

UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI
FAKULTETA ZA DRUŽBENE VEDE

Blaž Branc

EDU-LARP as a Game-Based Learning Method for
Corporate Training

EDU-LARP kot na igri temelječa metoda učenja za
korporativni trening

Diplomsko delo

Ljubljana, 2016

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Acknowledgements: professors dr. Michał Mochocki and Mikołaj Sobocinski of UKW in Bydgoszcz, Poland, for introducing me to the wonderful world of EDU-LARP

EDU-LARP as a Game-Based Learning Method for Corporate Training

Game-based learning is a form of experiential learning. Research conducted on game-based learning generally confirms the many effects such learning provides, but most often confirmed are learner engagement, motivation, and retention. Corporations have been using games and gamified learning experiences to train their employees since the 1940s. The methods discussed in this thesis include serious games, simulation games, and role-play. In terms of the latter, Western corporate role-play has its roots in Morenean psychodrama. Since the mid-90s, Scandinavians have been adopting the live-action role-playing (LARP) tradition that arose from fantasy table-top role-playing, originating in the USA. A new form has been established, named Nordic LARP. FromLARPs mostly played by enthusiasts for entertainment purposes arose a new form called educational live-action role-playing (edu-LARP). One of the goals of this thesis is to understand in which ways edu-LARP is similar to and different from existing corporate game-based learning methods, especially when compared to role-play. Analysis has shown many similarities, but the conclusion is that corporate role-play is best suited for teaching hard-skills and procedures, while edu-LARP might best be suited for addressing and changing soft-skills and attitudes.

Keywords:

Game-based learning, edu-LARP, role-play, human resources development, competencies.

EDU-LARP kot na igri temelječa metoda učenja za korporativni trening

Na igri temelječe učenje je oblika izkustvenega učenja. Raziskave splošno potrjujejo številne učinke tovrstnega učenja, najbolj pogosto zavzetost učencev (tudi odraslih), motivacijo in sposobnost ohranitve naučenega. Korporacije uporabljajo igre in igrificirane učne izkušnje za trening zaposlenih od 1940-ih. Metode v tem diplomskem delu vključujejo resne igre, simulacije igre in igre vlog. Pri slednjih ima Zahodna tradicija izvor v Morenovi psihodrami. Od sredine 90ih let so Skandinavci privzeli tradicijo utelešenega igranje vlog (angl. LARP), ki izvira iz namiznih iger vlog iz ZDA. Novo obliko so poimenovali Nordic LARP. Iz LARP, ki je najpogostejše razvedrilna igra, se je razvil t.i. izobraževalne utelešene igre vlog (edu-LARP). Eden ciljev te naloge je razumeti v čem je edu-LARP podoben in različen od obstoječih na igri temelječih metod učenja, predvsem iger vlog, uporabljanih za organizacijski trening. Analiza je pokazala mnogo podobnosti, vendar pa je zaključek analize razumevanje, da so korporativne igre vlog (KIV) najbolj primerne za trening postopkov in trdih veščin, edu-LARP pa za ozaveščanje in razvoj mehkih veščin ter odnosov.

Ključne besede:

Na igri temelječe učenje, edu-LARP, igra vlog, razvoj človeških virov, kompetence.

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1 Introduction

“Game play looks rather like any business seminar or meeting: people are talking, disappearing into private conferences, negotiating, debating, giving presentations, and so forth. They are pursuing both public and hidden agendas. As much as possible, the activities of the game are easy to conduct so as to permit differing behaviors to emerge. The multiplicity of overlapping and conflicting goals virtually guarantees that conflict will emerge” (Balzac 2010, 299).

“The stress of the game tends not so much to bring out the worst in people, but to bring out the most in people” (Balzac 2010, 297).

1.1 Personal background

Studying sociology - human resources management has led me professionally into education. I have been informally educating adults (especially middle management) since 2007, covering topics such as marketing, sales, and communicational skills.

I attended my first game-based learning train-the-trainers course in 2012, organized by the Slovene organization Mladinski ceh. In 2014 I attended a study visit (through the EU-funded Comenius programme) organized by professor Michał Mochocki and Mikołaj Sobocinski at UKW Bydgoszcz in Poland, where I was introduced to edu-LARP (educational live-action role-playing), namely a Cold War scenario entitled the Cuban Crisis, by Krzysztof Chmielewski. I have since invested a great deal of research into game-based learning, edu-LARP specifically, and have written and co-written a few scenarios myself, testing them out and running them commercially for my clients. Since edu-LARP is new in the people training market, it is little-known, especially in Slovenia where I live and work.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this bachelor's thesis is to establish edu-LARP as a game-based method for corporate training, specifically for developing leadership competencies. Close consideration will be given to simulation games and role-playing games in particular. Going further into role-playing games, I will introduce a new method called edu-LARP, an educational live-action role-playing game based in the Nordic tradition. Lastly, I will try to establish the

similarities and differences between traditional role-playing games used in corporations and edu-LARP, thus trying to establish edu-LARP as a method that would be optimal for certain educational goals. It has been my observation that edu-LARP has unique systemic features, unparalleled in traditional methods, especially for developing team leadership competencies and communicational skills in general.

1.3 Key concepts

These concepts are of my own definitions. All key concepts will be presented later with proper citations to other academic or professionally acclaimed resources.

HRM: Human resources management. A business process established to manage people within an organization in terms of creating jobs, job placement, worker efficiency evaluation, and development of competencies

Competency development: regardless of the formal education workers have, there is still a need for continued learning. A worker, seen as a production factor, is viewed in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Development is achieved through various methods, directed at upgrading competencies to serve the organization's goals.

Play: the process of taking actions within a game system via game mechanics.

Game: a system designed for the purpose of playing

Game-based learning: and educational process that uses games or game elements as a core tool to facilitate learning

Serious games: games designed to facilitate learning with a specific educational goal

Simulation games: games mimicking a real-life situation to offer grounds for rehearsal for some future event (think simulated work-based training, military simulation games, etc.)

Role-playing games: games relying heavily, if not solely on the mechanics of role-play

LARP: a live-action role-playing game, a fully embodied method of play combined with spatial displacements of the player, as opposed to table-top role-playing or computer game-based role-playing games

Edu-LARP: a form of LARP designed specifically with an educational goal in mind; Players don't play for their own meaningless entertainment, they play to learn something in a gamified environment, as a contrast to traditional lecture/workshop methods

1.4 Hypotheses

1. edu-LARP is not just another subset of role-playing games used for corporate training
2. edu-LARP enables learning experience unlike other existing game-based methods in corporate training

Insight into theses construction: Edu-LARP, a game-based training method, is a new, fresh, and unique method. It is not only a substitute for traditional corporate role-playing training, it is wider and deeper, offers a more intense experience, a broader appreciation of the situation at hand, more free will and meaningful choices, more space for improvisation, fewer fixed outcomes, and overall a more embodied and deeply felt learning experience.

2 The Role of HRM within Organizations

Human resources management (HRM) is a business process run by various specialists within the human resources field. *“The process of analysing and managing an organisation’s human resource needs to ensure satisfaction of its strategic objectives”* (Hellriegel et al. in Coyle-Shapiro et al. 2013, 12). *“The policies and practices involved in carrying out the “people” or human resources aspects of a management position, including recruitment, screening, training and appraising”* (Dessler in Coyle-Shapiro et al. 2013, 12).

(Developmental) training aims for the

“acquisition of competencies (skills, knowledge and attitudes) that the company will find necessary in the future. This type of training is designed to meet long-term corporate needs rather than provide training in specific skills that are currently required. Developmental training also refers to the preparation given to employees for promotion or for managerial succession, in which case it is called management development” (Coyle-Shapiro et al. 2013, 48).

2.2 Focusing on developmental function: what are competencies

Competencies are more complex than just knowledge, the know-what. Skills must be considered, for they represent the know-how. Attitudes, the know-why, are also of crucial importance. *“Competencies, in the most general terms, are “things” that an individual must demonstrate to be effective in a job, role, task, or duty. These “things” include job-relevant behaviour (what a person says or does that results in good or poor performance), motivation/.../and technical knowledge/skills.”* (OECD 2005, 4).

2.2.1 Leadership competency

To give this thesis focus, I will mainly discuss one particular competency: leadership.

“A key, arguably central, part of leadership is the ability to attract and retain followers in pursuit of a goal” (Bennis in Balzac 2016, 3). Followers are needed, because leaders cannot accomplish the goal themselves alone (Schein in Balzac 2016, 3). The leader and followers require good working relationships if they are to achieve effective performance (Wheelan in Balzac 2016, 4). Leaders and followers do not operate in a vacuum. Rather, they are engaged

in a form of elaborate roleplaying (Goffman in Balzac 2016, 4–5), in which the each member of the group attempts to fill a certain role vis-à-vis everyone else (Balzac 2016, 4–5).

2.3 KSA model

A widely used and simple model of understanding competencies is the KSA model, whereas 'K' stands for 'knowledge', 'S' for 'skills', and 'A' for 'attitudes'. The KSA model, however, does not have a simple history to track back to its origin or its creator.

“Knowledge, skills, and attitudes relate directly to Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor. The first taxonomy, namely Cognitive, appeared in 1956 by Bloom. The second, Affective, appeared in 1973 by Krathwohl, while the third, Psychomotor, was published in 1972 by Harrow” (Clark 2016).

Perhaps the first mention of tying the three KSAs together is in a book edited by Robert Gagne, *Concepts of Training*, by Meredith Crawford in 1962 (ibid.) Historically, U.S. Federal Government hiring practices applied the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities model to recruiting activities, but this has been phased out in favour of resume-focused recruiting practices (Reh 2016).

“It seems that the “A” in KSA originally meant “attitude.” It later became politically correct to use “ability” rather than “attitude” as it was deemed incorrect to change someone's attitude if they behaved correctly. When viewing the “A” from the performance aspect of training, perhaps “abilities” makes more sense. However, when viewing the “A” from the strategy side, then perhaps “attitude” works better” (Clark 2016). I shall use 'attitudes' when referring to the KSA model, because in my observations attitudes have a more psychological root, are more abstract, are often less consciously aware, and thus are harder to address, let alone change.

KSA MODEL OF COMPETENCIES

- a) KNOWLEDGE
- b) SKILLS
- c) ATTITUDES

Ad a) Knowledge is obtained during the course of formal education. Engineers, say, learn the tools of the trade by the time they graduate. What they lack in specific or even more up-to-

date knowledge they can learn through additional seminars, for instance those offered by their university. *“Knowledge statements refer to an organized body of information usually of a factual or procedural nature which, if applied, makes adequate performance on the job possible. A body of information applied directly to the performance of a function”* (CDC 2016). Even after the above mentioned exemplary engineers landed a job at an organization, they would continue to gain knowledge through various input methods: seminars within their organization, peer-to-peer knowledge transfer, internal mentoring, literature, webinars, etc.

Ad b) skills refer to the use of knowledge in a specific situation. In a strict sense this means practicing what one has learned. It is putting knowledge into practice and getting increasingly efficient at it. *“Skill statements refer to the proficient manual, verbal or mental manipulation of data or things. Skills can be readily measured by a performance test where quantity and quality of performance are tested, usually within an established time limit. Examples of proficient manipulation of things are skill in typing or skill in operating a vehicle”* (CDC 2016).

