

GAME ON- FIRST STEPS INTO EDULARP

Imprint

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Introduction

Have you ever larped before? And done it with educational aims?

If yes: you already experienced the world of educational Live Action Role-Playing (edularp). That is great! If no: no problem. The guide is aimed to take you by the hand and help you take the first steps into this fascinating world of an innovative, educational method.

In both cases: please use this guide as a practical tool, read chapters you are interested in and learn from the presented experience. Use the guide for your individual aims, involve young people and let them be part of learning experiences through larps.

But first back to the beginning: The guide was created as part of the Erasmus+-project "eduLARP" including the following **3 partner organisations**:

- [Jugendagentur](#) focuses on European youth projects. One core experience is digital communication.
- [Nausika](#) develops high-quality learning in non-formal education and has a lot of experience with role-playing games and events.
- [Waldritter](#) works in the field of non-formal (youth) education and has expertise in the areas of political education, youth work, gamification and conducting events.

The aim of the project was to learn from each other, to experience edularp, find ways to hybridize the method, include different perspectives and to share our findings. That's why you can browse through this collection of edu larp information now!

So, what will you find in this guide? To get a taste of edularps, the guide starts with an overview on various aspects that **define the field of edularps** based on experiences of Nausika and Waldritter.

To expand the basic understanding of edularps, **chapter 3** provides **concrete concepts** with ready-to-play scenarios. On the one hand, we focus on environment protection and climate change. On the other hand, the second focus lies on technical developments and communication.

Chapter 4 widens our technical/communicative perspective and adds information on how to use **digital tools**. Expanding our digitalisation strategy might help to increase the participation of young people in our project developments.

Chapter 5 shows how we (within the project) tried out **hybridizing strategies**. One workshop in Germany and one in Poland were conducted as well as additive online offers. This chapter secures, disseminates and evaluates our results and findings of the workshops.

A **concluding chapter** shows further thoughts on **digital edularps**. And as a final addition, the **appendix** broadens the view on more **edularp projects within the European context** and presents links to already published scenarios.

Is there more to say? Yes. We thank you for your interest in edularps. We hope this guide provides useful information on various topics to arouse awareness about the innovative method and to improve the quality of youth work through edularp and digital skills. Hopefully, even more young people can experience learning through educational larps.

We are happy for comments and thoughts. Now you can finally start reading the good stuff ;)



**What is
edularp?**

The following description and explanation of Edularp is primarily based on the experience and knowledge of the organisations Nausika (from Poland) and Waldritter (in Germany). Both organisations have been using edularp in their daily educational (youth) work for years and are connected in specialist networks with other partners and stakeholders on this topic in their countries.

2. 1. Edularp - at a glance

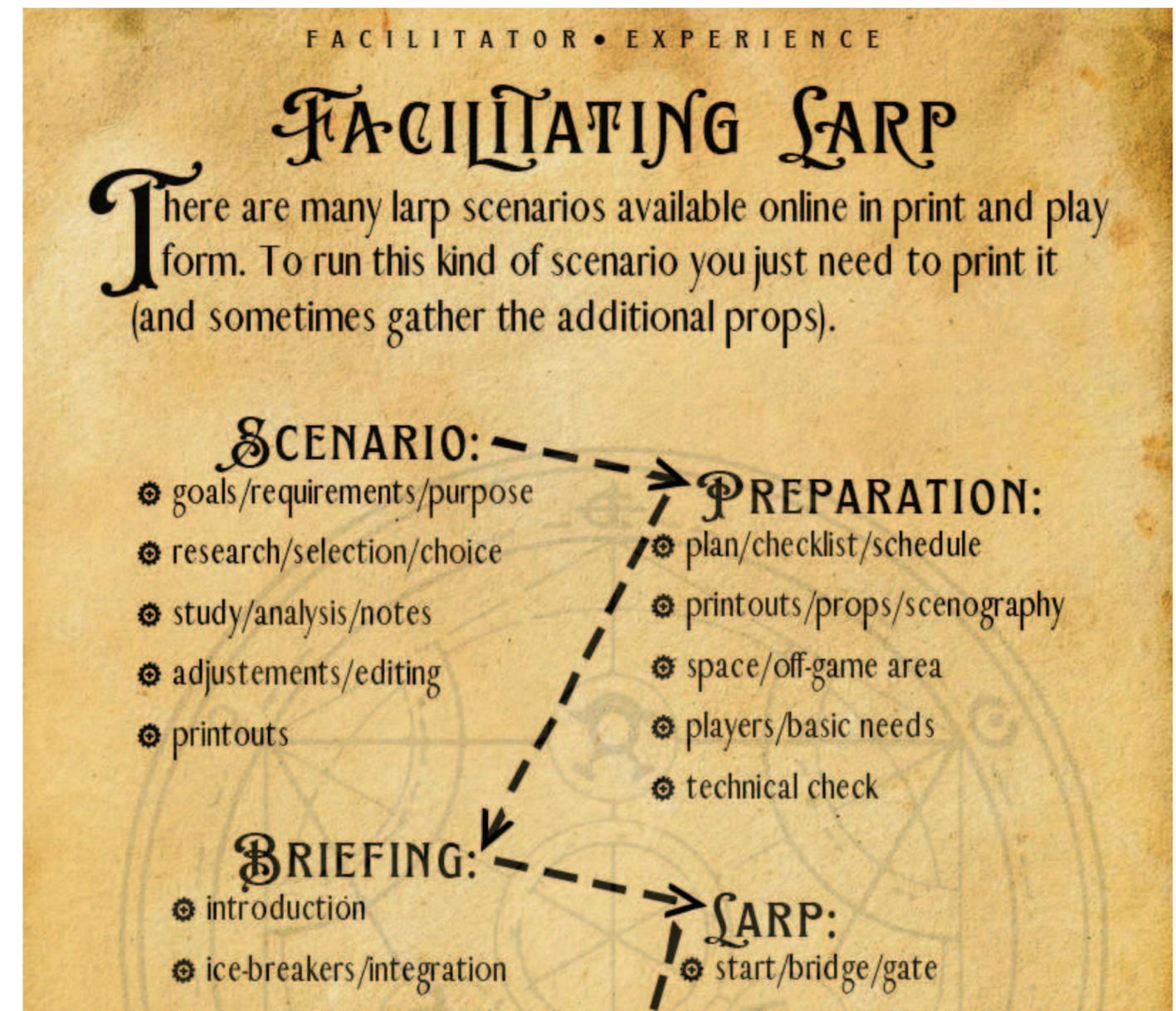
Edularp (or Edu-LARP), short for Educational Live Action Role-Playing, is an innovative teaching and learning method that combines elements of traditional live-action role-playing games with educational goals. In an edularp, participants engage in immersive, interactive scenarios where they take on the roles of characters within a fictional world. These scenarios are carefully designed to meet specific learning objectives and can cover a wide range of subjects, from history and social studies to science, leadership, and even conflict resolution.

Edularps, in its simplest form, can be a method that, once completed, is usually easy to implement on site without much preparation .

The game material often consists of a text template (role descriptions, notes, process, game instructions, name tags, etc.), supplemented by a few (symbolic) props, such as caps, scarves, etc., and the usual moderation material (cards, tape, flip chart, etc.). They are usually spatially flexible, so that they can be played in almost any room with tables and chairs. Depending on your mood, the game concepts can be lovingly equipped with additional accessories – but they also work without them.

The key aspect of edularp is that it offers its participants a chance to learn through experience, rather than just receiving information in a traditional classroom setting. By physically embodying a character and participating in the story or problem-solving activities, participants develop a deeper understanding of the material. This hands-on approach also encourages critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration, as participants must often work together to navigate the story of the larp.

Edularp scenarios can vary in complexity ranging from simple, ready-to-play scenarios to high-preparation experiences made by entire teams of people. Since they tend to be used by educators, ready-to-play versions have been gaining more and more popularity lately, with many turning to free materials available for print or boxed games with materials already prepared.



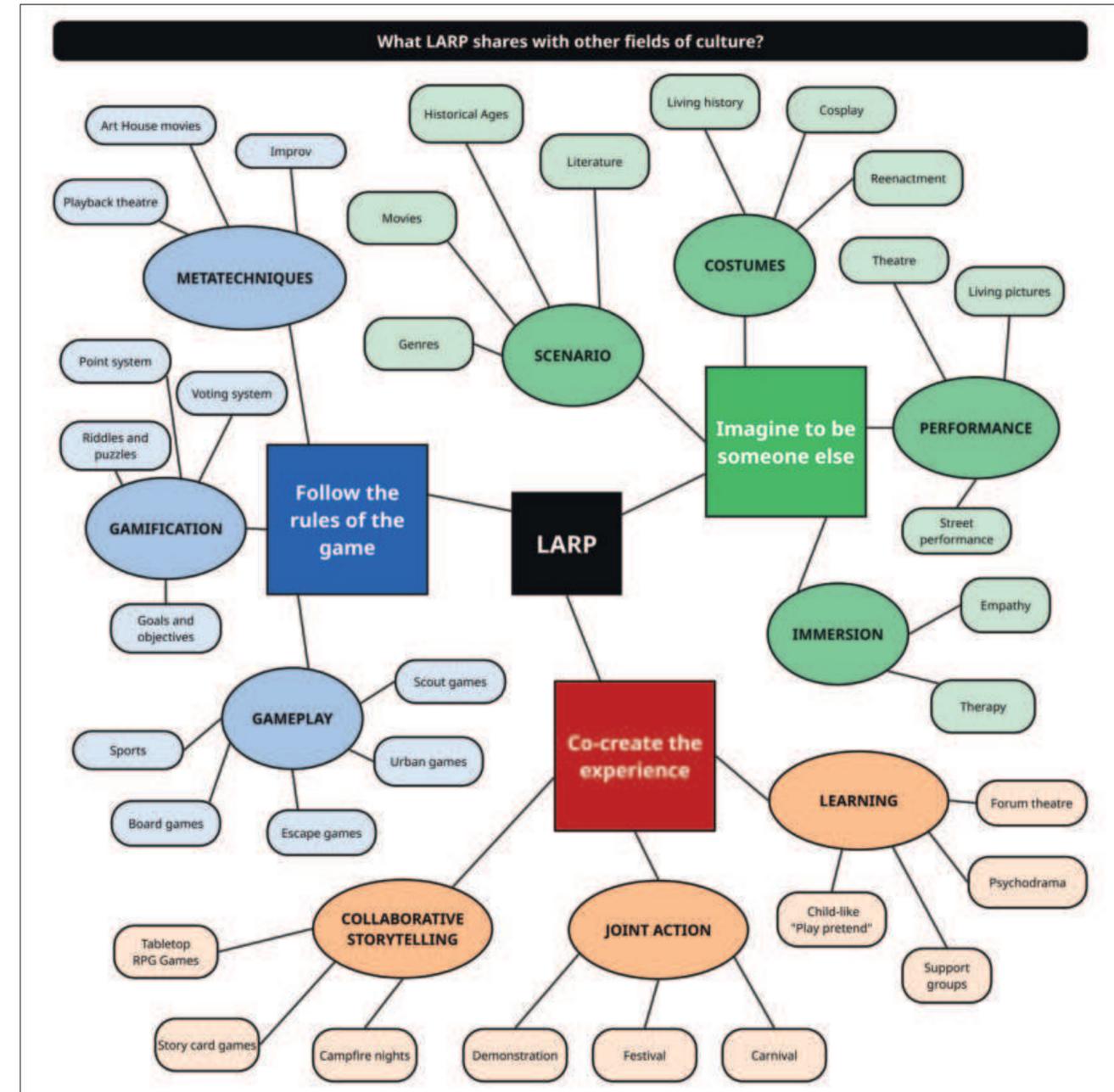
2. 2. First things first - What is larp?

If you know little about larp, you probably think of adults who, at the weekend, dress up as fantasy characters in their free time and pretend to live in the Middle Ages and hit each other with buffer swords.

And indeed, there are people who do just that - but this description is only one side of the coin - because larp is as diverse and colourful as the people who do it, ranging from tavern evenings in costume to large events with 10,000 people. It covers almost all genres known from the media - and there is a larp for almost every good TV series. People embody silly or serious roles, enjoy the community or push their psychological and physical limits individually - with the stagings ranging from the very simple to the extremely elaborate.

But let's start at the beginning. Larp (often also written 'LARP') is the acronym for Live Action Role Play and has its origins in the 80s as adaptations of comic and fantasy series and games, such as Conan, play-by-mail adventures and Dungeons and Dragons. Meanwhile, the word has outgrown the abbreviation and is mostly used as a separate word ('larp').

From the outside, larp is first and foremost a form of cultural and artistic pastime that is often associated with (improvisation) theatre, but which is similar in its elements to many other cultural phenomena. In the following graphic, we have tried to place larp in the context of other cultural formats and events.



We have highlighted three typical characteristics of larp, which in combination make up the special form of expression and appearance of larp: the representation or embodiment of figures or roles (imagine to be someone else), a set of rules established before the game (follow the rules of the game) and the shared creation of an experience (co-create the experience).

Core elements of larp and edularp

Let's play pretend...

Every larp begins with the basic desire to pretend to be someone or something else – another character, another being, in another world or time. Characters in a scenario that is so fascinating that we want to be part of it. Perhaps because we are interested in the world or the topic, which may even be inspired by our favorite books, movies, series or tabletop role-playing games. Maybe because the LARP throws us into situations, challenges or conflicts that we are not confronted with in everyday life and where we only realize how we react to them in the game - and thus possibly learn something new about ourselves. But maybe it's just an escape with other creative people from our exhausting or dreary everyday life...

Collaborative experience

However, generally you could describe edularp as a collaborative, improvisational game focused on building an experience, rather than reaching a goal.



Blackbox style of larp using lights and symbolic costumes for emotional experience. Rabka-Zdrój, Poland, Larp Alchemy project by Nausika

Jointly agreed rules

Although larp is mostly improvised and arises from the spontaneous interaction of characters, there is still a pre-arranged framework and associated rules that are monitored by a game management team (as well as the players themselves) during the game. This concerns the location and time of the game, rules for dealing with each other empathetically, safety and opportunities for retreat, fairness and a constant check to see if the way we present a scene is okay for everyone involved.

