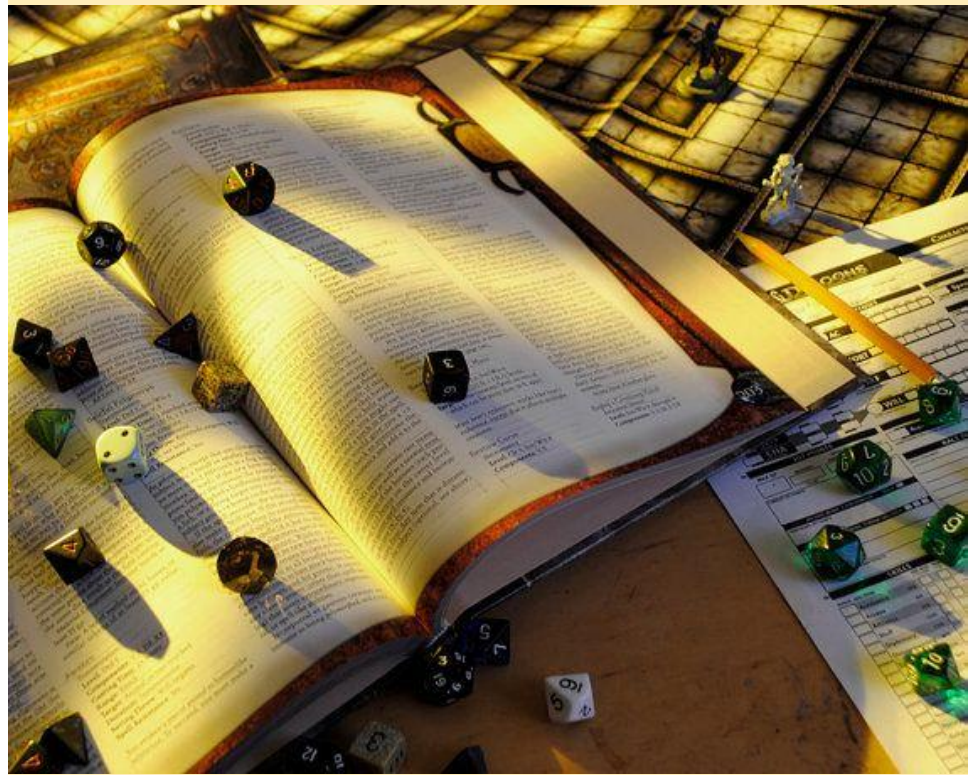

Using Social Gaming to Reach Under-served Students

*Maryska Connolly-Brown
Hampden-Sydney College*

Social gaming provides:

- Structured format
- Social interaction with a purpose
- The ability to try out different identities and perspectives
- Shared mythology and narrative
- Shared goals
- Built-in social groups and relationships
- Ability to explore conflict in a safe environment
- IRL interactions rather than screen time
- Time management skills
- Problem solving skills
- Teamwork
- Lifelong friendships
- A sense of accomplishment and increased confidence
- Public speaking skills
- An chance to be seen and valued by others
- A creative outlet
- Relationships with trusted adults

But mostly...
FUN!



You arrive to find the
entrance to the
Dwarven mine has
collapsed.

What do you do?



Social Gaming at Bortz Library



choose your weapon

The Lingo

- **Campaign** - the long-term adventures of a party of players, this can be one continuous storyline or a series of one-shots of increasing difficulty loosely connected; think of it as a series of books
- **DM/GM/Storyteller** - Dungeon/game master; the person who runs a game by guiding the players through a story or mission including playing the NPCs and running combat
- **NPC** - Non-player characters, they are portrayed by the DM and typically exist in the world to perform a specific function such as supplying information, providing a “hook” or reason for players to embark on an adventure, or running shops and businesses. Some NPCs are 2 dimensional and some can become very important players in the world’s events with their own goals, relationships, and motivations.
- **One-shot** - an adventure or mission that is self-contained and intended to be played in one or two sittings; think of this as a single book in a series or an episode of a TV show
- **PC** - Player character, the players who participate in the game. Players typically develop a character with a specific race, class, and background and interact with the fictional world in the way their character would
- **RAW** - Rules as Written; the guidelines for the game
- **Supplements** - additional optional rules, options, and settings to be used with core rules

Roleplaying Games

- Dungeons and Dragons
- Starfinder
- Call of Cthulhu
- Homebrew games
- MANY more...