But this is not where skills end. The more intangible categories of skills are communicational skills, often referred to as soft skills and even as people skills.

“Hard skills are the technical expertise and knowledge needed for a job. Soft skills are the interpersonal qualities, also known as people skills, and personal attributes that an individual possesses” (Robles 2012). Engineers must work with others to accomplish their tasks, thus they, too, must learn about team work, leadership, argumentation, presentation, negotiations, etc., which all fall into the category of soft skills.

“People skills are a core component of soft skills (Cafasso and Klaus in Robles 2012). People skills are the interpersonal attributes that characterize a person’s relationships with others. Some researchers note that interpersonal skills are the most important skills at all levels of the job (Sheikh and Smith in ibid.). While many authors equate interpersonal skills with soft skills, interpersonal skills are only one facet of soft skills. In addition to interpersonal skills, soft skills include personal qualities and career attributes” (James et al. in ibid.).

Business executives emphasize the development of soft skills. The top 10 soft skills perceived to be the most important are: integrity, communication, courtesy, responsibility, social skills, positive attitude, professionalism, flexibility, teamwork, and work ethic (Nealy in Robles

2012). *“Self-awareness is an integral part of problem-solving and communications. Self-awareness is essential to understanding others, and the best way to learn skills is through role-playing”* (Blatner 2009).

The cost of poor communication skills can be great regardless of the job at hand. A report on project management at NASA (Mars Climate Orbiter (MCO) Mishap Investigation Board in Eichelman 2015) tells the story of how poor communicational skills cost NASA 125 million USD in 1999.

Ad c) Attitudes are defined by Merriam-Webster's dictionary as:

2) : a position assumed for a specific purpose <a threatening attitude>

4) a: a mental position with regard to a fact or state <a helpful attitude>

b : a feeling or emotion toward a fact or state

6) : an organismic state of readiness to respond in a characteristic way to a stimulus (as an object, concept, or situation)

Attitudes are the most elusive and abstract component of the model. Basically they can be viewed as a grouping of several telic, target-wise relationships towards:

- myself
- my line of work
- my job position (hierarchy)
- my superiors/inferiors
- co-workers
- the company that employs me
- top-management of the company
- the industry my company belongs to
- the broader aspect of the industry's impact on the natural environment and social life, etc.

Gallup's research shows that workers' disengagement, which can be viewed as a set of attitudes, is costing the USA dearly, with yearly losses in productivity amounting from 450 to

550 billion dollars. Coming back to the KSA model, Gallup's research does not imply that the disengagement issue is in any way connected to workers not having enough knowledge or skills; in fact, *“an alarming 70% of American workers are not showing up to work committed to delivering their best performance /.../”* (Sorenson and Garman 2013). Commitment is not a matter of knowledge or skill, but is a psychological and personal attribute; it is an attitude issue. What company training tools are available to tackle that?

2.4 A growing need for better-developed soft skills

Organizations have long established that it is soft skills and attitudes that young professionals who are entering the work force lack. *“In a fast moving information society the nature of personal skills and knowledge seems to be a much more dynamic and complex concept than what university teaching seems to traditionally suggest”* (Kettula and Berghäll 2013, 2).

People skills such as leadership ability are more important to employers than technical skills, according to employers (Guenther and Moore 2005, 59). For instance, agricultural businesses have suggested that *“agricultural economics students take human relations classes and commented on the fact that companies look for employees with well-developed leadership abilities”* (Luby in *ibid.*). Graduates in general should also learn several *“generic skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, and communication skills, as well self-regulatory skills”* (Kettula and Berghäll 2013, 3).

Above mentioned generic skills are also crucial in cases such as that of the MCO incident. *“Teaching methods for communication must be improved upon in order to better prepare engineering students for the changing requirements of the workforce”* (Lattuca et al. in Eichelman et al. 2015 3–4).

2.5 Developing competencies

2.5.1 Students (before work-based training)

Volumes of literature on role-play as an educational method for the development of generic skills for working exist. However, there is a lack of knowledge for the development of work-specific skills, and concrete scenarios to afford students “a taste of real-life experiences,” depicting contrast between “learning in role-play and workplace learning” (Kettula and Berghäll 2013, 3).

Leadership can be taught and learned (Bass et al. in Guenther and Moore 2005, 60). According to Huber (ibid.), “*the goal of leadership education is to provide opportunities for people to learn the skills, attitudes, and concepts necessary to become effective leaders.*” The fact that many opportunities are experiential is no surprise, since according to Kolb (1984, 3), “*people do learn from their experience.*” Hultman stated that “*if the goal is to increase the capacity of people and organizations to lead, then they must gain some experience in the endeavor*” (in Guenther and Moore 2005, 60). Instructors use various activities to teach leadership. Bass (in ibid.) identified “*lecture-discussion, role-playing, living cases games, computer-assisted and programmed instruction, behaviour modelling, and sensitivity training as methods of training leaders.*”

2.5.2 On the job - developmental training

Organizations have business strategies and the task of human resources management is to support business’ strategies with the human factor. Besides the obvious concerns (are there enough people at the right locations, etc.), the question of whether people are sufficiently developed to carry out the tasks that emanate from the demands of the organization's business strategy is gaining in popularity.

With that said, how does the HR department develop human resources in terms of soft skills and attitudes? Surely, a variety of methods are employed all over the globe on a daily basis, but certain methods are most effective for achieving certain goals. Focusing on leadership competency, which methods might HR employ? What are the benefits of these methods and what are the drawbacks? As there are numerous methods, this thesis will focus on game-based learning methods. If these methods, role-playing, and similar approaches are said to help prepare students to enter the work force (see 2.5.1. on page 15) and make up for the life

experiences that students lack, then it is safe to assume that professionals can benefit from them too.

3 Game-Based Learning

An educational goal achieved through playing a (educational) game, defines the process as game-based learning. A game thus serves as both the environment, the facilitator (optional), and the method of enabling the student, whether child or adult, to achieve whatever the established goal is. *“Game-based learning incorporates game design elements, such as instantaneous feedback, an immersive nature, and scaffolding techniques, into non-game contexts in order to push students to the edge of their capabilities. This form of active learning has been shown to increase students’ interest and motivation”* (Eichelman et al. 2015, 2). I will use game-based learning as the broader frame from which methods such as role-play derive.

3.1 A form of experiential learning

The Kolb Learning Cycle *“is composed of four categories: (1) abstract conceptualization, (2) active experimentation, (3) concrete experience, and (4) reflective observation (Kolb 1984). Education missing categories (2) and (3)”*, such as the read-write-discuss model, popular in formal education, is fatal for the *“ability to cope with emergent phenomenon of complex systems, because coping often requires swift action via effective heuristic reasoning, which can only be developed through similar past experiences and experimentation”* (Sadowski et al. 2013, 1328). Educational games fill the gap of missing past experience by providing a safe space for experimentation by using methods such as simulation games and role-playing. Formal education is not the only field to be considered in this context; many fields make use of various forms of role immersion activities in order to help teach or explain material. *“Play is a very powerful environment for learning”* (Winnicott in Balzac 2016, 5)

3.2 Play and game

Huizinga defines play as *“.../ a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is 'different' from 'ordinary life'.”* Huizinga noted that English differs by using two words, both "play" and "game," to express ideas handled in most European vernaculars by lexeme.

Whereas in English we "play a game," in the Romance languages, and even in German, the same root word does double duty in expressions such as *jouer un jeu*, *spielen ein Spiel* (Kendrick 2009, 49).

Salen and Zimmerman understand a game as a "system, in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules, that results in a quantifiable outcome." In role-playing games, "rules are used to simulate the diegetic events, and they act as "diegetic norms in some cases. Diegesis refers to the reality within the game." According to Salen and Zimmerman, "the reality of play has special qualities, creating what Huizinga describes as a magic circle. Within this magic circle roles are guided by the rules of the game, and act as norms within the diegesis and simulate the world and events in it" (Lukka 2011, 160).

George Herbert Mead observed that role-playing is the for the establishment of self-consciousness in children. As they play, they personify the role of 'specific other' (e.g. father, mother, doctor and generally any other symbolic role) by acting as that other. Role-playing in this manner children act out one role at the time (Mead in Cronk 2016). Later on, a child enters into play with others, thus internalizing the perceived attitudes of other players of the group which as a consequence get categorized as "a generalized other." As Mead observed, "one has to be a member of a community to be a self" (Mead in Ryan 2016). The game, then, "is the stage of the social process at which the individual attains selfhood" (Cronk 2016).

Creator of transactional analysis, Eric Berne (2009), defined games in his book *Games people play* (first released in 1964) as:

an ongoing series of complementary ulterior transactions progressing to a well-defined, predictable outcome. Descriptively it is a recurring set of transactions, often repetitious, superficially plausible, with a concealed motivation; or, more colloquially, a series of moves with a snare, or "gimmick." Games are clearly differentiated from procedures, rituals, and pastimes by two chief characteristics: (1) their ulterior quality and (2) the "payoff".

We can understand the definition as a flux of 'moves' (verbal and non-verbal communication) exchanged between players (in this case, people) that play out a predictable plan of contingencies. The moves add up to a result that is one player's victory, a "payoff" or "goal." Typically, the players of Berne's games are not aware they are taking part in playing a game.

3.3 Learning goals

A learning goal can practically be just about anything an educator sets out to teach. As is the focus of this thesis, I will mostly discuss developing the leadership competency as a broader learning goal. Zooming in on leadership competency and focusing on soft skills and attitudes, this is the TOP 10 wish-list according to business managers: “integrity, communication, courtesy, responsibility, social skills, positive attitude, professionalism, flexibility, teamwork, and work ethic” (Robles 2012).

We could say that it is the learning goal that ultimately distinguishes a game from an educational-game, and while this is true that, put in a proper context any game could be interpreted as a learning experience to some extent. For the sake of the argument, let's suppose that in work life the developmental process is linear. For example, the HR specialist within a company acknowledges that a certain group of employees need to improve their negotiation skills. This need translates directly to the learning goal. Now the HR specialist will look for methods and skilled educators to facilitate education. In our case, the HR specialist was open to welcoming game-based methods.

3.4 Game theory, game mechanics, rules

For the sake of comparing different kinds of games created as game-based educational games, we need to understand the basic concepts of game theory, game mechanics and rules in particular. Game theory has produced an extensive body of knowledge on how to design and document games. Sadowski et al. (2013, 1337) used game theory as:

the structural framework for designing an experiential learning environment where students gained experience addressing ethical dilemmas as well as learned how to navigate the power dynamics of cooperation and competition with other students working through the same scenarios. Game-theoretic, experiential pedagogy moves the learning experience from passive to active, apathetic to emotionally invested, narratively closed to experimentally open, and from predictable to surprising.