Meta techniques

As a special form of rules, however, many scenarios require an explanation of meta techniques, i.e. the tension between "in-game behavior" and the interpretation of this behavior by the person playing the character or encountering that character. In most cases, meta techniques represent in-game events that cannot or should not be depicted in real life - for example, magic or intimate acts. So if it is made clear in advance that saying a magic spell and throwing a red softball is the meta technique for creating a "magical fireball", the casting and enchanted characters, as well as bystanders, can imagine what was depicted and adapt their performance accordingly. In more compact larp, meta techniques are often used to design the game or the course of the game – for example, you can agree that there should be time jumps, that a story should be told backwards, that there should be restrictions in communication, or that you should imagine the room in a certain way.

No audience or script

There is no audience or script to be played, and the focus tends to be on experience. By immersing themselves in another world a player can experience different rules, perspectives and ideas.

Focus on safety mechanics

Important thing to mention is that edularps create environments that are considered to be safe to experiment within and it is critically important to treat them as such! Safe words and gestures are used as a blanket safety measure in case a triggering situation occurs during the game, but most game masters insist on educating the players themselves on safety measures and how to keep the game safe. Since edularps can touch on potentially triggering themes, such as mental health, migration or tolerance, it is possible that emotions appear that players will not expect when entering the game. This is not a reason to panic - stepping into another's shoes is often the goal of the game. However, it IS important to know when and how to navigate these situations in ways that will not only keep the players safe, but also not break the immersion of the game.

Orcs - and other "High Fantasy" Characters

Larp is inspired by "Lord of the rings", "Conan" and other "High Fantasy" narrations - and let's be honest: medieval fantasy larps is still the most played larp scenario and still the beginning of a "larp career" for many players. So you might find Knights and peasants in medieval reenactment or living-history events or folkloristic backgrounds; Costumes and Live Interaction in theatre or urban games - but if you encounter an orc - it will probably be larp (or cosplay ;)).

It is said that children who encounter and interact with orcs, elves and other fantasy creatures see the world as a wonderful place. It is also easier, and more affordable (spoken at 2025) to meet androids than look like real humans in larp than in real life.

Larp - or no larp?

Larps, and by extension edularps, take many different forms. New forms are being coined every single day, and many game-makers will try and intentionally break the box of what is considered a "traditional" larp by introducing, for example, technological elements, lack of characters or a setting, by playing with emotion and game making and turning a game into a form of its own.

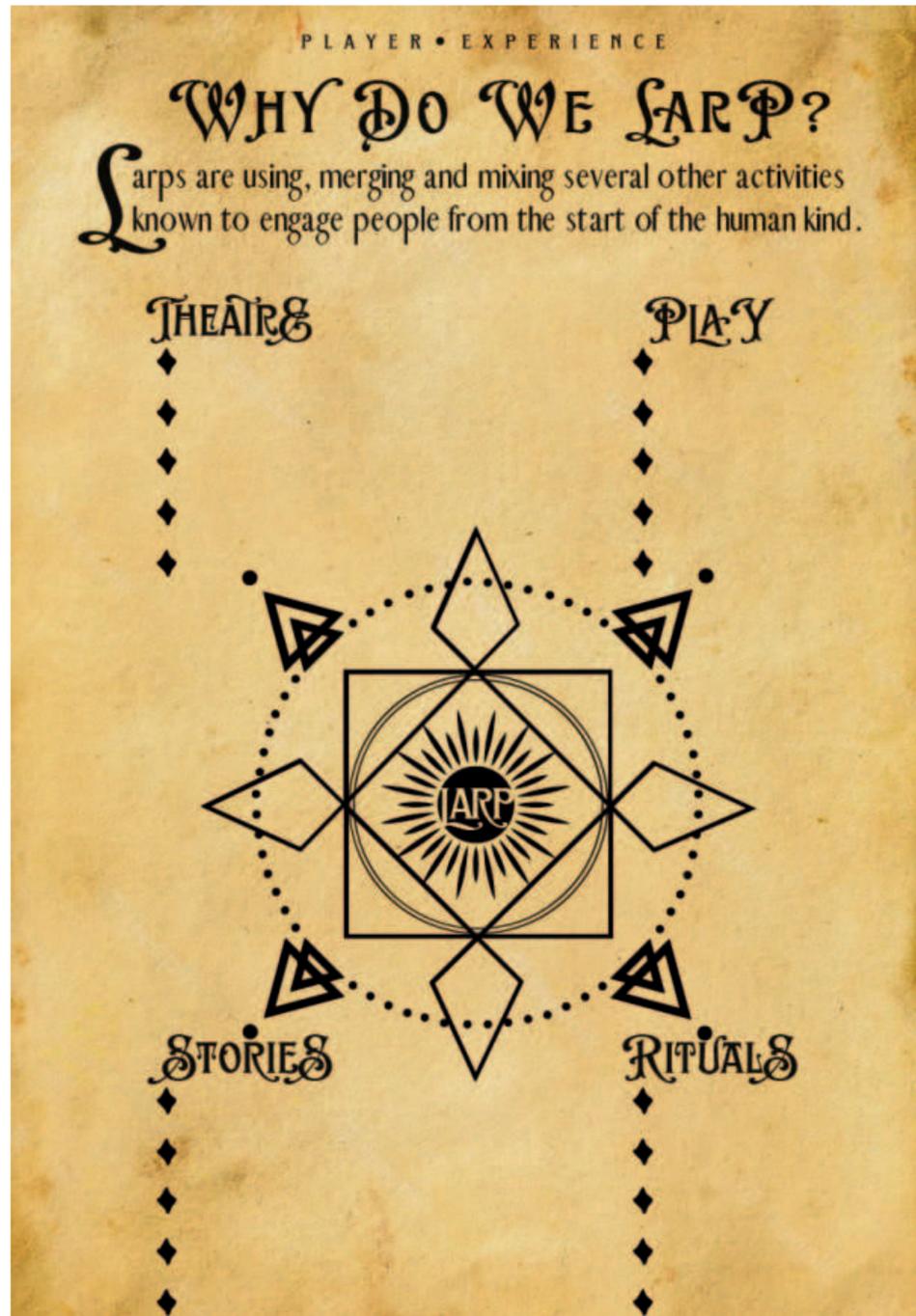
Since the beginning of larp in the mid80s there has been an ongoing discussion whether you should call any "larpish" interactive game concept "larp", also to increase familiarity with the term, or to find another name for your individual concept.



Painters tape used for spacial design of a fictional world in a larp game

Personal Motivation: Why do people do larp?

Larping attracts people for several reasons:



material from Nausika's "Larp Alchemy Training"

Immersive Experience:

Larping allows participants to step into the shoes of their characters, providing an immersive experience that combines storytelling, acting, and physical activity.

Creativity:

It encourages creativity in character development, world-building, and improvisation. Participants can express themselves through their characters and scenarios.

Community and Social Interaction:

Larping fosters a sense of community. It brings people together who share similar interests in fantasy, history, or specific genres, creating friendships and social networks.

Escapism:

Many people enjoy the escape from everyday life that larping offers. It allows them to explore different identities and scenarios in a safe environment.

Physical Activity:

Many larp events involve physical challenges, whether through combat simulations, quests, or exploration, appealing to those who enjoy active participation.

Skill Development:

Participants can develop various skills, including teamwork, problem-solving, and improvisation. Some also learn practical skills like costuming, prop-making or stage combat.

Storytelling:

Larping often revolves around collaborative storytelling, where participants contribute to a larger narrative. This shared storytelling experience can be deeply fulfilling - especially when it becomes a "fan-fiction" of beloved tv-shows, games or books.

2. 3. Edularp - play the learning game

To give a greater understanding of edularp in addition to chapter 2.1, we will use this chapter to specify the way it is used. Edularp is a type of learning (similar to other types of non-formal education) has been shown to improve engagement, retention of knowledge, and interpersonal skills. It's especially popular in educational settings like schools, universities, and even corporate training programs, as it brings a sense of fun and excitement to the learning process while still delivering meaningful lessons. The interactive nature of edularp also allows for adaptability, where the story or situation can change based on the decisions and actions of the participants, making each experience unique.

What do you do?

The short, scenic role-playing games require little material and have no audience. All roles are embodied by the participating individuals, while a director or game master takes over the scenic design. Characters and the type of role-playing game are discussed in preparation for the game – after the game, the experiences of the game are discussed and reflected upon.

In terms of content, the story played can be both classic or experimental. Whether you play consistent characters in chronological order or experiment with changes of time, characters or location by using meta techniques is determined primarily by the topic covered and the game design.

Intense gaming experiences, holistic role play and topic-related reflection enable an entertaining educational method that produces long-lasting learning effects.

Complex social or political topics such as interculturality, right-wing extremism, migration, bullying or mental illness become emotionally tangible and thus personal.

Video on the method: <http://www.drama-games.de/pictures-and-videos/drama-game-video/>



Improvised larp created by the participants and played in the whole building on the same day. Rabka-Zdrój, Poland, Larp Alchemy project by Nausika

Duration

Edularps can vary greatly in scope, facilities and duration.

In most cases, edularps are short role-playing games (usually about 2-5 hours) that make it possible to create emotional access to (political) topics. In contrast to related game types (Mini-LARP, Chamber-Larp, Freeform-Larp or Interactive Drama), the focus of edularps is on a clearly formulated educational goal or topic.

Edularp-concepts that are larger in scale last several days, comparable to an educational training, usually on a weekend. In this case, Friday afternoon and evening is usually spent preparing the game and conducting workshops that prepare the players for the basic mood and tone of the game ("calibration") and practicing basic rules. Friday evening and Saturday are then spent role-playing, and finally, Sunday morning is reserved for reflection and evaluation of the game. Here, playing times of 10 hours a day or more are not uncommon – although there are usually breaks, or the opportunity to leave the game setting for a while and come back to it later.

Intentions / educational approach

An edularp is a method that, in its simplest form, can be implemented without much preparation and is still highly effective. By taking on roles within a conflict-oriented setting, the participants are emotionally “thrown” into a topic and have to make decisions for their character based on their own experiences. The effects of these decisions can often be experienced within the game and are discussed in the evaluation after the game at the latest.

Eduarps offer participants an alibi for getting involved with perspectives or characters and basically the “permission” to try out alternative behaviors and perspectives within the game. In their emotional dimension, they represent an “individual” examination of topics, which makes them personally significant for the participants and thus generates intrinsically motivated learning processes. Last but not least, they represent an attractive shared experience that, on the one hand, favors group processes and, on the other hand, generates a common visual language that can be drawn on in the further reflection process.

Eduarps are a good way to start longer educational processes, as they often shed light on representative, emotional aspects of a broader topic and, due to their controversial structure, provide a good basis for different perspectives.



Implementation

Basic ideas

Playing an edularp often means embarking on an emotionally moving journey with an uncertain outcome. This basic situation gives rise to a few fundamental consequences. Playing should be voluntary and collaborative to ensure cooperation and openness. Only with this attitude does a “journey” begin - forcing people into play or having “spectators” represent insecurity factors that can and should be avoided. Since one is entering uncharted territory, it should be made as clear as possible what happens in the game, what the rules are and where the limits of the game, or what safety or abort mechanisms are. It should be clear from the outset that preparation, playing and evaluation are part of the process and the method, and that participants are expected to be present at all stages. In general, there should be a strong focus on safety and well-being in order to give players the greatest possible sense of security so that they can engage with the game.

Role of the game master

Of course, game masters are there to explain rules and game mechanics – but above all to ensure the safety of the players. In addition to the introduction mentioned above, this means responding to the participants, helping them to get into roles or settings and being aware of their limits. People are different and perceive emotionally constructed situations with different levels of intensity. The game master should therefore keep an eye on whether fellow players feel overwhelmed and, if so, try to defuse, resolve or abort these situations. It should be clear that everyone can interrupt or leave the game at any time – nevertheless, there are situations where being overwhelmed overrides these options and actors are unable to act (“freeze”). The game master should be the players’ partner and have their back, so that the participants have a safe space to test themselves.

In doing so, another focus should be on positions of power - the game master is in a powerful role due to his/her function. Therefore, they should avoid linking this position with the portrayal of powerful characters, especially when working with young people, in order to avoid being overwhelmed.

Structure

In its basic structure, there are three game mechanics that drive the game of roles forward: the conflict between characters, which increases in intensity, a game-shaping story, which scenically drives a development, or a game rule, which dominates the course of the game.

One stylistic device that is frequently used, especially in the shorter, more compressed forms of edularp, is meta technique, i.e. the field of tension that arises from the relationship between a character and the person playing it. This could be, for example, an "inner monologue": the actress playing a character speaks out loud what her character "thinks" (in accordance with previously agreed rules, such as two claps beforehand). The other actors hear what the player says, but not her characters. Nevertheless, after the "inner monologue", the actors are free to "suddenly" focus on acting with the "thinking" character, thus changing the entire scenario. A variety of existing meta techniques allow the space, the interaction between characters or the sequence of events to be influenced, depending on the intention of the game.

Education in a playful environment

Edularp consists of preparation, (role-) play and evaluation. The educational effects often take place in the evaluation. A scenario outlines different attitudes that, embodied by characters, clash and are treated controversially. The game demands action or positioning, which is usually taken "instinctively". It is only in retrospect, in a cross-character review of the behavior and motives of the characters and actors that a consideration or evaluation of the respective behavior can take place. Sometimes aspects of the central questions or objectives of the drama game become clear during the design of the characters or within the game and touch the participants emotionally. However, even in these cases, the evaluation helps the participants to place their emotions and impressions in a larger context and provides approaches for evaluating their own actions.



Debriefing session after larp game using cards and objects to bring back memories and feelings. Rabka-Zdrój, Poland, Larp Alchemy project by Nausika

CC license, acknowledgement and feedback

Under the premise "Caring is sharing", the instructions for most of the replayable edularps can be found under a CC-(creative commons) license. The idea is that well-designed games provide impulses for thinking about a "better world". They often inspire other game authors to create new, well-designed games, which can then be shared again. For this reason, it is desirable to use and share games for your own educational purposes – but out of respect and courtesy, you should name the authors – perhaps even share feedback with the authors after your gaming experience. After all, recognition and the benevolent playing and sharing of own game ideas are often the only benefit that authors derive from their creative work.

