

CHAPTER 2

Implementing Transformative Role-playing Games in Specific Applied Contexts

Sarah Lynne Bowman ❖ Angie Bandhosingh
Elektra Diakolambrianou ❖ Felipe García-Soriano
Kjell Hedgard Hugaas ❖ Josefin Westborg

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses specifically on additional considerations when applying role-playing games in specific contexts, i.e., running *interventions* with target groups. Transformative leisure, therapeutic, and educational games each have unique concerns regarding implementation factors, as do working with specific target groups and in particular applied settings. While we cannot give a comprehensive roadmap for implementing in these various contexts, this chapter is intended to provide a starting place when planning for more complex applied role-playing situations. We will discuss more general logistics and production in Chapter 3 and facilitation in Chapter 4.

Importantly, in our model, games themselves do not change people. Instead, participants engage in games with a certain unconscious or conscious willingness to change; experience situations in play that may catalyze processes of change; and then must reflect and take action after the game to integrate desired change. Thus, games are better understood as catalysts that help jumpstart change that occur within larger processes of transformation than causes of transformation themselves. This textbook is intended to help you optimize their potency within these overall processes.

2.2 A review of transformative role-playing game design

a) Transformative goals

As a reminder from *Transformative Role-Playing Game Design (TRGD)*, Bowman, Diakolambrianou, and Brind eds. (2024), our model involves several components in order to be considered a transformative game design.

First, the designers should establish transparent, intentional goals for the scenario, which can be predetermined, designed in collaboration with the participants, or both. These goals should be appropriate to the type of game you are designing. Is your game

meant to be run in a leisure setting for people in their spare time? Is your game meant to be run in an educational setting? Or is your game part of a therapeutic intervention? As we will see, the goals can be similar in all three settings, but the framing structures and articulation of the goals will likely change.

Here are some examples of broader categories and more specific goals associated with them (Bowman and Hugaas 2019):

1. **Educational Goals:** Examples include critical thinking, systems thinking, problem solving, perceived competence, motivation;
2. **Emotional Processing:** Examples include identity exploration, identifying / expressing emotions, processing grief / trauma, practicing boundaries;
3. **Social Cohesion:** Examples include leadership, teamwork, collaboration, practicing communication skills, community building; and
4. **Political Aims:** Examples include awareness raising, perspective taking, empathy, conflict transformation, paradigm shifting.

Another way to identify goals is to consider: Are the desired impacts primarily *cognitive*, *affective*, or *behavioral*, or some overlap in between? In other words, are you trying to help participants to *think* in a certain way or reflect upon their own thinking patterns? Do you want players to *feel* a certain way or come into contact with their emotional landscape? Or do you want to encourage them to *behave* in a certain way regarding their actions in the world and interactions with others?

Note that such goals should always emphasize the consent, willpower, and identities of the individuals in question; we are not using role-playing games to change people into who we want them to be, but rather inviting them to change based on their own volition and inclination. Furthermore, we are interested in types of change that cultivate greater peace and justice for oneself and all others in society, not types of change that emphasize exclusionary or discriminatory thinking or valuing one group of people over another. Broadly speaking, we consider these prosocial and progressive goals. Thus, role-playing games can become a vehicle for increased self-actualization, agency, and ability to help ourselves and others get our needs met in society outside of the game.

For more on transformative goals, our theoretical model of transformation, and the research on the benefits of role-playing games, see Chapters 2, 3, and 7 of *TRGD*.

b) Structure of a transformative role-playing game

These role-playing games are best undertaken within a supportive *transformational container* (Bowman and Hugaas 2021; Baird and Bowman 2022). Ideally, the play group of the specific game -- and members of the wider community of transformative play advocates -- can serve this role for each other before, during, and after play.

The following components form the structure of a transformative role-playing game in our model. As discussed in more depth in Chapter 6 of *TRGD*, role-playing

games are a ritual activity at their core (Long 2026). Rituals are highly important and potent methods of reinforcing group cohesion in human culture. They have three main phases: preparation, liminal, and return (van Gennep 1960; Turner 1995).

i) Safety structures

Throughout the design and implementation of your game, you should consider which safety structures to integrate, including both physical and psychological safety. While no space can ever be fully safe, transformative play requires players to perceive themselves as safe enough to lower their vigilance during play and dare to try new things. While we recommend having at least one member on your safety team when implementing, upholding safety structures should be the responsibility of everyone in the process, including the designers, organizers, and players themselves. We discuss safety in more detail in Chapters 5 in *TRGD* and Chapter 5 of this book.

ii) Workshops

To more robustly ritualize the role-playing experience and help frame the activity, we recommend clear starting and ending phases. Workshops are an excellent way to start a game. They can include activities for example that brief players on key information they will need; guide them through practicing key skills or interactions they will use in the game; encourage them to try any safety mechanics included; and develop their characters and in-game relations with others. See Chapters 2 and 4 in *TRGD* and Chapters 3, 4, and 5 in this book.

iii) Game play

This phase can take many forms, but from a ritual perspective, it serves as the entrance into *liminality* (Turner 1995): the space in which social roles and behaviors can change within a community for a specific purpose, i.e., the role-playing game itself. Game play should focus as concretely on your transformative goals as possible and remove activities that might distract from them. For example, if you want your participants to practice complex systems thinking, including a strong romance plot might derail that activity. On the other hand, such a plot might make the stakes more personally relatable and motivating for the participants if it was tied directly to play activities related to the system. This consideration is especially important when scaling up a smaller game with relatively simple design to add one or more of the following: a more complex design, more players, additional mechanics, comprehensive lore, and/or a larger play space.

iv) Debriefing

All transformative games in our model require some sort of debriefing: a processing exercise that serves as the closing ritual of the game. The first stage should involve some sort of *de-roling*, a short ritualized activity in which players indicate they are exiting the character, e.g., taking off an article of costuming, saying, “I was Hathor, I am now Jan.” Then, players should process the experience in some meaningful way, usually through serious discussion, as opposed to more relaxed and entertaining regaling of memories after the game.

Debriefs can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. We recommend structured debriefs, in which each player is asked the same question and given roughly the same amount of time to share about their own experience, moderated by a facilitator or group leader. Crosstalk between participants should be discouraged and players should focus on their own experience. Depending on your goals, you may structure these questions to focus more on *emotional*, *intellectual*, or *educational* debrief questions, which are tied to your transformative goals and the setting. Their responses to these questions will help them distill takeaways to aid in their transformative process. See Chapters 2, 4, and 5 in *TRGD* for details.

v) Integration strategies

Finally, we recommend including some integration strategies in your design. Integration practices help participants to continue processing their takeaways from the experience in their daily lives, as well as instigate and maintain processes of long-term change. Examples include (Bowman and Hugaas 2019; qtd. from Bowman et al. 2024):

1. **Creative Expression:** Integrating their experiences by creating new works of art.
2. **Intellectual Analysis:** Engaging in cognitive processing by analyzing their experiences on an intellectual level.
3. **Emotional Processing:** Processing emotional content of their experiences, either individually, one-on-one, or in a group setting.
4. **Returning to Daily Life:** Transitioning from the headspace of the game frame to that of their daily lives and identities.
5. **Interpersonal Processing:** Processing relationally to transition from the social frames of the game to their off-game interpersonal dynamics.
6. **Community Building:** Creating or transforming existing communities around them.

If integration processes are not undertaken, takeaways from the experience may have no long-term effects or, worse, have negative effects. If a person has started a process of transformation, such as gaining increased confidence through their character, then fail to integrate this belief about their own abilities, they may end up reinforcing a *limiting belief*, e.g., they are less capable than they are and attribute that trait only to the character and fictional setting.

Therefore, in our model, games themselves do not change people. Instead, participants engage in games with a certain unconscious or conscious willingness to change; experience situations in play that may catalyze processes of change; then must reflect and take action after the game to integrate desired change.

Note that many of these integrative processes are beyond the scope of the design and organizing team's responsibility. We recommend assessing what integration practices the implementation team is willing to offer, such as assigning debrief buddies to check in with each other and process after the larp. Other activities can be recommended, such as sharing a list of ways in which players can integrate the

experience, or better yet deputizing someone within the play group willing to lead others in these activities. This latter practice incentivizes collective responsibility for the integration process, as well as a greater commitment to leadership and support among the player base. For examples from our own design practice, see later in this chapter.

For a deeper dive on implementing framing practices, see the latter sections of this chapter, as well as Chapter 3 and 4 of this book.

2.3 Hacking existing games for transformative purposes

A common and less-time intensive strategy is adapting existing role-playing games for use in applied settings. The most common example is *Dungeons & Dragons* (*D&D*, Gygax and Arneson 1974), considered the first RPG. To this day, *D&D* is the most commonly played game in its various editions and permutations, with the 5th edition considered the most friendly to new players due to its more accessible approach.

D&D is a fantasy role-playing game in which a small adventuring party embarks on quests, often with epic outcomes. The game encourages a large degree of creativity of action and self-expression through its magical world. Therefore, theory, practice, and empirical evidence is increasingly demonstrating how *Dungeons & Dragons* is an important site for players in leisure settings, offering benefits in, for example:

- **Exploring identity** (Bowman 2010; Causo and Quinlan 2021; Davis and Johns 2020; Atanasio 2020);
- **Experiencing gains in mental health** (Walsh and Linehan 2024; Baker, Turner, and Kotera 2022; Arenas, Viduani, and Araujo 2022);
- **Practicing democratic decision making** (Adams 2013; Garcia 2016; Haarman 2023),
- **Developing moral and ethical skills** (Hollander 2021; Wright et al. 2020);
- **Participating in problem solving** (Bowman 2010; Atanasio 2020; Daniau 2016; Zayas and Lewis 1986; Varrette et al. 2020); and
- **Practicing creative thinking** (Carter 2011; Dyson et al. 2015; Chung 2013) and expression (Walsh and Linehan 2024).

Notably, the development of such skills have been either theorized or empirically supported outside of applied settings. Indeed, many practitioners have “a-ha moments” during their own leisure play, realizing games like *D&D* could be helpful in other contexts, such as in more intentionally transformative leisure settings, therapy, or education. Others become interested in RPGs and want to learn more after already having a solid professional background, e.g., in counseling or youth work. Whether your entry point is as an experienced gamer or a professional who is new to RPGs, a viable approach is to integrate an existing system into your practice rather than designing a new game from scratch.

In our model, adapting existing games requires *hacking* the game for your desired transformative impacts and constructing the framing around the game accordingly. For example, you may include more targeted workshops and debriefs, or recommend specific integration activities relevant to your goals. In terms of game play, you may adjust plots and in-game activities, e.g., to foster more prosocial behaviors through meaningful moral dilemmas or situations that can be solved non-violently (cf. Albom 2021).

As Kilmer et al. (2023) discuss, you may choose to remove many of the mechanics or to handle all mechanics yourself to reduce the cognitive load and make the game easier to access for new players. Alternatively, you might choose a more story-focused game with less mechanics if you are focusing primarily on interpersonal relationships or creative thinking, such as *Kids with Bikes* (Gilmour and Levandowski 2018; see e.g., Varrette et al. 2023). On the other hand, you may wish to foster problem solving and math skills in your participants, in which case a complex rule set may offer an appropriate challenge, especially for more experienced players.

Whatever game you choose to hack, you should have a strong command of the rules and mechanics yourself. Your players should have the physical and cognitive capabilities needed for play. Furthermore, the themes and setting should be both engaging and appropriate for your population, e.g., for their age or knowledge level (Kilmer et al. 2023). Popular genres include high and low fantasy; science fiction; superhero; steampunk; horror; romance; modern and historical realism; games based on popular culture; and mixtures of these (Kilmer et al. 2023), e.g., a post-apocalyptic horror game with science fiction themes.

You also may choose to insert specific techniques from your given modality or teaching method into game moments, e.g., encouraging players to practice cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques while enacting the character in the fictional setting (Connell, Kilmer, and Kilmer 2020; Connell 2023; Bartenstein 2022, 2024; Varrette et al. 2023). Alternatively, such techniques might be integrated in the framing activities surrounding the experience, including any intensive classroom discussions or 1:1 therapeutic sessions.

If you have specific skills you want to train that require a considerable amount of practice, you might choose a more focused system or scenario. As mentioned before, the more expansive the game world and the possible actions within it, the less likely one specific activity will be practiced at length. In our transformative game design programme, we have asked students to practice their hacking and facilitation skills through:

- Simpler leisure scenarios from the Golden Cobra Challenge (2014-);
- Transformative leisure games such as from the *#Feminism* anthology (Bushyager, Stark, and Westerling, eds. 2017); and
- Existing educational scenarios with learning objectives of their own, such as in the *Roll for Learning* anthology (Zamboni, Farber, and Merchant eds. 2024).

This approach may be more effective depending on the specificity of your goals, whereas an open world might be fine for more general goals, like increasing social connectedness between players.

a) Ethical concerns when hacking existing games for applied purposes

Keep in mind that hacking existing games may come with unintended consequences based on the original design. For example, *D&D* and other games have been critiqued for problematic content and character behavior related to:

- **Violence** (Torner 2014; Albom 2021; Eddy, Zoë Antoinette 2024; Dashiell 2026);
- **Reproducing exclusionary mythical norms** (Garcia 2017; Kemper 2018a, 2020b);
- **Performing problematic forms of geek masculinity** (Martin et al. 2015; Dashiell 2020; LeClaire 2020);
- **Sexism** (Nephew 2006; Trammell 2014; Stang and Trammell 2020; Stang 2021);
- **Racism** (Kemper 2018b; Mendez Hodes 2019a, 2019b, 2019c; Trammell 2020; Baker 2022; Dashiell 2022; Eddy, Samantha 2023);
- **Queerphobia** (Paisley 2015; Koski 2016; Stenros and Sihvonen 2019);
- **Colonialism** (Kemper 2020a; Eddy, Zoë Antoinette 2020);
- **Cultural appropriation and stereotypical representations** (Kessock 2014a; Trammell 2016; Mendez Hodes 2020; Leonard 2021; Leonard, Janjetovic, and Usman 2021);
- **Insufficient representation** (Long 2015, 2016; Sihvonen and Stenros 2015).

Experiencing such content or behavior can lead players from marginalized backgrounds to feel that they must pay a *fun tax* to play (Holkar 2016), accepting that their backgrounds may be represented stereotypically or erased completely from the fiction. During play, they may feel the need to *steer for survival* (Kemper, Saitta, and Koljonen 2020), e.g., trying to avoid certain content, or to hack the game from the inside to be playable. Having such experiences will likely run counter to your transformative goals. Even if players do not react strongly to such content, consider what values and behaviors the game is communicating through its structure, narrative, and mechanics, e.g., its *procedural rhetoric* (Bogost 2007). What verbs are encouraged through play (Townser and Li 2019; Brind 2022), and how might those actions be interpreted as harmful or oppressive to marginalized groups?

While many applied facilitators hack their games to address such challenges, designing a new system from scratch with similar themes might be a better approach, as the therapeutic tabletop RPG company Game to Grow has done with their game *Critical Core* (2021). In other situations, it might be advantageous to play upon such

themes if run in a consensual manner with all participants agreeing and wanting to explore them through play within a supportive safety structure. For more on these topics, see Chapters 5 and 6 of *TRGD* and Chapter 5 of this book.

Furthermore, you should consider your players' identities when choosing an existing game (Kilmer et al. 2023). For example, an Indigenous population may resonate more strongly with the game *Coyote & Crow* (Alexander, Connor, et al. 2022); an LGBTQIA+ group might find *Monsterhearts* (Alder 2017) relatable. Ultimately, you should consider the specific needs of your population and your chosen transformative goals when hacking an existing game.

2.4 Scaling up transformative game design

As discussed in Chapter 1, if not hacking an existing game, you may be designing a larger-scale implementation plan from scratch or scaling up from the nano-game design process described in *TRGD*. While this textbook will often refer to scaling up your previous design, you will likely find these recommendations helpful regardless of your entry point.

Within the transformative framework, scaling has different considerations depending on the applied setting. For example, you may take the nanogame you playtested with other students in your course and run it for a new target group, such as primary school students or trauma survivors, or in a new environment, such as a prison or museum.

We recommend keeping the following general advice in mind regardless of the context.

a) Transparency of communication and goal setting

We believe that transparency is extremely important in transformative role-playing games. We recommend communicating with your players as much as you can regarding not only the transformative goals you have for the experience, but also themes present in your game, e.g., through content advisories, ingredients lists, or consent checklists (see e.g., Reynolds and Germain 2019). You may also want to explain any other parameters of the game, such as whether it will be verbal or non-verbal and what sort of movement is required (see e.g., Wood 2022).

While many larps on serious themes have been designed for instance by the Nordic larp movement (Stenros and Montola eds. 2010) and adjacent communities, the goals of such games may not always be clearly articulated either within the design team or among the player base. For example, the Nordic larp *System Danmarc* (Opus 2005; see e.g., Munthe-Kaas 2010) was designed to explore themes of homelessness. After the multi-day larp, the organizers showed a documentary directly after the game with footage of unhoused individuals in contemporary Denmark as an awareness raising exercise. While such contextualizing framing activities are often helpful for learning, because this aspect of the design was not transparent, the exercise backfired for some players, who were unaware of these political aims of the larp and felt betrayed after this experience (Nordic Larp 2011).

As trust is essential to establish and maintain in transformational communities, we recommend designing and implementing transparently (Torner 2013), unless absolutely necessary for your goals. While secrecy can be exciting and is even expected in some communities, sensitive themes or unexpected experiences can affect the player experience negatively. Transparency of communication should happen far in advance, e.g., on the website or other promotional materials (Budin 2010), so that players have the opportunity to manage expectations and opt-out (Koljonen 2016). Having players present who are unprepared for the game to focus on transformation might cause conflicting incidents in terms of playstyle, intensity, and expectations of care.

Alternatively, if all players are ready for transformative play, the group can likely work more deeply and supportively toward their goals as an ensemble (Tolvanen and MacDonald 2020). Importantly, fully informed consent is not possible in role-playing games due to the spontaneous co-creativity inherent to the form, which is why we recommend including calibration mechanics in order to communicate preferences and needs before, during, and after play (Koljonen 2020). For example, players should also be aware of the greater expectations of care for others and off-game processing necessitated by transformative play. See Chapter 5 in *TRGD* and Chapter 5 in this book for more details on psychological safety.

b) Embracing individual goals and emergence

While setting goals for the game as a whole is important, for scaled up designs, we also recommend helping players identify individual goals for themselves. Players arrive at games with their own subjective worldview, experiences, and needs at any given moment. Some may be highly enthusiastic about your intended impacts, whereas others may be more interested in exploring other aspects of the design or themes of the game. Others still may want to experiment with aspects of their life path, identity, interpersonal dynamics, or social structures that are highly personal to their own experience. Scaled up role-playing games can often accommodate a variety of different goals.

One design approach is to consider your players as *engines of desire* (Pettersson 2021; see also Li 2012), and your job as a designer and/or organizer as providing means to meet those desires. For example, in the *College of Wizardry* (2014-) style of larps, players can request scenes from NPCs that are highly specialized for their particular emotional processing needs or story arc. If you have sufficient staff, you may be able to accommodate such requests. In other cases, players are not fully conscious of these desires or needs, but they become apparent through *emergent play* (Torner 2018). One of the skillsets of facilitating role-playing games effectively is learning how to pivot accordingly, or help shift in-game dynamics between players to meet player's needs and desires.

