

Title: **Using LEGO® to aid reflection on practice through metaphors**

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Explore the benefits and challenges of learning through making within Academic Development
- Discuss the LEGO® model making approach used within the LTHE module of the PGCAP Programme
- Identify opportunities for learning through forms for creative play and art in academic programmes and professional development provision

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

“Play isn’t the enemy of learning, it’s learning’s partner. Play is like fertilizer for brain growth. It’s crazy not to use it.” (Brown, 2010)

In this workshop the facilitators will discuss some of the benefits of working and thinking creatively with our hands and using LEGO® for learning in Higher Education. They will share details of an assessment strategy developed for the Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (LTHE) module. This module is part of the blended and multi-disciplinary Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP), offered at the University of Salford to staff who teach or support learning. Could ‘learning by making’ or as described by Papert and Harel (1991) constructionism, in the form of LEGO® model making, aid reflection and help students articulate their learning journey using their own metaphors (Gauntlett, 2011). Findings of a year-long study will be shared and discussed with delegates. Can we really afford to disregard play as frivolous, childish and inappropriate for learning and teaching in Higher Education?

We will also connect remotely with a colleague who experienced this approach as a panel member. They will share their LEGO® model making experience in the context of the assessment and respond to questions delegates might have. Could you use LEGO® model making activities with your students, how and what impact would this potentially have on their learning? Participate in this session, share experiences, make LEGO® models and discuss possibilities.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

Workshop approach

Requires active engagement throughout. We will make use of LEGO® and smart devices.

Part 1 (10 mins): Introduction to learning through making

Delegates will have the opportunity to find out more about the pedagogies behind learning through making in the context of Higher Education and explore together the benefits and challenges of using such approaches in staff development settings and with students. Delegates will be asked to participate in an individual Lego model activity, take photographs of their models and discuss with other delegates.

Part 2 (25mins): Using model making in the context of a summative assessment

A variety of model making activities used within the Learning and Teaching in Higher Education module of the PGCAP will be shared and discussed with delegates. Special reference will be made to the Professional Discussions, the summative assessment strategy and how LEGO® models are used to aid reflection. Key findings will be shared with delegates. A panel member who experienced this approach will be brought into the session remotely to share their experiences and answer questions.

Part 3 (10 mins): Extending opportunities

We will discuss with the delegates how model making using Lego and other materials can be used within Academic Development but also directly with students to provide alternative opportunities for expression, engagement, reflection and learning. At the end of the workshop delegates will work together on creating a collaborative LEGO® model.

References

Brown, S. (2010) *Play. How it shapes the brain, opens the imagination, and invigorates the soul*, London: Avery, Penguin.

Gauntlett, D. (2011) *Making is connecting. The social meaning of creativity, from DIY and knitting to YouTube and Web2.0*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Papert, S. & Harel, I. (1991) Situating constructionism, in Papert S. & Harel, I. (eds.) *Constructionism*, New York: Ablex Publishing, pp. 1-12.