Reflection / Debriefing

Organizers have many methods at their disposal to evaluate the events of the game, methods that are familiar from other contexts and that can be used depending on the objective of the game (shorter or longer, formal or informal, etc.).

However, it is important to understand that edularps create emotionally challenging situations and that a first step after the game should therefore be to create a space in which people can “get rid” of their emotions. This includes both the direct review of game situations (“Why did you say ‘that’ to me?” “I thought you were so stupid in your role!” or similar), as well as an initial emotional assessment of sensitivities (“I feel really bad now - don’t you?”). This phase has a very informal character, for example, it can take place in the form of “going outside for a moment”, but it is extremely important for the overall process. There are several techniques to “leave the embodiment of your character”. The higher the emotional intensity of a game, the more extensive and powerful the methods should be (e.g. digging a hole and “burying” the characters together or something similar). The release of emotions is the first step towards reflection.

Only then does the formalized part of a reflection begin, moderated by the game leader or additional facilitators of this process. This could start, for example, with a “How are you?” round, in which the first “raw” emotions can be expressed in a “pre-sorted” way. In the following, various aspects of the game can be reflexively addressed that are interesting with regard to the objectives.

The third part of the reflection should ideally enable the participants to build a bridge to their everyday lives. How realistic are aspects of the game? Are there parallels to their own lives? With the experience and with the reflection of the game scenes in mind: Where are future opportunities to rethink or change one’s own behavior? In the case of more extensive seminars, concrete steps towards social change could also be tackled directly together here.



2. 4. When does a larp become educational?

Educational Goals

It seems clear that edularp means “larp in education” and that the educational framework is designed with that purpose, while larp is first and foremost played “for fun”, as a leisure activity. However, based on our practical experience, we recognize that this clarity easily slips away, when actual educators and larpers meet on projects and seminars that aim to grasp edularp as educational methodology. Larps that were not designed as edularp are used in educational training and larps that were meant to be educational are used to play for fun... so how can we tell whether a game is educational?



Blackbox style of larp using lights and symbolic costumes for emotional experience. Rabka-Zdrój, Poland, Larp Alchemy project by Nausika

Rather than providing a set definition, let’s look at the different frameworks of edularps in terms of CONTENT, CONTEXT and ATTITUDE.

Content

If we look at CONTENT, then edularp games are those scenarios which are designed for learning or training purposes. Therefore, their content is usually organized in one of the following ways:

- The narrative of the game is connected to usual subjects of education. For example, when the players play out the coronation of Charles the Great, players will learn about the medieval history of France (as it appears in school history books).
- The subject of education has to be learned to fulfill the challenges of the scenario. For example, the players can only open a magical treasure chest if they place an oak leaf on the magical lock (so they need forest knowledge).
- The participants have to engage in unfamiliar roles in areas of social or political conflict in order to broaden their perspectives and experience these types of conflicts holistically. This form of experience is processed and evaluated in subsequent reflections after the game.
- The participants have to deal with the subject of education because they will be hosting a larp - so they have to be informed about the subject as game designers, which brings with it an inner motivation.
- The competences developed by playing are clearly mentioned in the scenario, known by the organizers and related to a wider educational framework (f.e. [European Youth Goals](#)), which is supported by the [Erasmus+ Program](#) and 152 projects which had included edularp as one of the teaching tools).
- The framework of the larp is designed as a field of experience with a special interest for a special target group to encourage peer- and self-learning. For example learning special craft skills during a larp camp.

As practitioners, we also know that there are overlaps with other concepts and learning formats that cannot be clearly categorized:

- Many games which were not designed as educational are actually applied in education, f.e. during summer camps or facilitation trainings to support group phases or team-building.
- Particular games or educational programs may include just certain elements of larp (f.e. impersonating characters or creating a fictional world), without being a full-fledged larp game.

Context

If we try to define it by CONTEXT, then edularp games are those games which are applied in educational context. The most common typology of education is between FORMAL, NON-FORMAL and INFORMAL, we find it useful in understanding edularp as well (READ MORE about the typology on a well crafted article on Wikipedia, see also quotes to expanded bibliography there).

1. Formal education

"Formal education occurs within a structured institutional framework, typically with a chronological and hierarchical order." ([Wikipedia](#))

Larp games can be performed as part of the formal education curriculum in mainstream teaching institutions : during school lessons, university seminars or vocational trainings for adults. In this context, the most likely scenarios to be used are those which are openly designed as educational, but we have also seen non-edu larps successfully played within educational walls, so please don't limit yourselves! The biggest challenge in this context is the fact that participation in learning units is rarely voluntary - which in turn is one of the basic conditions for larp.

2. Non-formal education

Non-formal and informal education occur outside the formal schooling system, with non-formal education serving as a middle ground. Like formal education, non-formal education is organized, systematic, and pursued with a clear purpose, as seen in activities such as tutoring, fitness classes, and participation in the scouting movement. ([Wikipedia](#))

Larp games can be performed as part of the informal education which is provided by smaller institutions: during evening extracurricular classes and workshops, summer camps, youth exchanges, international training.

There are also opportunities for non-formal education within formal structures in the form of project or excursion days, whole-day activities or outside of regular lessons.

In this context, both "edu" and not "edu" larp scenarios are used. Sometimes games which had been designed for fun or for art, are smartly incorporated into longer learning programs, either as part of few day intense programs (f.e. a political larp inside a week-long youth exchange about European democracy) or regular series of individual events (f.e. a high school theatre club which is playing one larp game every month with the same participants).

3. Informal education

Informal education occurs in an unsystematic manner through daily experiences and exposure to the environment. Unlike formal and non-formal education, there is typically no designated authority figure responsible for teaching. Informal education unfolds in various settings and situations throughout one's life, often spontaneously, such as children learning their first language from their parents or individuals mastering cooking skills by preparing a dish together. ([Wikipedia](#))

Typical larp games (not "edu") are organized outside educational context and institutions - as private events, commercial leisure activities (castle larps) or during larp festivals for the nerd larp community. On the other hand, many adult players join larp games in order to learn something, even if it seems very personal and. f.e. how to fight with safe medieval weapons or how to flirt confidently with girls or boys. Physical agility and personal confidence are, in fact, competences (soft skills) which adult people want to develop in the informal process of life-long learning. From a pedagogical perspective, we would rather call this "accidentally" than "educational" learning, since "educational" processes would follow planned, structured and meaningful methods to promote personal development and self-assured behaviour.

However, the border between "informal educational" and "not educational" is tricky. The difference is in the personal approach: if one person wants to join a larp game for entertainment, they can do so, but another person may join it for personal development and they also can do so. Both players will play the same game and behave alike, it's only in their heads if they are learning or not.

Attitude

Back to the beginning of our considerations: Edularps are designed or carried out with a specific purpose. Whether a game is played just for fun or with an educational goal in mind depends not least on the attitude of the designers, players and instructors.

Assuming that the imparting of learning content is not a mere transfer of accumulated knowledge, which can be transferred one-to-one, the success of learning processes depends on many different factors. Ideally, an edularp is a learning arrangement that offers as many possibilities as possible to approach a specific topic, through decoration, story, interaction, figures and setting - not least through the joint evaluation of experiences.

For the facilitators of an edularp, implementing an "edularp" requires the attitude of wanting to bring certain content and social tensions within a certain framework into discussion and negotiation, in order to enable participants to grow in this way and to test their own options for action. To do this, it is necessary to know the edularp and its target group, but also to formulate an objective that is to be achieved through the larp - and to continuously review this objective and adjust it if necessary.



Some additional thoughts:

- It would be beneficial for the learners if the game scenarios include well developed parts of briefing and debriefing which provide introduction and elaboration of the learning agenda.
- It would benefit teachers and their institutions if scenarios are directly related to the official educational curriculum, so that playing the game can be formally justified as developing particular knowledge or skills from the official program.
- As most of the larp scenarios are published not as books or game boxes, but as print-and-play materials online, it will make it much easier for teachers if the scenarios are provided with clear, step-by-step instructions for the facilitators (many scenarios of high-quality larp games don't have it) and edited in a format which makes it practically easy to print on home or office printers.
- Never cut down the time of briefing and debriefing parts, always give the players time to talk and reflect upon their experience.
- If possible, arrange a safety person - someone from the educators team, who would sit outside the game and be available for any player who feels uneasy (for any reason) and wants to leave the game for some time and talk to someone about it. No judging attitude, just be there, listen and talk, you don't need to be a psychologist to be a safety person.

Benefits of using larp in education

- The players develop soft skills and social competences, including meta-skills like adaptability, empathy and learning-to-learn. (READ MORE about the competences learned through larp in the research performed by Zbigniew Janczukowicz as part of the Larp Alchemy project).
- Seeing the world from the point of view of multiple fictional characters opens the understanding of complexity of the world and diverse perspectives of various social groups.
- Going through emotional experience helps to remember the learning content and opens the players for possible change of long-term attitudes and habits.
- Testing your own actions in the form of model learning in a safe environment (without possible negative consequences) enables you to act with confidence and determination in similar real-life situations.
- Experimenting with different emotions and motivations of the played characters allows a conscious work on personal development and self-understanding, including the spheres like fears, resentments and gender identity.

Weak points of larp in education

- Each game might demand more preparation from the facilitator than a standard school or university class. This may include printing full-color materials and cutting out multiple cards, studying long game instructions, memorizing, preparing mentally for improvisation and acting. On top of that, some of the games require physical costumes or scenography which look good on the photos, but takes so much time and costs to prepare.
- A risk of negative "bleed-out effect" - the players transfers emotions from the level of the characters (in-game) to the level of players (off-game). This should be taken care of by the organizers, but anyway, it happens. If not taken care of, this may result in creating conflicts and getting new enemies, the worse the less it is spoken about during the game itself.
- Potential for abuse or (unintentional) triggering – while edularp can be a powerful method that empowers people, shows them new perspectives and helps them to develop into independent and mature individuals, it can just as easily be abused, for example if it is not possible to critically question instructors or content, or to get out of the game at any time. When combined with narrative structures that glorify submission, conformity and obedience to authoritarian systems, for example, larp could also be a method that promotes a lack of freedom and independence.
- Role-playing brings the players out of their comfort zone, which may result in feeling awkward or cringe, especially if the facilitator doesn't know the players in advance and there is no initial level of trust established between them. After all, why should they walk around and talk emotionally as fictional characters, when they could just passively sit in the room without any risk of looking ridiculous in front of the group?

Edulearp concepts

3. 1. Concepts about environment protection and climate change

PIG GROVE

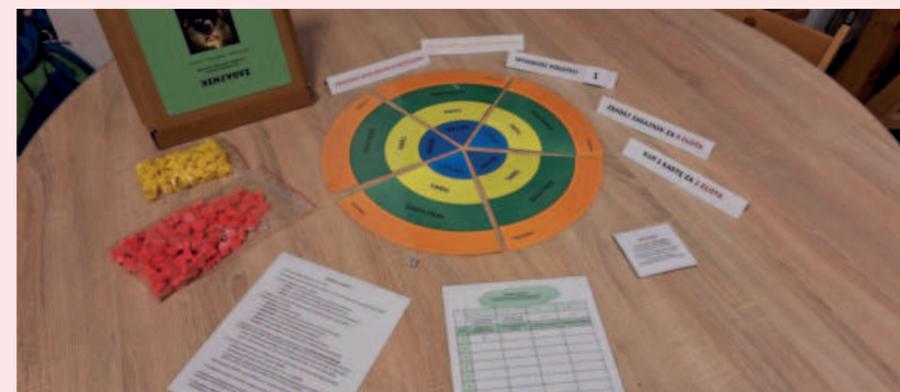


WALKING BOARD-GAME ABOUT THE TRAGEDY OF COMMONS

10-20 players | age 13+ | 45-90 minutes

The players take on the roles of 5 families of local farmers who use a public grove to feed their pigs. Each family wants to win the game by becoming rich, but the limited number of common resources might make all of them lose together if they exploit the resources unsustainably.

Understanding economic models standing behind climate change is vital, this game focuses particularly on a phenomenon called "The Tragedy of Commons" - a situation in which individuals with access to a public resource (also called a common) act in their own interest and, in doing so, ultimately deplete the resource. People tend to pursue short-term gain regardless of whether they would have gained more long-term with a measured and reserved use of the common. We see examples of this phenomenon all too often, from excessive deforestation, to overfishing, to fast fashion, to fossil fuel.



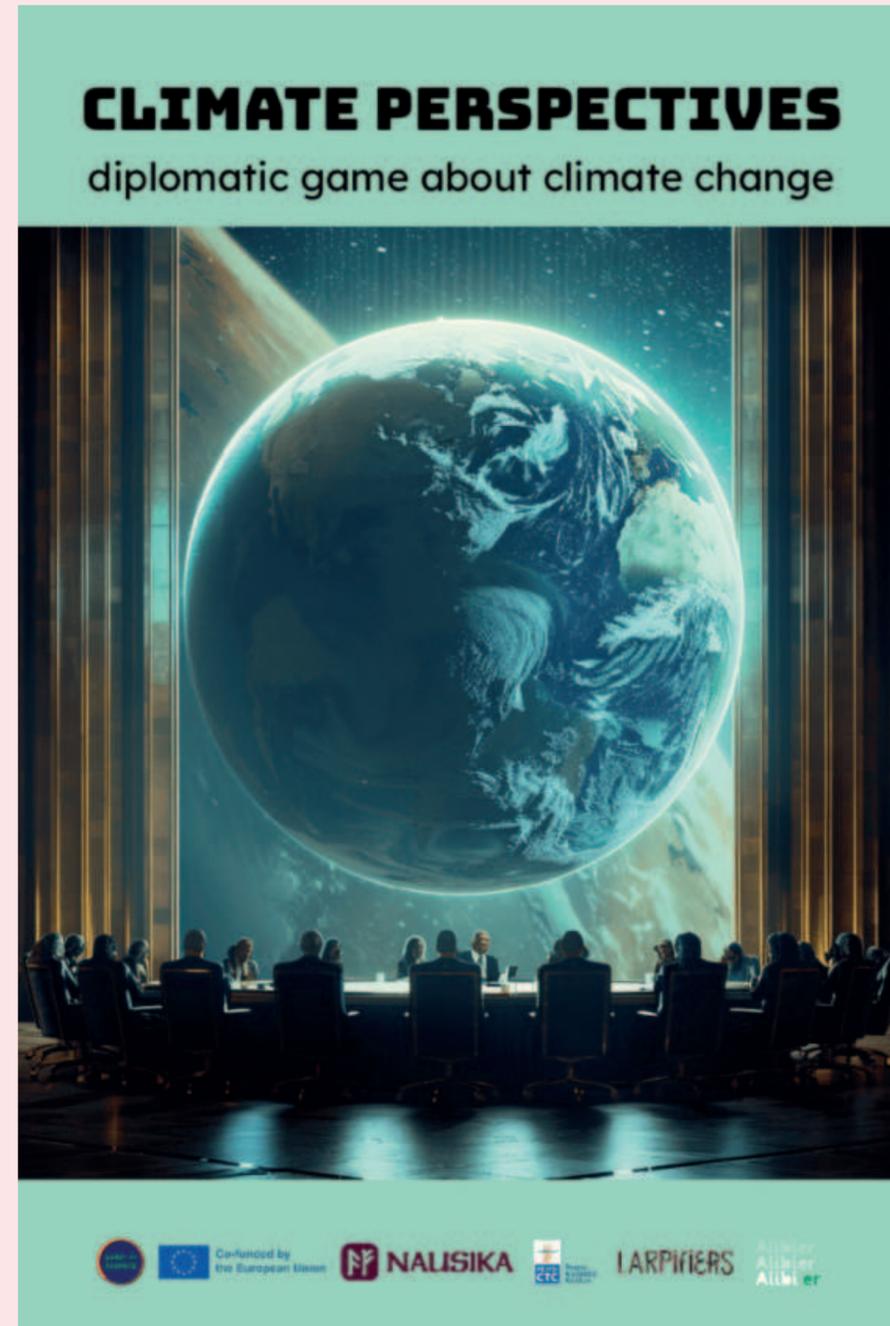
The game accomplishes that by putting the players in the situation where while reaching for higher profit they will almost surely exploit the public resource of the grove to extinction.