Extra Life 2018

Roleplaying Games: The Basics

- **Staffing requirements:** One staff person (GM/DM/storyteller) per 5-8 students
- **Time requirements:** 3+ hours for a single game; prep time can vary but can be minimum with premade adventures and random generators
- **Cost:** \$20 to \$75 for basic supplies
- **Minimum supplies:**
 - Character sheets
 - A way to reference the rules (typically core rulebooks or starter set)
 - A campaign or adventure
 - Dice set (number and type will depend on the game)
 - Dry erase, 1 inch grid mat (optional but highly recommended)
 - Something to represent the figures in combat (optional but highly recommended)

One-Shot

- Single session (3 to 5 hours)
- Self-contained
- Little or no character background
- Simple goal(s)
- Fewer scheduling issues
- Very little prep
- Parties can be more experimental
- Premade characters are common
- Characters can be any level (determined by the adventure)
- Table rules and etiquette should be discussed at the start or ahead of time
- Great introduction to a new game

Campaign

- Multiple sessions over a period of months or years
- Character backgrounds and goals often factor in the story
- Individual sessions can be “monster of the week” or an interconnected narrative (or a combination of both)
- Players establish long-term goals, NPC enemies and allies, political and social connections
- Scheduling can be challenging
- Always begin with a session zero to establish session tone, rules, etiquette
- Parties are more likely to be deliberately designed and balanced
- Typically start at a low level

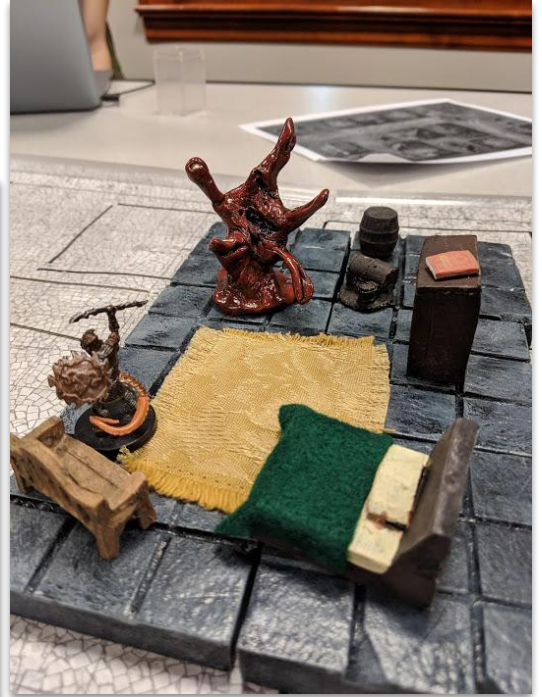
RPG Resources: Dungeons & Dragons (5e)

● Character creation and rules sets

- Goblin Queen's Guide for the New Dungeon Master: <https://bit.ly/2BFA0bl>
- Basic Rules for D&D: <https://dnd.wizards.com/articles/features/basicrules>
- DnDBeyond: <https://www.dndbeyond.com> (share your purchased content with students; club accounts available)
- Roll20 5th Edition Compendium: <https://roll20.net/compendium/dnd5e/BookIndex>
- Character sheets and pregenerated characters: https://dnd.wizards.com/articles/features/character_sheets
- Handbooker Helper: <https://bit.ly/362kk1h>
- The Animated Spellbook: <https://www.youtube.com/user/zeebashew>