Alternatively, some desires may not be appropriate given the overarching goals of the game or the needs of other participants. For example, you may wish to set limits for the group up front on romantic, sexual, violent, or antagonistic play if you think it will derail or distract, e.g., from professional or prosocial skill building. Furthermore,

small actions of players in the game can form a *domino effect* through emergence that can strongly shape the game narrative for everyone and stray from your intentions (Bowman 2018). A common, somewhat rueful adage in role-playing game communities is, “No plot survives contact with the players.” This chaotic environment can sometimes be challenging in applied settings, e.g., for teachers who are used to having a strong degree of control in the classroom (Larsson 2004; Harder 2007; Hyltoft 2010; Bowman 2014). While role-playing games can likely be used to meet any goals, they cannot meet *all* goals at the same time, nor can they accommodate all emergent play, as some actions may break the structure of the game or logic of the storyworld.

Ultimately, the individual subjectivity of players and emergence in improvisational play are two of the unique features of analog role-playing games. Some of the most profound transformative impacts from these games have occurred “accidentally,” as in the examples of the incidental benefits of leisure *D&D* play. Rather than fighting against them to meet our artistic vision, we should embrace these more unpredictable forms of transformation insofar as we can. We will discuss facilitation strategies in more detail in Chapter 4.

c) Ensuring transformative goals are consistent in every element

While the actions of the characters during game play can be unpredictable and largely outside of the control of designers and organizers, what can be controlled is the number and nature of designed elements. As discussed in Chapter 3 of *TRGD*, analog role-playing games provide an exceptional amount of *alibi*, meaning social permission to behave in a wide range of ways that might be unavailable or socially scrutinized in daily life (Montola 2010; Deterding 2018). These behaviors can be described as the range of verbs (Townser and Li 2019; Brind 2022), or types of actions a player is incentivized to take by the design. The design presents an environment in which *affordances* (Gibson 2014; Lampo 2015) make themselves available, which may or may not be desirable.

Some questions to ask yourself when evaluate your design, especially if you are adding many elements to your scaled up version or you have multiple designers with different creative styles on your team:

- What alibi are we providing with the setting, the characters, the story, the mechanics, and the relations?
- What affordances are provided through these elements?
- What verbs are likely to emerge as a result of these elements?
- To what degree are certain verbs likely to become dominant in emergent play if such alibi and affordances are present?

Too many verbs or too much alibi for extreme behavior might stray beyond your intended goals. For example, if you have explicit rules for how to negotiate sexual intimacy, romance, violence, or sexual assault in your game, then you are indicating

to the players these actions are not only possible, but probable and even desirable for the game under the right circumstances. Similarly, if you have conflict resolution mechanics for such actions built into the game, you are communicating that players should anticipate initiating them or being on the receiving end, and that such interactions have winners and losers.

Again, if such content is relevant to your goals, then such a design may be appropriate and desirable. However, in certain applied settings, for example working with underage people on prosocial skills, you may wish to communicate clear guardrails to help keep emergent play within bounds of the sort of actions you want players to perform. In these cases, trying to hack existing games with massive lists of combat mechanics to focus on nonviolence may be more trouble than it is worth. A bespoke design may prove more useful, meaning a design that is created from scratch for a specific aesthetic (Koljonen 2019) or practical purpose.

This process is also important in implementation. For example, if you want to avoid potentially uncomfortable or ethically problematic situations, you may wish to make a rule for underage players that they cannot initiate romantic role-play with the non player-characters (NPCs) of adult facilitators. On the other hand, if the purpose of the game is to learn about consent, you may prefer that the adult facilitator fields such interactions, giving young players the chance to practice saying yes and no in a safer space than daily life might be.

Inherent to these examples is a question of interaction incentivization: is your facilitation inviting players to interact e.g., with each other, their own inner world, non player-characters, the game system? In what ways and to what end?

To help with consistency, we recommend engaging in *constructive alignment* when designing and implementing your game. You can use tools like Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom 1956; Heick 2021) to help you structure goals with concrete action verbs that players should perform in play and aligning your game activities accordingly, i.e., creating opportunities that incentivize or require those actions. Whatever verbs you permit or incentivize through play, they should a) be aligned with your transformative goals; b) be thoroughly assessed in terms of risk to your target group (see Chapter 5 of *TRGD* and Chapter 6 of this volume).

This practice is also especially important when adding *modules* (sometimes called *mods*), side quests, or other additional content to an existing design. Consider how much time the activity will take, the accessibility of the location, who will be invited, what risks are involved, and if the activity serves the larger goals of the game. Will the activity require cognitive activities that distract from the role-playing or vice versa? Is that desirable, e.g., training how to respond to crisis situations within a group? Or is it distracting, e.g., trying to solve a puzzle during a game focused on complex diplomatic negotiations? We discuss these topics later in this chapter in more detail.

d) Goals of personal vs. social change in implementation

One thing to consider when planning your goals is whether you are interested in cultivating personal development or social change or both. Importantly, separating these two areas is a bit of a false dichotomy, as they can overlap and are not mutually exclusive. They are best understood as a spectrum of goals that often overlap or reinforce each other: personal reflection may spark social engagement, and vice versa. This reinforcement is particularly relevant in activist larps or identity-based play, where the act of embodying a marginalized perspective can simultaneously support individual empowerment and broader cultural critique. Scott Nicholson (2015) discusses how personal relevance and social connectedness are two overlapping forms of intrinsic motivation players can have simultaneously in games intended for learning.

Nonetheless, to a degree, the planned activities may need to shift depending on your emphasis. For example, if your goal is to uplevel the skills of a group in deliberation as in *The Assembly* (Bowman, Öberg, Rydberg, and Hugaas 2025; see also Bowman et al. 2025), the structure of the larp will likely need to focus on group discussions. Allowing for complex interpersonal dynamics between two people in side scenes or a person's personal journey as they wander through different parts of the game world will likely become distracting. Conversely, long meetings with several characters may derail from other personal plots, such as proposing to one's fiancé, plotting secretly with co-conspirators, or any number of other individually-motivated actions that could otherwise happen. In such cases, meetings might be shortened, limited only to key decision makers, or made more interesting (Axner and Vejdemo 2016).

On the other hand, personal transformation can be worked into a group process, whether in-game or off-game. A therapeutic group can have both individual goals for each player, e.g., learning to self-advocate, and compatible goals for the group, e.g., practicing building a community based on consent. Children in a larp camp may be working on bravery and self-confidence on a personal level, while also practicing teamwork when solving a puzzle together. Thus, considering what degree the players are having an independent vs. shared experience becomes important, as well as what activities will best suit personal vs. social change.

Finally, consider the scope of social change you are hoping to see. Some examples:

- Are you hoping players will become better friends with one another and connect off-game?
- Are you cultivating an ongoing community of players that should persist after the game session?
- Are you aiming to create a cohesive community of activists that will go out and make change in the world afterward?
- Are you trying to affect social dynamics within an existing organization such as a business, governmental organization, or non-governmental organization (NGO) (see e.g., van Bilsen 2024)?
- Are you hoping to affect politics on a national scale?

Each of these goals will have different design and implementation concerns beyond the play itself. While some individuals may be motivated to continue to engage in social change processes, we cannot expect players to do so without support from the community. Evaluate how much your implementation design can help scaffold the desired social behavior you hope to see, e.g., through structured group integration processes.

Most importantly, while ambitious goals are laudable, make sure they are practically feasible and reasonable for your participants. If our expectations of others are too high, sometimes they can feel like a failure or we can project failure onto them if the expected outcomes do not occur. We recommend instead having small-scale goals that should be attainable in the contained group community, e.g., increasing discussion on an important social issue. You can present more lofty goals as aspirational, e.g., forming an ongoing activist group on the issue after the game.

e) Co-creation with populations

Finally, both in design and implementation, consider the degree to which your target populations should be involved with co-creation. While analog role-playing games are inherently co-creative due to their improvisational nature, integrating the perspectives of target groups in- and off-game in a more comprehensive way can enrich everyone's experience and be more culturally responsive (McIntosh and Marques 2017). Such practices are important for example in participatory design (Björgvinsson, Ehn, and Hillgren 2012) and Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal 1996, 2002), in which the content of play is sourced from the play group.

Co-creation can take many forms:

1. Deciding together which transformative goals will inform the design and/or implementation;
2. Paying members of a specific population for cultural consulting or sensitivity readings;
3. Involving members of a specific population in the design team throughout the process;
4. Calibrating with players within the population as design and play unfolds to ensure the process is appropriate to their needs;
5. Integrating workshop activities before the game that invite co-creation, e.g., character, relation, faction, and culture design;
6. Creating opportunities in-game for co-creation to occur, e.g., developing a ritual as a group or deciding on the norms of the community through discussion;
7. Asking players from the population to develop and lead their own activities through play;
8. Receiving feedback after the game and iterating accordingly;

9. Onboarding new team members in ongoing design processes after play, e.g., when playing games in a series, or designing new ones; and
10. Teaching players the tools of transformative game design so they can create their own experiences.

Co-creation carries political weight: it challenges hierarchical authorship and invites collective meaning-making. In some contexts, this kind of participatory process can be transformative, especially when working with historically excluded or marginalized groups. However, we should also acknowledge situations in which co-creation is not always aligned with the experience we want to offer—especially in tightly scripted, emotionally guided, or aesthetically cohesive games. If you are wanting to create a highly specific experience, it may not make sense to include co-creation. Therefore, we recommend balancing the enthusiasm for co-creation with an honest view of its limits. Not every process needs to be democratic to be impactful—but when it is, it should be done with intention and care.

Furthermore, in some cases, co-creation may not be possible or even desirable. For example, if your participants are children who have not developed cognitively enough to understand complex systems, then involving them to help design your game's magic system would likely be confusing. Additionally, co-creation can be difficult with an international group without a shared cultural baseline. Design and implementation skills sometimes take time to develop; one design workshop with no playtesting will likely not result in an optimized design. While input into the process is helpful, be mindful also that you are not placing unrealistic expectations on players that are counterproductive to your goals. On the other hand, co-creation can take many forms; for example, establishing a creative atmosphere in drama classrooms can make space for small elements of student creativity to become playable fictional tropes or *bits* enjoyed by the group through emergent play (Wolgel 2024a, 2024b).

We will discuss more specific methods for co-creation in Chapter 7.

f) Ratio of organizers to players and group composition

In applied settings, considering the ratio of organizers to players is often critical. While a leisure game may be able to run for dozens of players with only one organizer if the design is minimal enough, expectations and needs are often different at scale in various applied settings and when working with specific populations.

When working in school settings or with youth in camps, it may be required to have a certain *ratio*, e.g., of adults or teenagers to children, such as 1:5, 1:10, 1:30. This ratio can be necessary for multiple reasons, including:

- Expectations of supervision;
- The necessity of working closely with a guide to scaffold learning; and/or
- Narrative reasons such as having an NPC facilitator direct the exercise.

For populations who are under supervision, the ratio may be necessary also for legal reasons, like in retirement facilities, schools, or prisons. For example, parents may want to know how many adults will be on the premises during a larp camp activity.

Therapeutic processes can be time intensive and require extensive processing, e.g., when working with trauma survivors or clients with mental health challenges such as severe depression. In such cases, it may be preferable to have a higher number of facilitators, e.g., 2:2 or 4:1 in a tabletop role-playing game in order to provide more targeted support for therapeutic goals of clients. These facilitators can have different roles as well, e.g., one mental health professional running the game, while the other one observes or focuses on the off-game processing.

Furthermore, in therapeutic settings, 1:1 sessions with the client's therapist may take place between group sessions, which can become important for discussion around personal goals or sensitive topics related to the play experience, e.g., considering how the player can adopt their character's bravery in specific challenging life circumstances. This therapist may be part of the facilitation of the game or external to the process, e.g., contracting the facilitators to run the game as adjunctive to a group or 1:1 therapeutic process.

Group composition is also important to consider. You may choose to include participants with compatible challenges and goals, while avoiding pairing players who might exacerbate each other's challenges. Thus, in therapeutic role-playing, group composition usually involves a 1:1 intake process to assess the suitability of the group method for specific clients in certain configurations.

In leisure games, players may be asked to engage in a *flagging* process to indicate if members of the group have concerns about each other before the start of the game. Such concerns may be minor -- such as not cohering well with that person's playstyle or wanting to avoid one's ex -- or could represent more serious safety concerns. While this process is controversial and sometimes messy (Brown and Teerilahti 2024; Wood and Holkar 2024), we believe that some sort of vetting process is important in community creation and maintenance. Whatever the process, role-playing games are at their core about human-to-human interaction; considering the personalities, behavioral tendencies, and needs of the individuals within the group is part of implementation design.

See Chapter 5 of *TRGD* and Chapter 5 in this book for more considerations around flagging and vetting.

g) Time

Finally, you should carefully consider the amount of time you actually have to run the game. How much time do you have with the target group? Are you squeezing in a game session during their lunch break or do you have them for a week during the summer? Will you only meet for one session or will play extend over several sessions? Plan your time accordingly.

Similarly, are players engaging in their leisure time or during work or school hours? Is play mandatory or voluntary (Roda Martínez 2025)? Consider how much time for preparation, play, and post-game processing you can reasonably expect from your population given these constraints. If your leisure participants have jobs and families, can you expect them to engage in extensive pre-game planning? If running a game for students, will you “borrow” time from the teacher by asking them to lecture the class on important concepts beforehand? Will the teacher help them process the experience and connect it to the existing curriculum after you leave? Can you trust this process will happen sufficiently?

Will the game be interrupted by outsiders, e.g., a school bell ringing, the school principal entering the room, nurses coming in to administer medications? If interruptions will happen, make sure to plan accordingly, e.g., starting the game play part after the planned interruption, or having smooth meta-techniques for entering and leaving play. Do you have a hard limit on when you have to leave the building, or can you potentially stay later to finish the session? Make sure what you are planning is feasible given the time constraints and setting.

Remember to add time for proper framing before and after your event when planning. The amount of time needed for workshoping and debriefing is likely longer with a scaled up design than for a nano-game.

2.5 Implementing based on the needs of the setting and group

We might assume that certain settings always focus upon specific types of learning objectives, e.g., educational goals in schools. However, these categories often overlap. For example, LajvVerkstaden and Lajvbyrån have run scenarios for thousands of Swedish children in schools, but the focus is not on established curricular outcomes connected to subject matter (cf. Geneuss 2021; Cullinan and Genova 2023), but rather on socio-emotional learning about culture (Westborg 2016). Similarly, while the company Game to Grow focused on therapeutic role-playing, they often emphasized developing social skills (Kilmer et al. 2023, 2024), rather than, for example, processing trauma.

From this perspective, you should consider the needs of your population based upon the goals, not just the setting. For example, if you do not need to adhere to specific curricular learning objectives, you may not need as much educational framing in the form of lectures or homework. Similarly, *social skills-based therapeutic interventions* likely do not recover the same degree of emotional processing as more *intensive therapeutic interventions*; a facilitator may decide to do a quick check-in and check-out procedure to frame the game rather than a full 1:1 emotional processing session with individual clients.

Furthermore, more extensive processes might be run by someone else, e.g., the group’s regular teacher or a mental health professional outside of the game. In these

situations, we recommend providing materials to support them in facilitating the process, as they may not have relevant expertise to frame the experience properly, e.g., additional learning content or debriefing questions specific to the game.

a) The Educational Role-Playing Game Design Matrix

When working with educational games, consider which aspects of the game are intended to be educational. The Educational Role-Playing Game Design Matrix (Westborg 2023b) is a tool to help identify if a game fits the intended learning, and also to help design or re-design a game for this purpose. The matrix has two axes: gameplay design and framing design. Both axes range from leisure to educational, creating four quadrants. (See Figure 1).

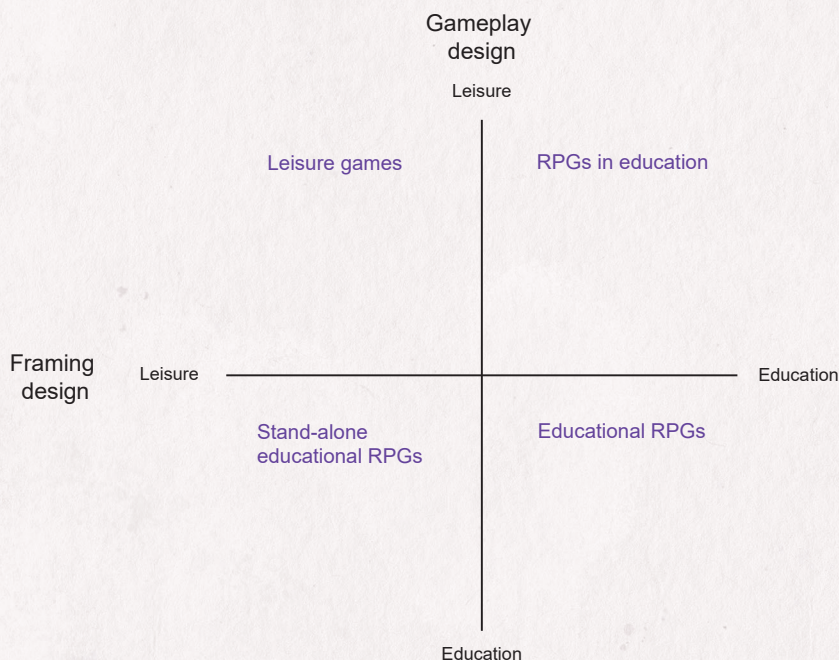


Figure 1: The Four Quadrants (clockwise) -- Leisure games, RPGs in education, standalone educational RPGs, and educational RPGs (including edu-larp).

This figure shows how different parts of the game can be designed for specific learning outcomes. A leisure game has neither the gameplay nor the framing designed for a specific learning outcome. An RPG in education hacks a leisure game by designing the framing for a specific learning outcome. In stand-alone educational RPGs, the gameplay is designed for a specific learning outcome, but not the framing. This practice is more common in digital games for young children, such as math games played on a tablet, but it is not common for RPGs. It might work well for practising physical skills or internalizing rote knowledge, but not for more complex learning, making it less relevant for transformative games. Finally, we have educational RPGs (bottom right corner) where both the gameplay and the framing are designed for a specific learning outcome.

Westborg (2023) further connects the matrix to the different types of education: informal, nonformal, and formal (see Figure 2).

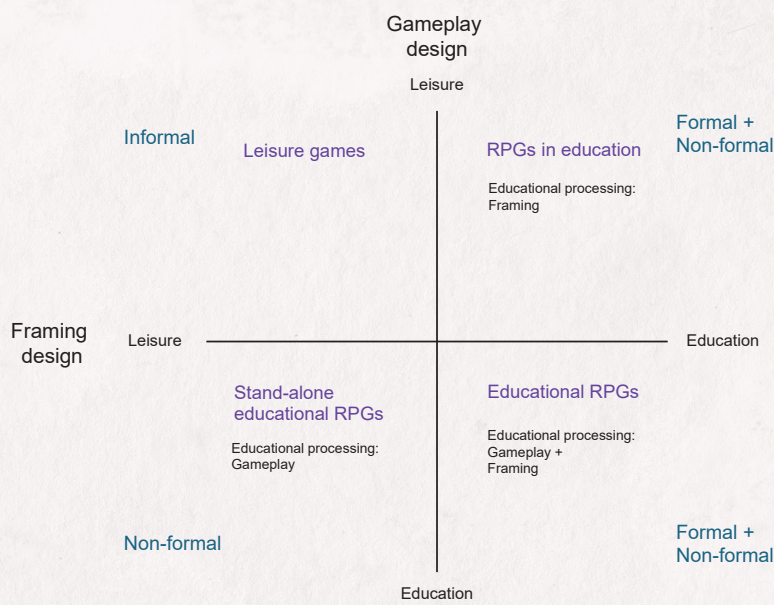


Figure 2: The types of education suited for each quadrant: informal, non-formal, and formal.

