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COMBATING DISINFORMATION AMONG YOUTH THROUGH LIVE ACTION ROLE PLAY

A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO EDUCATIONAL LARP

Running a full scale educational live action role play (LARP) session is not an easy task as you have to remember a great deal of things while also playing your own role. This guide is meant to support you in role playing with your group by providing a short overview of the relevant concepts. It serves to refresh your memory and can be printed out to have something to cling on during the game.

If you are totally unfamiliar with the concept of LARP or want to know more about its backgrounds, its advantages as an educational method or comprehension information on how to play, you will find a longer information document in the DIS-PLAY toolkit. Alongside it, there is material to run a specific educational LARP, that you can utilise as a fully planned program for a group activity.



WHAT IS AN EDUCATIONAL LARP?

In a LARP, a group of players comes together and everyone assumes the role of a character within a fictional setting. The experience is shared storytelling where everyone contributes with their characters' actions. The educational method makes use of larping to convey certain contents as an additional layer that is translated into the game. By involving players directly in the learning process, giving them agency, invoking their creativity and allowing them to express themselves within a protected environment, educational LARP perfectly fits the learning style of young adults.

WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAY?

A template for a LARP session is called a scenario. It can be defined by four aspects:

1

A world : Scenarios take place within a fictional universe that sets the environment. Everyone must agree on where and when the LARP takes place. During the LARP everyone will pretend to be there, as if it were real.

2

Characters: Within the LARP, participants get the chance to be someone else than themselves. Every person plays a role that is created before the LARP begins. Non-Player Characters (NPCs) play a special role that is usually taken by an educator

3

Events : To make the LARP exciting, special events need to take place. They are usually introduced by the NPCs.

4

Rules : Even within LARP, some rules are usually required for it to work.

Other than these defining ideas of the LARP, you will need some additional assets like costumes, atmospheric print outs and a location suitable to your group.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- There is no designated outcome. Participants steer the LARP through their actions and decisions, and you can only nudge it into a certain direction
- There is a difference between the fictional and the real world, and with it between the characters and the players. A character is different from the person playing them, and their actions only reflect upon the person to a low degree. Make sure that the group is always aware which sphere you are currently in and what the consequences are.
- Still, not everything is okay in the LARP. Extreme behaviour may force you to break up the LARP and solve the situation in the real world.
- The LARP must be enjoyable for all participants.



THE FOLLOWING STEPS ARE REQUIRED TO FULLY RUN A LARP. FOR EACH ONE, WE HAVE PROVIDED A SHORT CHECKLIST OF WHAT YOU NEED TO PREPARE.

Personal preparation

- Do you know what the LARP is about in terms of its world, the characters, specific events and rules?
- Do you know what the educational content of the LARP is and do you have enough knowledge of the topic to run it in the LARP?
- Do you have a location?
- Did you prepare all the material like costumes and decorations?

Group preparation

- Does everyone in the group know what LARP is and how it works?
- Does everyone understand the world and its rules?
- Did you include mechanisms to dissolve discomforting situations like certain phrases or locations to allow players to take the space they need? Did everyone agree to them?
- Did you prepare warm-up exercises?
- Do you want to disclose the educational topic of the LARP? If not, are you sure nobody will have a bad surprise? If yes, do you think it might negatively impact the behaviour during the LARP?

Character Creation

- What questions did you prepare to guide the players during the creation of their characters?
- Do players have enough time and creative freedom to create a character they want to play? Do they know enough about the world to create fitting characters?
- Did you conduct an introduction round?
- Do you want to allow the players to form groups previous to playing? If yes, what kind of connection should they have?

Playing the LARP

- What is the signal for the start and end of the scenario? Does everyone know it?
- How long does the scenario run?
- Do you know how to play your role?
- What are the events that need to happen? When do they occur?
- How do you manage conflicts?
- At what point do you break the game prematurely?
- Did you prepare extra tasks for players having trouble finding into the game?

Debriefing

- Did everyone get the chance to discuss their experiences?
- What method do you use for debriefing? What do you need for it?
- Did you resolve any conflicts that arose?
- Have the players drawn the important connection to the real world learning objectives?

These five steps should give you a rough orientation on how to run a LARP. Keep the special requirements and challenges posed by your group and resources in mind. And last but not least, remember that not everything will go perfectly according to plan, no matter how hard you try. So try to embrace the spirit of larping when you conduct education and just start off into the adventure.



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