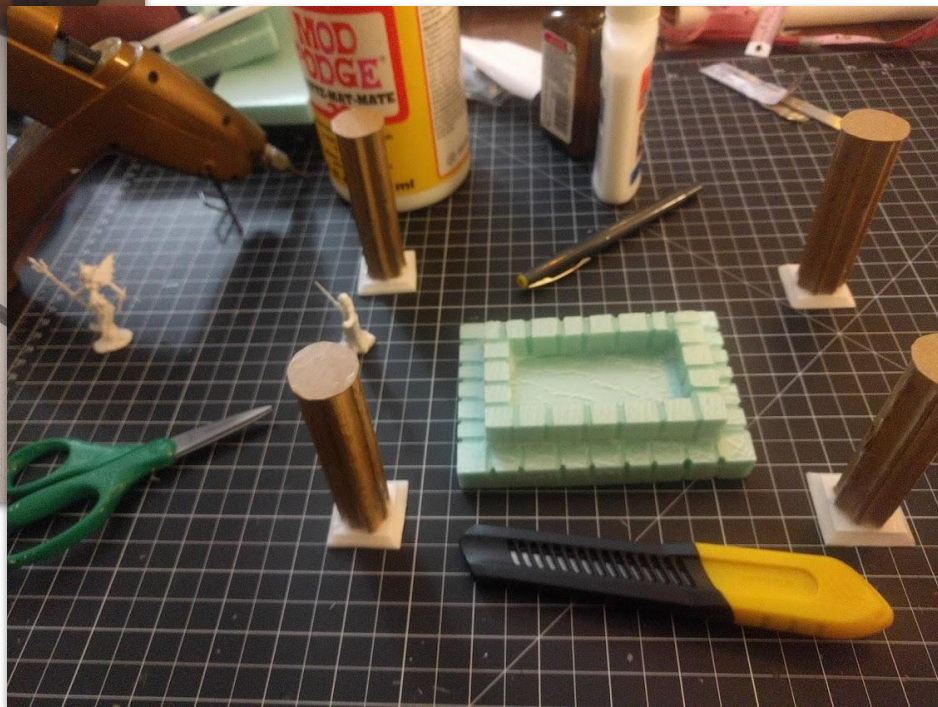
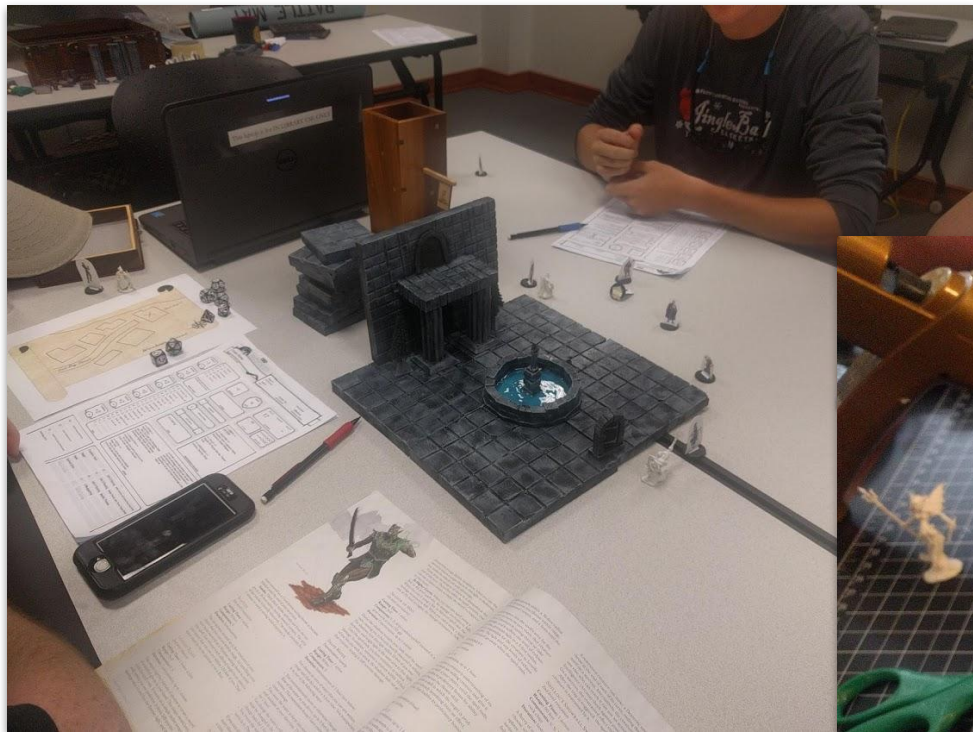
● Premade modules and adventures

- <https://www.drivethrurpg.com>
- <https://www.dmsguild.com> (Dungeons & Dragons specific)



RPG Resources: Dungeons & Dragons (Homebrew Games)

- Resource management
 - Dungeonomics (campaign notes, loot, NPCs, etc.): <https://dungeonomics.com/>
 - Fantasy calendars: <https://fantasy-calendar.com/>
- Combat
 - Kobold Fight Club: <https://kobold.club>
- Tips for running a game
 - Running the Game with Matthew Colville: <https://bit.ly/341f85y>
 - How to be a Great GM with Guy Sclanders: <https://bit.ly/366GhWv>
 - GM Toolbox with Seth Skorkowsky: <https://bit.ly/2Ph4C6f>
- Content generators
 - Random Town generator: <https://www.kassoon.com/dnd/town-generator>
 - City map generator: <https://watabou.itch.io/medieval-fantasy-city-generator>
 - Random NPC (non-player character) generator: <https://www.fantasynamgenerators.com/>



You suddenly come
to a deep chasm.
You need to be on
the other side.