While all quadrants facilitate learning, the educational processing happens in different ways. For example, teachers are generally skilled at designing educational framing, enabling them to adapt leisure games to RPGs in Education and thereby making games fit for formal education.

For more information about the types of education, see chapter 2.5 in *TRGD* and Chapter 4 of this textbook.

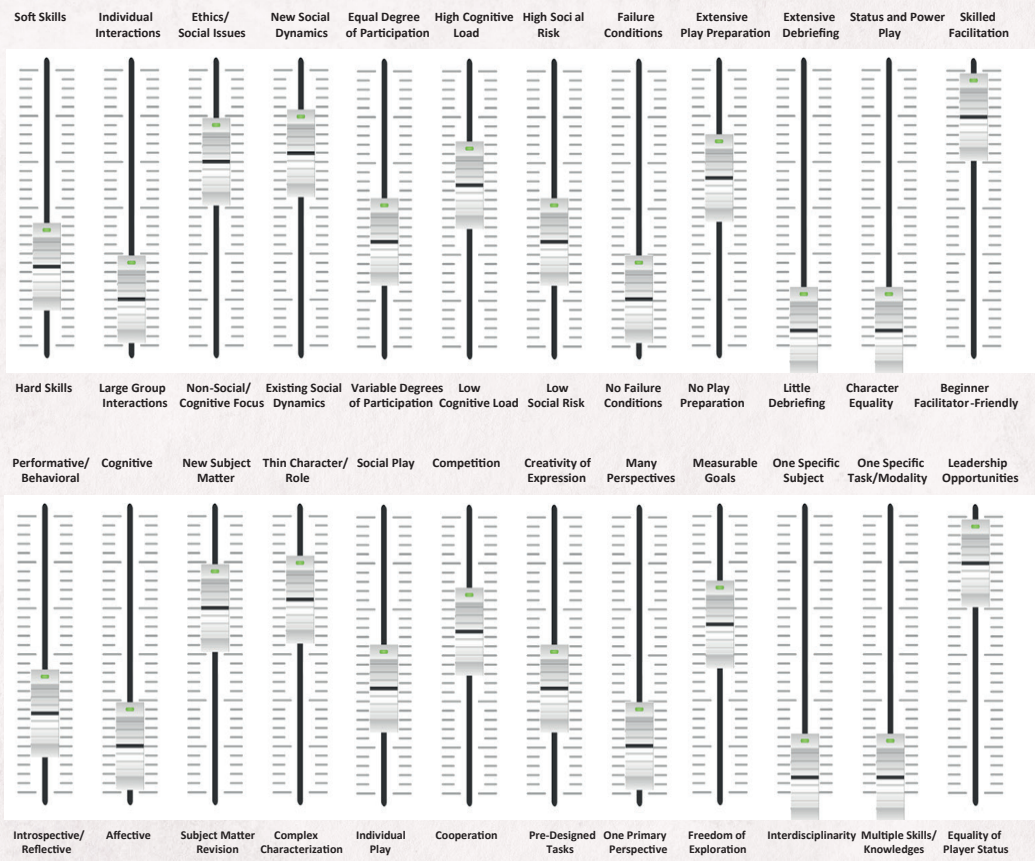
b) The Mixing Desk of Edu-Larp

As we discussed in Chapter 4 of *TRGD*, The Mixing Desk of Edu-Larp might help not only during the design process, but also when scaling up during implementation. For example, if you are adding new activities, you might want to consider the various “sliders” on this metaphorical mixing desk. These sliders represent choices you make when implementing educational games, although many of the principles are likely also important to consider for leisure and therapeutic games.

The sliders for the Mixing Desk (see Figures 3 and 4) are as follows:

- Performative/behavioral ↔ Introspective/reflective
- Cognitive ↔ Affective
- New subject matter ↔ Subject matter revision
- Thin character / role ↔ Complex characterization
- Social play ↔ Individual play
- Competition ↔ Cooperation
- Creativity of expression ↔ Pre-designed tasks
- Many perspectives ↔ One primary perspective
- Measurable goals ↔ Freedom of exploration
- One specific subject ↔ Interdisciplinary
- One specific task / modality ↔ Multiple skills / knowledges
- Leadership opportunities ↔ Equality of player status
- Soft skills ↔ Hard skills
- Individual interactions ↔ Large group interactions
- Ethics / social issues ↔ Non-social / cognitive focus
- New social dynamics ↔ Existing social dynamics (among the player base)
- Equal degree of participation ↔ Variable degrees of participation
- High cognitive load ↔ Low cognitive load
- High social risk ↔ Low social risk
- Failure conditions ↔ No failure conditions
- Extensive play preparation ↔ No play preparation
- Extensive debriefing ↔ Little debriefing
- Status and power play ↔ Character equality
- Skilled facilitation ↔ Beginner facilitator-friendly

The Mixing Desk of Edu-Larp



Figures 3 and 4: The Mixing Desk of Edu-Larp (Bowman 2018)

For more information about implementing in education, see Westborg (2019, 2021, 2023c).

2.6 Interventions: Mediums, modalities, approaches, and techniques

In many cases, you will likely be integrating strategies from your professional background into the implementation of your game. Previous knowledge and practice often informs our conceptualization of what form a transformative game or process should take. This section will list several examples, expanding into more depth on a specific example: spirituality-focused games.

In general, you should consider how your background will impact how you view game play. Examples include:

- **Medium:** Do you work with a specific medium, such as visual arts or physically embodied performance art? Media here do not necessarily refer to technologically mediated work.
- **Modality / Approach:** Do you have a specific theoretical or praxis-based lens that informs how you approach games, e.g., cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), person-centered psychology, or psychoanalysis?
- **Techniques:** Do you have specific techniques you employ in your work that might be practiced within a game, e.g., mindfulness or a dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT) script?

As an example, perhaps you work with clients primarily through visual art therapy through a depth psychology lens. You create an exercise in which you prompt participants to first draw a representation of their personal shadow: aspects of themselves they wish to suppress or disown. Then, participants role-play these parts, enabling participants to connect and empathize with these disowned parts of self. As a final exercise, you have them draw their shadow again, then debrief about any changes that might have occurred.

a) Types of transformative leisure interventions

In this section, we will list various examples of ways in which existing leisure practices can either augment or be augmented by role-playing games for transformative purposes.

i) Arts-based interventions

As discussed in the previous example, you may be trained in the arts or wish to integrate artistic practices in role-playing games. These artistic expressions may be performed by participants during the intervention, e.g., expecting players to compose, improvise, and/or perform songs during play (Blancarte 2025). Alternatively, artistic content may serve as inspiration for play, e.g., creating characters and embodying them based on specific works of art within a museum (*Hyvät museovieraat* [Eng: Dear Museum Visitors] 2024; Kangas 2025). In other cases, art may be a source of critique play, e.g., discussing art at a museum from the perspective of different movements, see e.g., *Mantles in the Museum* (Cox and Lewis 2020, 2023; Cox 2025).

Examples of artistic media include:

- **Visual arts:** Engaging in painting, sculpture, or other visual arts before, during, or after play.
- **Crafting:** Creating props, costumes, or other crafts.
- **Performative arts:** Dancing, performing plays, playing musical instruments, singing, or other types of performance.
- **Recorded media:** Integrating recordings into the play or recording during play, e.g., film, television, radio, or music.
- **Mixed media:** Integrating some combination of artistic media.

ii) Creative writing-based

Other interventions rely on creative writing as part of the process. Creative writing is often inherent to role-playing games, especially if they contain elements of fictional worldbuilding or character writing. Integrating creative writing before, during, or after a game allows participants to actively engage with this process and contribute to the fiction of the game world. Such exercises can encourage solo creative writing or group compositions.

Examples include:

- **Backstory writing:** Composing fiction connected to a character's history and significant events in their lives.
- **Worldbuilding:** Composing written fiction related to the storyworld of the game.
- **Journaling:** Writing journals as one's character before, during, or after a game.
- **Narrative accounts:** Writing post-game descriptions of game events in the first-, second-, or third-person.
- **Poetry:** Composing poems related to the game or during runtime.
- **Storywriting:** Composing stories that will be used during the game or are inspired by it.

iii) Game-based interventions

In some cases, you may wish to integrate methods from game-based media adjacent to role-playing games. Game-like activities have been developed within several different subcultures, practices, and disciplines. Indeed, many of our common techniques in RPGs originated elsewhere, such as in theatre exercises. You may wish to hack these existing practices by integrating role-playing game meta-techniques, or integrate exercises from other game-based media to your game.

Examples include:

- **Theater and improv games:** Integrating existing theatre workshops, exercises, techniques, or improv games intended to promote spontaneous creativity (see e.g., Spolin 1986; Johnstone 1987; Foreman and Martini 1996).
- **Group games:** Running existing icebreakers, party games, social deduction, or other games meant for groups.
- **Tabletop games:** Integrating components from other tabletop games, such as card, dice, and board games (Eladhari 2018a, 2018b).
- **Digital RPGs:** Continuing play or augmenting analog role-playing with digital formats, e.g., MMORPGs, MMOs, text-based formats such as play-by-post (for a leisure example, see Zalka 2019), or online larps, sometimes called LAOGs (Reininghaus 2019).

When integrating existing games, carefully consider whether or not the design is cooperative or competitive. A social deduction game in which players are encouraged to deceive one another may be fun and exciting, but may not be the best choice if trying to foster trust among strangers. On the other hand, competitive games are sometimes more motivating than cooperative ones, e.g., in school environments in which individual students want to excel in comparison with others.

iv) Politics-based interventions

You may choose to integrate political activities into your games, or role-play as part of a broader political activity. Examples include:

- **Theatre of the Oppressed / Forum Theatre:** Integrating techniques such as those developed by Augusto Boal (1993, 2002) in order to play out power dynamics and conflicts within a specific social group;
- **Sociodrama:** Integrating techniques from Jacob L. Moreno on therapeutic group work for political purposes (Moreno, J. L. 1946; 37-44; Moreno and Zeleny 1958; Lehto 2021; Pitkänen 2019);
- **Activism:** Using role-play for activist purposes, such as pervasive play in public spaces or specifically designed scenarios to raise awareness on a political issue (Johansson et al. 2026). Example activities include:
 - Protesting (Pöllänen and Arjoranta 2021) and
 - Lobbying (Pettersson, Maria 2018).
- **Diplomacy and peacebuilding:** Using role-playing to practice skills related to peace and conflict:
 - Understanding and/or deescalating conflict situations (Taraghi, Bowman, and Khosropour 2022; Bowman et al. 2024),
 - Negotiating peaceful terms (National Museum of American Diplomacy 2022)
 - Providing humanitarian aid (Smith 2025)
- **Debate and deliberation:** Practicing adopting multiple perspectives; debating (Pettersson, Juhana 2015) by arguing persuasively to convince others; or deliberating on key issues to arrive at a shared understanding (Levine 2018a, 2018b; Bowman et al. in press).

v) Spirituality-based interventions

Designers and organizers can include a number of spirituality-based techniques into role-playing game interventions. For our purposes, spirituality can refer to:

- Having a phenomenological experience of connection with the divine, the universe, nature, or deities, i.e., an expanded, non-ordinary, and/or mystical state of consciousness;
- Philosophies and practices surrounding such states; and
- Philosophies and practices that explore human ethics, meaning, and purpose, e.g., existentialism.

While spirituality is often conflated with religion, for our purposes, religions refers more to social structures and cultural practices reinforcing certain belief systems and behaviors in a top-down fashion rather than a more bottom-up experience of personal connection with the spiritual, e.g., interfacing with the mystical or numinous. Thus, while spirituality is sometimes connected to religious dogma or informed by religious cultural practices, the two should be considered separate for our purposes.

While a full description is beyond the scope of this book, spiritual practices in role-playing games might include the following activities, whether they are considered truly spiritual or fictional or both:

- **Providing spiritual direction** to explore meaning, purpose, and/or ethics through embodied play (Cohen 2023);
- **Mystical journeys**, such as exploring the inner imagery of one's mind through spiritual communion;
- **Spiritual rituals** in groups (Kim, Nuncio, and Wong 2018; Bowman 2023);
- **Storytelling and mythic enactment** (Beltrán 2012; Page 2014);(Brown 2018)
- **Dream analysis**, including precognitive dreams;
- **Working with aspects of the personal or collective unconscious** (Jung 1976; Bowman 2024a), including **shadow work** (Beltrán 2013; Bowman 2025)
- **Communicating with the spirit world or traveling** through it;
- **Aspecting parts of deities or channeling the deity**, whether from existing cultures or invented ones (Jones 2017; Brown et al. 2018; Bowman and Hugaas 2021; Milan 2023);
- **Meditation and mindfulness** practices;
- **Tarot, oracle cards**, and other forms of **divination** (Nøglebæk 2021; Mutsaers 2022).
- **Prayers, invocations, and appeals to divine forces** or the **natural world**;
- **Breathing and movement exercises** based on spiritual philosophies;
- **Sacred sexuality**, eye gazing, and other intimacy practices;
- **Cultivating power-within**, e.g., through manifestation or other psychomagical practices in- and off-game (Cazeneuve 2021);

- **Hypnosis** and other guided states;
- **Invoking aspects of one's character in off-game situations**, e.g., “borrowing” a character's confidence in job interviews.

Importantly, when integrating spiritual practices, your player base may have different beliefs regarding how “real” such practices are, so you should address this with the group, either only inviting individuals who share the same worldview or encouraging respectfulness (see e.g., Bowman 2023).

Furthermore, when including such techniques, facilitators should carefully explain what practice will take place, what kinds of effects it could have, and the origins of such a practice, integrating techniques from other cultures responsibly or avoiding cultural appropriation entirely. Risks associated with such practices should be explained both in-game and off-game when possible. If players ask to integrate such practices through emergent play, we recommend giving them clear guidelines for how to do so responsibly, and possibly vetting the content for appropriateness.

We recommend that organizers signpost spiritual techniques before the game so players are not surprised in a way that disrupts their experience. We also recommend having in-game debriefs after such practices to help the player process them through the lens of the character directly after the experience to avoid disorientation. As role-playing itself can be considered an expanded state of consciousness, adding additional expanded states can have unpredictable or overwhelming impacts. However, such experiences can be profoundly transformative under the right circumstances.

For more on psychomagic and working with beliefs through play, see Chapter 6 of *TRGD*.

b) Types of therapeutic interventions

Role-playing games can augment or include a variety of types of therapeutic modalities and techniques. For example, expressive arts therapy includes many of the media mentioned above, but is conducted as part of a therapeutic practice. Indeed, several therapeutic practices already use forms of role-play, identify parts of the self, or work with narrative as a core component of the processing. While a complete list is beyond the scope of this textbook, below are some key examples.

i) Narrative-based interventions

Some therapeutic approaches focus on the use of narratives, whether real or imagined, as intrinsic to building relations with the client and helping them process their experience. Examples include:

- **Narrative therapy / narrative identity / restorying:** Working with a client's life story in order to identify limiting beliefs and construct more empowering or redemptive narratives (Brown and Augusta-Scott 2007; Diakolambrianou 2021; McAdams 2011; Bowman and Hugaas 2021; Tanenbaum 2022).

- **Geek therapy:** Working on media connected with geek culture within a therapeutic setting, often connected to narrative (Bean, Daniel Jr., and Hays eds. 2020).
- **Superhero therapy:** Using the symbolism of superheroes to help the client make mental health a hero's journey, combining ACT with geek popular culture to (Enfield 2007; Scarlet 2016; Swaby 2021).

ii) Play- and role-based interventions

Other techniques employ embodied play and/or role-playing as part of the process, whether in 1:1 therapy or enacted physically as part of a group process, including:

- **Psychodrama:** Using role-playing techniques developed by J. L. and Zerk Moreno such as role reversal, mirroring, doubling and soliloquy (Cruz et al. 2018)
- **Gestalt therapy:** Integrating role-playing techniques to practice dynamics, such the Empty Chair and Overdog/Underdog (Perls, Hefferline, and Goodman 1951; Naranjo 2000; Mendoza 2020; Hand 2023; Kilmer et al. 2023)
- **Play therapy:** Including play dynamics as central to the process, such as in *sandplay* with children (Axline 1991).
- **Drama therapy:** Embodying narratives and characters relevant to the client's life (Jones 1996; Berg 2016; Diakolambrianou 2021; Diakolambrianou and Bowman 2023; Kilmer et al. 2023)
- **Family Constellations and Internal Family Systems:** Embodying internal or external relational dynamics (Franke 2017; Schwartz and Sweezy 1995; Burns 2014; Devorak 2022; Diakolambrianou and Bowman 2023).
- **Recreational therapy:** Focusing on play as a form of recreation that is inherently therapeutic (Austin and McCormick 2015; Hawkes-Robinson 2016)

For more extensive lists and information about these techniques, see Chapters 2 and 3 of *TRGD*.

c) Types of educational interventions

Finally, many types of educational interventions already exist that likely inform an educator's background that may be compatible with role-playing games. General categories include:

- **Experiential learning:** Experiencing education in an embodied way, i.e., learning-by doing (Kolb 1984).
- **Situated learning:** Engaging in learning experiences within relevant contexts outside of a classroom setting, e.g., practicing skills onsite or in a similar location as where the learner will use it later (Lave and Wenger 1991; Westborg 2024)

More specifically, educational interventions can be:

- **Adventure-based:** Including quests or other forms of adventures as motivating for learning (Gass 1993).
- **Nature-based:** Having relevant learning experiences in the outdoors (Russell 2000).
- **Game-based:** Using gamification or other forms of game-based learning.
- **Drama-based:** Integrating embodied play as part of the learning process, whether highly structured or improvised, e.g., Drama in Education (Way 1998; Heathcote and Bolton 1995; Mochocki 2014);
- **Arts-based:** Integrating visual, performing, or mediated arts in learning (Cox 2016).
- **Digital-based:** Leveraging technology for educational experience, whether online or offline.
- **Emotion-based:** Integrating socio-emotional learning, emphasizing emotions as important to motivation / self-determination, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan and Deci 2017; Algayres 2018).

For examples of educational larp implementation, see Geneuss (2021, 2022).

2.7 Population types

As discussed in Chapter 2 of *TRGD*, role-playing games are used for a variety of populations (see e.g., Kot 2018). We will reiterate them here and encourage you to follow the cited sources for specific information about working with these groups or conducting research.