Game designer Richard Rouse (in Sicart 2008) define game mechanics as *"the guts of a design document"*, describing *"what the players are able to do in the game-world, how they do it, and how that leads to a compelling game experience."* Järvinen takes a step further by

drawing a line between mechanics and rules by defining the former as *"means to guide the player into particular behaviour by constraining the space of possible plans to attain goals."* Sicart sees mechanics as an interface between the player's actions and the meaning of those actions in the game world, while understanding the rules as the "space" enabling the interaction. Sicart also admits there isn't one widely accepted definition of rules and mechanics.

3.4.1 Understanding mechanics: examples

Table 3.4: examples of game mechanics

Mechanic	Description	Comments
Turns	Turns are used to organize the sequence of player's moves. Additionally, turns can define special moves granted to players who have managed to attain an appropriate level by, for instance, collecting enough points.	An example of the turns mechanic is Chmielewski's educational LARP game <i>Cuban Crisis</i> (Branc 2014a).
Action points	Action points serve as an in-game currency that is to be earned and spent to acquire either items or the right to perform specific actions.	In LARP jargon, action points are called experience points (XP). XP are a common trait of fantasy LARP scenarios. This mechanic is also used in educational LARP run as a student activity.
Dice	A die serves the purpose of randomizing play or a certain outcome within the game.	With the <i>Survivors</i> LARP, a physical variation was introduced called the shoot-out game. An additional mechanic was added to challenge someone to a fight. The rule says that a challenge must be accepted.
Resource	Another example of in-game currency,	Such a mechanic is used in the

¹ Team building lab (2015)

management	albeit more specific and often with an attached meaning within the game-world (e.g. natural resources, upgrade abilities, trade currency). Resources might only be used for players interacting with the game, while often resources represent an interaction between players with players performing trade. Tactic management of resources will often enable the player to increase his chances of winning the game.	educational LARP designed to be run as an Assessment Centre, the “7 Samurai” (Branc 2016b). The samurai need to manage coins that represent rations. Another example is the educational LARP “The Ark” where ship's crew need to prioritize what items they will take aboard a rescue boat (Branc 2016c).
Role-playing	Role-playing is a non-quantifiable mechanic designed for performing actions of impersonating the character (or avatar) within the game. Success rate of player’s role-playing skilled is defined either by the game master facilitating the game or by players’ consensus.	
Goals	Goals may represent a general condition for winning the game, however the sheer mechanic of actually winning the game might be very specific and even unique to a game as it is the mechanic of checkmate in chess. More universally, goals serve to drive player agenda and create conflict.	

Source: summarized from Wikipedia (2016a)

3.5 Finite and infinite games

Before diving deeper into games as an educational framework to address employees, organizational culture must be considered. In my observation organizational culture is the potential and the limit to an organization's creative and innovation output. In my experience,

not every organization is able to make use of game-based learning and enjoy its benefits. Depending on the company's evolutionary phase (Bulc 2006) some companies seem to be 'ripe', while others could be far from ready.

Company culture can be seen a mosaic of its people, processes, resources, history, plans; all these elements can be seen as stones in the mosaic. The people involved must be seen as stones of various sizes, depending on the impact they make within the organization. It is safe to say that the hierarchical level plays an important role on the size of the stone. Management makes up one of the biggest stones in the mosaic. If management is too serious to embrace the idea of playful learning, the HR specialist has an impossible task in facilitating game-based training.

There is a fine modern discourse on the topic of *playing a game*, games being divided into two philosophically very distinct categories, namely *finite* and *infinite* games, as proposed by New York University's professor emeritus James P. Carse (2012). Two of the most pertinent Carse's quotes on the subject are: "A finite game is played for the purpose of winning, an infinite game for the purpose of continuing the play" and "It is an invariable principle of all play, that whoever plays, plays freely. Whoever *must* play, cannot *play*." An organization that understands play in this respect can embrace game-based learning in all its various methods and techniques. Such an organization will understand that playing a game to understand leadership, team roles, and how to negotiate might be just as effective in terms of developing team leadership competency as any other method. My observation is that it is often even more so.

3.6 Standard game-based learning methods

I wish to focus on some of the methods that organisations have been using for decades now. I will give a brief description of each, trying to explain its benefits as I would to an HR specialist.

3.6.1 Serious games

Although today the term is generally used to refer to computer games, the phrase "serious game" has been around at least since 1970, when it was used as the title of a book by Clark Abt. "*Serious games are generally defined as games that educate and entertain*" (Balzac

2010, 297). Serious and games are seemingly in direct opposition. However, the designers of serious games have a different opinion.

The serious is not everywhere isolated from the playful. Huizinga claims there is a fundamental difference between a) using games as an efficacious instrument to teach science, philosophy, or art and b) treating science, philosophy and art under the aspect of play. The point is not that education would be more "effective", like some well-oiled machine, if its methods were more playful. The point is that the subject matter of education is in some respects already playful (Rodriguez 2006).

Serious games of the twenty-first century are designed for developing skills such as ethics, leadership, negotiation, teamwork, improvisation, partial-information decisions making etc. (Balzac 2010, 295). The entertainment component of serious games aims at players' enjoyment, since this maximizes learning. Additionally, game design provides challenges to players who in turn become involved with the game-world and engaged to drive play, resulting in dealing with (demanding) situations in a fashion much similar to real-life problems. Simply put, playing a serious game provides training ground for companies to develop skills before they are needed. Besides the cost of running such learning, employees experience zero stress when experimenting and making mistakes in a safe space of the game world. (ibid., 296).

While on the topic of 'serious' I would like to reflect on Carse's (2012) and Bulc's (2006) theories by pointing out that there is a big difference between taking your business seriously and taking yourself seriously; the practitioner of the latter will surely not engage their company in game-based learning, let alone in (fantasy-themed) role-playing, while a practitioner of the former will not engage in playing games for the sake of playing but for the sake of being open to try something new. The attitude and ability of management to *try something new* is again, a consequence and a stone in the mosaic of organizational culture. It would appear that the game is rigged.

3.6.2 Simulation games

A simulation game is typically designed for two purposes: 1) to physically or virtually model a setting /situation as truthfully as possible, using technology and props and/or 2) to simulate the events and processes of a situation, again, as truthfully as possible. A simulation game is played for two purposes: 1) to as realistically as possible experience a far-fetched situation (e.g. working on Apollo 13) or 2) to provide realistic situation to train and prepare for a real-

life future task (think military simulations). Above all, when taking a part in a simulation game, players will usually receive a role. This role would likely be 'house-based' or even 'flat', so that the player can become a part of the game-world. An individual role (Branc, 2016d) would probably be overkill, unless it were directly connected to the learning goal set by the employer.

Military wargames are a very well-known example of serious games design, as are flight simulators for pilots. Businesses have used simulations of varying complexity, from simple in-basket exercises used to test someone's ability to process a heavy workload (Levy in Balzac 2010, 294), to extremely complex and elaborate simulation games designed to test a variety of different aspects of leadership or team performance (Yukl in *ibid.*). Simulation games are mainly used for educational purposes because they are either safer or cheaper than reality (or both).

Business games (also called business simulation games) are games simulating a business environment and are typically used 1) to train players in hard or soft business skills and/or 2) to evaluate and assess participant's performance. Business games are used to teach business in universities, business schools and for education of executives (Aldrich 2004).

3.6.3 Role-playing games

"In role-play the participant acts out the role of a character with a set of rules that define a situation while interacting with others who are also role-playing" (Kettula and Berghäll 2013, 6). A more precise definition of 'role' would be a role as a result of a formula: player + character (Branc 2016d). According to Bass, *"the purpose of playing a role, rather than reading or talking about a solution to an interpersonal problem without a script, is to improve learning and retention and to promote transference from the learning situation to the leadership performance on the job"* (in Guenther and Moore 2005, 60).

Role playing techniques are used in undergraduate college classes, as well as in fields as diverse as training engineers, psychologists, and social workers, and midwives. Role play is used to teach conflict resolution skills, help employers hire the right people, develop multi-cultural competency (Balzac 2016, 6), etc.

3.6.4 Comparison

As I stated in the Introduction to this thesis, it is my intention to distinguish various methods of game-based learning in order to be able to discern which method would be most suitable for a certain educational goal (with leadership in mind). My ambition to compare serious

games to other game-based learning methods is destined to fail, because of its broad definition. Saying serious games are any games designed for the purpose of learning while playing covers just about any method based in game-design. The term 'serious games' will thus be seen as an umbrella term.

Blatner (2009) sees role-playing as “*a natural vehicle for learning,*” and “*a less technologically elaborate form of simulation.*” Role-play is used across the disciplines and trades: from pilots training with flight simulators, soldiers ‘playing’ combat situations to salesmen studying how to tackle difficult customers. The goals of role-playing activities are practice of one’s abilities, working on the ‘bugs’ in scripted routines and “*preparing for unforeseen eventualities.*”

CLEAR (2016) provides another definition of role-play, which is two-fold. Firstly, it defines role-play as “*activities where students simulate a scenario by assuming specific roles. In the classroom, students can work through a situation and practice behavior for the real world.*” This definition agrees with Blatner's (2009) 'practice makes perfect' definition. Secondly, it states that “*activities may be used to shed light on any complicated topic. To be effective, students must take on the roles that they are assigned and assume the vantage point of a specific character. Some students may play themselves while others are given roles that require them to behave in a way that they would not normally conduct themselves*” (CLEAR 2016). Because of definitions like this, role-play was never clearly understood; it just sounds too mighty to be real. Finally, role-play is defined in a way that makes it impossible to understand what it exactly is in terms of game-design. It is only certain that role-play is a game-based learning method relying heavily (if not exclusively) on the game mechanic known as role-playing.

Crookall et al. (in Mochocki 2013, 60) made their statement even more firmly: “*a role-play is always a simulation.*” It would seem that any game is ultimately a simulation, even if it simulates something that does not exist, or has not yet been discovered or created.

3.7 Benefits, claims, research

One of the ways of helping a group achieve more mature relationships among its members is by having each member of the group understand how leadership and groups actually work (Wheelan in Balzac 2016, 5). Unfortunately, there is a big difference between simply

educating people on group theory and actually giving them the practical knowledge and experience: “*knowing is not the same as knowing how*” (Ossorio in *ibid.*). Green and McNeese (2007) suggest that teacher reluctance to incorporate games into curriculum is incongruent with the influx of high school and college students who grew up with games.

Without going into any particular game-based learning method, I have found these benefits:

- Increasing “levels of group tacit knowledge” (from Group as assemblage, Collective action, Phronesis to Collective improvisation; the latter allowing players to “improvise unique and effective solutions to unfamiliar, complex problems”)(Sadowski 2013)
- A game is able to manifest the gap between players’ moral ideals and moral actions and have the players become aware of the gap (Kahneman in Sadowski et al. 2013, 1327)
- Players’ constant and parallel 1) reflection of diegetic and non-diegetic events, and 2) adjustments of their “*relation to the game world, the other characters and the other players. The character's identity is also consciously developed not only by the player, but by the entire group as well.*” (Bowman in Meriläinen 2013, 53)
- ‘fiero’ effect, a state of “neurochemical high” after overcoming a difficult challenge, keeping players engaged and immersed (Sheldon in Eichelman et al. 2015, 4; McGonigal in *ibid.*)
- Students taking part in game-based learning develop:
 - “A heightened sense of self-awareness about their own beliefs and how those beliefs relate to their actions”
 - “The courage to question components of their self-identity when faced with experiences that contradict their beliefs”
 - Courage for taking risks and acting outside of their comfort zone
 - “The capacity to proactively perceive changes in a group dynamics and respond appropriately” (Sadowski et al. 2013, 1338)
- Simulation “is considered to result in improved performance, greater retention, and better understanding of complexity” (Crookall et al. in in Mochocki 2013, 60-61).

