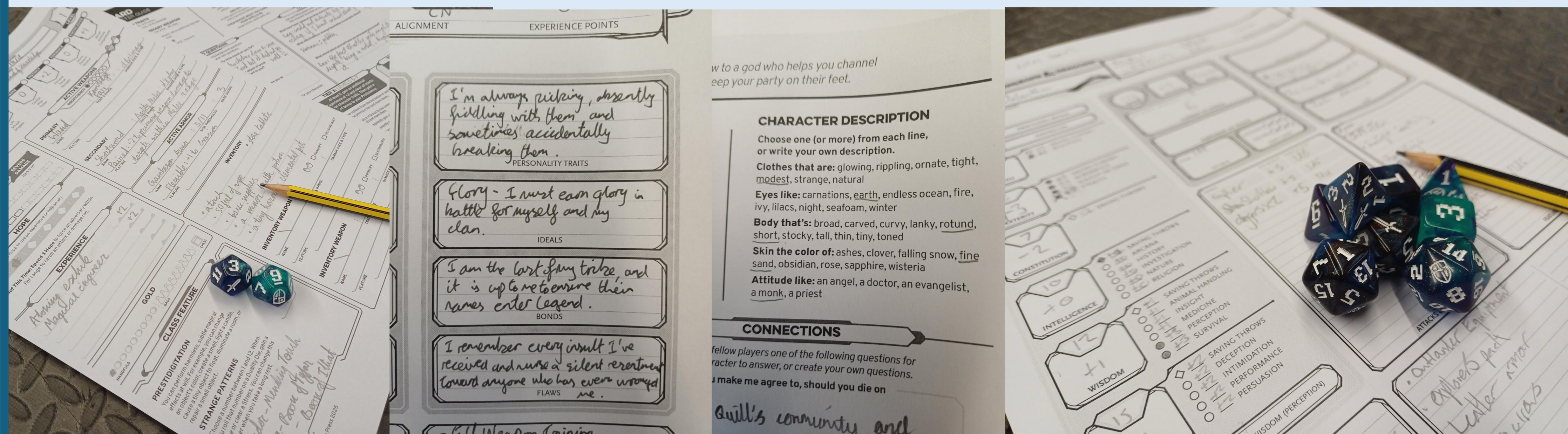




Roll for Insight: Can TTRPG Mechanics be Leveraged for Persona Creation?



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Introduction

In user centred design, a persona is a fictitious member of the system's target audience, whose background, skills and goals dictate how they will interact with a system [1]. While there are generally accepted traits that personas will have, such as a name, background, and their goals [2], there are few formalised methods for their creation. This results in some personas consisting of a couple of sentences and others including a detailed backstory.

Tabletop Role-Playing Games (TTRPGs) generally feature mechanics and rules for creating characters in a more formalised manner. These characters share attributes with personas, including skills, goals, name and background, which indicates an overlap with the characteristics of personas.

Can this overlap be used as a basis for a TTRPG-UX environment?

Methodology

We organised a series of in-person character creation workshops, recruiting 14 participants, including those who have played at least one TTRPG previously (n=12), and novices (n=2). Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) and Daggerheart were used for these workshops.

Two key aspects were evaluated in these workshops: How effectively the provided materials (character sheets, game rulebook) guided the character creation process; and whether the character creation process leads to characters that share the key attributes of personas (motivations, goals, skills).

Results

- Initial findings indicate that both systems gave participants a generally good understanding of their characters' motivations.
- Some need motivations and goals to shape the character in the first place.
- Others need a full campaign to develop these aspects.
- Both systems also helped participants understand their characters' skills in terms of how they can be used in context.
- Daggerheart's card-based system made skills seem like more of a focus.
- Players who made "goofy characters" had less understanding of motivations and skills.
- TTRPG systems allow players to build a character and understand their skills, goals and motivations – which are what personas require.

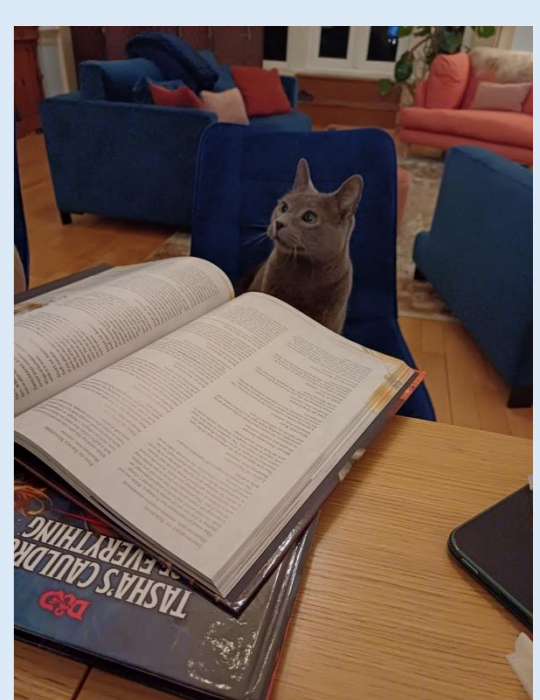
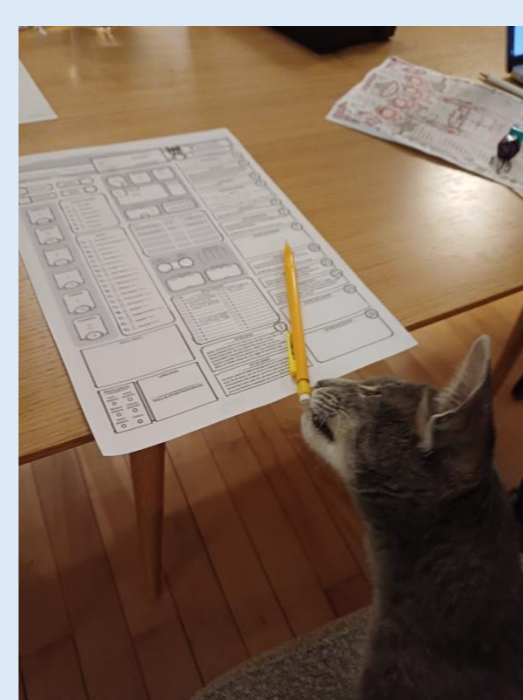
Acknowledgements:

All of the participants for spending their time making characters which may never get played.

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References:

- [1] Alan Cooper. 1999. Designing for Pleasure. In The Inmates Are Running The Asylum. Macmillan Computer Publishing, 123–148.
- [2] Stefan Blomkvist. 2002. Persona—an overview.



Research Questions

1. Can TTRPG mechanics be utilised for creating personas?
2. Which TTRPGs lend themselves best for creating personas?
3. How do students currently design personas, and does TTRPG experience affect this?
4. Can character creation mechanics assist students in designing and using personas?