Role-playing has been applied for people of all ages in the lifespan:

- **Children** (Zayas and Lewis 1986; Enfield 2007; Callina, Colbert, and Gray 2018; Juustila 2019; Bandhosingh 2024)
- **Adolescents** (Kallam 1984; Zayas and Lewis 1986; Enfield 2007; Shanun 2013; Gutierrez 2017; Harris 2018; Katō 2019; Connell, Kilmer, and Kilmer 2020; Davis and Johns 2020; Bagès, Hoareau, and Guerrien 2021; Arenas, Viduani, and Araujo 2022; Kilmer et al. 2023)
- **Young adults** (Shanun 2013)
- **Adults** (Shanun 2013; Brom et al. 2029; Varrette et al. 2022; Slaughter and Orth 2023; Lehto 2024; Tsiaras and Neofotistos 2026)
- **Older adults** (Atanasio 2020)

As role-play can be a powerful way to train skills, RPGs are sometimes used in the following contexts:

- **Elementary students** (Carter 2011)
- **Primary and/or secondary school students** (Schmit, Martins, and Ferreira 2009; Abdul Jabbar and Felicia 2015; Cook, Morgan, and Gremo 2016; Geneuss 2021; Gjedde 2014; Cullinan 2024; Stubbs and Sorensen 2025)
- **Middle schoolers** (Mochocki 2013; Bowman and Standiford 2015; Bagès, Hoareau, and Guerrien 2021; Katō 2019; Fey et al. 2022)
- **Youth in after-school programs** (Callina, Colbert, Gray 2018; Bandhosingh 2024)
- **Youth in summer camps or weekend larps** (Hoge 2013; Fein 2015; Faros 2018; Westborg et al. 2020; Pohjola 2022; Turi and Hartyándi 2023; Chronicle 5 WCVB 2024)
- **College / university students** (McDonald and Kreizenbeck 2012; Wright, Weissglass, and Casey 2020; Mercer, Harris, and Swab 2021; Torner 2021, 2022; Zhang, Xu, and Li 2025)
- **Health practitioners** (Standiford 2014; Riser et al. 2024)
- **Mental health practitioners** (Gutierrez 2017)
- **Camp counselors, trainers, teachers, players, or researchers** (Daniau 2016)
- **Youth workers and volunteer managers** (DiveIn Consortium 2021; Ladišić and Prkosovački 2022)
- **Government employees and politicians** (van Bilsen 2024)
- **Business professionals** (Pouchlá 2013; Branc 2018), including **entrepreneurs** (Swab, Mercer, and Harris 2024)
- **Leaders seeking professional development** (Funk 2021; Jensen 2021; Mercer, Harris, and Swab 2021; Lasley 2024; Hartyándi and van Bilsen 2024), among many other professional contexts.

In addition, role-playing games have been adapted to work with a variety of populations with specific needs, including:

- **LGBTQIA+** (Connell 2023; Rosenblad et al. 2025)
- **ADHD** (Enfield 2007)
- **Autism spectrum** (Fein 2015; Harris 2018; Helbig 2019; Katō 2019; Connell, Kilmer, and Kilmer 2020; Davis and Johns 2020; Harada, Katō, and Fujino 2022; Atherton et al. 2024; Visuri 2024; Rosenblad et al. 2025)
- **Families** (Breen and Woodin 2025)
- **Veterans** (Kilmer et al. 2023; Battles, Curland, and Cruitt 2025)
- **Refugees** (Misje, Nielsen, and Andersen 2014)

- **Forensic clients** (Slaughter and Orth 2023)
- **Occupational difficulties** (Hazlett et al. 2024)
- **Interpersonal difficulties** (Rosselet and Stauffer 2013; Abbott, Stauss, and Burnett 2021)
- **Social anxiety** (Atanasio 2020; Connell, Kilmer, and Kilmer 2020; Abbott, Stauss, and Burnett 2021; Causo and Quinlan 2021; Varrette et al. 2022; Kroplewski, Łoś, and Pawlicki 2025)
- **Generalized anxiety** (Scudder 2018; Atanasio 2020; Abbott, Stauss, and Burnett 2021; Causo and Quinlan 2021; Varrette et al. 2022; Rosenblad et al. 2025)
- **Fear of making mistakes, rumination about the past** (Abbott, Stauss, and Burnett 2021)
- **Isolation** (Abbott, Stauss, and Burnett 2021; Atanasio 2020)
- **Hopelessness and loss of personal meaning** (Atanasio 2020)
- **Loneliness** (Abbott, Stauss, and Burnett 2021; Atanasio 2020)
- **Depression** (Hughes 1988; Atanasio 2020; Abbott, Stauss, and Burnett 2021; Causo and Quinlan 2021; Rosenblad et al. 2025)
- **Suicidal thoughts** (Abbott, Stauss, and Burnett 2021)
- **Nightmares** (Rosenblad et al. 2025)
- **Grief and loss** (Atanasio 2020)
- **Mental health recovery** (Causo and Quinlan 2021)
- **Insomnia** (Causo and Quinlan 2021)
- **Physical disabilities** (Kallam 1984; Atanasio 2020)
- **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)** (Sargent 2014)
- **Bullying** (Connell, Kilmer, and Kilmer 2020; Abbott, Stauss, and Burnett 2021; Bagès, Hoareau, and Guerrien 2021)
- **Abuse** (Enfield 2007; Gutierrez 2017; Atanasio 2020)
- **Trauma** (Sargent 2014; Atanasio 2020; Abbott, Stauss, and Burnett 2021; Causo and Quinlan 2021)
- **Addiction** (Causo and Quinlan 2021; Bartenstein 2022, 2024)
- **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)** (Causo and Quinlan 2021)
- **Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)** (Causo and Quinlan 2021)
- **Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)** (Rosenblad et al. 2025)
- **Antisocial behavior and aggression** (Gutierrez 2017)

2.8 Adapting to needs of the population

Finding ways to adapt for the needs of your target group as a whole, and specific individuals within it, is important. The following sections will discuss general recommendations when assessing your participants' needs and making adjustments accordingly.

Keep in mind that members of your group may have conflicting needs. For example, one person may need low lighting to decrease stimuli, whereas another may have difficulty seeing under such conditions. You should take these needs into account when considering group composition and compatibility, as discussed later in this chapter. Sometimes, compromises are possible, whereas in other situations, the group may become untenable. Similarly, you may have to adapt your game content or implementation plan to the needs of your population.

a) Cognitive load, attention span, developmental stages

When working with transformative games, consider the cognitive needs of your population. These needs will vary depending on the group, e.g., age; neurotype; mental and physical health; and/or differences in ability. In this section, we will focus on factors related to cognitive attention and memory more generally, but we recommend adapting this content based on any relevant differences when working with your target group.

You usually need to convey information before, during, and after a game. For longer games, you may have provided this information before the event, e.g., on your website or Player's Guide. However, since you can't be sure the players have engaged with the information, we recommend mentioning the most important parts in a briefing or workshop before the game to make sure everyone is up to date. If you are running a shorter game and/or do not have the opportunity of informing participants beforehand, then conveying the information at the game is essential and you should plan for enough time.

When planning, you should take into account how the brain processes information. We have three parts of memory: *sensory memory*, *working memory*, and *long-term memory* (Woolfolk 2010). Sensory memory helps sort through all the input (stimuli) with which we are constantly bombarded, such as sights, smells, sounds, etc. Sensory memory helps make sense of all this input and, through perception and attention, decides what will be kept in the working memory for further processing. In working memory, the new information is related to information from long-term memory. Well-established information that has been thoroughly processed becomes a part of the long-term memory and can be recalled when needed by the working memory. Thus, when you deliver new information, it will be processed in participants' working memory.

Cognitive load is the amount of information the working memory can process at any given time. If the cognitive load is too high, the participant will get cognitively overloaded and be unable to retain the information. There are three aspects that affect the degree of cognitive load:

1. How complicated the information is,
2. How much external irrelevant input comes in, and
3. How the information is presented.

Participants can more easily retain information if they recognize it from before and are receiving it in a calm environment where it is presented in a clear way through both visual and auditory means. Conversely, retaining brand new information is more challenging, as is learning in an environment where people are trying to talk to the participant at the same time and/or while the information is presented by someone who reads it quickly out loud from a paper. We recommend practicing any briefings ahead of time so you can more engagingly and effectively convey information.

Our working memory can usually keep about five to nine things at the same time, but only actively process around two to four at the same time (Woolfolk 2010). Our brain does not excel at handling many processes at the same time. Even if the number of things our memory can keep and process is consistent, the degree of cognitive load in any given situation is individual, as it is dependent on factors such as emotional well-being and prior knowledge. For example, if a participant is not used to reading texts about role-playing, then when seeing the acronym “RPG,” they will have to stop and process what the abbreviation means, which takes up slots in their working memory. Alternatively, if they are familiar with the acronym, then they do not need to process it, only retain it in long-term memory, which is less mentally challenging. To use a game example, chess experts do not improve at processing the information and thinking additional steps ahead; they recognize patterns and recall previous plays.

Closely tied to the working memory is the ability to maintain prolonged attention (Wilson and Korn 2007). No universal amount of time exists for how long we can keep attention or focus on something; it is highly individual and depends on things such as how interesting the participant finds the subject, how motivated they are, and how the information is delivered. However, repeating information is helpful for retention, as is connecting the information to something the participant already knows, and asking them to apply the information.

When planning how to convey your information, consider focusing only on crucial information is crucial. What previous knowledge do your players have? Do not waste time slowly reiterating things they already know, but try to attach the new information to previous knowledge.

Let us take safety mechanics as an example. Start by considering which safety mechanisms you need. Try to use as few as possible that still cover the situations that could be relevant to this game (Koljonen 2020). Each mechanic will take up space in

the memory, and if your participants get cognitive overload, they may forget important ones. Make sure to describe the mechanics but also invite players to practice them. When describing them, try to use visual aids such as demonstrations or illustrations. Do not ask participants to read a text containing different information than you are saying aloud, since they can only focus on one type of input at a time.

Similarly, some games invent bespoke words for consent mechanics that fit into the universe of the larp to avoid breaking immersion with meta communication. In the larp *Inside Hamlet*, the word “rotten” means that you like the direction of the play and to escalate, while “pure” means the opposite (Participation Design Agency 2015, 2017, 2018; see Lane 2018). While in principle, these terms can be helpful for immersion, i.e., maintaining sustained attention on playing, when analysing it from a cognitive perspective, the players need to learn a new mechanic for every larp (Fischer 2020). They will have to process the new word when it is used or search their working memory to find it instead of being able to recall something they have learned before, which might also lessen immersion. It might still be a valid design choice, depending on how much other information you have to convey and how much of it is new to the players, but we recommend keeping it simple. For example, if phrases are generic enough that they are used at many games, they can be repurposed for yours, and are more likely to be used by participants who have encountered them before.

b) Constraints on time

As mentioned earlier, when working with specific populations, they may need to follow a specific schedule. For example, when working with a school, the students often have specific starting and ending hours that are not flexible, or they might have a lunch break at a certain time. Another example in business settings that have established coffee breaks and everyone assumes you will stop the game for it. Make sure to check with your population what their schedules are, what is flexible and what is not, so you can adjust beforehand. We also recommend clarifying whether they can drop into your activity late or not. In general, we do not recommend allowing players to join late since they will likely miss key safety information and may disrupt the group dynamic that was established in the beginning.

If time constraints necessitate cutting parts of your game, we recommend reducing gameplay time rather than framing activities. The pre-game workshops are usually necessary to explain the game and create a container that feels safe and therefore needs to be kept. Often, people instead cut time from the debrief since they want the players to play as much as possible, but for any type of transformative game, the debrief is the most important part and should not be cut. Our experience is that cutting the debrief can interrupt the transformational process.

For more information on facilitation, see Chapter 4.

c) Constraints on space

When running a game in a new location, you need to assess both the needs of your game and for the needs of your population. Does your game require multiple rooms? Is this a must, or can you make one large room work by creating discrete sections on the floor using masking tape? If you have a participant showing up in a wheelchair, will they be able to access all parts of the game? What about visual or hearing disabilities? Do participants need to read small text in a space that is designed to be dark and cosy? Is there a lot of background noise in a large open space, making it hard to hear? Consider establishing one easily accessible, calm, and quiet space where people can take a break.

We will discuss locations in more detail in Chapter 3.

2.9 Working with external parties and stakeholders

When working with specific populations or in certain locations, you will likely also need to communicate and coordinate with key stakeholders. In general, you should consider how to meet the needs of your framing design with these stakeholders. Do you need a mental health professional to follow-up with a client? Do you need a teacher to cover certain content before you arrive? Does a camp counselor need to run a debriefing activity in the following week to help cement the knowledge and skills gained? If so, make sure to be transparent and offer support in helping them follow through. Alternatively, if you do not make an effort to connect with stakeholders, you may end up having to answer difficult questions about what you are doing or even face legal ramifications, so onboarding them ahead of time is wise.

These individuals may not know much about role-playing games, so finding ways to contextualize what you are doing within a framework they find relatable is helpful, such as comparing it to theatre, improv, Model United Nations (MUN), or other recognizable activities. We also recommend having ready credible materials to help explain similar activities, such as articles (or even these textbooks).

In this section, we mention some examples of stakeholders you may encounter when working with your target group.

a) Teachers

If you are running a game for a specific class with an assigned teacher, you will likely need to coordinate schedules. Teachers often have a tightly constrained timetable, so you should demonstrate how the activity will be helpful for their students and figure out how to best support what they are already learning. You can also ask the teacher to play a role in the fiction, ideally one with a lower power position than they usually hold.

Teachers have likely spent significantly more time with their students than you and therefore have better insights about their individual needs. Don't hesitate to ask

questions and take their input into account to better understand your players and create a more tailored experience for them whenever possible.

In some cases, the design cannot support major changes, so communicate these constraints ahead of time as well. If your scenario can only take 12 players and cannot be scaled up to a class of 30, it may not be a good fit for their context.

b) School administrators

A few schools in the world use a larp-based pedagogy throughout the year, such as Denmark's Efterskolen Epos (2014) and Østerskov Efterskole (Harder 2007; Hyltoft 2008, 2010, 2012; Gjedde 2013, 2014; BBC 2023). See Van Hauwaert (2025) for practical advice on how to establish such a school.

However, in most cases, you will need to engage with administrators overseeing a school, who may not be RPG-aware at all. Administrators may not have an active role in the game itself or the learning, but they can be quite important for helping with logistics. As examples, they can make sure legal bases are covered in terms of consent forms, make available locations in the school for play, or help to coordinate field trips.

Additionally, administrators are often the decision makers when approving activities, so make sure they clearly understand the benefits of your work. When presenting the opportunity, make the process understandable and clear for them so they can support the needs and requirements of the game more efficiently.

c) Legal guardians

When working with minors or with adult clients who require supervision, you likely need consent from their legal guardians. At minimum, usually the guardians need to sign a consent form informing them of the activity, and the clients likely need to sign an assent form. We recommend establishing a direct line of communication and keeping guardians updated about the activities, especially if the activities will unfold over time and an ongoing relationship is involved, e.g., running a tabletop campaign after school (Bandhoosingh 2024).

Legal guardians are not necessarily familiar with role-playing games, so use accessible language when describing your game and seeking their consent. You may need to dispel myths about role-playing connected to moral panics or pop culture stereotypes. Sometimes, the presence of a legal guardian or caregiver is required for the child's participation, e.g., for accessibility. In these situations, if possible, we recommend including them in the game as a player with a dedicated role rather than having them observe, which can make the experience more seamless for everyone involved.

d) Mental health professionals

You also may need to communicate with a client's therapist, counselor, social worker, coach, or other mental health professional assigned to them. Ideally, you can share your goals for the activity and they can discuss with you important factors to know when working with this client. Briefing them regularly and planning next steps together can help augment the therapeutic process.

Similarly, checking-in with your client throughout the process to make sure they are still comfortable with the direction of play may be appropriate, as may engaging in a co-creation process with your client as described earlier in this chapter.

e) Museum staff and librarians

Museums often have wonderful spaces and evocative surroundings for play. Museum staff are often seeking nonformal educational experiences to host at the site and are especially interested in more interactive forms of engagement. Depending on the content of the game, they may become interested in playing themselves, or at the very least promoting your activity, so connect with them as early as possible in the process. For an example, see *Mantles in the Museum* (Cox and Lewis 2020, 2023; Cox 2025).

Libraries are also often seeking out engaging activities, so make sure to build a relationship with the local librarian. Often, they will be eager to help provide readings or other materials to support the learning.

f) Camp counselors

Summer camps are spaces in which role-playing games are often fairly easy to integrate. Some camps specifically emphasize larp (see e.g., Hoge 2013; Faros 2018), whereas others may have space for role-play activities to be run. Camp counselors are often youth themselves and may be quite excited to help you run games. In addition, having more camp counselors on board means you will have a higher ratio of facilitators to players, which is usually desirable. Counselors could play a role in the fiction, help officiate, or simply monitor the activities.

g) Prison wardens

For clients who are incarcerated, onboarding prison wardens and other staff is imperative. Some prisons allow special classes or activities to take place, offering them as a reward for good behavior. However, prisons often have strict rules that might limit how you can play, e.g., no violence allowed in the fiction, no pencils or dice permitted on the premises. Make sure you understand and follow these rules or you could be putting your clients at risk of punishment.

h) Public servants

In some cases, you may need to negotiate with local or regional authorities to have access to a specific space. As before, make sure you understand the legal requirements, e.g., permits you might need to have.

i) Law enforcement

Similarly, you may need to engage with law enforcement, especially when role-playing in public spaces. Letting the police know ahead of time can sometimes help build trust and provide more leeway to the activities (Minor 2014). You can also clarify any rules with them to make sure you are operating within legal bounds, which is especially important when running events in other countries.

Be especially careful if alcohol or other substances are present at your event, as you will likely be subject to following local laws. You should conduct a risk assessment for your event (Sinking Ship Creations 2020; Losilla 2024) that includes consequences for your team and your participants for engaging in illegal behavior.

j) Management

When running events within an organization or at a specific location such as a hotel, you will likely need to negotiate with management. Within an organization, the management may need to help you coordinate to make sure the members are signed up and are available for the activity. In hotels and similar rented venues, you may need to share the space with people not involved in the larp activity. Make sure you clearly communicate the timetable and spaces for your activity. You should also make clear if you will be wearing costumes or engaging in unusual or concerning behaviors through play. Ideally, you will have some privacy, but in the event that other guests have questions, give the managers some short explanations to share that will hopefully help allay any concerns or satisfy curiosity. In this way, management might help provide a buffer between you and non-larpers who might otherwise disrupt the activity with questions or try to engage with the players.

k) Veterans affairs

When working with veterans, you may need to contact a veterans affairs office or something similar in order to get access to members of the population. The office may be able to help coordinate sign-up and, if running events at a veterans home, give you access to spaces. In some cases, they may also be able to help connect you with mental health resources available, e.g., counselors at the veterans home.

l) Community organizers / activists

If you want to run events within a specific community, we recommend connecting with the organizers who serve as leaders for that group, whether in an official or unofficial capacity. Community leaders can often be passionate allies and can help encourage group members to attend.

Similarly, you may need to coordinate with activists who organize within communities when working with specific topics or target groups. Make sure to come prepared with an explanation of how your activity will help contribute to the overall cause.

m) Religious officials

In some cases, you may be running games within a religious organization or in a church, mosque, synagogue, or temple. For example, in Denmark, larp has been used in confirmation practices for young people as a way to teach ethics in collaboration with the local church. Make sure these officials understand the nature of the content you are playing and find it appropriate for their setting. In some communities, religious people have been taught to mistrust role-playing games and other forms of media (see e.g., Stark 2012; Laycock 2015). Ideally, you can find ways to reassure them your game is not threatening to the values of the religion or norms of the group.

n) Artists and gallery owners

In some cases, you may collaborate with local artists or gallery owners. Such collaborations can be fruitful, especially if you can find a way to streamline your goals with the aesthetic sensibilities of these stakeholders. In this way, both the art and the play can be augmented by one another.

o) NGO workers / charities

You may also choose to work with non-governmental organizations, non-profits, and/or charities formed around a specific cause. Sometimes, these organizations are quite small and low on time and resources, so be aware of those limitations. In other cases, the organization may be quite large and require navigation to find the right stakeholders who can support your activity.

