ReFound	17/03/2018	\$75.90	Furnishings	1
ReFound	08/04/2018	\$83.95	Furnishings	2
Urban Cottage	11/04/2018	\$142.31	Furnishings	3
Value Village	31/03/2018	\$33.30	Furnishings	4
Flag Shop	19/04/2018	\$25.24	Flag	5
IKEA	31/03/2018	\$27.58	Lighting	6
Michael's	07/04/2018	\$50.97	Puzzles	7
Kent	19/04/2018	\$41.81	Construction	8
Kent	21/04/2018	\$128.98	Construction	9
IKEA	22/04/2018	\$19.54	Boxes	10
Canadian Tire	24/04/2018	\$99.97	Locks	11
Michaels	24/04/2018	\$33.24	Frames	12
Maritime Medals	18/04/2018	\$21.71	Medals	13
Staples	20/05/2018	\$19.50	Labels	14
BestBuy	19/05/2018	\$22.98	Camera	15
Michaels	04/05/2018	\$31.36	Puzzles	16
Michaels	11/05/2018	\$19.56	Puzzles	17
Kent	16/05/2018	\$22.91	Hardware	18
IKEA	20/05/2018	\$11.49	Hardware	19
Kijiji	25/04/2018	\$60.00	Fireplace	No Receipt
<b>Total Development Costs</b>				<b>\$972.30</b>
<b>Total Salary Costs</b>				<b>\$900.00</b>
<b>Total Project Costs</b>				<b>\$1872.30</b>
<b>Total CAUL Cost (Less Returned)</b>				<b>\$963.78</b>

Photos



Publicity

**ESCAPE ROOM**

Legal research will lead the way, its the way out of the room... if you dare to play

**THE LAW**  
VERSUS  
**THE MOB**

**A CHALLENGE FOR THE BRILLIANT AND BRAVE**

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