Furthermore, this game aims to motivate cooperation, effective communication and responsibility for various types of common goods locally, nationally and globally in addition to Goal 12 of SDGs UN Agenda 2030 "responsible consumption and production". It has been run hundreds of times in schools, conventions and other events, in many countries and is being used by many institutions.

Accessibility-wise, it requires a printer and two types of tokens, one representing the pigs and one the money. All the printable materials are available online for free. It requires one or preferably two facilitators. Instructions and materials for the game can be found on Nausika's web-page [here](#).

CLIMATE PERSPECTIVES



DIPLOMATIC GAME ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

10-35 players | age 13+ | 45-120 minutes

Diplomats from countries all around the globe gather at a climate peak in the year 2050. Local interests of particular countries clash with the global goal of protecting the planet. The game asks questions about the world of international politics and how it shapes our environment.

Climate Perspectives is an educational LARP (live-action role-playing) game designed for schools, students, activists, and decision-makers.

- Increases climate literacy and teaches about sustainable development in ecological, economic, and civic contexts.
- Motivates individual and systemic change of attitudes and behavior towards climate action.
- Strengthens critical thinking and resistance to media manipulation.
- Designed on the basis of the future projections of IPCC experts.

In this game, players embody diplomats from all over the globe convincing, arguing, and voting for which matters that require financial support should be prioritized and receive the limited funding. This is an important aspect of the game as making the decisions and figuring out what needs to be prioritized is something we will all need to come to terms with in the coming years.

By giving each country conflicting interests it showcases the complex weaves of the forces that move countries to act in certain (often deleterious) ways. Additionally this conflicting weave of priorities is what provides the political gridlock for a lot of climate action as each country pushes for the priorities that hold more would benefit, enrich, and save their own people.

The game consists of three rounds of voting with both open and structured talk in-between to give room for the players to practice both rhetorics and the more intimate one-on-one conversations and strategizing.



Instructions and materials for the game can be found on Nausika's webpage [here](#).

A house printer is enough to produce all the materials and one facilitator is enough to run it though, two are recommended.

3. 2. Concepts about technical developments and communication

Creating educational game environments: The spaceship

Based on the idea that innovative non-formal educational projects need an appealing educational space and compete with other attractive leisure activities, the Waldritter rented a former department store in Herten (Germany) and transformed it into an educational spaceship.

Multifunctional rooms with lots of decoration and flexible technical equipment enable the implementation of interactive edularp concepts in which social conflicts can be personally embodied. Various technical possibilities could be tried out and used during the workshop (see 5.1).



In the edularps, we try to find representations of real power relations and participation structures that can be experienced within the game, in order to reflect on the experiences within these structures after the game, especially with regard to privileges and power structures within the real world.

Here are a few approaches to how the (technical) space scenario is used to create certain game effects:

Rooms and Spaces

The use of rooms is not only determined by organizational issues; in most cases, it is even of great importance who has "control" or access to certain rooms and how often: Do you have a "private" room? Then you may have a special task (bridge, engine room, medbay) or a special position (captain, ship's engineer) - in any case, this access represents special privileges compared to people in cramped crew quarters or without a permanent workplace. In some scenarios, floors represent certain social affiliations - customer contact at the top, then technical and at the bottom maintenance and robots. This also corresponds to certain social levels, which also have to do with reputation and experience and quickly lead to conflicts in the game. With over 20 rooms on three floors, social tensions can be created in this way. Coupled with light (light or dark?) and sounds (sounds of nature or the hum of machines?), these areas of conflict can be experienced physically.

Furthermore, the furnishing and skillful spatial placement of objects can be used to create zones in which people either like to spend time or dislike spending time and use it for deliberate confrontations within the game.

Communication

Within a game scenario, players can communicate via text-based terminals that can be found in almost every room, or via telephones that are set up at central locations in the hallways. In addition, there is the option of "locking" certain doors, corridors or areas by having warning lights on the doors change from green to red (for security reasons, of course, nobody is actually locked in, i.e. the doors are closed "in the game" and open "in real life"). Furthermore, the lights in each room can be controlled individually, so that "alarm", "contamination" or "radioactivity" can be indicated by different light moods or colors.

So there are many ways to influence what happens in the game and the possibility of getting information or not. Above all, the terminals offer a good opportunity to create or prevent connections between stations, to simulate queries about the ship's status, to "hack" if you have the right "codes" or to provide additional information as the game master.

Tasks

Certain technical game elements allow the creation of specific tasks within the game. For example, there are different "filter tubes" that can be inserted into suitable base stations. The control system can be used to name the tubes and display them on the terminals – it can also be used to adjust how long the filter duration lasts. In this way, air, water or oxygen filters can be simulated that have to be changed, can run out or are stored in places that are currently inaccessible – this way, endless possibilities for creating stories arise. Another example is synchronizing wavelengths across multiple terminals located in different parts of the spaceship – this is how information has to be shared and passed on in order to solve certain tasks as a team.



Use of Discord in Larp - "Green lobbying" edularp

In the edularp "green lobbying" an old building owned by the city is to be renovated and made available for a purpose that benefits the common good. The opportunity is favourable, because a structural support programme of the European Union has made a large sum of money available in the short term, which the city would have to return if it did not use it. In the larp, we play a set of different scenes that revolve around the process of awarding the old building. The aim is not so much to embody a character throughout, but rather to get different perspectives on an application, publicity and lobbying process.

The players are divided into small groups to get to know their own characters and tasks. Since the game is designed for young adults, communication takes place via Discord. This way, the players are not limited to predefined locations, but can choose their location freely – while still being in contact with the game master, non-player characters (NPCs), and the other groups.

Within the scenario, the players initially embody employees of several advertising agencies that develop strategic campaigns for different interest groups (which they will also embody in the further course) - but for this they need information that they can get from stakeholders and decision-makers - but for that they must of course make an official "appointment". The spatial distance, coupled with the necessity of coming into contact with people, creates a greater freedom for the players to shape their actions themselves, but at the same time a high degree of realism.

The channel restrictions also give players the opportunity to "unlock" channels from certain contacts if they earn the right to do so. In addition, they gradually gain more influence and sovereignty within the game and can also share their digitally created content directly with "customers".

The fact that the game masters have access to all channels makes it possible to control the game well - a few funny "news" or "spam" channels add a bit of extra fun and game options without direct consequences for the gameplay.

Short and accessible: postcard larps

One of the biggest barriers when it comes to larp or role-playing in general is the very long rules and instructions. Germany in particular is known for its cumbersome explanations of how the game works, what is and is not allowed, how to create roles, scenarios and game scenes – supplemented by background stories, tables and additional material.

As a countermovement to this over-regulation of larps, a competition was held at a larp writer summer camp to write larp instructions that fit on a postcard (you could also use a beer mat or a post-it). Inspired by this idea, some very creative games have been created that still have very versatile and interesting game mechanics and provide hours of fun.

The results can be found here: [Postcard-Games](#)

Characters:

- Paladin or Highpriest/ Pope/ etc.**
You know the secrets of religious faith and higher powers.
- Academic Mage or Scholar/ Scientist/ etc.**
You studied for a long time and gathered a high amount of knowledge on secret powers.
- Mighty shaman or Bard/ Leader Reseach Institute/ etc.**
You know the secrets of social and the energy of life.
- Healer or Alchemist/ Medic/ etc.**
You know every means to heal injuries or illness.
- Influential Thief or Ninja/ Rockstar/ etc.**
You have contacts to the underworld, where money, unscruplness and rumours reign.
- Barbarian or Knight/ Elite-Soldier/ etc.**
You trained hard and became a living weapon.

The setting:
You are the biggest heroes of your time and prepared all your life for the last final battle against evil. Evil came – you made a stand against it and ... you've lost! There's no escape, no way out – it's obvious: At dawn the evil will strike again and destroy the world as you know and love it. You will stand up against it again, but it is obvious that you have no chance to win ... and that you will certainly die. This is your last desperate night at the camp-fire at the end of the world!

SAVE OUR SOULS
A POSTCARD-LARP BY MERLE LOTZ

„You have been on a pleasure boat. This one sunk! You are the lone survivors. You sit together in the lifeboat.“ (The boat may be represented by a blanket on the floor.)

Opening scene: Team meeting on the boat before lifting the anchor – in which you present your character, your function on board and your relationship to others. Afterwards there is a time jump to the „situation on board of the lifeboat“. Everyone plays a „flashback“ in the action on board, started and ended by a double clap. For the others the scene „freezes“. What was said ACTUALLY happened. It can't be taken back.

The End: The player who has the feeling that the game should end says: „I think I see something over there!“ If the others have the same feeling, they agree that it is indeed the coast watch. If not, it has been a hallucination.

larpwriter.de an initiative of WALD RITTER supported by LWL Für die Menschen. Für Westfalen-Lippe

Feel free to use this idea to start into the action immediately without hundreds of pages of text.

Digital tools for educational concepts

Both in our working and private environment, digital tools support us in our lives. We use digital tools for planning and organising as well as in communicating in general. We use a lot of different tools (and there are always coming new ones).

In this guide, we try to present tools especially helpful for the educational larp environment and the work with young participants (as well as with youth work professionals). We cover the areas of planning, organising, implementing and evaluating edularps. Additionally, we take digital communication into account. Not all edularp scenarios need digital support in these presented possible fields. Feel free to just have a look at topics you are really interested in.

Within each chapter, tools are accompanied by examples and/or step-by-step instructions to show possibilities how to use them. If you have a look at <https://e-parti.eu/>, a website about online participation (in German), you can find even more...

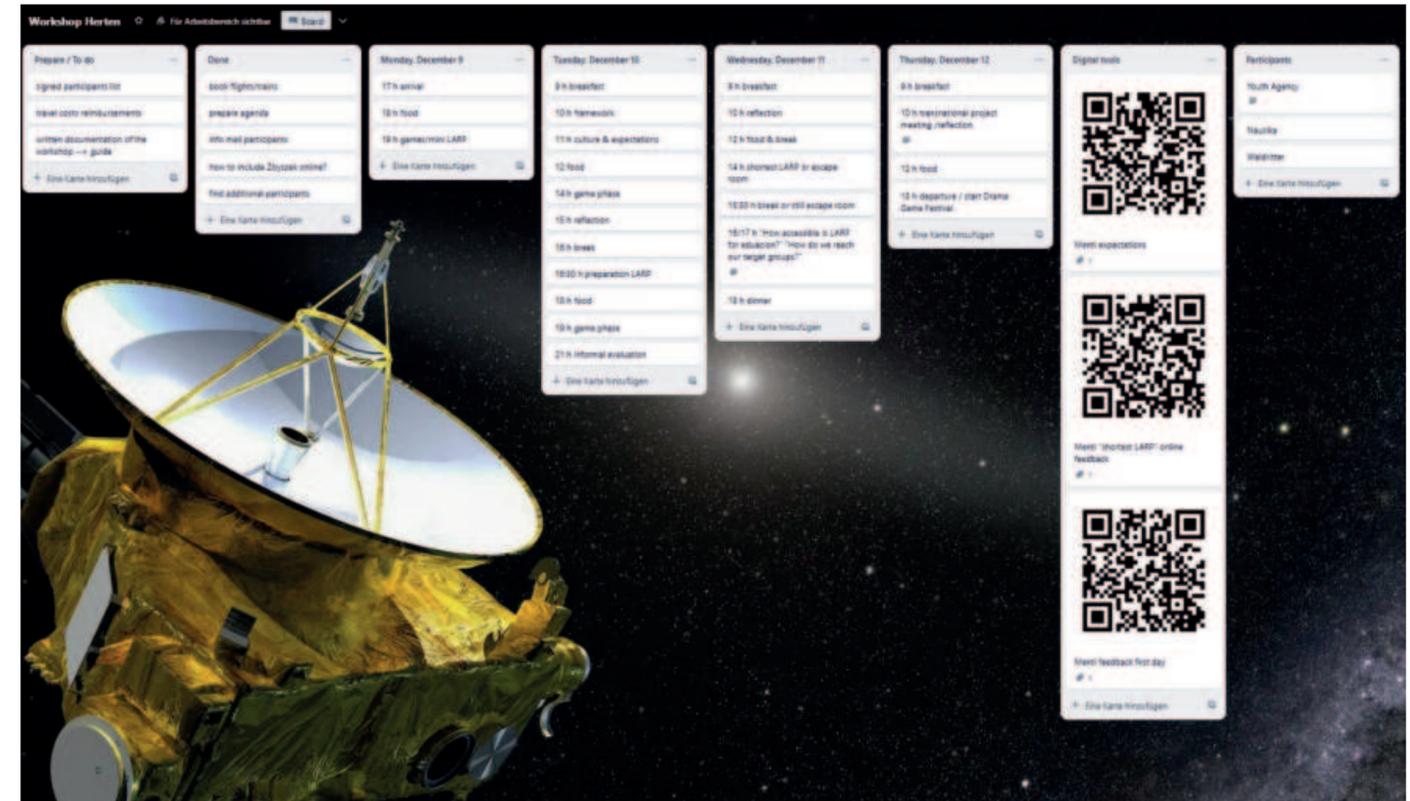
Always keep in mind that data protection is an aspect you should be thinking about when choosing a tool while working with youngsters.