2.10 Group selection and formation

Another important factor is group selection. While the individuals in a given group may be well-suited for the role-playing activities, sometimes the group dynamics between these individuals are strained for various reasons. When possible, you should try to assess not only whether each individual is a good fit, but also whether the group members cohere well together and are compatible. This process is especially important when playing campaigns or other long-running group activities.

In some cases, 1:1 work may be more appropriate, e.g., in therapeutic settings in which players have incompatible diagnoses, or if an individual is not yet ready to work within a group setting. Make sure to also keep in mind any contraindications, for example delusional tendencies. While contraindications do not necessarily rule out participation, they may make the activity more risky for the participant and the rest of the group. For more information on contraindications, see Chapter 2 of *TRGD*. See Chapter 5 of this book for more on vetting procedures and group safety.

2.11 Implementing the framing

As we have explained, one of the most important questions is: How will you frame the game according to your desired transformative impacts and/or learning objectives?

a) Implementing workshops

You often have limited precious workshop time before the game. Carefully consider what workshops you will include and how they will contribute to the desired transformative impacts.

First, consider including only the amount of *briefing* that is needed, meaning the amount of time in which you are delivering information and they are passively receiving. How short can you make any information delivered via speech from facilitators? We recommend getting players in the mode of *doing* as quickly as possible, while still conveying important information to them. For example, if the players need to learn each other's character names, you could do a Name Game workshop, in which all players stand in a circle, say their character's name with a gesture connected to their personality, and everyone then repeats the name and gesture.

We recommend including only workshop activities that relate to one or more of the following ends (Holkar 2015):

- Group formation,
- Any activities you would like them to perform in the game,
- Character building/relationships,
- Developing cultures,
- Physically embodying certain actions,
- Practicing mechanics/techniques, and
- Safety.

Consider how many activities you absolutely need for each of these purposes and avoid overloading the workshops with excessive content. Avoid spending too much time on “warm-up” activities that do not directly relate to the skills needed to play the game or practice key skills. If you have participants perform three improv exercises in a row but fail to give them enough time to discuss their character relations with each other, that is likely not the best use of your time.

b) Implementing debriefing

Debriefing should be considered and prioritized throughout the implementation design process. As mentioned above, if you have to cut some of the run-time of the game for debriefing, that is time well spent. We recommend having a plan for the debrief well in advance, with questions carefully chosen for emotional, intellectual, and/or educational debriefing (see Bowman et al. 2024). Some guiding questions:

- **When will debriefing take place?** Do you debrief only at the end of the game or during Act breaks throughout the run-time?
- **Where will debriefing take place?** Is everyone expected to attend? Is the space easy to find? Are there other activities happening at the same time that might be distracting to the debriefing, such as packing up to leave or attending the afterparty? Do they need access to technology to debrief, e.g., logging on a few days later?
- **How will debriefing take place?** How long will it be? Remember that a long debrief is not necessarily more effective than a well-planned efficient one, at least for the initial round of processing.
- **How structured is the debrief?** Should they follow a clear structure guided by a facilitator in which each person takes turns speaking with no crosstalk? Should the discussion be semistructured, with the facilitator steering the conversation at certain moments? Or should it be unstructured, allowing the participants the option of what to discuss?
- **In what sized group will they debrief?** Groups of 2? 4? 6? 8? Combinations of different sizes depending on the exercise? Does the whole group debrief together? Keep in mind in a structured debrief, you will need to plan for each person to be able to talk, e.g., 4 players with 5 minutes each = 20 minutes max per debrief question.

c) Implementing integration activities

Finally, you should consider how you want players to integrate the experience well before the end of the game and ideally during the implementation design phase. As a reminder, many activities are possible and may be preferable depending on your player base, which we have organized into six overarching categories (Bowman and Hugaas 2019).

Here, we will share with you the recommended integration practices for the larp developed by several of the authors of this book for the Erasmus+ EDGE project, *Lumen* (2025):

“We hope you will consider integrating your experience after the larp, whether with yourself, with others, or both. Here are some possible actions to take this week. We will also send these to you digitally.

- **Creative expression**
 - Write a story about your character journey.
 - Create a piece of art representing the lesson you would like to take away.

- **Intellectual processing**
 - Write a documentation piece or research article about the larp. (We would love to hear about your experience on Nordiclarp.org or the *International Journal of Role-Playing*, for example).
 - Discuss the game design with others.
- **Emotional processing**
 - Debrief again this week. (We would love volunteers willing to run Zoom sessions).
 - Journal about your experience.
- **Interpersonal processing**
 - Plan reunion activities with other players, for example at conferences or conventions, or in local meetups.
 - Discuss the experience with someone not present at the larp.
- **Community building**
 - Plan a new project with other players.
 - Continue to use the Discord as a space for discussing your journey moving forward. (We would love to hear how you use this work and how you process the experience long-term).
- **Returning to Daily Life**
 - Apply skills you learned in your work and daily life.
 - Ground yourself by doing activities that bring you comfort, like sleep, food, social activities with friends, or watching a good show.”

Giving players a range of activities, some of which are social, whereas others are solo, can be supportive of people with different needs. Similarly, providing a mixture of activities can be helpful: some that are more verbal and some more physical and/or non-verbal. You may also choose to have some of these activities take place on site, e.g., having them create a piece of art or writing that represents what they want to take away from the experience (see e.g., Bowman 2023).

d) Implementing participatory framing

In participatory settings in which players co-create the game, invite players to help define the frame so that the purpose, norms, and intended skills reflect their goals. The facilitator should focus on eliciting, synthesizing, and checking understanding rather than prescribing content. Keep briefing time short and move quickly into action. Consider facilitating a short co-framing activity during workshop time. Here is an example:

Ask each participant to write one sentence about what the game is about for them today and what a good outcome would be. Read several aloud, cluster similar ideas, and craft a two-sentence shared statement that names the purpose; the skills or decisions to practice; and one explicit boundary for safety. Keep it visible during play and revisit it at act breaks if needed.

Translate the shared frame into observable cues for play and one simple success criterion. For example, you might track how many proposals come from different voices, or note one rule negotiation that increases inclusion. These cues help players align behavior during the run and give you concrete material for the debrief.

Support broad participation while setting the frame. Rotate who speaks first, invite quieter participants, and record minority views without pressure to conform. If someone prefers to stand aside on part of the frame, document that choice and adjust safety or facilitation so participation remains viable.

Avoid common pitfalls. Over-briefing dilutes agency, so keep instructions lean. Vague aspirations are hard to use in play, so ask what you would see during play if the frame is working. Hidden dissent can surface later as conflict, so normalize quick check-ins and small revisions to the frame during breaks.

2.12 Game activities

As discussed in Chapter 1, whether starting from scratch in your design or scaling up your nano-game, you should carefully consider which activities you are adding to the game, which will impact your implementation plan. What intended transformational impacts and/or learning objectives do these activities have? Are they different from the original game's objectives? If you have multiple impacts in mind, do they align or contradict one another?

For example, you may dream up a super cool poker room embedded within your sci-fi larp about surviving on a spaceship. Perhaps the overall goals of the larp are practicing teamwork against all odds, whereas the poker room is intended to teach bluffing and strategic thinking. Now consider that the characters may end up betting what little resources they have left to try to win at poker. You have inadvertently created a situation in which a cooperative game is now competitive and high-stakes, which could create conflict between the players contrary to your teamwork. On the other hand, you may want to emphasize the difficulties of working together within a community, so the contrast between cooperative and competitive play is then important to your goals. Whatever you decide, be intentional about the activities you include and make sure they are well-motivated.

a) Designing for the six types of immersion

Related to this principle is remaining aware of the different types of immersion incentivized by your design (Bowman 2024b). As discussed above, immersion refers to attention to game-related processes (Lankoski and Järvelä 2012). As discussed in

Chapter 3 of *TRGD* and Chapter 6 of this book, different game content incentivizes specific forms of engagement (see Calleja 2011 for video game examples). In other words, your players have a limited amount of attention to devote within the game. Understanding what sorts of demands certain activities make on players' attention can become quite important. While role-playing can be quite useful in training multiple skills at once, multitasking may prove more difficult for players if the tasks compete with one another for their attention.

Consider the following when deciding whether or not to integrate a task:

- **Immersion into activity:** Does the task require strong focus on engaging in a specific activity repetitively or for a long period of time?
- **Immersion into game:** Does the task require strong focus on tactics, rules, strategy, achievements, or other game-related factors?
- **Immersion into environment:** Does the task focus on simulating a realistic experience: physically, mentally, or both?
- **Immersion into narrative:** Does the task focus on aspects of story or plot that are central to engagement?
- **Immersion into character:** Does the task emphasize strong identification with the character's thoughts and feelings in the moment?
- **Immersion into community:** Does the task focus on in-game activities related to social dynamics and roles within a community?

In the previous example, the teambuilding activities may have been most closely tied to immersion into the community, or related to immersion into the narrative. However, introducing the poker game incentivized immersion into an engaging activity, one that is also a game within a game. You now have four types of immersion competing with one another for character attention.

On the other hand, if the goal is for the spaceship to feel realistic, then having social activities such as poker outside of their work shift might help with immersion into the environment, or increase feelings of community. Experiencing the rising tension of gambling might help the player immerse more deeply into their character. So, it also depends on the inclinations of the player and what parts of the activity they find engaging.

Remember that you can onboard your participants during your framing activities and indicate how you would like them to play, e.g., "In the poker room, try to focus on the shared camaraderie you feel when engaging in social activities on the ship rather than the competitive elements." You could also put time limits around specific activities to make sure they do not monopolize player attention, e.g., "Poker games will only be 30 minutes of game time, as you will be needed on the bridge for teambuilding exercises."

b) Designing for group size and specific interactions

Thinking through these elements will help mitigate the risks presented by unclear design, which can lead to players directing their attention away from the desired activities. On the other hand, overdesign can lead to incoherent goals or too many types of stimuli demanding the player's attention at once.

Another thing to consider is how many players can and should be included in an activity. If you want to incentivize larger group scenes, consider including activities that require some form of participation from several people, e.g., voting, deliberating, speeches, eating together, partying, or attending a performance or class. If you want to incentivize one-on-one or small group interpersonal scenes, you may want to include structured activities along these lines, e.g., therapy sessions, tutoring, mentoring, or even elements that incentivize romance or intimacy, e.g., everyone should find a date for the ball before Saturday night. Other kinds of activities may be highly engaging, but do not incentivize direct interaction between the player-characters, e.g., scouting, crafting, fighting monsters, meditation, having psychic or magical encounters, or interacting with NPCs, animals, or other external characters.

c) Designing for metareflective moments

Metareflection can be quite helpful when designing for transformative impacts (Levin 2020, 2023). Metareflection occurs when the player has a moment of pause during the runtime and is able to process the experience. These moments may happen organically, for example if a character is walking alone in the woods and the player's thoughts become more dominant. They can also be designed and integrated into the game. For example, in the larp *Just a Little Lovin'* (2011-; Groth, Grasmø, and Edland 2021), at midnight, all characters are expected to drink the Green Drink in a ceremony. The Green Drink is a meta-technique in the larp that encourages players to reflect upon their game so far and steer toward where they would like it to go next. Metareflection can also occur during pauses for calibration with other players or Act Breaks, especially if a debriefing component is present. Finally, metareflection can be fostered in workshops (Hernø 2026).

d) Designing specific scenes, quests, or modules

Sometimes, a game will include a specific scene, quest, or module (sometimes called a *mod*). This activity may be open to all characters or geared toward a certain few characters. Narratively speaking, sometimes these scenes are tied to *plot*, which some players seek as a sort of currency or status in the game. In other words, consider who has access to these scenes, why, and who might feel excluded if they are not invited or permitted to join.

When designing these scenes, consider the following questions:

- Do the scenes build on one another in terms of knowledge or experience gained, i.e., are they sequential? Or are they unrelated, i.e., episodic?
- How much commitment do they require compared to other important game activities?
- Do the scenes relate to your transformational goals? How?
- Do the scenes require specific subject matter knowledge or skill training essential for your goals? If so, how will you scaffold this information with preparatory activities before and after?
- Are the scenes mandatory or optional? If optional, are there other activities players can experience that will aim for similar transformational goals?
- What concerns should you consider and communicate in terms of accessibility? Does the scene require a certain degree of physical ability? Does the terrain where the scene will take place hold any risks?

2.13 Processing

In general, it can seem like the understanding of the importance of providing players with spaces to process their game experience is gaining traction across most larp traditions. Yet, it is important to understand that different role-playing game groups will have their own cultures and norms around how or even whether at all designers should create such spaces for players. If you are running a large international larp or facilitating your game at a tabletop RPG convention, understanding these differences becomes even more important, as you might have a player base with varying ideas of what is needed and even acceptable.

When talking about processing, we make the distinction between off-game processing and in-game processing. In short, by off-game processing we mean the reflection that takes place when the players are out-of-character, and by in-game processing we mean reflection that occurs when they are in-character.

a) Off-game preparation and processing

i) Establishing norms around processing

Since players from different scenes might have different ideas about the need for processing, take the time to establish how reflection will work in your game.

While pre-game workshops are important to establish shared norms among the players, you can also seed the importance of reflection earlier: in game design documents; texts and documents handed out to players; website material; and social media. It is important to note that even if you actively establish norms in these different channels, the only way you can make sure that every player has been exposed to your game's norms is in the onsite pre-game workshops.

The following recommendations offer structures that support processing for different types of games.

ii) Transformative leisure games

If you are running a leisure game, consider the following as a minimum:

- Pre-game materials that explain the norms at the event with a high degree of specificity.
- Presence in social media that explains and reinforces the provided information.
- Pre-game workshops where the relevant information is explained and rehearsed.
- A dedicated safety lead or safety team available at the game and after.
- A short and mandatory structured debrief that includes processing suggestions.

Note, that this list might change if you wish to run a leisure game with heavy and/or emotionally activating themes. In this case, you might want to add some items from these additional lists.

iii) Therapeutic games

If you are running a Therapeutic game, consider adding the following to the Transformative Leisure list:

- A process of player selection and casting that is an integrated part of the overall design.
- A dedicated safety lead or safety team available before, during, and after the game.
- A mental health professional that is available to do 1:1 counseling.
- One or more mental health professionals that can run group therapy sessions.
- A mandatory structured debrief that includes processing both in the present and as part of integration processes after the game.

iv) Educational games

If you are running a Educational game, consider adding the following to the Transformative Leisure list:

- Pre-game lectures covering the educational content
- Post-game lectures covering the educational content
- A mandatory structured debrief that includes processing both in the present and as part of integration processes after the game.
- Homework covering the educational content, connected to the structured debrief.

b) In-game processing

Sometimes, you can engage in processing within the game through the lens of the character. Since the character and player experience are not identical, the character lens may provide unique and valuable insights. The fiction may afford alibi to discuss topics that otherwise might feel too vulnerable for the player to share. In-game processing can also lead to character growth, which in turn can then be reflected upon and integrated off-game.

For example, when running a ritual or special activity in-game, you can apply the same framing logic as you do outside of the game: having a workshop to guide the characters into the experience and having an in-game debrief. They will be experiencing multiple layers of identity, e.g., the player, the character, and the character playing a role in the ritual. Therefore, having a clear way to guide them in and out of the experience can be less jarring and more beneficial for staying immersed in the fiction. Furthermore, running characters through multiple intense rituals back to back without in-game processing time might lead to emotional or cognitive overload. Any learning you expect to occur may get lost without in-game debriefs.

You may also choose to integrate facilitators who play a special role in the game that help characters in processing their experiences, e.g., school counselors in *New World Magischola* (Bowman et al. 2017), or similar support roles. Ideally, these facilitators are also part of the safety team. Since these characters are embedded, they tend to have a much stronger idea of what is happening in the fiction and may have even been present for the event the character is processing. Make sure you are clear with your players about what kinds of support you are offering off-game versus in-game, i.e., if your in-game support staff are not actually counselors in real life, but are playing one in the game. Try to avoid these characters becoming too involved in the plot of the game or taking sides with certain factions, as that might distract them from their support duties or confuse players as to their intended role on staff.

Ideally, you will also always have an off-game safety staff member available at all times, especially in larger larp settings. This principle is also helpful in therapeutic tabletop groups, e.g., having one facilitator focused solely on emotional processing. See Chapter 4 on facilitation and Chapter 5 on safety for more information.

c) Designing experience based on reflection models

In some cases, you may want to use an existing reflection model as the basis for your framing activities, e.g., Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (Gibbs 1988), Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb 1984). Keep in mind that the game itself is not likely to provide enough time for players to experience all of these steps. Consider what other types of framing might be appropriate and how long they will take. For example, should you organize another debrief in a week? Six months?

Remember you can tailor your questions to mirror the kinds of reflection you are inviting, e.g., referring to the Reflector's Toolkit (University of Edinburgh 2024). See Chapter 3 of *TRGD* for more information.

2.14 Assessment

In many cases, assessment might be desirable or even required when running role-playing games in applied settings (Westborg 2023a). For example, you may wish to know how effective your game was at helping players meet specific goals. You have options for assessment in this case. *Formative assessment* involves checking in during the learning process and offering feedback on the individual or group development. *Summative assessment* evaluates how successful the individual or group ultimately was at the end of the activity (Whitton 2014).

Formative assessment can be quite helpful at specific checkpoints during the role-playing activity and sometimes can even be delivered through the game itself, e.g., through a facilitator in-character, or through a feedback mechanism within the game, such as success or failure at a task. These check-in points can provide powerful learning moments for players moving forward, helping them build confidence to complete difficult tasks later in the game or indicating areas of improvement. For example, if a leader character has to deliver a persuasive speech at the climax of a larp, having the character practice the speech and receive accurate feedback from facilitators in the role of in-game advisors can help scaffold the learning process.

While it may be tempting to tie the activities in the game to summative assessment like a grade, e.g., how well did the player perform at a specific task, such practices run the risk of making the learning activity too high stakes for playful engagement. Ideally, players will feel safe enough to try something challenging and fail, or to brainstorm creative, out-of-the-box solutions to a problem, which they may be less likely to do if they are being graded. Instead, you can assess their progress through reflective exercises such as journals. Ideally, they will not be graded on the content of their work, but rather the completeness of the task, e.g., whether or not they answered all the questions on the prompt. Alternatively, players can discuss assessment questions together during the debrief, e.g., asking for feedback on their characters' actions or their demonstrated skill level within the game.

We discuss assessment during the game in more depth in Chapter 4.

2.15 Summary

This chapter has offered some brief strategies for implementing transformative role-playing games in applied settings and for specific populations. In the next chapter, we will transition to discussing considerations around logistics and production more generally.