What do you do?



Murder Mysteries

- Purchased
- Homebrew



Murder Mysteries: The Basics

- **Staffing requirements:** 2 to 5 staff members or volunteers (one should be a storyteller/coordinator)
- **Time requirements:** 2 to 2 1/2 hours for a single game; prep time can vary but can be minimum with premade adventures; assignment of characters should happen prior to the game
- **Cost:** \$20 to \$100
- **Minimum supplies:**
 - Character sheets and setting information
 - Refreshments optional but recommended (finger foods and snacks work well)
 - Costuming and props will vary by scenario from minimal to quite complex (players often provide their own costuming but you can give them tips and ideas)
 - “Busy” games to facilitate interaction (board games, bar games, etc.) are optional but recommended
 - Timer for important story events (particularly the murder)

Murder Mystery Resources

- Tips for running a game
 - Be organized; information should be carefully controlled as not to spoil the mystery (spreadsheets are your friend!)
 - Impress on players how important it is to keep character information confidential; for younger students it's sometimes better to tell them the setting and give them the character when they arrive
 - Utilize teachers and professors (give them a player or NPC role)
 - Have volunteer act as points of contact and help clarify rules (the bartender/butler works well for this)
 - Meet with the murder and victim ahead of time separately to answer questions and work out the details of the murder (ideally the victim should not know their killer so they can come back into the game as another character)
- Where to find scripts
 - Drive Thru RPG: <https://bit.ly/2JhTaDu>
 - Endgame: <http://larpfactorybookproject.blogspot.com/2013/10/endgame.html>
 - Various premade modules are available for sale at bookstores and Amazon

A giant centipede erupts from a hole directly in your path and lunges to bite.

What do you do?



A Grandiose Disaster

- Premade games
- Homebrew scenarios



A Grandiose Disaster

- **Staffing requirements:** 1 to 2 staff members
- **Time requirements:** 2 to 3 hours; set-up and planning will vary by complexity
- **Cost:** \$10 to \$20
 - PDF includes scenarios and rules to create your own games: <https://ndpdesign.com/agd>
- **Minimum supplies:**
 - Character sheets and setting handouts
 - Props are not required but can make improv more fun
 - Food and drink are optional (finger foods/light snacks work well)
 - A means to time different stages of the game
 - Dice to determine random deaths/injuries (d6, d8, d12)

Mafia/Werewolf

- No adventure or scenario needed; every game is different



Mafia/Werewolf

- Staffing requirements: 1 staff member per
- Time requirements: As little as half an hour
- Cost: \$0 to \$20
 - You can purchase premade cards/tokens or use playing cards, pennies, or slips of paper
- Minimum supplies:
 - A room where everyone can sit in a circle (table and chairs optional)
 - Cards or tokens to assign roles (at minimum one or two werewolves/mafia and the rest civilians/villagers but more complex roles exist for both versions of the game)

Before you is a
locked door.
According to the
map, the treasure is
in the next room.

What do you do?



General tips

- Learn from Experienced Players (in person or online)
- Communicate with your players about expectations (theirs and yours)
- Coach through interpersonal conflicts
- Help players establish a reason to work together BEFORE you start (especially important for long-term campaigns)
- Avoid chaotic or evil alignments with untested players
- Don't be hard on yourself if you aren't a skilled roleplayer or can't do accents (trust me, they don't care if the story is fun)
- Take notes during game play as the story will rarely go exactly as you expect (sometimes I record my sessions so I can refer back after)
- Make time for aftercare and debriefing (with one-shot sessions in particular but not exclusively)
- Roleplaying diversity



Maryśka Connolly-Brown
mconnolly-brown@hsc.edu
Hampden-Sydney College, Bortz Library
<https://www.facebook.com/QueenoftheGoblins>



Loot

Maryśka Connolly-Brown

mconnolly-brown@hsc.edu

Hampden-Sydney College, Bortz Library

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