4. 1. Planning

For the planning of projects in a decentralized way, digital tools and techniques can help to keep up with mutual information and to have planning progress together. Working in a team where members cannot/don't want to meet on site, digital meetings are very common. Video conferences (e.g. via [Zoom](#) or [MS teams](#)) can be an integral part of project management. Additionally, chat messenger tools (like [WhatsApp](#), [Signal](#), [Threema](#) etc.) can be effective in terms of short term / fast exchange and coordination.

To share ideas, timelines and have a creative approach on working together, digital boards can be helpful. Common boards like [conceptboard](#), [Miro](#) and [Mural](#) have the same intention and work quite similar. It can be a good way to make planning processes visible to every team member. Also [Padlet](#) and [Taskcards](#) can be good tools to visualize, collect, group or evaluate information, ideas and tasks.

If edularps are rather big or included in a bigger project, it could be worth using a project management tool like [Asana](#) or [Trello](#). All team members can work together, make up lists and plans and share information regarding several project steps.



Within the eduLARP project, we used several planning tools that are mentioned above (monthly Zoom meetings, a WhatsApp group to catch up etc.). To plan the workshop in Herten (see chapter 5.1) we set up a Trello board:

- we shared to do's and ticked off tasks,
- we set up a potential schedule for the workshop days and
- shared QR codes for Mentimeter questions.

4. 2. Organisation

Many mentioned tools for planning also work to organise and implement (chapter 4.3) edularps / projects. Chat messengers for example help to communicate easily and at short notice through the whole process. Digital boards and project management tools also can be of help to visualize organisational tasks and to keep track of to do's (and to check off tasks). To come up with texts (e.g. for invitations or schedules etc.) collaborative text editors may be useful (e.g. [edupad](#)). Various persons can work simultaneously on collaborative texts, brainstorm in real time while different users are highlighted in different colors.

For various organisational tasks, we need tools to conduct surveys, coordinate dates/information and to vote on topics. [Doodle](#) is one digital tool that makes the task of finding a common meeting time quite easy: You can come up with a group survey informing with a short text about what you plan and give several dates to select. After the team members answer, the organiser gets an overview of the best matching date(s).

4. 3. Implementation

Implementing an educational larp, it might be helpful to add digital tools to an on-site activity. When we have a look at the introduction, playing and debriefing phase, there are several digital solutions that can fit at different moments:

- Before the game starts/introduction phase:
Digital boards (see above) can help to visualize tasks, networks, relationships etc. Participants might even work with the digital boards to make their own characters visual. It is also a possibility to use short quizzes and/or bounds to come into the mode for playing. Thinkable tools would be e.g. [Actionbound](#), [Kahoot](#) or [Mentimeter](#).
- During the game:
To communicate during a game, in addition to face-to-face communication, chat messenger tools could be helpful. Especially in scenarios that deal with the future,

digital communication tools might contribute to the futuristic character. Conceivable common tools are mentioned above. It is also thinkable to use QR codes within a game that need to be scanned with a digital device.

- After the game/debriefing phase:
Again digital boards can support the visualisation in the debriefing phase. You can also think about having short Menti surveys to get to know how participants feel or to visualize their (short) comments.

Sometimes it could work to have the whole edularp as a digital experience. Digital rooms like [Gather.town](#) or [Discord](#) may offer the space to host a whole game. Even though it might come with various difficulties when working with young people with different levels of education, technical equipment etc. Therefore, the organisation beforehand as well as the implementation might need more effort and time as during on-site larps. Further thoughts about the digital way of playing an edularp are described in chapters 5 and 6.

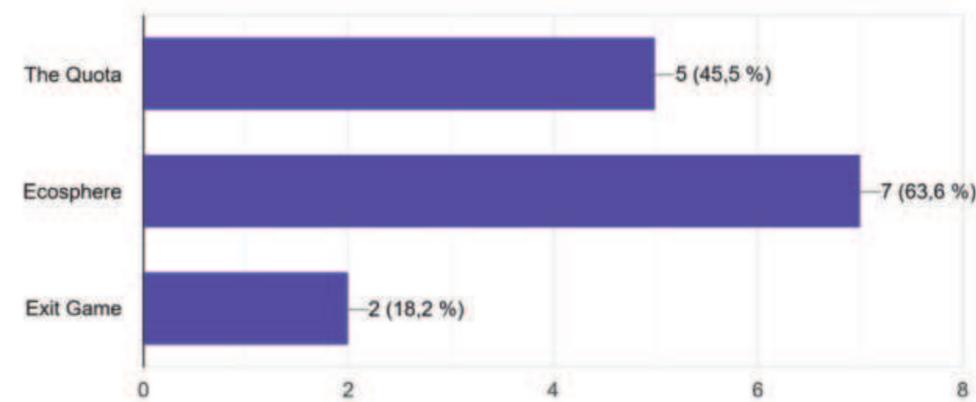
4. 4. Evaluation

As described above, already during the debriefing phase of an edularp the actual evaluation begins. When you have a look at the edularp from an organisation's perspective (means a wider perspective not only on individual participants), you could reflect on the edularp in a whole: was it a "success", were your goals met, did it all work well etc. In this regard, digital survey and evaluation tools could be of good service. You could come up with various (open) questions to share within e.g. [Limesurvey](#) or [Google forms](#) and get feedback from participants, organisers, etc.

Within the project we used Google forms surveys to evaluate the success of the 2 workshops we had. To get an impression on various topics, we included open questions, ratings, checkboxes and multiple choice questions. We come back to the feedback forms in chapter 5.1 and 5.2.

What do you think, which of the presented games is best suited for delivering educational content?

11 Antworten



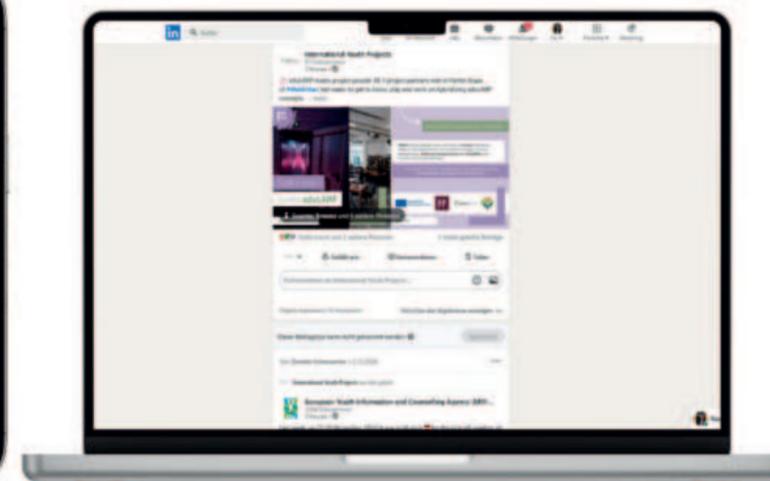
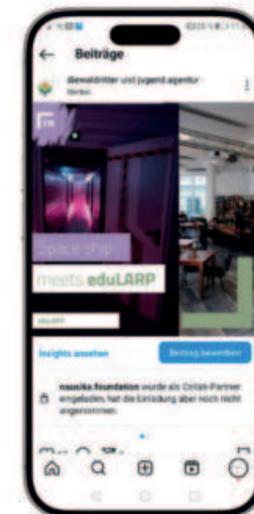
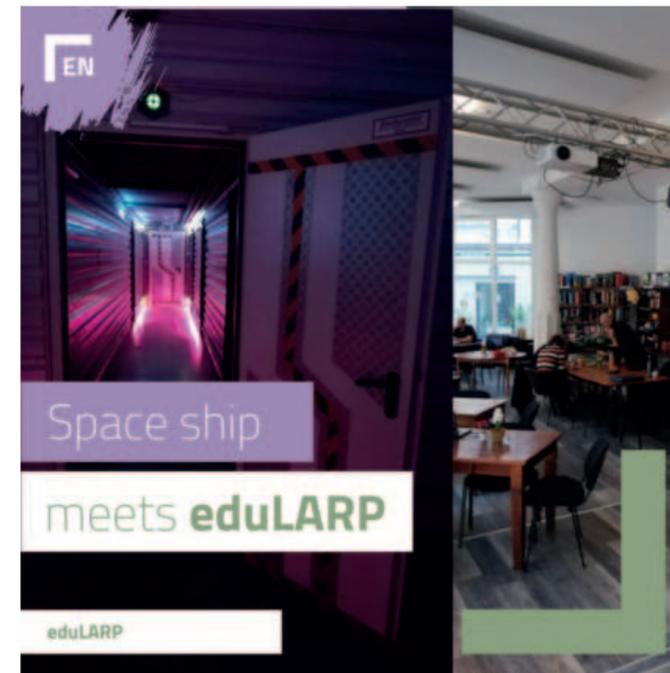
4. 5. Communication

Especially when it comes to communication, we get more and more used to digital ways of informing, sharing and interacting. Not only conversations within individuals are carried out digitally (e.g. in a WhatsApp chat or via email), but also group conversations often take place in digital rooms (e.g. Zoom meetings, group chats, etc.). When it comes to communication to the public (meaning public relations), social media is indispensable. Especially in the field of reaching a young audience, communication is no longer imaginable without using [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#) etc.

Within the project, we decided to stick to the channels of the three partner organisations (and not come up with a new channel that is only used for a short period). Therefore, the main focus was on Instagram ([LinkedIn](#) and the organisational websites).

Implementing proper communication content (regularly) requires a lot of work: you don't only have to think about the content itself, but also about the timing, the audience, appropriate language, appealing graphics and the capacity when to realize all the needed steps. In most cases, it is helpful to create an editorial plan in which you keep track of how often and what content you plan to publish.

Regarding the designing of posts, an intuitive tool to use is [Canva](#) (basic and non profit version is free). Lots of templates for various possible formats give an idea on how your post could look like. You can use ready design templates, integrate your corporate design and easily switch between formats to generate graphics for various platforms. Within "eduLARP" we created Insta posts and used the same content for LinkedIn:



**Developed workshop
concepts for
hybridizing edularp**

5. 1. Concept 1: Workshop in Herten, Germany | 10.-11.12.2024

Basic Ideas of the workshop:

When we talk about edularp, it is important to understand both the theory and the pedagogical objective, but also to experience in practice what larp in general, but also larp at unusual educational and learning locations, feels like. Since the aim of edularp is to provide a holistic approach to topics that takes into account the emotions and individual backgrounds of the participants, it seemed logical to choose a workshop design that combines knowledge and practical experience. Since many of the larp concepts are quite time-consuming, some game formats were only "tested", which reduced the experience but at the same time took into account the expertise of the group of participants, in order to have time to look at and evaluate content on a meta-level.

One of the side effects was to experience gaming in the Waldritter education site that is designed in the aesthetics of a spaceship and can be and is used for (educational) larps and workshops.

For the workshop, we started with 4 basic topics:

- Learning in space - How do we create a creative and holistic experience?
- Straight into the action - How do we create short edu experiences for youth groups/schools/trainings?
- Low-Threshold access - how do we reduce hurdles to reach broader target groups?
- Technology and technical tools - do they support or block experiences? How do they support evaluation?

Timing and content

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4
Let's get started...	Get to know edularp - theoretically and practically	The education that lies within	Before you go...
Arrival	Warm-Up	Warm-Up	Warm-Up
Get to know each other, Warming up	Introduction to edularp - sharing of basic knowledge	Ecosphere - Meta-level reflection	Evaluation of the trainings
—	—	—	Plans and collaboration
Playing the first edugames	Edularp - "the quota"	Playing the learning game: how accessible is edularp?	
	Debriefing / meta-level	What are the advantages and barriers?	
	—	What would it need to be more starter-friendly?	
	Edularp - Ecosphere: Preparation phase / Workshops	Can we use digital tools to reach these goals?	
	Edularp - Ecosphere: Game phase	—	
	Edularp - Ecosphere: Debriefing	Game-design challenge: "The shortest edugame you could come up with"	

Useful side-events (fostering a game friendly environment)

Game Night

Escape game

Networking / sharing practical experiences

Useful details of the workshop

Introduction into edularp

To give participants a framework on larp, edularp and non-formal education it is helpful to explain some of the basic rules, ideas and concepts behind it. We explain this in chapter 2 - What is edularp?

Warm up

Warm-up games, ice-breakers and energizers usually aim to energize the participants in two levels; physically and mentally. Therefore, the energizers can be chosen for these specific functions. For example, in the beginning of the training, when everyone is still relatively light, a physical energizer can be chosen, in order to bring some energy to the group, and people can get to know each other. Building rapport among participants is always necessary for a quality training program. When the topic of the training is a mentally challenging one, the trainer can use an energizer that will stimulate the participants mentally, introduce the topic, and motivate them to offer their view on the subject, so that engagement is increased.