References

- Abbott, Matthew S., Kimberly A. Stauss, and Allen F. Burnett. 2021. "Table-top Role-playing Games as a Therapeutic Intervention with Adults to Increase Social Connectedness." *Social Work with Groups* 45, no. 1 (16-21).
- Abdul Jabbar, Azita Iliya, and Patrick Felicia. 2015. "Gameplay Engagement and Learning in Game-Based Learning: A Systematic Review." *Review of Educational Research* 20, no. 40. doi: 10.3102.
- Adams, Aubrie S. 2013. "Needs Met Through Role-Playing Games: A Fantasy Theme Analysis of Dungeons & Dragons." *Kaleidoscope: A Graduate Journal of Qualitative Communication Research* 12, no. 6: 69-86.
- Albom, Sarah. 2021. "The Killing Roll: The Prevalence of Violence in Dungeons & Dragons." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 11: 6-24.
- Algayres, Muriel Gaelle. 2018. "A Study of Active Learning in Educational Roleplaying Games and Students' Motivation." In *Proceedings from Teaching for Active Learning: TAL2018*, edited by Christopher Kjær, Donna Hurford, and Lotte Dyhrberg O'Neill, 24-29. Denmark: Syddansk University.
- Arenas, Daniel Luccas, Anna Viduani, and Renata Brasil Araujo. 2022. "Therapeutic Use of Role-Playing Game (RPG) in Mental Health: A Scoping Review." *Simulation & Gaming* (March 2022).
- Atanasio, Joseph F. 2020. "Why Older Adventurers Can Beat a Lich: How Dungeons & Dragons Empowers Older Adults." In *Integrating Geek Culture into Therapeutic Practice: The Clinician's Guide to Geek Therapy*, edited by Anthony M. Bean, Emory S. Daniel Jr., Sarah A. Hays, 109-125. Fort Worth, TX, USA: Leyline Publishing.
- Atherton, Gray, Rhys Hathaway, Ingela Visuri, and Liam Cross. 2024. "A Critical Hit: Dungeons and Dragons as a Buff for Autistic People." *Autism* (August 21): 13623613241275260.
- Austin, David R., and Bryan P. McCormick. 2015. *Recreational Therapy*. Sagamore.
- Axline, Virginia M. 1991. *Play Therapy*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.
- Axner, Theo, and Susanne Vejdemo. 2016. "Design Strategies for Discussion-Heavy Larps." In *Larp Realia: Analysis, Design, and Discussions of Nordic Larp*, edited by Jukka Särkijärvi, Mika Lopenen, and Kaisa Kangas, 58-63. Helsinki: Ropecon ry.
- Bagès, Céline, Natacha Hoareau, and Alain Guerrien. 2021. "Play to Reduce Bullying! Role-Playing Games Are a Useful Tool for Therapists and Teachers." *Journal of Research in Childhood Education* 35, no. 4: 631-641. DOI: 10.1080/02568543.2020.1810834
- Baker, Ian S., Ian J. Turner, and Yasuhiro Kotera. 2022. "Role-play Games (RPGs) for Mental Health (Why Not?): Roll for Initiative." *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction* 11: 1-9.
- Baker, Marissa. 2022. "An Analysis of the Literature Surrounding the Intersection of Role-Playing Games, Race, and Identity." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 12: 22-39.
- Baird, Josephine, and Sarah Lynne Bowman. 2022. "The Transformative Potential of Immersive Experiences Within Role-playing Communities." *Revista de Estudos Universitário* 48: 1-48.
- Bandhosingh, Angie. 2024. "Roleplaying with Kids: Creating Transformative Experiences for Children Under 12 - Angie Bandhosingh." Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube, February 23.
- Bartenstein, Lennart. 2022. "Larp in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: Making Larp a Standard Method." Nordiclarp.org, April 22.
- Bartenstein, Lennart. 2024. "Live Action Role Playing (Larp) in Cognitive Behavioral Psychotherapy: A Case Study." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 15 (June): 92-126. [Link here](#).
- Battles, Allison R., Robert A. Curland, and Patrick J. Cruitt. 2025. "A Pilot Evaluation of a Therapeutically Applied Tabletop Role Playing Game Group Therapy Among Veterans." *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy* 75 (3): 443-66.
- BBC. 2023. "Back to School: Supporting Neuro-divergent Students through LARP." The Documentary Podcast: Back to School. BBC, August 23.

- Bean, Anthony, Emory S. Daniel Jr., Sarah A. Hays, eds. 2020. *Integrating Geek Culture Into Therapeutic Practice: The Clinician's Guide To Geek Therapy*. Leyline Publishing, 2020.
- Beltrán, Whitney "Strix." 2012. "Yearning for the Hero Within: Live Action Role-Playing as Engagement with Mythical Archetypes." In *Wyrd Con Companion Book 2012*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman and Aaron Vanek, 89-96. Los Angeles, CA: Wyrd Con.
- Beltrán, Whitney "Strix." 2013. "Shadow Work: A Jungian Perspective on the Underside of Live Action Role-Play in the United States." In *Wyrd Con Companion Book 2013*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman and Aaron Vanek, 94-101. Los Angeles, CA: Wyrd Con. [Link here](#).
- Berg, Chris. 2016. "Dungeons of the Mind: Tabletop RPGs and Social Therapy." Kill Screen, October 25.
- Bjögvinsson, Erling, Pelle Ehn, and Per-Anders Hillgren. 2012. *Design Things and Design Thinking: Contemporary Participatory Design Challenges*. *Design Issues* 28, no. 3: 101-116. [Link here](#).
- Blancarte, Tom. 2025. "Aesthetic Conflict in the Musical Role-Playing Game Runic Soundscapes -- Tom Blancarte." Paper presented at the Transformative Play Initiative Seminar 2025. Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube, November 26. [Link here](#).
- Bloom, Benjamin S., et al. 1956. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*. Handbook 1: Cognitive Domain. New York: David McKay.
- Boal, Augusto. 1993. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. English Ed. Trans. Charles A. McBride.
- Boal, Augusto. 2002. *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. 2nd ed. Routledge.
- Bogost, Ian. 2007. *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2010. *The Functions of Role-playing Games: How Participants Create Community, Solve Problems, and Explore Identity*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2014. "Educational Live Action Role-playing Games: A Secondary Literature Review." In *Wyrd Con Companion Book 2014*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman, 112-131. Los Angeles, CA: Wyrd Con.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2018. "The Larp Domino Effect." In *Shuffling the Deck: The Knutpunkt 2018 Color Printed Companion*, edited by Annika Waern and Johannes Axner, 161-170. Pittsburgh, PA: Carnegie Mellon University: ETC Press.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2023. "The Epiphany Experiment: Role-playing for Personal Transformation." In *Fictional Practices of Spirituality I: Interactive Media*, edited by Felix Schniz and Leonardo Marcato, 23-52. Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript Verlag.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2024a. "Finding the Self in Role-playing Games: Weaving Myth, Narrative, and Identity." *Media Practice and Education* (March 2).
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2024b. "Immersion and Shared Imagination in Role-Playing Games." In *The Routledge Handbook of Role-playing Game Studies*, edited by José P. Zagal and Sebastian Deterding, 393-408. London: Routledge.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne. 2025. "Games of Personal Horror: Shadow Work and Role-playing Experiences." In *Monstrosity in Games and Play: A Multidisciplinary Examination of the Monstrous in Contemporary Cultures*, edited by Sarah Stang, Mikko Meriläinen, Joleen Blom, and Lobna Hassan. Amsterdam University Press.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne, and Andhe Standiford. 2015. "Educational Larp in the Middle School Classroom: A Mixed Method Case Study." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 5: 4-25.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne, Elektra Diakolambrianou, Kjell Hedgard Hugaas, and Josefin Westborg. 2024. "Chapter 2: Transformative Role-playing Games: Types, Purposes, and Features" In *Transformative Role-playing Game Design*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman, Elektra Diakolambrianou, and Simon Brind. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Transformative Play Research 1. Uppsala University Publications. [Link here](#).

- Bowman, Sarah Lynne, Elektra Diakolambrianou, and Simon Brind, eds. 2024. *Transformative Role-playing Game Design*. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Transformative Play Research 1. Uppsala University Publications.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne, and Kjell Hedgard Hugaas. 2019. "Transformative Role-play: Design, Implementation, and Integration." Nordiclarp.org, December 10.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne, and Kjell Hedgard Hugaas. 2021. "Magic is Real: How Role-playing Can Transform Our Identities, Our Communities, and Our Lives." In *Book of Magic: Vibrant Fragments of Larp Practices*, edited by Kari Kvittingen Djukastein, Marcus Irgens, Nadja Lipsyc, and Lars Kristian Løveng Sunde, 52-74. Oslo, Norway: Knutepunkt.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne, Maury Brown, Brodie Atwater, and Alex Rowland. 2017. "Larp Counselors: An Additional Safety Net." Nordiclarp.org, August 7.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne, PerOla Öberg, Karin Johansson, and Annika Waern. 2026. "Mapping the Design Terrain between Live Action Role-playing Games and Deliberative Events for Democratic Skill Development." In *Education and Analog Role-Playing Games and: Theory and Pedagogy*, edited by Susan Haarman. CRC Press.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne, Shirin Khosropour, Philipp Freyer, Carole Fuller, Kjell Hedgard Hugaas, Josefin Westborg, and Alexandra Schreiber. 2024. "Spreading Conflict Transformation through Critical Virtual Exchange." Presentation at Day 3: 2024 National Community College Peacebuilding Seminar. Forage Center. YouTube, November 24. (00:06:34-01:15:35).
- Branc, Blaž, et al. 2018. In *Imagine this: The Transformative Power of Edu-Larp in Corporate Training and Assessment*, edited by Michał Mochocki. Rollespilsakademiet.
- Breen, Lorna H., and Erica Woodin. 2025. "Making Believe, Together: A Pilot Study of the Feasibility and Potential Therapeutic Utility of a Family Tabletop Role-playing Game." *International Journal of Play Therapy* 34, no. 1: 37-50. [Link here](#).
- Brind, Simon. 2022. "Combat Narratology - Strategies for the Resolution of Narrative Crisis in Participatory Fiction." Ph.D. thesis, University of the West of England. [Link here](#).
- Brom, Cyril, Viktor Dobrovolný, Filip Děchtěrenko, Tereza Stárková, and Edita Bromová. 2019. "It's Better to Enjoy Learning than Playing: Motivational Effects of an Educational Live Action Role-playing Game." *Frontline Learning Research* 7, no. 3: 64-90.
- Brown, Catrina and Tod Augusta-Scott. 2007. *Narrative Therapy: Making Meaning, Making Lives*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Brown, Maury. 2018. "Post-Play Activities for Larp: Methods and Challenges." *Analog Game Studies* V, no. II (June 2).
- Brown, Maury, and Nina Teerilahti. 2024. "Flagging is Flawed." Nordiclarp.org, May 8.
- Brown, Maury, Sarah Lynne Bowman, Quinn D, Kat Jones and Orli Nativ. 2018. "Immerton: A Society of Women." In *Shuffling the Deck: The Knutpunkt 2018 Color Printed Companion*, edited by Annika Waern and Johannes Axner, 41-52. ETC Press.
- Budin, Nat. 2010. "Creating Passionate Players: Building an Audience for Your LARP Group." In *Journeys to Another World: Companion to the 2010 Larp Summit at WyrdCon*, edited by Amber Eager, 25-27. Wyrd Con.
- Burns, Dylan. 2014. "The Therapy Game: Nordic Larp, Psychotherapy, and Player Safety." In *The Wyrd Con Companion Book 2014*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman, 28-41. Los Angeles, CA: Wyrd Con.
- Bushyager, Misha, Lizzie Stark, and Anna Westerling, eds. 2017. *#Feminism: A Nano-Game Anthology*. Pelgrane Press, Ltd.
- Bushyager, Misha, Lizzie Stark, and Anna Westerling, eds. 2017. *#Feminism: A Nano-Game Anthology -- Additional Games*. Pelgrane Press, Ltd.
- Calleja, Gordon. 2011. *In-game: From Immersion to Incorporation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- Callina, Krysten, Evan Colbert, and Peter Gray. 2018. "The Educational Micro-Larp." Paper presented at the *Role-playing and Simulation in Education Conference, Boston, MA, 2018*. Living Games Conference. YouTube, August 17.
- Carter, Alexandra. 2011. "Using Dungeons and Dragons to Integrate Curricula in an Elementary Classroom." In *Serious Games and Edutainment Applications*, edited by Minhua Ma, Andreas Oikonomou, and Lakhmi C. Jain, 329-346. Springer.
- Causo, Francesco, and Elly Quinlan. 2021. "Defeating Dragons and Demons: Consumers' Perspectives on Mental Health Recovery in Role-playing games." *Australian Psychologist* (March 12).
- Cazeneuve, Axiel. 2021. "Larp as Magical Practice: Finding the Power-From-Within." Nordiclarp.org, Aug. 13.
- Chronicle 5 WCVB. 2024. "In Charlton, Mass., A LARP Program Hosts Children Hungry for Adventure." YouTube, September 11. [Link here](#).
- Chung, Tsui-shan. 2013. "Table-top Role Playing Game and Creativity." *Thinking Skills and Creativity* 8: 56-71.
- Cohen, Menachem. 2023. "Play to Find Yourself: Using Tabletop Role-Playing Games in Spiritual Direction." In *Fictional Practices of Spirituality I: Interactive Media*, edited by Felix Schnitz and Leonardo Marcato, 23-52. Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript Verlag.
- Connell, Megan. 2023. *Tabletop Role-Playing Therapy: A Guide for the Clinician Game Master*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Connell, Megan, Elizabeth D. Kilmer, and Jared N. Kilmer. 2020. "Tabletop Role Playing Games in Therapy." In *Integrating Geek Culture into Therapeutic Practice: The Clinician's Guide to Geek Therapy*, edited by Anthony M. Bean, Emory S. Daniel Jr., Sarah A. Hays. Fort Worth, TX, USA: Leyline Publishing.
- Cook, Mike P., Ryan Morgan, and Matthew Gremo. 2016. "Implementing Tabletop Gaming in the English Classroom: Promoting Literacy through Interactive Gameplay." *Minnesota English Journal*.
- Cox, Jason. 2016. "Arts-Based Inquiry with Art Educators through American Freeform." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 6: 27-31.
- Cox, Jason. 2025. "Playing with / for / as Art Games as Arts Based Research for Pre-Service Educators -- Jason Cox." Transformative Play Initiative, May 9.
- Cox, Jason, and Lillian Lewis. 2023. "Whose Art Museum?: Immersive Gaming as Irruption." *The Journal of Social Theory in Art Education* 42.
- Cruz, Anna, Celia Sales, Paula Alves and Gabriela Moita. 2018. "The Core Techniques of Morenian Psychodrama: A Systematic Review of Literature." *Frontiers in Psychology* 9: 1263.
- Cullinan, Maryanne. 2024. "Surveying the Perspectives of Middle and High School Educators Who Use Role-Playing Games as Pedagogy." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 15 (June): 127-41. [Link here](#).
- Cullinan, Maryanne, and Jennifer Genova. 2023. "Gaming the Systems: A Component Analysis Framework for the Classroom Use of RPGs." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 13: 7-17.
- Diakolambrianou, Elektra. 2021. "The Psychotherapeutic Magic of Larp." In *Book of Magic: Vibrant Fragments of Larp Practices*, edited by Kari Kvittingen Djukastein, Marcus Irgens, Nadja Lipsyc, and Lars Kristian Løveng Sunde, 95-113. Oslo, Norway: Knutepunkt.
- Diakolambrianou, Elektra, and Sarah Lynne Bowman. 2023. "Dual Consciousness: What Psychology and Counselling Theories Can Teach and Learn Regarding Identity and the Role-Playing Game Experience." *Journal of Roleplaying Studies and STEAM* 2, no. 2: 5-37.
- Daniau, Stéphane. 2016. "The Transformative Potential of Role-playing Games: From Play Skills to Human Skills." *Simulation & Gaming* 47, no. 4: 423-444.
- Dashiell, Steven L. 2020. "Hooligans at theTable: The Concept of Male Preserves in Tabletop Role-playing Games." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 10: 26-39.
- Dashiell, Steven L. 2022. "Discussions of Fantasy Characters and Demonstrations of a Defensive Hybridity in Gamer Masculinity." *The Journal of Men's Studies* (March 31).

- Dashiell, Steven. 2026. "Hack, Slash, Heal, Repeat: Theorizing the Concept of the Murderhobo in Dungeons & Dragons." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 18 (April): 51-61. [Link here](#).
- Davis, Adam, and Adam Johns. 2020. "Dungeons, Dragons, and Social Development." In *Integrating Geek Culture into Therapeutic Practice: The Clinician's Guide to Geek Therapy*, edited by Anthony M. Bean, Emory S. Daniel Jr., Sarah A. Hays, 95-107. Fort Worth, TX, USA: Leyline Publishing.
- Deterding, Sebastian. 2018. "Alibis for Adult Play: A Goffmanian Account of Escaping Embarrassment in Adult Play." *Games and Culture* 13, no. 3: 260-279.
- Devorak, Mary. 2022. "Using RPGs with Family Systems." TAGGS: Therapeutic and Applied Geek and Gaming Summit, April 14.
- Dive In Consortium. 2021. *DIVE IN - Dip Beyond Your Reality: The Manual for Educators and Youth Workers on EduLARP Methodology*. Dive In.
- Dyson, Scott Benjamin, et al. 2016. "The Effect of Tabletop Role-playing Games on the Creative Potential and Emotional Creativity of Taiwanese College Students." *Thinking Skills and Creativity* 19 (March): 88-96.
- Eddy, Samantha. 2020. "More than a Game: Racecraft and the Adaptation of 'Race' in Live Action Role Play." *Humanities* 9, no. 4: 124.
- Eddy, Zoë Antoinette. 2020. "Playing at the Margins: Colonizing Fictions in New England Larp." *Humanities* 9, no. 4: 143.
- Eddy, Zoë Antoinette. 2024. "(Role)playing Soldier: LARP, Simulated Combat, and Gender at War." *Culture, Theory and Critique*: 1-29. [Link here](#).
- Eladhari, Mirjam Palosaari. 2018a. "Bleed-in, Bleed-out: A Design Case in Board Game Therapy." In DiGRA '18 - Proceedings of the 2018 DiGRA International Conference: The Game is the Message (July 2018).
- Eladhari, Mirjam Palosaari. 2018b. "SGC18: Mirjam Palosaari Eladhari - Bleed In, Bleed Out: A Design Case in Board Game Therapy." Sweden Game Arena. YouTube, Nov 16, 2018.
- Enfield, George. 2007. "Becoming the Hero: The Use of Role-playing Games in Psychotherapy." In *Using Superheroes in Counseling and Play Therapy*, edited by L.C. Rubin, 227-241. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Faros, Lux. 2018. "Immersive Narratives, Personas, and Multi-intelligence Scaffolding." Paper presented at the *Role-playing and Simulation in Education Conference, Boston, MA, 2018*. Living Games Conference. YouTube, August 17.
- Fein, Elizabeth. 2015. "Making Meaningful Worlds: Role-playing Subcultures and the Autism Spectrum." *Culture, Medicine, Psychiatry* 39, no. 2: 299-321.
- Fey, James, Ella Dagan, Elena Márquez Segura, and Katherine Isbister. 2022. "Anywear Academy: A Larp-based Camp to Inspire Computational Interest in Middle School Girls." In *Designing Interactive Systems Conference (DIS '22), June 13-17, 2022, Virtual Event, Australia*. ACM, New York, NY, USA.
- Fischer, Olivia. 2022. "The Lion, the Witch and the Workshop - Olivia Fischer." Nordic Larp Talks. YouTube, September 11.
- Fischer, Olivia. 2025. "Let's Do It Together! Why Participatory Design and Co-Creation are a Promising Approach for Designing an Edularp." Paper presented at the Transformative Play Initiative Seminar 2025: Games, Conflict, and Education, Visby, Sweden, June 12, 2025.
- Foreman, Kathleen and Clem Martini. 1996. *Something Like a Drug: An Unauthorized Oral History of Theatresports*. Players Press.
- Franke, Ursula. 2017. *The River Never Looks Back: Historical and Practical Foundations of Bert Hellinger's Family Constellations*. Carl-Auer Verlag.
- Funk, Samantha. 2021. "Examining The Implications of Tabletop Roleplaying Games For Use In Leadership Development: An Integrative Review." Master's thesis, University of Southern Maine.
- Garcia, Antero. 2016. "Teacher as Dungeon Master: Connected Learning, Democratic Classrooms, and Rolling for Initiative." In *The Role-Playing Society: Essays on the Cultural Influence of RPGs*, edited by Andrew Byers and Francesco Crocco. McFarland.