4 Role-playing (games)

4.1 A brief history

Role-playing has been a documented practice in the fields of education and psychology (Corsini 1960) since ancient Greek times (Williams et al. 2011).

Jacob L. Moreno (1889-1974), a physician working in Vienna since 1910, studied “*the nature of creativity and spontaneity inherent in and deriving from improvisational imaginative activity.*” His "Theatre of Spontaneity" project conducted with professional actors in 1921 has become the first improvisational company researching roles and play. Moreno developed a method called ‘psychodrama’ after 1925 and applied it to better the condition of psychiatric patients. Later he modified the method to work on social problems and called the new method ‘sociodrama.’ *Moreno created a dimension of actual methodology that enabled people to reflect on the way they were playing the various roles in their lives – role-playing.* This new method of role-play became adopted in organizational development in the late 1940s and became widely used in 1970s (Blatner 2009).

In a non-strict sense, Moreno's psychodrama marks the birth of role-play being applied to something else than entertainment or pleasure; it marks the birth of a new professional field in self-exploration and thus, self-betterment, which is, broadly speaking, the goal behind developing competencies. The earliest mentions of professional use of role-playing in formal education, namely medical training, that I was able to find, dates back to 1976 (Johnstone and Percival) and 1981 (Kochan in Nikendei et al. 2005, 122). It was not until my private e-mail correspondence with Adam Blatner, one of the founding fathers of modern psychodrama, that I tracked, according to Blatner, one of the earliest if not the earliest documented use of role-play for purpose of business training, dating back to 1961 (Corsini et al. 1980).

4.2 Deeper into role-playing

There is no common definition of a concept of role (Biddle et al. in Lukka 2011, 154). Two basic approaches to role-play exist, according to Van Ments (in Kettula and Berghäll 2013, 6):

structured/method-centred and unstructured/developmental. The structured/method-centred approach is designed to strengthen the participants’ skills in specific

procedures, methods, or techniques. The unstructured/developmental approach is more about learning attitudes and motivations, and it deals with fairly complex situations. The teacher does not provide models or examples of the “correct” behaviour.

Montola (in Meriläinen 2013, 52) claims it is imagination that give role-playing meaning and makes it work. When discussing drama, Leiber (in *ibid.*) says that actors practice empathetic skills by taking on the identity of their character and experiencing the life through their eyes; this process and state has been named ‘immersion’. Players of entertainment role-playing games tend to avoid character much like their own selves and show interest in exploring different personalities (*ibid.*, 62). On the contrary, playing characters that are totally unlike the player's image of self is also a popular reason for character rejection on the player's part (Branc 2014b; 2015b). Playing contrasting characters is only well-liked by a good 44% percent of LARPerS (LARP Census 2014).

4.3 Traditional, corporate role-play: an attempt at definition

When we speak about the role-play that is used as a training method for developing competencies in organisations, the same name is used as when we speak about children's role-playing games such as cowboys and Indians, elementary school role-playing games, or even adult erotic role-playing games. It is for purposes of clarity and distinction that I wish to establish a new term defining corporate role-play training: corporate role-playing games. The abbreviation CRPG will be used in this thesis. The C denotes 'corporate', since it was indeed businesses who used role-play professionally from early on, with the first occurrences dating back at least to 1961 (Corsini et al. 1980).

A definition: a corporate role-playing game (CRPG) is a method of facilitating development of skills using the game mechanic of role-play. CRPGs are conducted by actors or other professionals for organization's employees on behalf of organization's HR specialist or a member of management.

The goals of CRPG-based learning, according to my knowledge in the field, are:

- training in various procedures, used by a specific organizational work process
- developing a specific skill (e.g. active listening)

- understanding 'others' (point-of-view)
- testing out contingencies (e.g. of a sales-pitch)
- evaluation and assessment

Surely, the list is incomplete. Nonetheless, it outlines the overall goal of CRPG-based learning: training through feedback, reflection, and repetition. Such learning has evolved into an industry in the late 1990s with United Kingdom in the forefront. Professional actors are being hired to role-play with companies' employees. In UK alone, there are over twenty enterprises offering role-playing professional for business training. This type of role-play is called 'roleplay simulation'. Professional role-players (also called Interactors) seem to be prevalent in the modern, post 1990s role-play of the Western world (Wikipedia 2016b).

4.4 Benefits, claims, research

A lot has been written about the mostly positive impact of role-playing games upon soft-skill development especially. Yet, the case-studies seldom explore in-depth the various natures of game-design, or the specifics of designing and facilitating role-play. To begin with, Johnstone and Percival observed as early as 1976 that role-playing helps students concentrate above the average 15 to 20 minutes single attention-spans.

Maier (in Kettula and Berghäll 2013, 6) claims that role-playing 1) has impact on player's emotions, 2) it develops skills and 3) expands player's knowledge. Furthermore, role-play has been used extensively to *“learn professional knowledge and skills, to learn field specific concepts and the application of theories and to increase students' motivation. Role-play is also a source of self-reflection.”*

Research (Meriläinen 2013, 62–64) has shown that role-playing games develop group skills, serve as a reflectional tool, enable the development of empathy and social skills, provide space for practicing critical ethical reasoning, positively affect creativity and imagination development etc. Moreover, taking part in role-playing games had been beneficial to take on leadership positions after graduating (Guenther and Moore 2005, 59).

Bosse et al. (2015, 3) were the first to be scientifically prove the cost-effectiveness of role-play in the case of medical training methodology 'standardized patients.' Role-playing turned out to be equally effective as a simulation game, yet cheaper to facilitate. Additionally, role-

play “leads to a better understanding of patient’s perspective and therefore seems to foster a more empathic approach towards patients’ concerns justifying its prominent role in medical curricula).

5 Nordic LARP

Fatland and Wingård describe a LARP as “*a meeting between people, who through their roles, relate to each other in a fictional world*” (in Lukka 2011, 159). Meriläinen (2013, 54) defines LARP as “*...a very complex phenomenon consisting of a multitude of social and mental processes both conscious and unconscious*”, while Henriksen sees it as “*...a medium where a person, through immersion into a role and the world of this role, is given the opportunity to participate in, and interact with the contents of this world, and its participants*” (Henriksen in Henriksen 2004, 106). “*LARPs are complicated structures with an ultimately infinite number of interactions between the participants. No one sees all, hears all or understands all that any one LARP contains,*” claims Hyltoft (2010, 55).

I will write about the so-called Nordic LARP, although other forms exist. The name 'Nordic' comes from the countries it originates in: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Also the LARP biggest annual convention for LARPs, Knutepunkt, has its home in Scandinavia, held each year in one of the four Nordic LARP countries. Surprisingly, according to the LARP Census (2014), Scandinavia is not the strongest region of the world in terms of how many LARPer it has.

5.1 A brief history

LARP is presumably based on “a tradition of strategy and war games.” In 1968, the first board-gamers were created that experimented with “combining narrative immersion with strategy and war games.” In 1974 the *Dungeons & Dragons* game was published that saw millions of players in its first decade (Müller 2011, 39). The anti-role-playing game *Mazes and Monsters* (1982) is considered one of the first LARPs (Stenros and Montola 2010, 15).

Trenne byar LARP, created in the 1990s is “often credited as a starting point of the Nordic LARP community” (Stenros and Montola 2010, 15). Authors of the 1991 book *Rollespil* describe LARP as an “off spring of role-playing, a kind of live war game unfolding in Danish forests” (Johansen and Swiatek in Müller 2011, 40). The first *Nordic* LARP convention Knutepunkt was held in 1997 (Stenros and Montola 2010, 15).

A 2004 research by Gallup showed that “around twenty-seven thousand children between the ages of ten and fourteen practices LARP in July. In 2007 between fifty thousand and one

hundred thousand children engaged in LARP at least once per month” (Müller 2011, 40). Ten years later, LARPer themselves conducted an online survey and ran it in the LARPing community to better understand LARPer’s demography, as well as their motives for playing and organizing LARP events (LARP Census 2014).

5.2 Forms and genres: from mainstream to arthaus and back to CoW

Mainstream or Conventional LARP “is based on methods most often developed when adapting table-top role-playing directly to live-action. Conventional LARP is based in the “gamist” style of role-playing. This style creates structures that allow for a LARP to be won by someone, and hence lost by others” (Fatland and Wingård 2014), which is a clear trait of a finite game (Carse 2012). Conventional gamist-style LARPs encourage the use of game mechanics (experience points, avatar development, levels, campaigns, etc.) to “create fairness, and the use of secrecy and combat to create challenge. Other crucial characteristics are 1) structures that automatically discern between “important” and “unimportant” characters and a 2) dependence on a game-master's control and intervention in order for the LARP to work” (Fatland and Wingård 2014). Since the mainstream or conventional LARP in America usually employs fighting as a technique, LARPer have named it “boffer LARP”, with boffer referring to weapons made out of foam.

Nordic LARP has many forms, sometimes referred to as styles or even genres. According to the Nordic LARP (2016a), here are some examples:

- **Black box:** a black box is a room with black walls, no windows, flat floor and no furniture. Most rooms that are black or dark with little or no furniture will pass as a black box for LARP purposes, even though it would not suffice as a black box for all other purposes, such as film or TV production. By cleaning out other all visual elements, the black box makes it easy to catch attention with few and simple props or light effects. Sometimes the players are also asked to dress in black in order to strengthen this effect. Usually the black box is equipped with theatre lights and an audio system.
- **Chamber LARP:** usually a short LARP that lasts about a few hours and takes place in an enclosed area.

- **Freeform:** games tend to be strong in narrative, “with a game master taking the players from scene to scene. They are usually based on a repeatable, written, scenario.” Often freeform LARP writers refuse game mechanics.
- **Pervasive** is used to describe games that intertwine with the non-diegetic world, i.e. take place out in the real world or among people unaware of the game.
- **Progressive LARP** has recently been suggested at Knutpunkt 2014 as a replacement for the current term “Nordic LARP”. The idea is that by removing geographical signifiers the Progressive LARP movement will be immediately understood as a smaller but internationally diverse movement of artistic and experimental LARP design, not as a description of games made in the Nordic countries.

