ABSTRACT

The contemporary security environment demands far more of security professionals than theoretical knowledge. To ensure success, todays security professionals also depend on the acquisition of competent emotional intelligence, communication skills, reflective learning, judgement, planning, decision making and ethics. Failure to do so may impact, not only on the security professional's ability to obtain and retain employment, but also on the survivability of an organisation's security program. The challenge is to find an appropriate educational methodology that is capable of teaching this range of skills.

Today, there exist a number of challenges within security education. There may, for example be a problem with authenticity and realism, resulting in unrealistic scenarios that fail to engage the learner or undermining of educational value by the blunting of processes. Another limitation of most contemporary forms of security training is a failure to include real-time peer-to-peer communication or the nuances of culture and social order. Furthermore, reflective processes can often be postponed and limited to written reports.

Live-Action Role-Play (LARP) has been defined as a versatile art form or medium which may be implemented for games, artistic expression and education. A unique LARP tradition has evolved within the Nordic countries (Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark), characterised by significant academic research and a preference for realism. In this part of the world, LARP has already been implemented within an educational context where it is referred to as Educational Live-Action Role-Play (Edu-LARP). Due to its inherent similarity to scenario-based training, Edu-LARP could prove a useful tool for resolving challenges in security education.

Through an extensive literature review and interviews, this thesis aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Edu-LARP as a learning medium for security education. It assumes that both LARP and Edu-LARP consists of distinct tools, processes and phases that can be observed and analysed qualitatively. Furthermore, it argues that Edu-LARP offers a synergistic learning medium, suitable for security education.

Because no formal Edu-LARP model exists today, a theoretical framework was built on related methodologies and learning theories. This theoretical framework outlined expected observations and provided a foundation for the deductive research undertaken for the project. The research itself has consisted of interviews with an expert group. Once the data had been collected and collated, it was analysed statistically and descriptively. The findings were then integrated with the theoretical framework

and a model developed. Finally, determinations are offered towards the possibility of implementation of LARP into the field of security education.