- Garcia, Antero. 2017. "Privilege, Power, and Dungeons & Dragons: How Systems Shape Racial and Gender Identities in Tabletop Role-Playing Games." *Mind, Culture, and Identity* 24, no. 3 (2017).
- Gass, Michael. 1993. *Adventure in Therapy: Therapeutic Applications of Adventure Programming in Mental Health Settings*. Boulder, CO: Association for Experiential Education, 1993.
- Geneuss, Katrin. 2021. "The Use of the Role-playing Technique STARS in Formal Didactic Contexts." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 11: 114-131.
- Gibbs, Graham. 1988. *Learning by Doing: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods*. Further Education Unit. Oxford Polytechnic: Oxford.
- Gibson, James J. 2014. *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. 1st Edition. Psychology Press.
- Gjedde, Lisa. 2013. "Role Game Playing as a Platform for Creative and Collaborative Learning." In *Proceedings of the 7th European Conference on Games-Based Learning Volume 1*, edited by Paula Escudeiro and Carlos Vaz de Carvalho. Reading, UK: Academic Conferences and Publishing International Limited. 190-198.
- Golden Cobra Challenge. 2014-. Goldencobra.org
- Groth, Anna Emilie, Hanne "Hank" Grasmø, and Tor Kjetil Edland. 2021. *Just a Little Lovin': The Larp Script*. Drøbak.
- Gutierrez, Raul. 2017. "Therapy & Dragons: A look into the Possible Applications of the Possible Applications of Table Top Role Playing Games in Therapy with Adolescents." *Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations* 527: 1-39. [Link here](#).
- Gygax, Gary, and Dave Arneson. 1974. *Dungeons & Dragons*. TSR, Inc.
- Haarman, Susan. 2023. *Dungeons & Dragons & Dewey: Toward a Ludic Pedagogy of Democratic Civic Life Through the Philosophy of John Dewey and Tabletop Role-Playing Games*. PhD. diss., Loyola University Chicago.
- Hand, Daniel. 2023. *Role-Playing Games in Psychotherapy: A Practitioner's Guide*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Harada, Yūsuke, Kōhei Katō, and Hiroshi Fujino. 2022. "Jihei supekutoramu-shō-ji no TRPG katsudō ni okeru kaiwa no sokushin to gēmumasutā no yakuwari [Facilitating Conversation and the Role of the Game Master in TRPG Activities for Children on the Autism Spectrum]." *Japanese Journal of Analog Role-Playing Game Studies* 3: 14-32.
- Harder, Sanne. 2007. "Confessions of a Schoolteacher: Experiences with Role-playing in Education." In *Lifelike*, edited by Jesper Donnis, Morten Gade, and Line Thorup, 228-235. Copenhagen, Denmark: Projektgruppen KP07. [Link here](#).
- Harris, Andrew. 2018. "Guild Chronicles: A Game Designed for Social Emotional Learning." Paper presented at the *Role-playing and Simulation in Education Conference, Boston, MA, 2018*. Living Games Conference. YouTube, August 17.
- Hartyándi, Mátyás, and Gijs van Bilsen. 2024. "Playing With Leadership: A Multiple Case Study of Leadership Development Larps." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 15 (June): 142-77.
- Hawkes-Robinson, William A. 2016. "Role-Playing Games (RPG) as Intervention Modalities to Achieve Therapeutic & Educational Goals for Individuals and Groups from the Therapeutic Recreation Perspective." Draft Paper Proposal Submitted for Living Games Pre-Conference Review (unpublished). Texas State University, Austin, TX.
- Heathcote, Dorothy, and Gavin M. Bolton. 1995. *Drama for Learning: Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert Approach to Education*. Dimensions of Drama Series. Heinemann.
- Heick, Terrell. 2021. "What Is Bloom's Taxonomy? A Definition For Teachers." TeachThought, August 14.
- Helbig, Kate. A. 2019. "Evaluation of a Role-Playing Game to Improve Social Skills for Individuals with ASD." Ph.D. Diss., University of Southern Mississippi, USA.
- Hernø, Nór. 2026. "Facilitating Metareflections: From Individual Universes to a Collective Multiverse through Workshop Design." In *Seasons of Larp*, edited by Anna Erlandsson, Martine Svanevik, Mo Holkar, and Simon Brind. Knutpunkt.

- Hoge, Mark. 2013. "Experiential Learning for Youth Through Larps and RPGs." In *The Wyrd Con Companion Book 2013*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman and Aaron Vanek, 38-41. Los Angeles, CA: Wyrd Con.
- Holkar, Mo. 2015. "Workshop Practice: A Functional Workshop Structure Method." In *The Knudepunkt 2015 Companion Book*, edited by Charles Bo Nielsen, 150-155. Copenhagen, Denmark: Rollespils Akademiet.
- Holkar, Mo. 2016. "Larp and Prejudice: Expressing, Erasing, Exploring, and the Fun Tax." In *Larp Realia: Analysis, Design, and Discussions of Nordic Larp*, edited by Jukka Särkijärvi, Mika Lopenen, and Kaisa Kangas, 95-102. Helsinki: Ropecon ry.
- Hollander, Aaron T. 2021. "Blessed Are the Legend-Makers: Experimentation as Edification in Dungeons & Dragons." *Political Theology* (Feb 26): 1-16.
- Hughes, John. 1988. "Therapy is Fantasy: Roleplaying, Healing and the Construction of Symbolic Order." Paper presented at *Anthropology IV Honours, Medical Anthropology Seminar*, Australian National University.
- Hyltoft, Malik. 2010. "Four Reasons Why Edu-Larp Works." In *LARP: Einblicke*, edited by Karsten Dombrowski, 43-57. Braunschweig, Germany: Zauberfeder Ltd.
- Jensen, Maria Kolseth. 2021. "Larp in Leadership Development at the Royal Norwegian Naval Academy (RNNA)." In *Book of Magic: Vibrant Fragments of Larp Practices*, edited by Kari Kvittingen Djukastein, Marcus Irgens, Nadja Lipsyc, and Lars Kristian Løvang Sunde. Oslo, Norway: Knutepunkt.
- Johansson, Karin, Johanna Koljonen, Jaakko Stenros, PerOla Öberg, and Sarah Lynne Bowman. 2026. "Playing a Role in Democracy: Political Live Action Role-playing Games, Activism, and Deliberation." In *Education and Analog Role-Playing Games: Theory and Pedagogy*, edited by Susan Haarman. CRC Press.
- Johnstone, Keith. 1987. *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre*. Routledge.
- Jones, Kanane. 2017. "Immerton: A Fire in the Desert." Nordiclarp.org, October 28. [Link here](#).
- Jones, Phil. 1996. *Drama as Therapy – Theatre as Living*. London: Routledge.
- Jung, Carl G. 1976. *The Portable Jung*. Edited by Joseph Campbell. Translated by R.C.F. Hull. New York: Penguin Random House.
- Juustila, Merli. 2019. "Designing Larp for Children." In *Larp Design: Creating Role-play Experiences*, edited by Johanna Koljonen, Jaakko Stenros, Anne Serup Grove, Aina D. Skjønsvell and Elin Nilsen, 184-190. Copenhagen, Denmark: Landsforeningen Bifrost.
- Geneuss, Katrin. 2021. "The Use of the Role-playing Technique STARS in Formal Didactic Contexts." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 11: 114-131.
- Geneuss, Katrin. 2022. "To Play or Not to Play: Edu-Larp in Curricular Settings – Katrin Geneuss." Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube, April 8.
- Kallam, M. L. 1984. "The Effects of Simulation Game Play upon Oral Language Development and Internalisation of Locus of Control among Mildly Handicapped Adolescents." PhD diss, Oklahoma State University. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Kangas, Kaisa. 2025. "Experiencing Art from Within." Nordiclarp.org, September 8.
- Katō, Kōhei. 2019. "Employing Tabletop Role-Playing Games (TRPGs) in Social Communication Support Measures for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Japan: A Hands-On Report on the Use of Leisure Activities." *Japanese Journal of Analog Role-Playing Game Studies* 0: 23-28.
- Kemper, Jonaya. 2018a. "The Good, the Bad & the Internalized: Searching for Self Liberation in Conscience." Nordic Larp Talks. YouTube, March 20.
- Kemper, Jonaya. 2018b. "More Than a Seat at the Feasting Table." In *Shuffling the Deck: The Knutpunkt 2018 Color Printed Companion*, edited by Annika Waern and Johannes Axner. ETC Press.
- Kemper, Jonaya. 2020a. "Jonaya Kemper – Building on Our Own Ashes: Larp as a Decolonization Tool." Keynote at Solmukohta 2020. Nordic Larp. YouTube, April 9.

- Kemper, Jonaya. 2020b. "Wyrding the Self." In *What Do We Do When We Play?*, edited by Eleanor Saitta, Johanna Koljonen, Jukka Särkijärvi, Anne Serup Grove, Pauliina Männistö, and Mia Makkonen, 211-225. Helsinki, Finland: Solmukohta.
- Kemper, Jonaya, Eleanor Saitta, and Johanna Koljonen. 2020. "Steering for Survival." In *What Do We Do When We Play?*, edited by Eleanor Saitta, Johanna Koljonen, Jukka Särkijärvi, Anne Serup Grove, Pauliina Männistö, and Mia Makkonen. Helsinki: Solmukohta.
- Kessock, Shoshana. 2014. "Cultural Appropriation and Larp." In *The Cutting Edge of Nordic Larp*, edited by Jon Back, 125-134. Denmark: Knutpunkt.
- Kilmer, Elizabeth D., Adam D. Davis, Jared N. Kilmer, and Adam R. Johns. 2023. *Therapeutically Applied Role-Playing Games: The Game to Grow Method*. Routledge.
- Kilmer, Elizabeth, Jennifer Rubin, Michael Scanlon, and Jared Kilmer. 2024. "Therapeutically Applied RPGs to Support Adolescent Social Connection and Growth During the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health* 19, no. 2: 210-231.
- Kim, Yeonsoo Julian, Morgan Nuncio, and Jen Wong. 2018. "Epiphany – A Collaborative Mage: the Ascension Larp." Nordiclarp.org, February 1.
- Kot, Yaraslau I. 2018. "Larp as Life." In *Shuffling the Deck: The Knutepunkt 2018 Color Printed Companion*, edited by Annika Waern and Johannes Axner, 161-170. Pittsburgh, PA: Carnegie Mellon University: ETC Press.
- Kolb, David A. 1984. *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Vol. 1. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Koljonen, Johanna. 2019. "An Introduction to Bespoke Design." In *Larp Design: Creating Role-play Experiences*, edited by Johanna Koljonen, Jaakko Stenros, Anne Serup Grove, Aina D. Skønsvell, and Elin Nilsen, 25-29. Copenhagen, Denmark: Landsforeningen Bifrost.
- Koljonen, Johanna. 2020. "Larp Safety Design Fundamentals." *JARPS: Japanese Journal of Analog Role-Playing Game Studies 1: Emotional and Psychological Safety in TRPGs and Larp* (September 21): 3e-19e.
- Koski, Neko. 2016. "Not a Real Man? – Trans* Politics in the Finnish Larp Scene." In *Larp Politics: Systems, Theory, and Gender in Action*, edited by Kaisa Kangas, Mika Lopenen, and Jukka Särkijärvi, 136-143. Helsinki, Finland: Solmukohta 2016, Ropecon ry.
- Kroplewski, Zdzisław, Roksana Łoś, and Bartłomiej Józef Pawlicki. 2025. "Impact of Participation in Role-Playing Game (RPG) Sessions on the Perceived Level of Social Anxiety and Received Social Support." *Brain Sciences* 15, no. 11: 1158. [Link here](#).
- Ladišić, Anita, and Vojislav Prkosovački (eds). 2022. *YOUNGETEERS -The Manual for Volunteer Management in Culture During the Crisis*.
- Lampo, Marjukka. 2015. "Ecological Approach to the Performance of Larping." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 5 (January): 35-46.
- Lane, Maggie. 2018. "Inside Hamlet: A Journey Into the Past is the Future of Immersive Theatre." Immersed, January 11.
- Lankoski, Petri, and Simo Järvelä. 2012. "An Embodied Cognition Approach for Understanding Role-playing." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 3: 18-32.
- Larsson, Elge. 2004 "Participatory Education: What and Why." In *Beyond Role and Play: Tools, Toys, and Theory for Harnessing the Imagination*, edited by Markus Montola and Jaakko Stenros, 243-248. Ropecon ry, 2004.
- Lasley, Joe. 2024. "Role-Playing Games as a New Adventure for Leadership-As-Practice: Forming a Leadership Framework Around Collective Creativity and Development." *Journal of Leadership Studies: Expanding Interdisciplinary Discourse* 17, no. 4: 47-55.
- Lave, Jean, and Etienne Wenger. 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge University press.

- Laycock, Joseph P. 2015. *Dangerous Games: What the Moral Panic over Role-Playing Games Says about Play, Religion, and Imagined Worlds*. University of California Press.
- LeClaire, Matthew M. 2020. "Live Action Roleplaying: Transcending the Magic Circle through Play in Dagorhir." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 10: 56-69.
- Lehto, Kerttu. 2021. "Role-Playing Games and Well-Being." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 11: 72-93.
- Lehto, Kerttu. 2024. "Nordic Larp As a Method in Mental Health Care and Substance Abuse Work: Case SÄRÖT." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 15 (June): 74-91. [Link here](#).
- Leonard, Diana J. 2021. "Playing for Pain: Benefits, Pitfalls, & Strategies for RPin Marginalized Characters - Diana Leonard." Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube, September 24.
- Leonard, Diana J., Jovo Janjetovic, and Maximilian Usman. 2021. "Playing to Experience Marginalization: Benefits and Drawbacks of 'Dark Tourism' in Larp." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 11: 25-47.
- Levin, Hilda. 2020. "Metareflection." In *What Do We Do When We Play?* Solmukohta 2020, edited by Eleanor Saitta, Johanna Koljonen, Jukka Särkijärvi, Anne Serup Grove, Pauliina Männistö, and Mia Makkonen. Helsinki: Solmukohta.
- Levin, Hilda. 2023. "Playing with Perspective: Metareflection and Immersion in Embodied Role-playing -- Hilda Levin." Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube, October 4.
- Levine, Peter. 2018a. "Deliberation or Simulated Deliberation?" *Democracy and Education* 26 (1).
- Levine, Peter. 2018b. "Deliberation or Simulated Deliberation? Choices for the Classroom « Peter Levine." Peter Levine: A Blog for Civic Renewal, April 30.
- Li, J. 2012. "Gaming the Players: Four Meditations on the Physics of Building Games Out of Humans." In *Wyrld Con Companion Book 2012*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman and Aaron Vanek, 37-40.
- Long, Bjorn. 2025. "Games are Rituals - How the Human Capacity for Religious Ritual Makes Playing Games Possible." In *Seasons of Larp*, edited by Anna Erlandsson, Martine Svanevik, Mo Holkar, and Simon Brind. Knutpunkt.
- Long, TiMar. 2015. "Character Creation: The Symbolic Annihilation of Race in *Dungeons & Dragons*." In *The Wyrld Companion Book 2015*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman, 124-144. Los Angeles, CA: Wyrld Con.
- Long, TiMar. 2016. "Character Creation Diversity in Gaming Art." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 7: 23-29.
- Losilla, Sergio. 2024. "Rules, Trust, and Care: the Nordic Larper's Risk Management Toolkit." Nordiclarp.org, June 11.
- Martin, James S., Christian A. Vaccaro, D. Alex Heckert, and Robert Heasley. 2015. "Epic Glory and Manhood Acts in Fantasy Roleplaying: Dagorhir as a Case Study." *The Journal of Men's Studies* 23, no. 3 (Fall).
- McAdams, Dan P. 2011. "Narrative Identity." In *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, edited by Seth J. Schwartz, Koen Luyckx, and Vivian L. Vignoles, 99-115. New York: Springer.
- McDonald, Neal, and Alan Kreizenbeck. 2012. "Larp in an Interdisciplinary University Course." In *Wyrld Con Companion 2012*, edited by Aaron Vanek and Sarah Lynne Bowman, 128-137. Los Angeles, CA: Wyrld Con.
- McIntosh, Jacqueline, and Bruno Marques. 2017. "Designing for Culturally-diverse Communities: The Role of Collaborative, Interdisciplinary Design-led Research." *The Journal of Public Space* 2, no. 3: 21-38. [Link here](#).
- Mendez Hodes, James. 2019a. "May I Play a Character from Another Race?" [Jamesmendezhodes.com](#), Feb 14. [Link here](#).
- Mendez Hodes, James. 2019b. "Orcs, Britons, and the Martial Race Myth, Part I: A Species Built for Racial Terror." [Jamesmendezhodes.com](#), January 14. [Link here](#).

- Mendez Hodes, James. 2019c. "Orcs, Britons, and the Martial Race Myth, Part II: They're Not Human." Jamesmendezhodes.com, September 1. [Link here](#).
- Mendez Hodes, James. 2020. "How to Change Your Conversations About Cultural Appropriation." Jamesmendezhodes.com, January 2. [Link here](#).
- Mendoza, Jonathan. 2020. "Gaming Intentionally: A Literature Review of the Viability of Role-playing Games as Drama-therapy-informed Interventions." Master's Thesis, Lesley University.
- Mercer, Ian S., John N. Harris, and R. Gabrielle Swab. 2021. "To the Top: A Role Playing Exercise Highlighting Leadership, Influence Tactics, Decision Making, Conflict Resolution and Communication." *Journal of Organizational Behavior Education* 14: 71–94.
- Milan, Anna. 2023. "The Hunter Will Take You: Seeking Spiritual Experiences within Live Action Role-Play." In *Fictional Practices of Spirituality I: Interactive Media*, edited by Felix Schniz and Leonardo Marcato. Transcript Verlag.
- Minor, David. 2014. "LARP & the Law By David Miner at Wyrd Con 5." Wyrd Con. YouTube, June 15.
- Misje, Harald, Martin Nielsen & Anita Myhre Andersen. 2014. "Larping in Lebanon: Introducing Nordic Children's Larp to Palestinian Refugee Kids." In *The Cutting Edge of Nordic Larp*, edited by Jon Back, 93–101. Denmark: Knutpunkt.
- Mochocki, Michał. 2013. "Edu-Larp as Revision of Subject-Matter Knowledge." *The International Journal of Role-Playing* 4: 55–75.
- Mochocki, Michał, and Lukasz Wrona. 2013. "DEMOCRACY Project. Larp in Civic Education." KOLA Larp Conference 2013.
- Mochocki, Michał. 2014. "Larping the Past: Research Report on High-School Edu-Larp." In *The Wyrd Con Companion Book 2014*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman. Los Angeles, CA: Wyrd Con.
- Montola, Markus. 2010. "The Positive Negative Experience in Extreme Role-playing." In *Proceedings of DiGRA Nordic 2010: Experiencing Games: Games, Play, and Players*. Stockholm, Sweden, August 16.
- Moreno, Jacob Levy. 1946. *Psychodrama, Vol. 1*. New York: Beacon House.
- Moreno, Jacob L., and Leslie D. Zeleny. 1958. "Role Theory and Sociodrama." In *Contemporary Sociology*, edited by J. S. Roucek, 632–654. New York: Philosophical Library.
- Munthe-Kaas, Peter. 2010. *System Danmarc*. In *Nordic Larp*, edited by Jaakko Stenros and Markus Montola, 210–221. Fëa Livia.
- Mutsaers, Suus and René van den Berg. 2022. "Let Me Look into Your Future." Nordiclarp.org, March 7.
- Naranjo, Claudio. 2000. *Gestalt Therapy: The Attitude & Practice of an Atheoretical Experimentalism*. Crown House Publishing.
- National Museum of American Diplomacy. 2022. "Teacher Guide: Teaching Diplomacy in the Classroom with Diplomacy Simulations." Diplomacy.state.gov, October. [Link here](#).
- Nephew, Michelle. 2006. "Playing with Identity." In *Gaming as Culture: Essays on Reality, Identity and Experience in Fantasy Games*, edited by J. Patrick Williams, Sean Q. Hendricks and W. Keith Winkler, 120–139. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc.
- Nicholson, Scott. 2015. A Recipe for Meaningful Gamification. In *Gamification in Education and Business*, edited by Torsten Reiners and Lincoln C. Wood, 1–20. Springer.
- Nøglebæk, Oliver. 2021. "Tarot for Larpers." Nordiclarp.org, November 5.
- Nordic Larp. 2011. "Behind System Danmarc." Vimeo, January 26.
- Paisley, Erik Winther. 2015. "Play the Gay Away: Confessions of a Queer Larper." In *Larp Politics: Systems, Theory, and Gender in Action*, edited by Kaisa Kangas, Mika Lojonen, and Jukka Särkijärvi, 170–177. Helsinki, Finland: Solmukohta 2016, Ropecon ry.
- Page, Craig. 2014. "Playing With Myth: Applying Mythic Imagination to Live Action Role-Play." In *Wyrd Con Companion Book 2014*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman, 60–67. Los Angeles, CA: Wyrd Con.