I add two more:

- **Silent LARP:** a LARP played out entirely without words. Examples are “*White Death*” and “*Isabelle*” (Branc 2016a).
- **Arthaus** refers to LARPs designed and played out as an art form

In her book *Leaving Mundania* (2012), Lizzie Stark draws a fine line between mainstream and Nordic LARP traditions: “*Many Nordic LARPs seem to be about trying out a certain mindset or exploring an emotion, rather than saving a town from orcs or finding enough loot to buy a sweet magic item.*”

LARP, being mostly a hobby for the majority of LARPerS, has seen major traction by the media with the first establishment of –Danish-Polish coproduction called the *College of Wizardry*². This is one of the first LARP projects that broke out of the LARP milieu and into the public waters. It gained new interest mostly from Harry Potter fans, since the College's story is inspired by J.K. Rowling's best-selling book series. So far, eight instalments of 150 players have been played, with two more coming up in 2016, both already sold out. The Danish-Polish blockbuster LARP has in my opinion done two things: 1) it brought LARPing to a wider audience and 2) it reaffirmed LARP as a “thing of fantasy”. With the same team creating another blockbuster “*Fairweather manor*”³, a Nordic LARP inspired by the British

² Cow (2015)

³ FM (2016)

series *Downtown Abbey*⁴, LARP is well on the journey of being publicly recognized both as entertainment and an art form, covering all genres of fiction.

5.3 The Nordic values: play to lose

Even though LARP is considered to be a role-playing game, it lacks one key feature of games: winning. The concept of winning is replaced by the idea that overall experience matters more and that the players should enable each other to immerse into roles and create collective illusion, instead of personally pursuing their character's goal. The Nordic LARP (2016b) defines 'play to lose' as: *“a technique or concept used by a player to create better drama by not trying to win, letting their character lose. It is used in a collaborative play style rather than a competitive play style, and is a clear anti-gameism statement.”* The motto 'play to lose' has been famous for establishing such a philosophy, thus positioning Nordic LARP away from finite and closer to infinite games, deducting from Carse’s (2012) theory.

5.4 Understanding Larpers

Larpers are people who enjoy LARPing and LARP in their own free time. In 2014 the research project LARP Census was carried out. Approximately 30,000 people responded from all over the world, with the majority living in the USA, Russia, UK, Germany and Denmark. Demographics: 23.5% in the age group 25-29 years and another 30.3% were between 30-39 years. 61.8% of respondents were male, and 68.2% have been involved in the LARP scene for 5 years or more (LARP census 2014). I have drawn up a table of selected research questions and claims with representation of the answers.

Table 5.4 LARP Census 2014

Census question/claim	% of respondents answered with 'strongly agree' or 'agree'
“I enjoy playing influential characters”	60.1%

⁴ IMDB (2010)

“I prefer LARPs with few or no rules or game mechanics”	25.4%
“One of the main things I enjoy about LARP is the sense of being in a different reality”	83.7%
“LARPing has taught me a lot about myself”	71.9%
“Creating a good story is an extremely important aspect of LARP for me”	86.3%
“I sometimes deliberately have my character fail because it creates a better scene”	67.0%
“I enjoy LARPs that involve intrigue, scheming and political play”	69.0%
“I enjoy LARPs that give me a new perspective on the real world”	57.4%
“I enjoy participating in dramatic moments in which characters are very emotional”	76.4%
“I enjoy playing characters who are leader”	38.2%
“I prefer to play characters who behave very differently than I would”	44.1%
“I prefer LARPs where my character must overcome challenges to achieve what they want”	76.1%
“One of the main reasons I LARP is to experience situations I don't normally experience in real life”	80.2%
“It really annoys me when people drop out of character during LARPs.”	68.5%

Source: *LARP census (2014)*

5.5 Claims: why Larpers LARP

“*LARP can change the world!*” claimed Heikki Holmås, Norway's newly-appointed Minister for International Development in March 2012 (Raven 2012).

In games we can safely fail, try out things that we would avoid in real life and be more adventurous, receptive and open-minded. We need not fear the consequences of failure and this opens the door for LARPs as a space for exploration. As safe zones, games have a huge potential as critical tools. Communities, ideals, and identities can be constructed to safely explore hypothetical scenarios. In the process of exploration, a player may uncover something about the fictional world or the fantasy self that makes more sense than their mundane counterparts. LARP can foster personal growth,

offering insights that can empower players to enact real change in their lives and environments (Stenros and Montola 2010, 25).

LARPing together creates temporary communities and builds social networks: *“As these games can portray any world or society imaginable, they are a natural tool for studying questions such as what kind of a world is possible, what the world should or could be like, and what our world actually is like. It is one thing to postulate an alternative society on paper; constructing and living in one is another thing entirely”* (Stenros and Montola 2010, 25).

“These experiences are bodily, and the endorphins and the adrenaline are very real – even though the encounters themselves are also fictional” (Stenros and Montola 2010, 25).

Wing refers to Nordic LARPing culture by saying: *“By participating in this game, we are trying to be good humans to each other”* (2016).

6 edu-LARP

“Edu-LARP is live-action roleplaying used to impart pre-determined pedagogical or didactic content” (Balzer and Kurz 2015). *“Edu-LARP can be defined as any kind of pedagogical method that uses live action role-playing as a student activity directly connected to the pedagogical purpose of the teaching or therapy”* (Hyltoft 2010, 43). *“...an immersive role-playing experience in which participants take on characters within a fictional scenario and pursue goals through various freely chosen in-character interactions occurring primarily with other player characters and governed by some set of rules”* (Balzac 2016, 7). *“Edu-LARP is simultaneously a (1) game, (2) drama/role-play, (3) simulation, and (4) designed learning environment”* (Mochocki 2013, 60–61). Furthermore, edu-LARP is “what we refer to as an action-oriented method Edu-LARP is, in the truest sense of the word, learning by doing” (Balzer in Balzer and Kurz 2015).

It is the combination of educational purpose and educational goal that make a LARP an edu-LARP, though in the strictest sense any LARP could be interpreted as edu-LARP. Any player could, before endeavouring to play a certain (entertaining) LARP scenario, contemplate and predict some learning outcome.

In the context of games, structured goals are critical because they increase player commitment, enjoyment, and learning (Balzac in Balzac 2010, 295). Players need to have the goals clearly defined at the start of the game in order to generate the appropriate level of excitement and interest (ibid).

Phil Zimbardo observed that the more people perceive themselves to be anonymous, the more likely they are to engage in evil behaviour (Zimbardo in Balzac 2010, 294). As an interesting corollary to Zimbardo’s work, when people are presented with an alternate persona, they are no longer anonymous; instead, they become free to experiment within the new role and explore the boundaries of the situation (ibid.).

In the case of children’s reading primers, far too many roleplaying exercises fail to engage participants at an emotional level. They lack clear goals, a sense of urgency, or in-game consequences for actions. As a result, participation becomes a cerebral “what-if” exercise, a pleasant abstraction without a sense of real involvement. Emotions are a critical part of our decision making process, and, when you strip them away, you get very different decisions than when they are present (Pentland in Balzac 2010, 296), compromising the value of the

simulation. Also, as previously mentioned, in such an abstract, cerebral environment making the “correct” moral and ethical choices is easy (Bandura in *ibid.*). Authors of the edu-LARP *The Ark LARP* (Branc 2016c) had the same idea in mind, thus creating an edu-LARP out of a pen & paper (cerebral) game. *“Participants learn with all their senses. They viscerally experience the content, as their entire bodies act as sounding boards both for the experience itself and for their reflections on what they have experienced and learned”* (van Ameln and Kramer in Balzer and Kurz 2015).

6.1 Edu-LARP puts the 'game' in role-playing games

“Edu-LARP is a game, and every game has rules. Since LARPing is a social game, most of these rules actually have to do with the interaction between individuals” (Hyltoft 2010, 47).

*As it is with games in general and with edu-LARPs in particular, a kind of secondary reality takes hold. Authors from different fields have described this alternative reality in a number of different ways, but often mean the same thing or at least a similar thing: the “situation of the second degree” in Brougère (in Balzer and Kurz 2015), the “frame” in Goffman (*ibid.*), the “surplus reality” in Moreno (*ibid.*), or the “magic circle of gameplay” in Huizinga (*ibid.*).*

As discussed in the chapters “Game-based learning ” and “Game-theory, game mechanics, rules” (see page 20), it is game mechanics and rules that impose more/less structure upon the game. Simply put, the more mechanics and rules, the more game. Compared to regular LARP, edu-LARP is usually more structured and relies more on mechanics.

Krzysztof Chmielewski and later Michał Mochocki positioned edu-LARP as 'a gamified drama' (Branc 2014b, 3). Taking the industry and theory of gamification into account, a gamified drama would be a drama with additional game elements (think mechanics) mixed in to create a new blend.

Edu-LARP is generally not played by Larpers, but by students and employees. So, in terms of target audience, edu-LARP is closer to CRPG than to its origin, LARP. Perhaps the thing that makes edu-LARP unique is this: it has the roots and the heart of fantasy-originating LARP and the structured mind of psychology-originating corporate role-playing games, which ostensibly makes it the best of both worlds.

6.2 Educational, but entertaining

“There are no significant signs in the games mentioned that entertainment value is inhibiting the learning gains of the students” (Hyltoft 2010, 44). When addressing the problem of student engagement, the solution could easily be to “make the game entertaining.” Whitton (cited in Mochocki 2013, 64) says *“I believe fun can be a component of an engaging experience, but not an essential one.”*

“The role-play . . . does help us (create) bubbles of intrinsic motivation by being able to actualise its problems to the participant,” admits Henriksen (cited in (Mochocki 2013, 65). The motivational factors he suggests in place of entertainment are “fruitful frustration, irritation, narrative desire, social roles and frames, etc.,” and, most notably, “Papert’s (in *ibid.*) concept of hard fun, utilising fruitful frustration as a driving incentive.” I could subscribe to all the points made by Henriksen, but I will not put them in opposition to entertainment. If the human drive for hard fun and mastery is rewarded with satisfaction (i.e. pleasure) – it *is* entertaining). Therefore, what Henriksen (2010) sees as “entertaining” vs. “non-entertaining”, I would change to “immediately entertaining (easy fun)” vs. “first frustrating, then entertaining (hard fun)” (Mochocki 2013, 65, original italics).

6.3 Designing for an educational goal

Balzer and Kurz (2015) have presented a training course in writing and running edu-LARPs for the classroom. They have divided the process into seven steps, called categories. In the category ‘Learning content’ students as game designers are invited to define concrete learning content that is to be conveyed by the game.

Balzac (2010, 300) offers some insights to help edu-LARP designers:

- Games are conducted by one or more game masters.. The game master may also take on the role of an NPC (non-player character) and act as a diegetic character.
- Different types of games require different time frames, and different time frames lead to different game behaviours. Shorter games are more intense with less character development, while longer games tend to have lower intensity, but more room for characters to develop and change in response to circumstances.

- Character sheets are the players' entry way into diegetic world. They explain who they are and why they care about their goals.
- Creating plots that force mutually incompatible goals. If all goals can be accomplished, no conflict will occur. Conflicts spark game play.

Furthermore, debriefing (and reflection) “is regarded essential, because it turns simulation into learning” (Crookall in Kettula and Berghäll 2013, 6; Sutcliffe in *ibid*; Van Mentsin in *ibid*.). The goal of the debriefing is to: “*educate the players on how their actions affected the other players in the game, and how those actions might appear to an outside observer. Players can understand the longer-term consequences of their actions and how those actions might affect the world beyond the end of the game*” (Balzac 2010, 312).

Several authors have been developing the so-called 'Mixing desk of LARP'(2016), which serves the purpose of designing a LARP scenario by making several choices on an anaogue scale of “*dichotomies where a LARP positions itself somewhere between the two extremes.*”

6.3.1 Case-study: “The Ark”

An example of how educational goals drive edu-LARP design is the scenario “*The Ark*”, written by Žiga Novak and myself in 2016 (Branc 2016c).

The problem it addresses is 'silo mentality', which describes a ‘survival mode’ of the company where coworkers refuse to take responsibilities beyond their ‘realm’ and refuse to share ‘their own’ information in order to secure their jobs.

The target group is middle-management, specifically department heads.

What makes *The Ark* special is the concept of its creation; it was created out of an existing edu-LARP and several other learning games. To be exact: *The Ark* is a *LARPified* blend of business games.

Story

The story is that of a luxurious ocean cruiser *The Ark*, on its way across the Atlantic. The players are the ship’s crew, divided into four different factions: the engine room, kitchen staff, administration, and navigation. During the cruise, the ship is hit by a powerful storm and is set on fire by lightning. After the storm, the crew must prioritize rescued items to be taken on-board the rescue vessel.

Core game design components

- *The Ark* is based on the pen & paper simulation game “*Lost at Sea*” by Grahame Knox (2009), popularly used as a team-building game. In this simulation, items found on board of a ship must be prioritized for evacuation.
- The idea of 'departmentalization' and the introduction of asymmetric goals and information was taken from “*Dust over Assling City*” (Branc 2015a)
- The mechanic of breaking into the captain's cabin works by the principles of “escape room” riddles

Educational goals

The game was designed in hopes that the players would:

- establish cooperation within their department
- establish cooperation between departments
- trust and share information
- come to a decision as an individual, as a team, and as a collective
- have a major take-away: *"we are all in the same boat"*

The result and conclusions

Studies show that the greater the so-called "emotional distance" to the problem, the better the players' skill at mental problem solving. This works if your job actually is a pen & paper simulation in a nice cosy room. Edu-LARP as a game-based method was chosen to decrease the emotional distance and increase the impact on players' survivor instincts.

The Ark is designed to have the players highly emotionally involved, working under realistic psycho-physical conditions. The authors argue: “*If you're able to think straight in the face of the submerging ship and a lunatic captain (with all departments wanting to push their objects to the top of priority list), you might do well tomorrow in the office, too*” (Branc 2016c).

The Ark first ran in April 2016. Immediately after the game in the de-briefing session, one of the players exclaimed: “but we're all in the same boat!” The educational goal was achieved by other players confirming their colleague's realization.

6.4 Claims and praxis/research-proven effects

Most authors view edu-LARP as a method of fostering learning and training of skills and attitudes. Efficiency of transferring subject-matter knowledge is regarded problematic even by LARP educators. Mochocki agrees that “LARP is inefficient in delivering new content”, but concludes “it is efficient for *reviewing and broadening prior knowledge*” (Mochocki 2013, 59–60). Hyltoft (2010, 56) sees four main advantages of using edu-LARP for fostering learning: “distraction from everyday life, motivational strength, heightened activity level of the students, and student empowerment.” Edu-LARP also enables students to move freely around the designated space (ibid., 54), something that table-top role-playing games do not.

The compressed time period of a game allows players to make decisions under stress and learn the longer-term results of their actions within a relatively short period of time. This makes it considerably easier to connect cause and effect both logically and emotionally (Balzac 2010, 316).

LARP participation yields a deeper and richer understanding of leadership, group dynamics, and decision making than would be obtained from merely reading about these topics or from participating in a simpler role-playing activity. The complexity of the LARP contributes to the depth of role immersion, and enables participants to gain access to the more abstract and less obvious social forces at play (Balzac 2016, 11–12).

Participants in an edu-LARP learn not only with their heads but with their guts, with their emotions, senses, and intellects. It is by simultaneously addressing the cognitive and the emotional faculties that the learning content becomes truly relevant and emotionally meaningful to the learner. This means that they can learn more easily and, above all, with greater retention (van Ameln and Kramer in Balzer and Kurz 2015).

Balzac (2010, 297) notes: “*Someone who deals with an unexpected problem or setback in the game by giving up is also likely to do the equivalent at the office. Conversely, when someone demonstrates unexpected skills or talents within the game, this is often a clue that the person is capable of doing more than they are currently being given the opportunity to do in their job.*” Finally, with edu-LARP, we could even learn about the future (Candy 2016).

7 Comparing CRPG to edu-LARP

As to corporate role-playing games, I shall now refrain from using the term 'game', since too few (if any) additional game mechanics and rules exist. Corporate role-play will be addressed as such, CRP in short.

To sum up, a CRP serves the purpose of players getting better at handling specific situations (e.g. the patient dies), understanding the ecosystem of stakeholders (doctor, hospital director, relatives, main nurse, nurses, the morgue, police, the press), learning procedures and generally to get ready for a real-life situation that would become player's reality. Usually, taking part in a CRP has high level of institutionalization in it and a likely obligation to attend (sales training course, nurse job training). A CRP would usually be facilitated by a professional (facilitator, psychologist, HR specialist, interactor). The professional would usually be hired and paid for conducting the role-play by the institution where the players work/live.

A LARP can serve many purposes, whereas the ones described above would not be one of them. Based on LARP Census survey results (2014), players would join the role-playing on their own accord and in their own free time. The reasons are either entertainment or (self)exploration. Likely, for some, the two reasons are one and the same. Often players join the LARP to experience something extraordinary that would not be possible in their real lives (80.2% of Larpers, according to LARP Census 2014): becoming a member of the crew at *Battlestar galactica*, being a patient in a mental institution, negotiating the outcome of Cold War, waiting for a flight that will never arrive, studying at the *College of Wizardry*, etc. The facilitators are not hired but organize and run the LARP by their own free will. Mostly they get paid peanuts by the players, because there is a general agreement that LARPs are not a pro-profit endeavour.

What about edu-LARP? Edu-LARPs seem to be a mixture of both, CRP and LARP. In many respects they are even closer to CRP.

7.1 Elements and traits

Whereas CRP has its origins in psychodrama and improvisational theatre, edu-LARP has its in (fantasy) table-top role-playing games.

Personally, I see edu-LARP as a child of CRP and LARP. Yet, if you have not experienced LARP, you would likely not understand the difference between them.

The comparison of edu-LARP to CRP led to the creation of the following table. The reader should keep in mind that the term CRP is not sufficiently narrow-defined; you might have taken part in a corporate role-play that had different characteristic than the one mapped out here. But it is likely you have not.

Table 7.1: comparison of corporate role-play and edu-LARP

Element/trait	Corporate role-play (CRP)	Edu-LARP
Purpose	1) To train procedures, 2) to train a hard-skill, 3) to understand one's role from different perspectives	1) understanding complexity, 2) synthesis of complex subject matter, 3) deep realization and a change in attitude
Designed for some entertainment value	No (low)	Acceptable (medium)
Play-time (single run)	Short (up to 45 minutes)	Medium (up to 150 minutes)
Number of players	Up to 8	Unlimited (often more than 20)
Facilitator	Outside facilitator	In-character game-master
Facilitator's background (core business)	Actor (drama trained, theatre), Non-formal educators (business coach)	Formal educator (teacher) Non-formal educators (business coach) Professional LARPer
Facilitator's workload	Low	Mid-high
Game master intervention	Non-diegetic	Diegetic (in-character)
Non-player characters	No	Yes
Audience	Yes, called 'watchers'	No
Primary game mechanic	Role-play	Role-play
Other game mechanic	Few, if any.	Numerous

	Goal	
Competitive & Co-operative gameplay	Competitive - Fixed	Competitive & Cooperative - Dynamic (plot turns)
In-game (unforeseen) events	No	Yes (conducted by game master)
Playing type	Pretend-play	Acting and performing actions
Improvisational space	Tiny	Medium
Nesting of other complete games	No	Yes (e.g. escape room elements become a mechanic, contextualized)
Story	None, just context	Elaborate
Plot	A 1-chapter scenario	Multiple chapters (though usually 3, Greek tragedy format)
Plot drivers	Single-goal resolution	Individual tasks Individual goals House-based goals Internal conflict Other game mechanics
Number of stakeholders (perspectives)	Usually 2	Complete stakeholder system
Time represented in game	A slice of life	A chapter in life
Scenario complexity	Low	Mid-high
Narrative	None	Strong, creative
Context	True	Fantasy/Fiction/True
Game-world type	Cause and effect, rational and predictable world	Agreed-upon world. Even when realistic and rational, god is present both as fate (limitation imposed by game design) and as mystery (chance, offered by larger improvisational space and

		less structure)
Time distortion (diegetic vs. non-diegetic time)	Low	Potentially high
Character's personality depth	None/shallow	Depth varies upon the scenario
Role-types	House-based roles	All role-types
Transition into character	By imagining	1) Character sheet, 2) relating to other characters, 3) extensive warm-up workshops
Main interaction partner to a player	Interactor (actor or professional facilitator)	Other players
External conflict	Yes	Yes
Internal, character's conflict	No	Yes
Player-Character conflict	Possible; requires resolving	Possible; needs reflection
Ideal educational goals	1) Training fixed procedures	1) Understanding complex multiple stakeholder situations
Cost-effectiveness, regarding educational goals: Learning procedures		
• Recalling memorized routines	High	Low
• In-situ decision-making (limited choice)	High	Medium
• Simple negotiations, 2-party	High	Low-medium
• Complex negotiations, 3+ party	Medium	Medium-high
• Learning about other(s)	Medium-low	High
• Change of perspective	Low	High

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grasping new abstract concepts • Developing leadership skills • A change in attitudes 	<p style="text-align: center;">Low</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Medium</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Low</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">High</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Medium-high</p> <p style="text-align: center;">High</p>
Attitude towards outcome	Ulterior motive	Play to lose

8 Conclusions

Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* (1938) central theory "suggests that play is primary to and is a necessary condition for the generation of culture." Huizinga is of course thinking about societal culture, while I have organizational culture in mind. If an organization wants to take advantage of game-based learning, it will have most success not by using games to facilitate (better) learning, but by becoming (more) playful itself.

I have managed to show the claims and scientifically proven effects of game-based methods on learning. So far I have not found a study on how organizational culture enables the effects of such learning, nor have I found research on how using game-based learning changes organizational culture or what the most significant implications of such a change would be.

There was extensive need for positioning edu-LARP as a promising corporate training method. In order to do so, I wanted to identify the 'neighbouring' methods, or the 'products already existing on the shelf'. From my experience, serious games, simulation games, and role-play have been the most common HR developmental methods when it comes to game-based learning. Surveying the literature and comparing it, I realized that serious games are the umbrella term and, by definition, the category into which edu-LARP falls into. Later it became clear that all role-playing games are ultimately a simulation. It could be said that simulation is a property of (role-playing) games. Different game design choices are available: to simulate 1) expected reality, 2) distant future reality, 3) a historical setting, or even 4) a (science)fictional setting.