You will find hundreds of them online - so chose the ones that fit your goals:

[Energizers and games for your event](#)

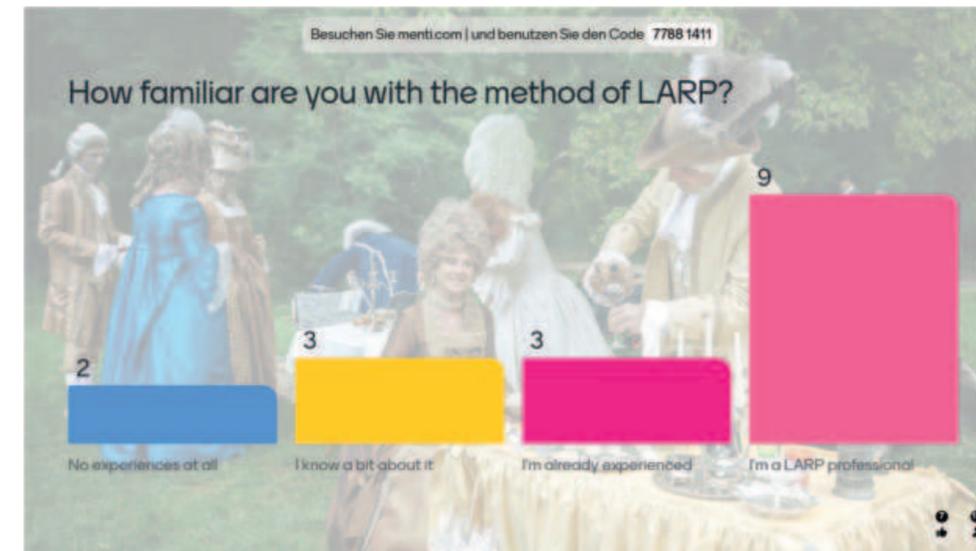
[ENERGIZERS](#)

[Energizers and Ice Breaker Games | SessionLab](#)

[Training games, icebreakers and energisers](#)

Hybridizing parts of the workshop

To support the workshop with digital tools we came up with 3 different links to the existing programme. For the edularp "the quota", we discussed if and how the game could be played in a digital environment (see below). We used Menti questions at several points to find out the participants' state of mind and their expectations in a relaxed atmosphere. And we used an overall survey (Google forms) after the workshop to evaluate the programme (see chapter 5.4).



The edularps

“the quota”

The edularp “the quota” puts participants in the role of decision-makers for asylum applications. They are not given prescribed roles or characters, but remain more or less themselves.

The scenario takes place in an undefined state (which is also irrelevant for the game) in which there are no fixed immigration or asylum rules. The decision as to whether people are granted asylum or not is made by randomly drawn, voluntary citizens who are supposed to make this decision on the basis of their own moral compass and with “common sense”. In case of doubt, a majority vote should be taken.

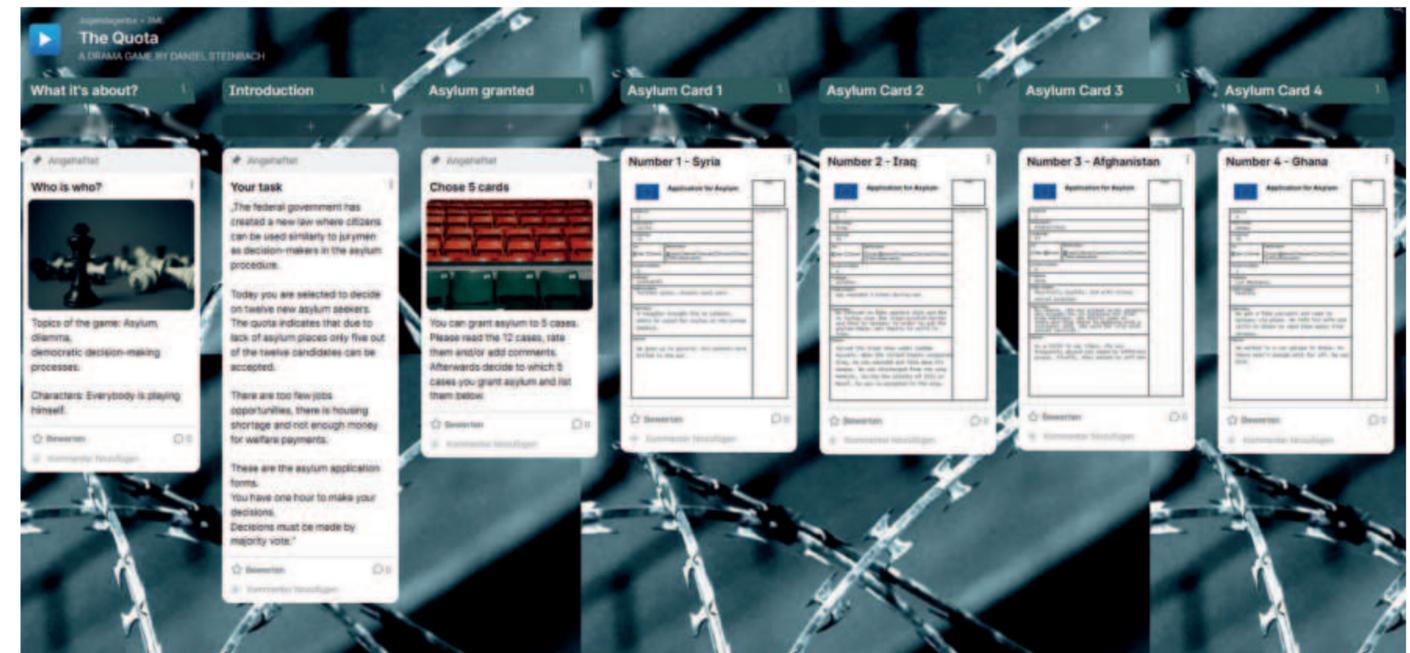
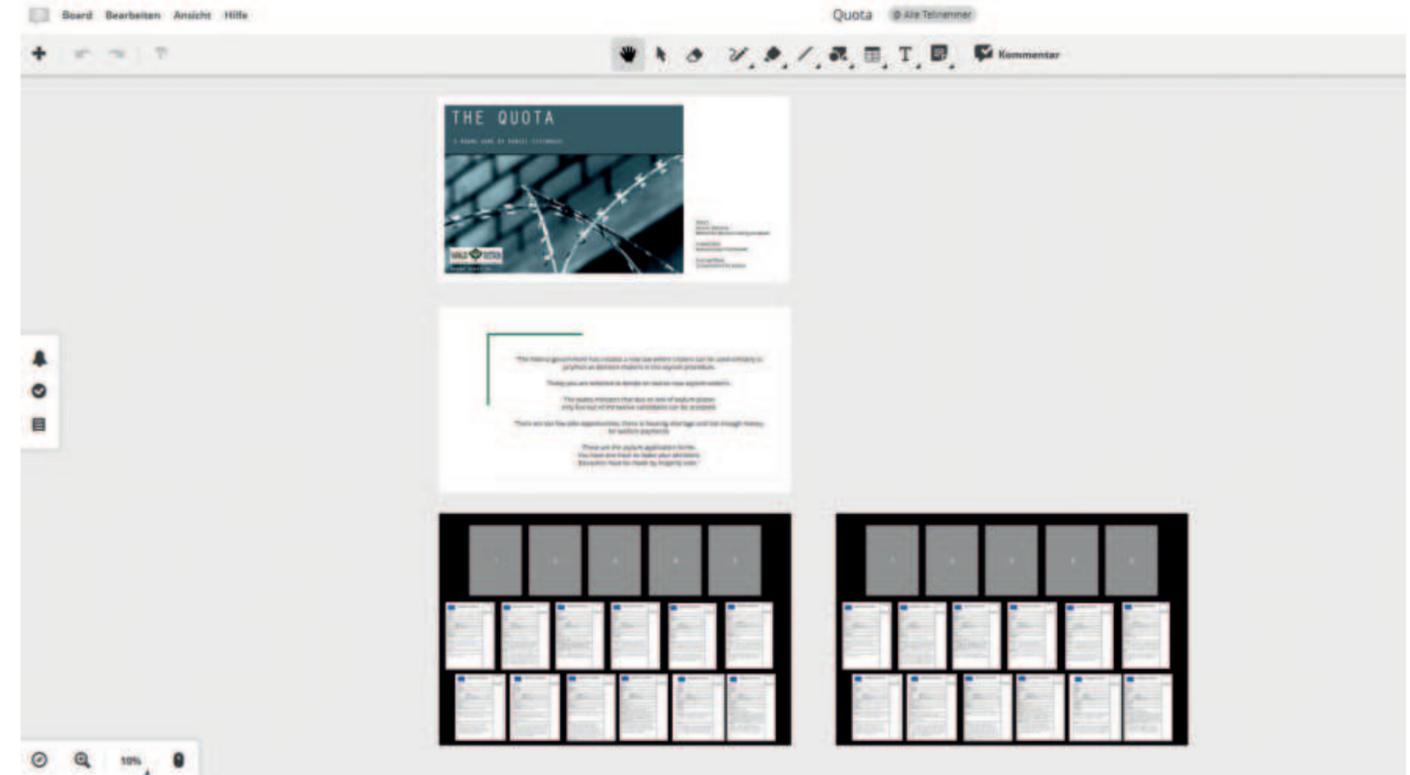
The dilemma of the game is as follows: Out of 12 asylum seekers, only 5 people can be accepted, there are no funds and no free places in the reception centers for more (according to the internal player count, which is not to be questioned in the game either).

Will the players manage to decide on 5 people? What are their criteria? How were the votes conducted? And how do these decision-making processes actually work in our country?

Find the full game here:

<http://www.drama-games.de/wp-content/uploads/The-Quota-Drama-Game-by-Daniel-Steinbach.pdf>

After playing “the quota” on-site, we had a look at 2 different versions of how the game could be implemented digitally. We had a look on Conceptboard and Padlet:



ecosphere

Background to the edugame:

The "Biosphere 2" was built in Arizona, USA, in 1991 with the aim of creating an ecosystem that was independent of the outside world and self-sustaining in its original design. The experiment was intended to prove that life is possible in the long term in an independent, closed ecological system.

<https://biosphere2.org/>

Story of the game:

A rich eccentric has secured funding for the "Biosphere" project and wants to use it to support research into a self-contained ecosystem to make space colonies possible at some point. Two years ago, 16 willing participants applied for the first experiment in Biosphere 2. The start of the game is the celebration after it has been decided which people will be allowed into Biosphere and which have been eliminated. The eyes of the global public are focused on this unique project and all participants are famous for their participation alone. A failure of the project would also mean a failure of their personal careers for many and a bitter financial loss for the financier. Successful completion of the project would lead to fame and further funding.

Gameplay and implementation in the "edu-spaceship"



Feedback and ideas

Getting feedback about the workshop, we asked participants about their opinion on:

1. the larp experience
2. the educational aspects within the larps
3. possible obstacles for beginners
4. Insights from the workshop

One of the main findings was the fact that there was too little time for all the exciting topics and that it would have been possible to extend the workshop over 5 days without any problems.

The larp experience was generally described as good relation-building, and the fact that they started playing immediately was also very well received. Some larp newbies initially had to struggle with a lot of new information and had to orient themselves first - but in general, everyone enjoyed the game part.

From an educational perspective, there were many interesting impulses, especially in the context of the adapted "ecosphere game", which was prepared together in a workshop and then played in the spaceship. Here, the desire was expressed to have more props, charts or buttons to get into character even better - but at the same time, the idea was also communicated that it would probably be exciting to design the spaceship with the participants during the next runs - with a little time, even with scientific background knowledge.

There was intensive discussion about how to best accompany new players into an edu-larp, especially with regard to motivation, role-finding and the presence of often very present fellow players - here it became clear that sufficient time is an important factor in creating a successful game.

The biggest barriers were named as fear of doing something wrong and an overwhelming amount of information about roles, scenarios and backgrounds. Costumes, safety mechanisms and theater workshops in advance were helpful for getting started.

In general, all participants felt very comfortable and well looked after, learned a lot and took a lot away with them for themselves personally. The exchange between the organizations was particularly positively mentioned, as was the opportunity to get a broader view of the possibilities of larp in the educational field. The option to use the Drama Games Festival afterwards with further games and networking opportunities was also highly praised.

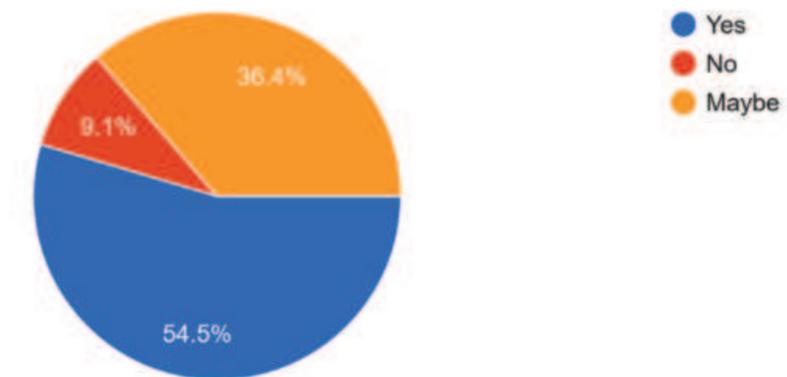
Before departure, we asked all participants to fill in a Google forms survey about the 2-day workshop in Herten. Looking at the responses, we can add some more insights how participants thought about it:

- The workshop as a whole was rated with 4.73 (out of 5) stars, so we can say it was a success and participants enjoyed it.
- The mix of playing and working/content development was rated positively, participants also enjoyed the digital tools.
- 90 percent of participants in Herten got an idea of how digital tools can support the planning and implementation of edularps.

Regarding the possible digital versions of "the quota" in Conceptboard / Padlet, we had a separate evaluation: Participants preferred an implementation within Conceptboard.

Do you think, you "lose" something of the game dynamics while playing online?

11 responses



But over 50 percent of participants thought that the game might lose something when played online:

- "The human interaction. You can only counteract to a certain degree."
- "People might even more distance themselves from the game or the discussion."
- "Personal interaction loses deepness and information"
- "People can't really talk at the same time in a video call so shy players get easily lost -- maybe a careful facilitator can make sure that everyone gets a chance to express their opinions"
- "The lack of personal connection can make the stress part bigger, so i think it is just generally harder to make sure that everyone feels alright after the game"

We need to keep these thoughts in mind when hybridizing edularps or when using digital support in games.

5. 2. Concept 2: Workshop in Krakow, Poland | 3.-4.2.2025

Basic ideas of the workshop

The second seminar of the project happened in Kraków, in the venue of Nausika Foundation. The program was designed to continue and deepen the discussions started in Germany, as well as experience the games adequate to the project in-person.

Timing and content

Here is the link to the full [INFOPACK](#), which was sent to all participants before arrival. Below is the excerpt from the program, edited in a way to be replicable by other organizers and youth workers.