- Perls, Fritz, Ralph Hefferline, and Paul Goodman. 1951. *Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in the Human Personality*. The Gestalt Journal Press: New Edition
- Pettersson, Juhana. 2021. *Engines of Desire*. Pohjoismaisen roolipelaamisen seura ry.
- Pettersson, Maria. 2018. "Larping in the Political Heart of Europe." Nordic Larp Talks. YouTube, March 20.
- Pitkänen, Jori (Linnamäki). 2019. "Formas o Métodos Para el Cambio. ¿Cómo contribuyen al cambio el Psicodrama, el Sociodrama, el Teatro Playback y el Role Playing educativo de acción en vivo o EDULARP." *La Hoja de Psicodrama* 28, no. 71 (May).
- Pohjola, Mike. 2022. "Pimp My Magic School - Mike Pohjola." Nordic Larp Talks. YouTube, September 21.
- Pöllänen, Sonja and Jonne Arjoranta. 2021. "Whose Were Those Feelings? Affect and Likenessing in Halat Hisar Live Action Role-playing Game." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 24, no. 6: 899-916.
- Pouchlá, Jana. 2013. "Business Larp: Management Skills Trained by a Game." In *Crossing Habitual Borders*, edited by Karete Jacobsen Meland and Katrine Øverlie Svela, 27-34. Oslo, Norway: Fantasiforbundet.
- Reininghaus, Gerrit. 2019. "A Manifesto for Laogs – Live Action Online Games." Nordiclarp.org, June 14.
- Reynolds, Sean K., and Shanna Germain. 2019. *Consent in Gaming*. Seattle, WA: Monte Cook Games.
- Riser, Aline Rodrigues Reser, et al. 2024. "Immersive RPG Elderly Health: A New Possibility for Constructing Health Learning?" *Revista Brasileira de Geriatria e Gerontologia* 27: e230214.
- Roda Martínez, Antonio. 2025. "Consent Using Analog Role-Playing in the Classroom: Strategies for Safe and Engaging Learning Experiences." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 16 (September): 85-99. [Link here](#).
- Rosenblad, Sherry R., Tessa Wolford, Richard S. Brennan III, Josh Darnell, Challen Mabry, and Andrew Herrmann. 2025. "Mastering Your Dragons: Using Tabletop Role-Playing Games in Therapy." *Behavioral Sciences* 15: 441.
- Rosselet, Julian. G., and Sarah. D. Stauffer. 2013. "Using Group Role-playing Games with Gifted Children and Adolescents: A Psychosocial Intervention Model." *International Journal of Play Therapy* 22, no. 4: 173-192. doi:10.1037/a0034557
- Russell, Keith, John Hendee, Dianne Phillips-Miller. "How Wilderness Therapy Works: An Examination of the Wilderness Therapy Process to Treat Adolescents with Behavioral Problems and Addictions." In *Wilderness Science in a Time of Change Conference Proceedings – Volume 3: Wilderness as a Place for Scientific Inquiry*, edited by Stephen McCool, 207-217. UT: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2000.
- Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. 2017. *Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness*. Guilford Publications.
- Sargent, Michael S. 2014. "Exploring Mental Dungeons and Slaying Psychic Dragons: An Exploratory Study." Master's Thesis, Smith College.
- Scarlet, Janina. 2016. *Superhero Therapy: A Hero's Journey Through Acceptance and Commitment Therapy*. United Kingdom: Little, Brown Book Group.
- Schmit, Wagner Luiz, João Batista Martins, and Thales Ferreira. 2009. "Role-playing Games and Education in Brazil: How We Do It." In *Larp, the Universe, and Everything*, edited by Matthijs Holter, Eirik Fatland, and Even Tømte, 75-96.
- Schwartz, Richard C., and Martha Sweezy. 1995. *Internal Family Systems*. New York: Guilford.
- Scudder, Sasha. 2018. "Reflections: The Positive Effects of Cooperative Roleplaying Games on Anxiety Disorders." Bachelor's thesis, Scripps College, Claremont, California.
- Shanun, Almog. 2013. *TTRI: Therapeutic Table Role-Play Intervention: Role Play In Group Therapy*. Scholar's Press.
- Sinking Ship Creations. 2020. "Risk Management." Sinking Ship Creations.
- Slaughter, Autumn, and Scott Orth. 2023. "An Uncontrolled Case Study of a Tabletop Role-playing Therapy Group With Difficult-to-engage Patients." *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy* 73, no. 2: 116-140.

- Smith, David J. 2025. "Lessons Learned in Experiential Education for Humanitarian Action -- David J. Smith." Keynote at the Transformative Play Initiative Seminar 2025. Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube, November 26. [Link here](#).
- Spolin, Viola. 1986. *Theater Games for the Classroom: A Teacher's Handbook*. Northwestern University Press.
- Standiford, Andhe. 2014. "Lessons Learned from Larp: Promoting High-Quality Role-play and Immersion in Nursing Simulation." In *The Wyrd Con Companion Book 2014*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman. Los Angeles, CA: Wyrd Con.
- Stang, Sarah. 2021. "The Fiend Folio's Female Fiends: Kelpies, Vampires, and Demon Queens." *Analog Game Studies, Special Issue: The Fiend Folio* (October 10).
- Stang, Sarah, and Aaron Trammell. 2020. "The Ludic Bestiary: Misogynistic Tropes of Female Monstrosity in Dungeons & Dragons." *Games and Culture* 15, no. 6: 730-747.
- Stark, Lizzie. 2012. "How to Debrief a Freeform Game." Leaving Mundania, July 15.
- Stenros, Jaakko, and Markus Montola, eds. 2010. *Nordic Larp*. Fëa Livia.
- Stenros, Jaakko, and Tanja Sihvonen. 2015. "Out of the Dungeons: Representations of Queer Sexuality in RPG Source Books." *Analog Game Studies* 3, no. 3.
- Stenros, Jaakko, and Tanja Sihvonen. 2019. "Queer While Larping: Community, Identity, and Affective Labor in Nordic Live Action Role-Playing." *Analog Game Studies: 2019 Role-Playing Game Summit* (December 23).
- Stubbs, Richard, and Nikolas Sorensen. 2025. "Tabletop Role-playing Games and Social and Emotional Learning in School Settings." *Social and Emotional Learning: Research, Practice, and Policy* 5: 100090.
- Swab, R. Gabrielle, Ian S. Mercer, and Harris, J. N. 2024. "Using Dungeons and Dragons to Creatively Evaluate What It Takes to Be a Successful Entrepreneur: A Role-Playing Exercise." *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy* 7, no. 4: 557-565.
- Swaby, Sean. 2021. "Batman is my Therapist: What Superheroes Can Teach us about Our Mental Health." TAGGS: Therapeutic and Applied Geek and Gaming Summit, May 5th.
- Taraghi, Laila, Sarah Lynne Bowman, and Shirin Khosrospour. 2022. "Teaching Conflict Transformation Through Roleplaying." Presentation at *10th Annual National Community College Peacebuilding Seminar*, October 28. Forage Center. YouTube, (0:11:47-1:08:34)
- Tolvanen, Anni, and James Lórien MacDonald. 2020. "Ensemble Play." In *What Do We Do When We Play?*, edited by Eleanor Saitta, Johanna Koljonen, Jukka Särkijärvi, Anne Serup Grove, Pauliina Männistö, and Mia Makkonen. Helsinki: Solmukohta.
- Turner, Evan. 2013. "Transparency and Safety in Role-playing Games." In *The Wyrd Con Companion Book 2013*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman and Aaron Vanek, 14-17. Los Angeles, CA: Wyrd Con, 2013.
- Turner, Evan. 2015. "Bodies and Time in Tabletop Role-Playing Game Combat Systems." In *The Wyrd Companion Book 2015*, edited by Sarah Lynne Bowman, 160-171. Los Angeles, CA: Wyrd Con.
- Turner, Evan. 2018. "Emergence, Iteration, and Reincorporation in Larp." In *Shuffling the Deck: The Knutpunkt 2018 Companion*, edited by Annika Waern and Johannes Axner, 171-179. ETC Press.
- Turner, Evan. 2021. "Film and Literature Instruction through Live Action Role-Play -- Evan Turner." Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube, December 5.
- Turner, Evan. 2022. "Chapter 16: Film and Literature Instruction Through Live Action Role-Play." In *Teaching Games and Game Studies in the Literature Classroom*, edited by Tison Pugh and Lynn Ramey, 177-184. Bloomsbury.
- Townser, H.P., and J. Li. 2019. "Describing What Actually Happens during a Larp." In *Larp Design: Creating Role-play Experiences*, edited by Johanna Koljonen, Jaakko Stenros, Anne Serup Grove, Aina D. Skønfsjell, and Elin Nilsen. Copenhagen, Denmark: Landsforeningen Bifrost.
- Tsiaras, Ilias, and Vasileios Neofotistos. 2026. "Educational Live-Action Role-Playing Games in Adult Education: Constituents and Perspectives." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 17 (March):1-21. [Link here](#).
- Trammell, Aaron. 2014. "Misogyny and the Female Body in Dungeons & Dragons." *Analog Game Studies* 1, no. III.

- Trammell, Aaron. 2016. "How Dungeons & Dragons Appropriated the Orient." *Analog Game Studies* III, no. I (January 11).
- Trammell, Aaron. 2020. "Torture, Play, and the Black Experience." *The Journal of Italian Game Studies* 8, no. 9 (September).
- Turi, Bálint Márk, and Mátyás Hartyándi. 2023. "Playing With The Fictitious 'I': Early Forms of Educational Role-Playing in Hungary, 1938-1978." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 14 (September): 47-60.
- Turner, Victor. 1969. "Liminality and Communitas." *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Turner, Victor. 1995. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.
- The University of Edinburgh. 2024. "Reflecting for Self-Awareness." Reflector's Toolkit.
- van Bilsen, Gijs. 2024. "Permission to Play: How to Design for Non-Larpers." Nordic Larp Talks. YouTube, April 11.
- van Gennep, Arnold. 1960. *The Rites of Passage*. Translated by Monika Vizedom and Gabrielle Caffee. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Van Hauwaert, Marijke. 2025. "How to Start a Larp School." In *Anatomy of Larp Thoughts: A Breathing Corpus*, edited by Nadia Lipsyc et al. Knutepunkt 2025.
- Varrette, Matthew, Jack Berkenstock, Adams Greenwood-Ericksen, Anthony Ortega, Faith Michaels, Veronica Pietrobon, and Marc Schodorf. 2023. "Exploring the Efficacy of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Role-playing Games as an Intervention for Adults with Social Anxiety." *Social Work with Groups* 46, no. 2: 140-165.
- Visuri, Ingela. 2024. "Autistic Re-creation: Live Action Role-play as a Safe and Brave Space for Social Learning." *Thinking Skills and Creativity* (August 25): 101622.
- Walsh, Orla, and Conor Linehan. 2024. "Roll for Insight: Understanding How the Experience of Playing Dungeons & Dragons Impacts the Mental Health of an Average Player." *International Journal of Role-Playing* 15 (June): 36-60. [Link here](#).
- Way, Brian. 1998. *Development through Drama*. Humanities Press.
- Westborg, Josefin. 2016. "Alfa/Omega: A Larp About Norm Criticism for 14-year Old School Kids." In *Larp Realia: Analysis, Design, and Discussions of Nordic Larp*, edited by Jukka Särkijärvi, Mika Lopenen, and Kaisa Kangas, 19-23. Helsinki: Ropecon ry.
- Westborg, Josefin. 2019. "How to Run Edularp." In *Larp Design: Creating Role-play Experiences*, edited by Johanna Koljonen, Jaakko Stenros, Anne Serup Grove, Aina D. Skjønsvell and Elin Nilsen, 355-360. Copenhagen, Denmark: Landsforeningen Bifrost.
- Westborg, Josefin. 2021. "10 Years of Working Professionally with Edu-larp." Keynote presented at the Knutepunkt Conference in Oslo, Norway, October 7, 2021.
- Westborg, Josefin. 2023a. "Assessment." Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube, January 26.
- Westborg, Josefin. 2023b. "The Educational Role-Playing Game Design Matrix: Mapping Design Components onto Types of Education." *International Journal of Role-playing* 13: 18-30. [Link here](#).
- Westborg, Josefin. 2023c. "Implementation for Education." Transformative Play Initiative. YouTube, January 26.
- Westborg, Josefin. 2024. "Placing Edu-larp on the Map of Educational Learning Theories: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Ideas about Learning in the Edu-larp Community." Master's thesis, Gothenburg University.
- Westborg, Josefin, Anders Berner, Kol Ford, and Mike Pohjola. 2020. "Solmukohta 2020: 500 Magic Schools for Children and Youth." Nordic Larp Talks. YouTube, April 10.
- Whitton, Nicola. 2014. *Digital Games and Learning*. Routledge: London.
- Wilson, Karen, and James H. Korn. 2007. "Attention During Lectures: Beyond Ten Minutes" *Teaching of Psychology* 34, no. 2.
- Wolgel, Lindsay. 2024a. "Adding Larp to a Drama Teacher's Curriculum - Year 1." Nordic Larp. YouTube, May 24.
- Wolgel, Lindsay. 2024b. "Innovations in the Drama Classroom with Larp." In *Liminal Encounters: Evolving Discourse in Nordic and Nordic Inspired Larp*, edited by Kaisa Kangas, Jonne Arjoranta, and Ruska Kevätkoski. Helsinki, Finland: Ropecon ry.

- Wood, Laura. 2022. "Description of Larps using Textual Parameters." Nordiclarp.org, October 27.
- Wood, Laura, and Mo Holkar. 2024. "Flagging: A Response." Nordiclarp.org, February 22.
- Woolfolk, Anita. 2010. *Educational psychology: global edition*. Pearson Education Limited.
- Wright, Jennifer Cole, Daniel E. Weissglass, and Vanessa Casey. 2020. "Imaginative Role-Playing as a Medium for Moral Development: Dungeons & Dragons Provides Moral Training." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 60, no. 1: 99-129.
- Zamboni, Camilla, Michael Farber, and William Merchant, eds. 2024. *Roll for Learning: 51 Micro Tabletop Role-playing Games to Use in the Classroom*. Play Story Press.
- Zayas, Luis H., and Bradford H. Lewis. 1986. "Fantasy Role-Playing for Mutual Aid in Children's Groups: A Case Illustration." *Social Work with Groups* 9, no. 1: 53-66.
- Zhang, Jiayi, Jing Xu, and Muru Li. 2025. "The Impact of Educational Live Action Role-playing Games on Social-Emotional Competence: A Mixed-method Study with Chinese College Students." *Frontiers in Psychology* 16: 1538761.

Ludography

- Alder, Avery. 2017. *Monsterhearts 2*. [Tabletop role-playing game]. Buried without Ceremony.
- Alexander, Connor, et al. 2022. *Coyote & Crow*. [Tabletop role-playing game]. Coyote & Crow Games.
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne, PerOla Öberg, Josephine Rydberg, and Kjell Hedgard Hugaas. 2025. *The Assembly*. [Live action role-playing game]. Stockholm Scenario Festival. [Link here](#).
- Bushyager, Misha, Lizzie Stark, and Anna Westerling, eds. 2017. *#Feminism: A Nano-Game Anthology*. [Nordic and American freeform games]. Pelgrane Press, Ltd.
- Bushyager, Misha, Lizzie Stark, and Anna Westerling, eds. 2017. *#Feminism: A Nano-Game Anthology -- Additional Games*. [Nordic and American freeform games]. Pelgrane Press, Ltd.
- Cox, Jason, and Lillian Lewis. 2020. *Mantles in the Museum*. Toledo, OH, US. [Link here](#) and [here](#).
- Davis, Adam, Adam Johns, Virginia Spielmann, Gavin Cheng, and Maja Nordrum. 2021. *Critical Core*. [Tabletop role-playing game]. Game to Grow.
- Edland, Tor Kjetil, and Hanne Grasmø. 2011-. *Just a Little Lovin'*. [Live action role-playing game]. Various countries.
- Erasmus+ EDGE Consortium. 2025. *Lumen*. [Live action role-playing game]. Italy, Oct. 2-5.
- Gilmour, Jonathan, and Doug Levandowski. 2018. *Kids on Bikes*. [Tabletop role-playing game]. Hunters Entertainment.
- Gygax, Gary, and Dave Arneson. 1974. *Dungeons & Dragons*. [Tabletop role-playing game]. TSR, Inc.
- Kangas, Kaisa. 2024. *Hyvät museovieraat* [Eng: Dear Museum Visitors]. [Live action role-playing game]. Amos Rex art museum. Helsinki, Finland. May 21 and August 20, 2024.
- Opus. 2005. *System Danmarc*. [Live action role-playing game]. Copenhagen, Denmark, October 7-9.
- Participation Design Agency. 2015, 2017, 2018. *Inside Hamlet*. [Live action role-playing game]. Castle Elsinore/Kronborg Castle, Helsingør, Denmark.
- Various designers. 2014. *College of Wizardry*. [Live action role-playing game]. Czocho Castle, Poland.
- Zalka, Csenge Virág. 2019. *Forum-Based Role Playing Games as Digital Storytelling*. McFarland Press.
- Zamboni, Camilla, Michael Farber, and William Merchant, eds. 2024. *Roll for Learning: 51 Micro Tabletop Role-playing Games to Use in the Classroom*. [Tabletop role-playing game]. Play Story Press.