Lastly, the analysis came down to comparing classical corporate role-playing to edu-LARPs. I have established that classical corporate role-playing games are not games per se, since they only have one mechanic, that of being based on role-play. The origins of both methods are quite different: corporate role-play (CRP) originates in Moreno's psychodrama and its adaptations, edu-LARP originates in table-top fantasy games and, Nordic LARP.

A detailed analysis of CRP and edu-LARP showed that both methods share common traits and elements in terms of facilitating learning for selected educational goals. However, my analysis show that the methods are significantly different. Whereas CRP is cost-effective for

the purposes of training hard skills, practising procedures, and just generally for preparing for an immediate reality, edu-LARP is best suited for two specific goals: 1) realizations of (subconscious) attitudes and 2) understanding of complex, multi-stakeholder issues. By applying simulation, edu-LARP may come to resolve what surfaces and what was made understood.

“Role-play is nothing more than rehearsal,” as Blatner claims (2009). Introducing some marketing talk, we could come up with the slogan *Explore and understand with edu-LARP, rehearse with corporate role-play.*

In abstract terms, what is the space of exploration (Stenros and Montola 2010, 25) that edu-LARP is supposed to handle well? I shall return to attitudes as Merriam-Webster's dictionary 6) defines them: *“an organismic state of readiness to respond in a characteristic way to a stimulus (as an object, concept, or situation).”* This reminds me of a quote from Viktor Frankl: *“Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our happiness”* (Covey in Pattakos 2010, 6). I believe this is edu-LARP's strongest suit: to explore within the space between stimulus and response, while uncovering players' attitudes and offering realization of new attitudes about new concepts.

I have come to understand that the ultimate learning experience is a game-based learning experience. Furthermore, I understand now that such a game would be a serious game first of all. Secondly, the game ought to be a simulation game for one simple reason: simulation provides realism (even if of a fantasy world) and structure: *“structure is the back-door to immersion for technical peoples.”* Thirdly, the ultimate game's designer should come to a decision on the ultimate learning objective.

As is the case with this thesis, a learning objective would be developing leadership competencies and thus, alas, role-playing would have to be one of the major game mechanics. At the end of the day, all classifications would be proper and right: the ultimate game is an edu-LARP, which is simulation and is a serious game.

An element of facilitating game-based learning that has surprisingly unanimous support (e.g. (e.g. Meriläinen 2013, 53; Branc 2015c; Kettula and Berghäll 2013, 15) is the so-called 'debrief,' which is actually a non-diegetic event where most learning and synthesis happens.

⁵ Private correspondence with Krzysztof Chmielewski, 2015

So, coming back to reality, players should be prepared to bring treasures from the alternate world where, free from personality, exploration was even fun.

Hopefully, this thesis would help the HR specialist understand game-based learning and edu-LARP in particular, its benefits and methods to be able to inquire about the ultimate game for her organizational needs. Ultimately, even with ready-made scenarios, custom adaptations are the reality of an educational game designer's work.

But above all: I believe the true power of edu-LARPs lies in alternate scenarios that wish to offer a new perspective or a deeper understanding. It is a waste to create edu-LARPs solely for the purpose of training a skill. For example: with an edu-LARP, you would not learn negotiations by playing yourself in one of the rooms of your company, but you would play and thus learn as Nikita Khrushchev in 1962, negotiating the outcome of Cold War (Branc 2014a). If you train negotiations acting as someone radically different than the idea you have about yourself, you might expect radically different results. *“Self-awareness is an integral part of problem-solving and communications and self-awareness is essential to understanding others; and the best way to learn skills is through role-playing,”* claims Blatner (2009).

It is easy to be self-aware when, paradoxically, you invest effort in being somebody else. By being somebody else (the character in an edu-LARP), you actually have an 'outside' reference point from which the self can be seen.

9 POVZETEK V SLOVENSKEM JEZIKU

Namen je preučiti na igri temelječo metodo edu-LARP (angl. educational live-action role-playing) in jo postaviti na 'policio' metod na igri temelječega treninga, ki jih že uproablajo kot organizacijski trening predvsem t. i. mehkih veščin. Od obstoječih metod bom podrobeje predstavil 'resne igre', 'simulacijske igre' in 'igre vlog.' Vse metode bom predstavil v luči razvoja kompetenc voditeljstva.

Fokus teoretske raziskave je odgovoriti na naslednji dve tezi:

1. edu-LARP ni le podzvrst klasične igre vlog, ki se uporablja kot organizacijski trening;
2. edu-LARP omogoče učno izkušnjo, kakršne obstoječe na igri temelječe metode treninga ne omogočajo.

Edu-LARP je, po izkušnjah avtorja, na igri temelječa metoda učenja, ki vnaša novosti in svežino v organizacijski trening mehkih veščin in odnosov. Najbolj primerna je za odkrivanje prepričanj in nezavednih odnosov (angl. attitudes), za razumevanje kompleksnih, večdeležniških situacij in za trening mehkih veščin izven dosega osebnostnih omejitev igralca.

VLOGA HRM V ORGANIZACIJI

Upravljanje človeških virov (angl. human resources management, v nadaljevanju HRM) je poslovni proces, ki ga vodijo specialisti z različnih kadrovskih področij. Eno od področij je razvoj človeških virov. Kar se pravzaprav razvija, so t. i. kompetence.

Kompetence lahko razumemo kot sestav znanj, veščin in odnosov. V kadrovski praksi uporabljamo KSA model, pri čemer 'K' predstavlja znanje (angl. knowledge), 'S' veščine (angl. skills) in 'A' odnose (angl. attitudes). Kompetence so torej več kot le znanje. Kompetence predstavljajo sposobnost posameznika, da se sooči in razreši kompleksne praktične izzive v kontekstu delovnega okolja (OECD 2005, 4). Fokus te diplomske naloge so voditeljske kompetence. Ključni del voditeljstva je sposobnost pritegnitve in zadržanja sodelavcev. Sodelavci so potrebni, saj voditelj sam ne more doseči organizacijskih ciljev (Balzac 2016, 4). Veščine iz modela KSA razumemo v več plasteh: trde veščine se nanašajo

na tehnično ekspertizo in znanje, potrebno za opravljanje dela. Mehke veščine pa so medosebne, poznane tudi kot človeške veščine (angl. people skills) in komunikacijske veščine. Današnji in poslovni voditelji prihodnosti poudarjajo pomen mehkih veščin, najvišje razvrščene so integriteta, komunikacija, vljudnost, odgovornost, socialne veščine, pozitiven odnos, profesionalizem, fleksibilnost, timsko delo in delovna etika (Robles 2012).

Delodajalci poudarjajo pomanjkanje mehkih veščin pri diplomantih že vsaj od 80. let prejšnjega stoletja. Naraščajoča je potreba razvoja mehkih veščin, predvsem pa kompetenc voditeljstva že v okviru visokošolskega izobraževanja (Guenther in Moore 2005, 59; Kettula in Berghäll 2013, 3; Eichelman et al 2015 3–4). Fakultete se za ta namen poslužujejo različnih metod, pri čemer je igra vlog ena najširše uporabljenih (Guenther in Moore 2005, 60; Kettula in Berghäll 2013, 3;)

NA IGRI TEMELJEČE UČENJE

Na igri temelječe učenje (angl. game-based learning, v nadaljevanju ITU) vključuje elemente igre, kot je hipna povratna informacija, spodobnost vživljanja, zgodba, ekipe, cilji ((Eichelman et al 2015, 2). ITU je v širšem okviru metoda izkustvenega učenja, kakor ga je definiral Kolb (1984), saj vključuje vse štiri kategorije Kolbovega cikla: 1) abstraktna konceptualizacija, 2) aktivna eksperimentacija, 3) konkretna izkušnja in 4) opazovanje z refleksijo. Igra je prepoznana kot učinkovito okolje za učenje (Winnicott v Balzac 2016, 5).

Igranje Huizinga (Kendrick 2009, 45) opredeli kot: *»[...] prostovoljno aktivnost, izvedeno znotraj mej časa in prostora ter pravil, prostovoljno sprejetih, čeprav zavezujočih. Aktivnost ima namen sama v sebi, zanjo je značilen občutek napetosti, veselja in zavesti, da je 'drugačna' oblika 'navadnega življenja'«*. Obstaja namreč razlika med igranjem (angl. play) in igro (angl. game) (Kendrick 2009, 49). Z igro razumemo sistem, v katerem se igralci angažirajo v navideznem konfliktu, ki privede do merljivega rezultata (Salen in Zimmerman v Lukka 2011, 159). Realnost igre ima posebne kvalitete, ki jih Huizinga opisuje kot 'magični krog' (ibid., 160).

Učni cilj je tisti, ki običajno igro spremeni v izobraževalno igro, običajno učenje pa v na igri temelječe učenje, čeprav drži, da do neke mere lahko vsako igro smatramo za izobraževalno, tudi če to ni njen namen. ITU pa so igre, zasnovane za specifične učne cilje, kjer je zabava ob igranju le nenujni stranski učinek. Igralci v svetu igre operirajo prek t. i. mehanik, ki

opisujejo, kaj igralec lahko v igri naredi, kako to naredi in kako to vodi do zadovoljujoče izkušnje igranja. Igre vodijo vedenje igralca in ustvarjajo interakcijo – s samo igro in z drugimi igralci. Pravila igre pa so tista, ki določajo prostor za interakcije (Sicart 2008). Ena takšnih mehanik igre je igranje vlog.

Resne igre (angl. serious games) so nadpomenka vseh iger, oblikovanih z namenom učenja. Resne igre so igre, ki izobražujejo in zabavajo (Balzac 2010, 297). Simulacijske igre so oblikovane z namenom, da igralno okolje in izkustvo igre, prav tako mehanike in pravila, približajo dejanski situaciji (npr. vojaške igre, simulacije letenja). Med simulacijske igre sodijo tudi poslovne igre, katerih namen je omogočiti učno izkušnjo poslovnega sveta (Aldrich 2004). V igrah vlog udeleženci igrajo svoj lik z naborom pravil, ki določajo situacijo, v kateri je udeleženec v interakciji z drugimi igralci, ki prav tako igrajo vlogo na podlagi svojega lika (Feinstein v Kettula in Berghäll 2013, 6).

Primerjava zgoraj omenjenih metod na igri temelječega učenja pokaže, da so resne igre nadpomenka. Nadalje, vsaka izobraževalna igra je do neke mere simulacija (Crookall et al v Mochocki 2013, 60). Tako je igra vlog resna igra z večjo ali manjšo mero simulacije.

Raziskave in praktične izkušnje uporabe iger kot metod učenja, tako v formalnem izobraževanju kot v treningu profesionalcev, kažejo številne pozitivne učinke: razumevanje voditeljstva (Wheelan v Balzac 2016, 5), razvoj tacitnega znanje skupine (Sadowski et al 2013), vključitev samoizključenih članov v skupini (Mochocki 2013, 66), prepoznavanje sebe kot akterja v etičnih dilemah (Sadowski in Sadowski 2013 et al, 1327), refleksija sebe kot igralca in lik (Bowman in Meriläinen 2013, 53), 'fiero' izkušnja adrenalinskega zagona za premagovanje ovir (Eichelman et al 2015, 4), povečana učinkovitost, višje pomnenje in boljše razumevanje kompleksnosti (Mochocki 2013, 60-61).

IGRE VLOG

Praksa igranja vlog izhaja iz antične Grčije (Williams in drugi 2011), aplikativno in sistematizirano rabo za namen izobraževanja pa je Zahod prepoznal v metodi psihodrama J. L. Morena v 40. letih 20. stoletja (Blatner 2009), ki se je sprva uporabljala za psihološko transformativni trening gledaliških igralcev. Moreno je vloge definiral kot »dejanske in oprijemljive forme, ki jih zavzema Sebstvo« (Moreno v Propper 2014, 4). Potrebno je razlikovati med konceptoma vloge in osebnosti. Emmerich (v Lukka 2011, 159) pojasnjuje,

da osebnost izvira iz vedenja ene osebe v različnih (družbenih) vlogah, koncept vloge pa izhaja iz tipičnega vedenja osebe v eni specifični vlogi.

Ko govorimo o uporabi iger vlog za organizacijski trening, lahko govorimo o specifični vrsti, ki jo imenujemo klasična oz. korporativna igra vlog (v nadaljevanju KIV). Učni cilji KIV so trening trdih veščin, trening ene specifične veščine (npr. aktivno poslušanje), razumevanje drugega (druge perspektive), raziskovanje in testiranje različnih razvojnih situacij (npr. prodajna pogajanja) ter ocenjevanje in evalvacija. Prva znanstveno dokumentirana uporaba KIV sega v leto 1961 (Corsini in drugi 1980).

Učni učinki iger vlog so v znanstveni in strokovni literaturi obsežno dokumentirani, najpogosteje pa navajajo: ohranjanje daljših intervalov pozornosti na učitelju (Johnstone in Percival 1976), vplivanje na čustveno stanje, razvoj veščin, razširjanje informacijske in kognicijske baze znanja (Maier v Kettula in Berghäll 2013, 6), razvoj generičnih veščin, področno specifičnih konceptov in aplikacije teorij, povečanje motivacije za učenje (Kettula in Berghäll 2013, 6), spoznavanje in razumevanje sebe (Kettula in Berghäll 2013, 15), razvoj empatičnosti (Meriläinen 2013, 51), razvoj pozitivne interakcije in razvoj ekipnih veščin (Meriläinen 2013, 62) itd.

NORDIJSKI LARP

Nordijski LARP (live-action role-playing) Fatland in Wingård opisujeta kot »srečanje med ljudmi, ki skozi svoje vloge ustvarjajo medosebne odnose v namišljenem svetu (Lukka 2011, 159)«. LARP je kompleksna struktura z neskončno možnimi interakcijami med igralci (Hyltoft 2010, 55). Igralne mehanike so redke (Stenros in Montola 2010, 20). Nordijski LARP izvira iz amerškega, t. i. 'mainstream' fantazijskega LARP, ki se je razvil kot utelešena izkušnja igranja namizne fantazijske igre vlog 'Dungeons and dragons' iz leta 1974 (Stenros in Montola 2010, 15). Zibelko predstavljajo skandinavske države, podatki raziskave LARP Census iz leta 2014 pa kažejo, da je nordijski LARP po državah, iz katerih prihajajo igralci, že zdavnaj prerastel številčnost igralcev v svoji 'domovini'. Nordijski LARP se od ameriškega razlikuje po tem, da je opustil igranje fantazijskih scenarijev in teme črpa v polpretekli zgodovini, dramatici in fikciji. Lizzie Stark (2012) obe vrsti razlikuje: *»Številni nordijski LARP se vrtijo okoli preizkušanja različnih miselnih naravnosti in raziskovanja čustev, medtem ko mainstream LARP zanima, kako rešiti mesto pred orki.«* Avtorji in igralci

nordijskega LARP na to temo ustvarjajo znanstvena dela, številni so magisteriji in doktorske naloge (Stenros in Montola 2010, 28). Ena glavnih vrednot nordijskega LARP je načelo »igraj, da bi izgubil« (angl. play to lose), s čimer nakazujejo, da naj bo igralec pripravljen žrtvovati uspeh svojega lika, če s tem omogoči bolj razgibano, dramatično izkušnjo igranja drugim igralcem oz. igralcem kot celoti. Glavni razlogi za igranje nordijskega LARP so: bivanje v drugi realnosti, kolektivno ustvarjanje dobre zgodbe in izkušanje situacij, v katerih se v običajnem življenju ne bi mogli znajti (LARP Census 2014). Norveški minister za mednarodni razvoj Heikki Holmås je vzkliknil: »LARP lahko spremeni svet!« (Raven 2012)

EDU-LARP

»Edu-LARP je utelešena igra vlog, uporabljena za posredovanje vnaprej določene pedagoške ali didaktične vsebine (Balzer in Kurz 2015).« Edu-LARP definirajo trije aspekti: izobraževalni, utelešeni in igra vlog. Izobraževalni pomeni, da imajo organizatorji načrt za pridobivanje znanja ali veščine oz. korekcije določenega vedenja skozi medij LARP-a. Da lahko govorimo o utelešenem, se mora interakcija dogajati med igralci in ne med igralcem in tehnologijo. Igra vlog je narativni element, »prevzemanje vlog s strani igralcev in splošni konsenz igranja, ki označuje vsako igro« (Hyltoft 2010, 44). Torej sta izobraževalni namen in izobraževalni cilj tista, ki določata načrtovanje in izvedbo edu-LARP. Strukturirani izobraževalni cilj so nujni, saj povečajo zavzetost igralcev, užitek in učenje (Balzac, S. 2007). Čustva so ključni del človekove sposobnosti odločanja; če jih odstranimo kot komponento igre ali simulacije, dobimo precej različne rezultate, ki ne odsevajo realnosti simulirane situacije. V takšnih 'cerebralnih' simulacijah je lahko sprejemati etične odločitve. Primer takšne cerebralne igre je igra *Lost at sea* avtorja Grahama Knoxa. Primer ustvarjanja edu-LARP z vključeno čustveno komponento pa *The Ark*, ki je nastal na podlagi namizne (angl. pen and paper) igre *Lost at sea* (Branc 2016c). Edu-LARP je akcijsko orientirana metoda; v najožjem smislu je 'učenje iz prakse' (angl. learning by doing). Pri načrtovanju edu-LARP scenarija je prisotna dilema, v kolikšni meri naj bo igra tudi zabavna.

Hyltoft (2010, 44) trdi, da pri učnih igrah zabavnost igre v ničemer ne zmanjšuje učnih učinkov. Hyltoft je bivši so-ravnatelj danske gimnazije Østerskov Efterskole, kjer zaključna letnika v celoti potekata v formatu edu-LARP. Večina avtorjev vidi edu-LARP kot metodo za učenje in trening mehkih veščin, odnosov in konceptov. Med konkretnimi učinki avtorji navajajo: motivacijsko moč, zvišano aktivnost študentov, opolnomočenje študentov (Hyltoft

2010, p. 56), sprejemanje odločitev pod stresom, zavedanje dolgoročnih posledic svojih odločitev, razumevanje voditeljstva, skupinske dinamike (Balzac 2010, 316) in celo učenje o prihodnosti (Candy 2016).

PRIMERJAVA KIV IN EDU-LARP

Korporativne igre vlog (KIV) uporabljajo eno samo igralno mehaniko: igro vlog, edu-LARP uporablja številne mehanike, zato je edu-LARP igra v pravem pomenu besede. Jasno je, da so razlike med KIV in nordijskim LARP številne. Za edu-LARP pa bi lahko rekli, da je križanec med nordijskim LARP in KIV, saj je tudi sam precej različen od svojega izvirnika, LARP.

Tabela 1: Ključne razlike med KIV in edu-LARP

Element/lastnost	Korporativna igra vlog (KIV)	Edu-LARP
Namen	1) Trening postopkov, 2) trening trdih veščin, 3) razumevanje svoje vloge skozi perspektive drugih	1) Razumevanje kompleksnosti, 2) sinteza kompleksne učne snovi, 3) globoka realizacija in sprememba v odnosu (do konceptov, deležnikov)
Trajanje igre	Kratko (do 45 minut)	Daljše (do 150 minut)
Moderator igre	Zunanji moderator	Game master v vlogi
Game master intervencije	Ne-diegetične	Diegetične (v liku)
Občinstvo	Da, 'opazovalci'	Ne
Druge igralne mehanike	Redko Cilj	Številne
Zgodba	Ne, samo kontekst	Obširna
Zaplet	Scenarij z enim poglavjem	Številna poglavja (običajno tri, po vzoru grške antične dramatike)
Narativ	Brez	Močna, kreativne oblike
Kontekst	Realen	Fantazija/domišljjski/realen
Svet igre	Vzrok in posledica,	Dogovorjen svet. Tudi, če je

	racionalen in predvidljiv svet	realen in racionalen, je Bog še vedno prisoten kot usoda (omejitve igre) in kot misterij (nepredvidljive priložnosti izhajajo iz širokega improvizacijskega prostora in ohlapne strukture igre)
Globina osebnosti lika	Plitka	Odvisna od tipa scenarija
Tipi vlog	'Hišne' vloge	Vsi tipi vlog
Prehod v lik	Z imaginacijo	1) Osebna mapa lika, 2) grajenje odnosov z drugimi liki (igralci), 3) uvodne delavnice
Glavni interakcijski partnerji igralcu	Interaktor (najeti profesionalni igralec)	Drugi igralci
Idealen izobraževalni cilj	1) Trening postopkov in povezanih trdih veščin	1) Razumevanje kompleksnih večdeležniških situacij in povezanih konceptov

ZAKLJUČEK

Analiza je uspela pokazati učinke na igri temelječega učenja, tako v okviru formalnega izobraževanja, kot strokovnega izobraževanja odraslih. Edu-LARP kot metoda na igri temelječega učenja sodi v širši okvir resnih iger. Glede na izobraževalne cilje je lahko v manjši ali večji meri tudi simulacijska igra oz. ima poudarjene lastnosti simulacije. In nenazadnje sodi v skupino iger vlog, saj je igranje vlog ključna igralna mehanika metode edu-LARP. Potem, ko smo uspeli vzpostaviti nov tip iger vlog, korporativno igro vlog (KIV), je postala nujna primerjava med to, v podjetjih klasično uporabljano metodo, ter novo metodo edu-LARP. Primerjava po elementih igre ter lastnostih je pokazala ključno razliko v idealnih izobraževalnih ciljih, za katero je posamezna metoda najbolj primerna. Pri KIV je to trening postopkov in povezanih trdih veščin, pri edu-LARP pa razumevanje kompleksnih

večdeležniških situacij in povezanih konceptov. Za rezultate učenja pa je pri obeh metodah ključna sklepna faza moderiranja igre, povzetek in refleksije (angl. debrief and reflections), kjer se iz igralne izkušnje in dogodkov znotraj igre črpa ključna sporočila in ugotovitve tako udeležencev, kot moderatorja oz. game masterja igre.

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