Useful details of the workshop

edularp theory

Two digital interactive presentations were prepared and facilitated with time for questions, comments and overwrites:

1. "The Educational Role-Playing Game Design Matrix: Mapping Design Components onto Types of Education". It is a model created by Josefin Westborg and published in the International Journal of Role-playing
2. "Learning in larp - more than a serious research", an independent research carried out during Portal Larp Conventions and Larp Alchemy Training Courses, published on a Miro Board.

Nausika Games

A crash course presentation of relevant games developed by Nausika Foundation was shown for all participants. The focus was on the practical implementation of the games (with target groups, learning competences, logistic requirements) with facilitation and design anecdotes from the authors. The presentation included printed boxes to touch the following games:

1. Climate Perspectives
2. Forgotten Gods
3. Pig Grove
4. A Tree of Life
5. Family Dinner
6. Renaissance Art of Murder
7. The Price
8. The Tenants
9. From Under the Counter

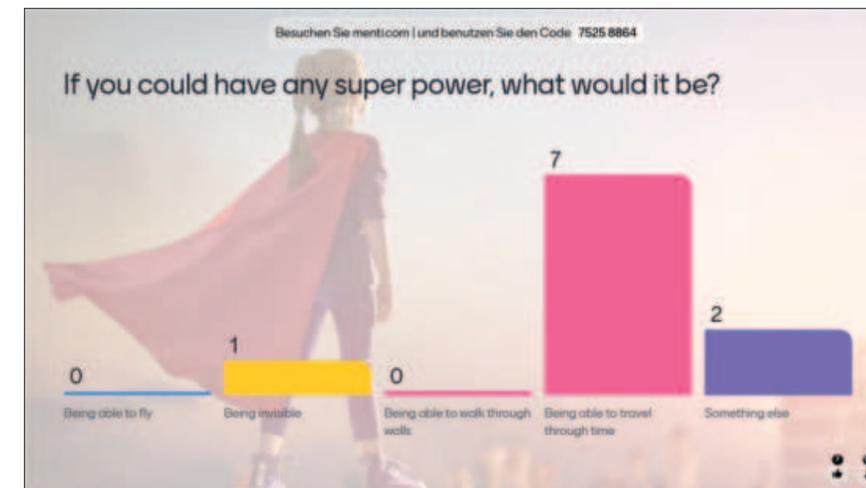
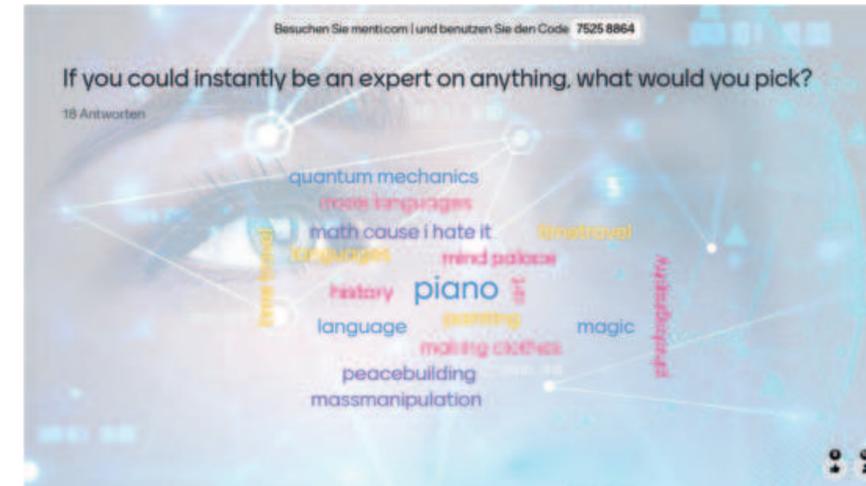


Timing and content

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4
Arrival Day	Sessions Day 1	Sessions Day 2	Departure Day
Arrival	Project introduction and digital quiz	LARP GAME "Pig Grove"	Project Meeting
COFFEE AND COWORKING Integrate, know the place, talk about their work or just use the coworking space in the shared office.	EDU-LARP THEORY with 2 digital interactive presentations:	LARP GAME "Climate Perspectives"	Evaluation
	1. "The Educational Role-Playing Game Design Matrix: Mapping Design Components onto Types of Education"	DOUBLE-FISHBOWL DISCUSSION TABLES	Plans and collaboration
	2. "Learning in larp - more than a serious research"	1. HYBRIDIZING EDU-LARP How to bring EDU-LARP into the digital or semi-digital educational setting?	
	PREVIEW OF NAUSIKA GAMES	2. CONDENSING EDU-LARP How to adapt non-digital EDU-LARP to the school education practice?	
	LARP GAME "The Strangers"	PROJECT PUBLICATION DESIGN	
	optional: DIGITAL TOOLS		

Hybridizing parts of the workshop

Common to the workshop in Germany, digital tools were used during the workshop. Within Menti we realized a short "digital quiz" as an icebreaking activity:



We also offered a time slot to discuss digital tools and dive deeper into their handling and benefits. As the workshop was already very full with lots of different activities, we decided to shift some of the work about digitalisation into the online space. We agreed on having 2 additional online workshops after Krakow. Most participants were either very interested in Gather.town or Canva. That's why we chose these two applications to meet online (see chapter 5.3).

The edularps

“The strangers”

We played the full-time larp game [THE STRANGERS](#) by Nina Runa Essendrop in the Dungeon in Nausika Hub.

Strangers is an abstract, non-verbal larp about integration. It uses physical methods such as sign language and simple movement routines to create the two cultures and the feeling of belonging or not belonging to them. It explores the situation of refugees trying to fit in, and the reactions among the people who they try to fit in amongst.



The full process of Briefing, Derolling and Debriefing was carried out to provide a live experience of a high-quality game which has been designed for art purposes but has been also used in the educational context.

“Pig grove” and “Climate perspectives”

We played a short version of “Pig grove” as well as “Climate Perspectives”. Included were discussions on how to facilitate the games. A full description about the two games is found in chapter 3.1.

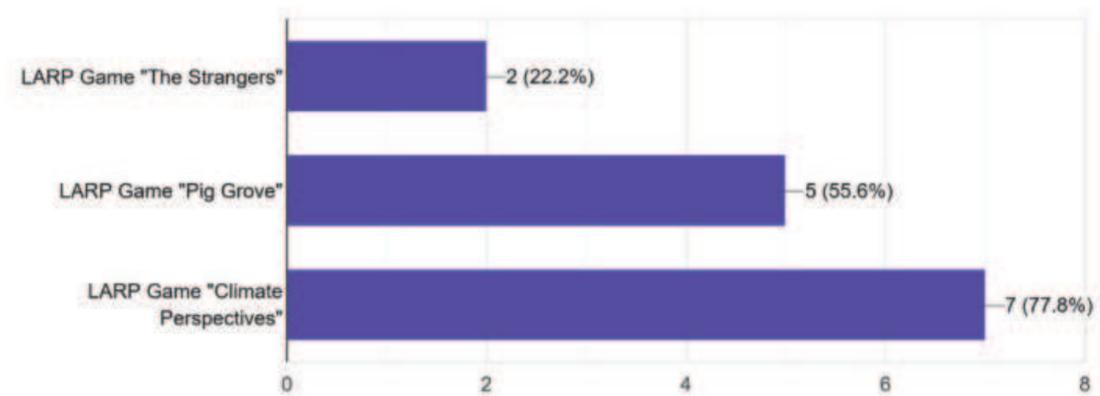
Feedback and ideas

We have engaged in deep expert discussion on the crossroads of larp and education. The discussion benefited from differences of perspectives all 3 partners brought into the seminar. The conclusions can be summed up in the following points:

- The division between larp and edularp is conventional and should not be treated as absolute. The same games can be used in either educational or leisure situations, depending on the goals of the organizers. Some people say that every game is educational, because the players are learning while playing (in-formal education approach).
- Many high-quality larp games (including edularps) are missing high-quality introductory workshops and post-game debriefing. It looks like the authors have used their brilliant creativity in designing the main gameplay and then didn't have the energy to add creative workshops around it. The debriefing is crucial in edularp - it helps to turn experience into structured reflection, it's what makes the game educational. Many existing games need reworking in terms of adding a structured debriefing which implements the non-larp methods of non-formal education, in which trainers and youth workers are more experienced than larp game designers, so two-way cooperation in this field is required.
- Many larp and edu-larp games would be valuable in school education, but need to be adapted into the formal education system. This does not need changing the games themselves. It would be enough to locate a game in a formal network of themes and competences of relevant learning curricula. It would be much easier for the teachers to use edularp if the scenario clearly mentions what competences and information the students will gain by playing it, and how it connects to the national teaching program which schools must follow. This can be done, there's a need to do it within future projects.

What do you think, which of the presented games is best suited for delivering educational content?

9 responses



Adding some insights from our online survey about the 2-day workshop, we can say: The workshop in total was rated very good by all participants regarding content, networking, game experience etc.

- The mix of playing and content development was seen positively and participants liked the digitalization elements.
- Nearly 80 percent of participants in Krakow got an idea of how digital tools can support the planning and implementation of edularps.

Here are some of the comments participants left:

- "one day I would like to create a full digital version of Climate Perspective on Gather platform"
- "Climate Perspectives with some more audiovisual support"
- "AI" > can it be of help for edularps?
- "I wish we talked more about digital tools"



5. 3. Online workshops

As mentioned above, we decided to meet online to have digital sessions to experience and share knowledge about the two tools "Canva" and "Gather.town".

Canva workshop

On 11th of February 2025 we had the possibility to work together on Canva, a tool used for designing processes. The tool offers a variety of functions that makes it easy to create graphics or whole flyers/posters etc. to use on websites, as digital banners or within social media.

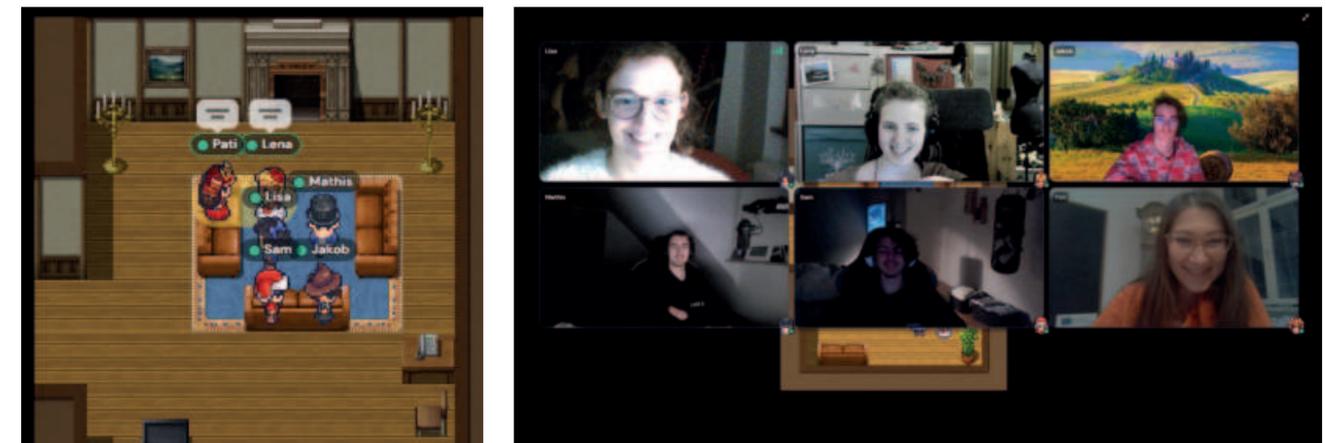
Together we explored various possibilities Canva includes, like ready-to-use design templates, options for filing branding kits (e.g. logos, a defined color palette, fonts etc.) or the use of mockups. We agreed about the fact that AI supported functions (e.g. to edit photos) are quite useful and already pretty acceptable in terms of quality.



Gather.town workshop

On 13th of February 2025 our Gather.Town workshop introduced the possibilities of virtual spaces for interaction and specifically the chances for gamification in the realm of education to the 5 participants. Gather.Town is a platform for virtual meetings, which incorporates the unique function of being able to move through a customizable online space and through this and being able to talk to specific people, replicates a feeling of closeness that most platforms for video communication lack.

The basic introduction covered a structured tutorial of the platform in its functions as well as easy troubleshooting methods should problems arise. Afterwards the participants got the chance to explore the virtual maps through fun tasks and to discover different possibilities hands on.



The workshop concluded with a discussion of possible uses and how to incorporate the website into future projects. The option to move freely through the map allows the possibility of exploration and interactive storytelling that works through showing and experiencing the story rather than just being told. This leaves a bigger impact and could be used for role plays that rely on the message being delivered through several channels without the audience feeling preached to. Overall, the reception was very positive and new ideas were formed.

Conclusion and perspective

During the project, the three partner organisations and participating youngsters experienced edularp AND various accesses to the digital world. Combining these two topics made the project itself an interesting package from which we can feed on.

The project enabled us to use digital tools not only while playing but also in the framework of the project (management). Playing and working within this “digital surrounding” let us integrate digital devices and made us able to explore how they can improve or at least make things easier within the game.

Meeting on-site, using hybrid ways and trying out pure digital solutions, we experienced different underlying claims. While seeing each other on-site, you enjoy the personal encounter. Then, you don't want to only work digitally. In case you meet online, the basics of the encounter are different: exchange might not be as intuitive as within the real world, you may meet fatigue in front of the screen, it might be more difficult to follow others and you might miss the feeling for interpersonal relationship. You have to keep that in mind when hybridizing or developing digital edularp concepts.

Evaluating the whole project with the three project partners, we are happy that we created this guide together. We experienced a good team, sharing of work packages, acceptance of different views, valuable moments of encounter, learning from each other, playing and growing together. Within this guide, we are able to capture our thoughts and ideas about edularp and hybrid possibilities - now it is your turn to start experiencing your own edularp world (with digital help).

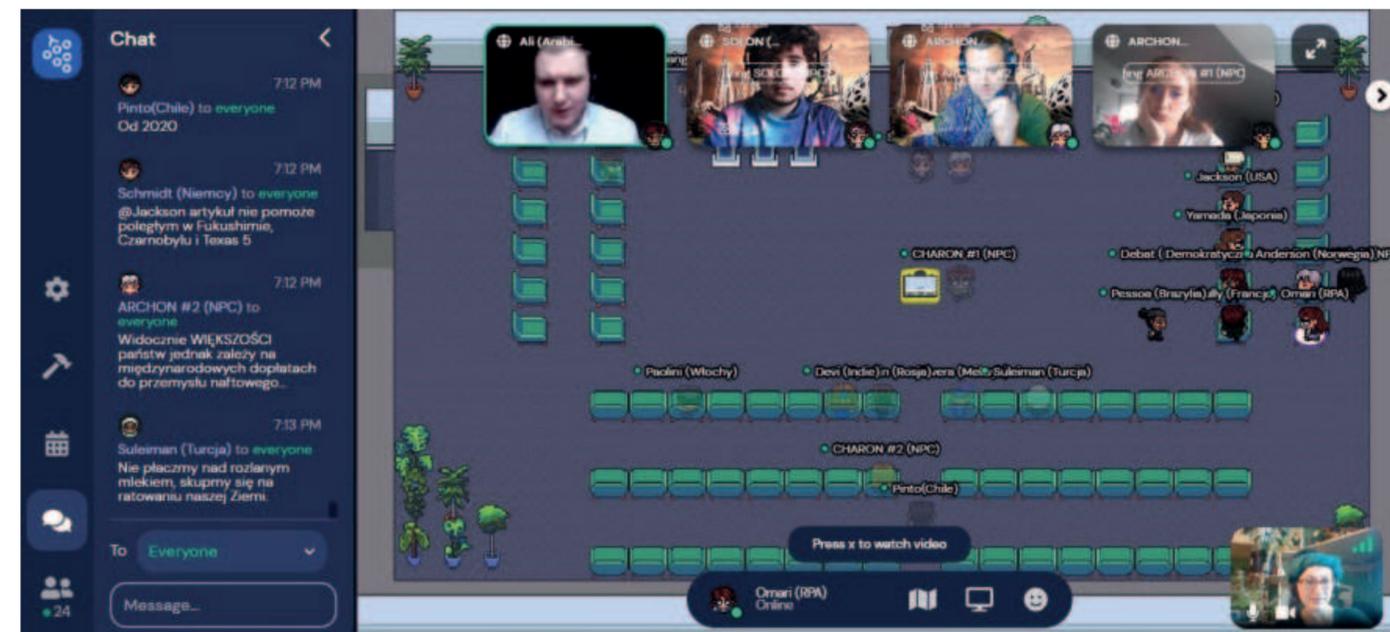
During this project, we talked about concepts, scenarios and edularp games in general. We played some of them, some were thought ahead. We discussed creating online/digital or hybrid versions of existing larp games. One of the ideas was a plan to create a fully digital version of “Climate Perspectives” - the most often organized edu-larp game of Nausika Foundation (over 200 events), explained in chapter 3.1.

DIGITAL CLIMATE PERSPECTIVES

The idea dates back to 2021 when a prototype of the game was actually run online two times during Covid. It was organized using the paid Gather.town platform for up to 50 participants. Nausika created his own map - a castle with multiple conference rooms and climate change posters.

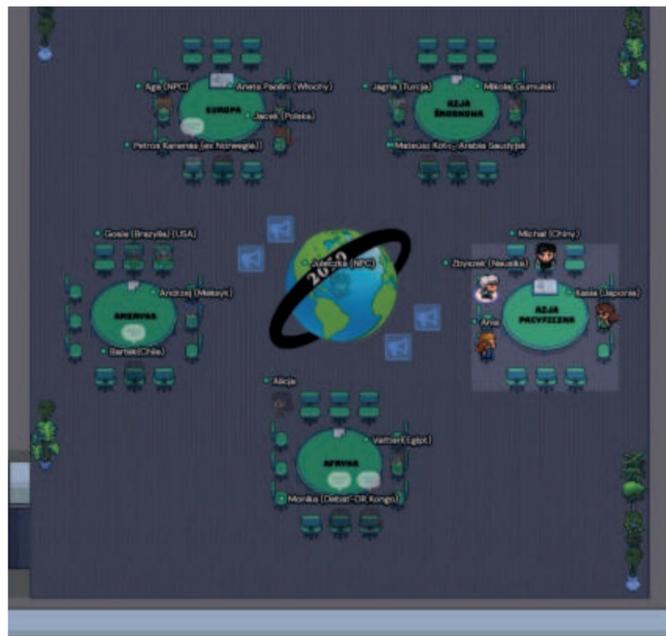
The online runs received positive feedback from the players. However, after Covid Nausika turned back to in-person events and the online game idea was frozen. Since then, the game has developed and changed, so there is no presentable updated online version anymore.

The experience from running the game on Gather.town is valid. Nausika would like to work further on it if a funding opportunity is available. This would require around 50 working days, so could not fit into the current project timeline. From the current perspectives, pros and cons can be pointed out using Gather.town to digitize an analog larp scenario:



Advantages:

- possible to create a big map with different rooms, each for a specific part of the game
- easy access for players (minimal technical requirements, direct use in the browser)
- flexible options for defining roles, speaking and writing permissions during the game
- possible to make it sci-fi and show that it's the year 2025
- the feature of speaking only with persons close to you on the map provides a dynamic and "realistic" experience of a conference and stimulates the good player behaviour
- flexible options of sharing the access to the map



Disadvantages of Gather for Climate Perspectives:

- you have to pay for the app when using it for over 10 players, which makes it expensive for NGOs and youth workers to use
- the app looks simple and pixelate, (however this might be a plus).

FORGOTTEN GODS HYBRID

Within the project, we also tried out a hybrid version of the game "Forgotten Gods". It is a city game in which players take roles of ancient gods, with the goal of seeing the cities (they might have seen previously) with a fresh set of eyes. Players are tasked with venturing the city while looking for signs of their "godly presence" - interpretation is left to players themselves, which usually leads to fun, innovative conclusions.

Gods are separated by different cultures (Egyptian, Celtic etc. mythologies) and guilds (gods of war, nature, love...). The game is replicable in any city and most player groups, from inexperienced players to gamers looking for a new experience.

The standard version of Forgotten Gods has a digital component: groups of Gods communicate by using social media and posting pictures, videos or text messages explaining what they found. This gives other players the opportunity to be updated at all times, while simultaneously giving the game master(s) channel to communicate with players and keep track of their whereabouts. Since players are usually separated in groups and exploring by themselves, the digital element provides a structure that would be otherwise hard to keep up with.

For the seminar in Krakow, we decided to prepare something special - a hybrid variant of the game. It was facilitated online on a special Whatsapp channel and a set of Google Docs and played in the free time between the project sessions, which allowed participants to roam around the city and look closely for potential game elements.

The difference between previous and new versions of the game was mainly in the amount of time players spent together through all the stages of the game. Whereas in the original version players are coming together at the beginning (for introduction, game rules and backstory) and at the end (for the ritual that signifies the end of the gameplay time), in this version players met each other only at the end, to announce the results.



It is also notable to say there is already a potential for this sort of community building. Third (and final) version of the game, which is usually played at bigger events (conferences, conventions, gatherings), sees players finding character cards put up in the venues, reading the rules and deciding whether or not they want to take the initiative and join by themselves. If they decide to play, their objective is to take a game-related picture and post it on social media (Instagram, ex.g.) with the hashtag #forgottengods. This way, the foundation for a future community might already be set.



In the traditional version players come together at the end, to announce their findings and share insights on the lives of people and modern times. Following this is the ritual, a chant said by all the players together.

In the version participants played in Krakow, game had a competitive objective as well as the collaborative one, with gods collecting points based on the number of posts and reactions they got on them. This resulted in players not being as deeply in character as in previous versions, but proved to be a starting point for potential expansions of the game that could be played completely online, or even introduce Forgotten Gods as a city-exploring community for sharing findings and fun stories.

Thank you for reading! We hope you have fun now implementing your own edularps.

If you have any questions, comments or further thoughts, please feel free to contact us!



Appendix

Within the appendix you can find more information about the edularp environment: We added other edularp projects and concepts used in the European context as well as information and links to various edu larp networks. Feel free to dive into your favourite topics. We would love to meet you at an upcoming event, festival or in case you contact us to cooperate in future edularp projects.

Other eduLARP projects and concepts in the European context

LARP FOR CLIMATE

<https://nausika.eu/larpforclimate/>

Erasmus+ Partnership which resulted in 5 high-quality diverse edu-larp scenarios for climate education. The scenarios have been played over 300 times in over 12 countries, are continuously used by youth workers and teaching institutions, as well as translated to new languages. The project has been awarded the Good Practices label.

TIME DIVE

<https://nausika.eu/timedive/>

Erasmus+ Partnership that connected LARP with the social history of the cities of Kraków, Prague and Budapest. Understanding history was the main educational asset, which resulted in creating 9 immersive, engaging game scenarios, which can easily be played also for leisure and at cultural festivals.

FORGOTTEN GODS

<https://nausika.eu/forgottengods/>

Erasmus+ Partnership that focused on creating a single Larp(like) scenario and adjusting its qualities to the maximum. What was achieved - the Forgotten Gods - a mixture of role-playing experience with an outdoor city game, devised to explore new European cities or rediscover the ones you're living in, driven by passion for culture studies and ancient mythologies, with a touch of philosophy and sustainable tourism.

LARP ALCHEMY

<https://nausika.eu/larpalchemy/>

Larp Alchemy is a series of Training Courses for Youthworkers and game designers. The main goal is to explore the regular LARP games (so not particularly edu-larps!) as tools of non-formal education, personal development and social change.

The series is organized and hosted by Nausika Foundation, with over 20 partner organizations. The basic timelines are:

- once per year an advanced Training for experienced game designers, facilitators, and organizers,
- once per year an introduction Training in LARP for teachers and youth workers with no experience demanded.

Next Larp Alchemy training will happen in 2026, the sign ups will be posted on the Nausika webpage, the materials and lots of photos are published already on the link above.

DiveIN

<https://europe4youth.eu/blog/portfolio/divein/>

Erasmus+ Partnership – Developing EduLARP Methodology To Prevent Violent Radicalisation of Young People. Results: 4 Larp Scenarios, free to download, and a printed publication with an interesting research trying to measure the learning impact of larp games. Have you ever wondered in what conditions beliefs and opinions get hardened, become implacable and think-skinned? When they can become problematic in the context of social cohesion and solidarity? Regardless of what they are (left, right, cause-based), their radicalization may lead to loss of holistic view on ourselves as a society and to reduction of empathy towards those who think differently. Project "DiveIN" proposes a tool that helps preventing legitimization of violence in the radicalization process – eduLARP.

MORE EDU-LARPS of other organizations and projects

There are some collections of games that might be worth a look:

"#feminism" - a collection of games by authors from the "nordic larp community":

<https://feministnanogames.wordpress.com/about-the-anthology/>

"Crescendo giocoso" - a collection of chamber larps from the "southern larp community":

<https://nessundove.it/en/crescendo-giocoso/>

Collection of further links as part of the german DRAMA GAMES Community:

<http://www.drama-games.de/more-free-form-games/>



Networks

EDINU larp community

<https://www.edinu.eu/>

A series of six 3-day long outdoor edu-larp games which created a vast community of players and educators. The setting of the game was post-apocalyptic, both in the storyline and the costumes, which proved to be a vivid environment for solid learning and acting experience on the highest level.

The games took place in Berlin [Abenteuerzentrum](#), and were financed as part of Erasmus+ youth exchanges and training courses. Board members of Nausika worked there as game designers and facilitators.

PORTAL larp community

<https://www.facebook.com/portallarpconvention>

An international community of larp players and designers, focused mainly in the south-east Europe, but recognize in the whole continent.

The in-person conventions are held yearly, moving from country to country. In the years 2021-2024, Portal community had a close adventure with adult education and edu-larp, thanks to co-funding within Erasmus Projects, initiated and coordinated by Nausika Foundation. The events then were organized in (click on the titles to see the event's webpages):

[Athens \(September 2021\)](#)

[Kraków \(June 2022\)](#)

[Budapest \(June 2023\)](#)

GIMLE larp community

<https://gimlelarp.com/>

A series of 4-day long outdoor edu-larp games in Swedish forest. Each game was a unique, strong experience, carefully prepared by the hosts and the community of players through the whole year until the larp, which always happened on the full moon of the month July. Setting: Tolkien/Viking/GameOfThrones, with low magic. Venue: Hastekasen Farm Association, which holds 13 hectares of permaculture land, including forest with infrastructure like livable hobbit holes, scary orc towers and tree elven houses.

The Gimle Larp games are a rare example of mixing Erasmus+ youth exchange (~50) with regular commercial players (~150). Patrycja Paula Gas from Nausika is one of the founders and lead designers of the whole adventure. Beside building a strong community linked to larp, Gimle also contributed to the growth of the Hastekasen permaculture farm, both in terms of people and infrastructure (people live in the summer in the houses built for the larp games).

edularp:network

The german edularp:network is a loose and open association of actors who use live role-playing (larp) as a method to shape educational processes. The aim is to exchange experiences and methods in order to learn together and to achieve a higher public presence. The network tries to meet at least once a year.

<https://edularp.de/>

DRAMA GAMES FESTIVAL

"DRAMA GAMES" is another term that Waldritter use for shorter larp games with educational goal. Once a year Waldritter hosts a 3-4 day event to get to know, play and share new or interesting edularps - surrounded by a playful environment with board-, street- and escape-games. The DRAMA GAMES FESTIVAL started as a german speaking event in 2014 and has become international with english slots in the last two years.

<http://www.drama-games.de/>

German (Fantasy-) larp campaigns and events

In Germany there are lots of players that do larp as their leisure activity or hobby. Most of the games can be categorized as "fantasy larp".

There are some campaigns, where different larp organizers meet from time to time and share the same background-world with a common map containing the different larp countries that interact with each other and visit each other's events:

<https://mittellande.info/>

<https://www.suedlande.de/>

<https://www.ostlande.de/ostlande/>

Germany hosts two of the biggest larp events in the world, with around 6000 (Drachenfest) and 8000 (Conquest of Mythodes) participants:

<https://realmsomythodea.com/conquest-von-mythodea/>

<https://www.drachenfest-larp.info/>

There is a german wiki on larp as well: <https://www.larpwiki.de/LarpWiki>

We are looking forward to your comments. Please contact the project partners via their websites:

