AN EXPLORATION OF ‘VALUE’ IN THE LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) METHOD
BACKGROUND

Occupational Therapist working with children & young adults in the UK

Interest in developing health services → MBA - University of Bath

Desire for dissertation to encompass my knowledge of play & skill development alongside strategic thinking & business development

= LEGO ® SERIOUS PLAY®
On-going research is required to ‘show that LSP can produce richer information than other current techniques’ (McCusker, 2014).

It can enhance creativity; focus ideas; and provide safe spaces to enrich communication and deal with complexity in business (Schulz et al., 2015, Holliday et al., 2007).

An important aspect of strategic thinking tools is the outcome that they can provide.

How can we substantiate these outcomes and remarks?
How could you show that ‘people had more awareness’; that ‘they enhanced their communication’ and that by using LSP ‘they were better off as an organisation’?

The challenge of learning and development is that often results are not always obvious and measurable, especially in the short-term.

Is there a way of being able to understand the elements of LSP that bring about change?

= What are the values and changes elicited from LSP?
‘I found a sense of security and direction coming from my hands. I built the model in eight minutes not thinking I knew the answer of where I was going with my research. When I began to talk about what I had built and write down the language I had used and metaphors I had voiced, I realised I knew where I needed to go. It felt like my hands knew where I was going long before my head’.

Phrases and metaphors included: ‘capturing value’, ‘extracting the elements’, ‘not being able to see the wood for the trees’ and hence not yet knowing the values yet to extract, ‘needing to check in with others’ to ratify my thoughts and findings.
RESEARCH AIMS

To theorise and reflect on my experience of participating in a LSP facilitation course

To identify key elements and capture what constitutes ‘value’ within the LSP method

To confirm or refute these ‘values’ with experts and other LSP facilitators in the field

To review and consider evaluation of the LSP method

To examine the potential practicalities; possible benefits and limitations of evaluating LSP
MULTI-METHOD QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY IN THREE PHASES

Phase One – Ethnography

Phase Two – Semi-structured Skype Interviews

Phase Three – Respondent engagement with an emerging model
Ethnography literally means ‘a written account of a people or ethnic group’. Interpretive ethnography places its emphasis on subjective impressions rather than on objectivity (Saunders et al., 2016).

Researchers immerse themselves into a culture or specific location in order to practically experience a situation and gain insight (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

= Attended LEGO ® SERIOUS PLAY ® Facilitation Training
I CONTINUED TO BUILD AND REFLECT...
I created codes and landscaped themes into categories.
12 Core Values

- I felt listened to
- My confidence grew
- I contributed more
- I had an increased self-awareness
- I had insights into my colleagues’ thoughts
- We had a shared understanding
- The team leaned in

- A different way of thinking
- We were engaged
- New ideas, creative insights and solutions
- A safe space where emotions were allowed giving a deeper meaning
- The process is a fun and illuminating journey
PROPOSED FRAMEWORK CAPTURING THE VALUE IN LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

The problem in question

Organisation

New ideas, creative insights and solutions

We were engaged

A different way of thinking

Team

The team "leaned in"

We had a shared understanding

I had insights into my colleagues' thoughts

Individual

I felt listened to

My confidence grew

I contributed more

I had an increased self-awareness

A safe space where emotions were allowed giving a deeper meaning

The process is a fun and illuminating journey
INTERVIEWS — PHASE TWO

- 6 Skype interviews with various LSP facilitators
- 7 questions around the topic of values in LSP and the evaluation of the method
- Interviews transcribed and codes identified as I highlighted repeated notions and aspects that appeared striking
- From these codes themes were derived
### RESPONSES WERE ANALYSED AND FORMED CODES → THEMES → CATEGORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First order data</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed and accuracy</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Process level</td>
<td>Efficient and focused process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil glands work in a finely focussed and intense way</td>
<td>Practical method</td>
<td>Multi-sensory approach</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintains motivation provides that content of challenge, seems momentum and discovery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A stronger proposition of having an outcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time limit is variable as the image that has come into people’s minds are extensive</td>
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**Unique combination of seeing something in these terms - helps to see that in practice, way.**

- Very visual, easier to remember
- The power of stories
- Emotion connects to different abilities - some more visual, some more auditory, memorable, personal and insightful stories

**In a holistic multi-sensory approach.**

- The optimal level of challenge - individuals feel engaged and it dissolves anxiety or boredom

You are being to the model. It’s not personal - users look to lose and deal with something in a safe way that would be a very emotional response.

Unusually, if they said they were having conversations they had never had before.

That regulation of can live with this, it is a really healthy way of looking at context.

Gives everyone a language in expressing themselves.

**Thinking, communication and problem-solving process.**

- This is a new way of communicating, a new language.

- If you are trying to create specific outcomes for people who are less resilient, feel less threatened and are more likely to take risks.

**“A safe space for negotiation enables a process of setting goals, setting new ones.”**

- Safety environment

- Play, being valuable

- A safe space

- A unique possibility through positive exploration

Applicable across all cultures and all organisations.

Enabling everyone giving it a stronger impact.

Very impactful, from 2020 to 100190 - so people don’t dominate, everybody’s opinion and ideas shared.

Evaluating because of the process - demonstrating tool.

Gives a live playing field.

- People feel more engaged, involved, motivated, empowered, people feel understood and part of something.

- Empathy to conceptualise their own view and ideas on a given question before they see everybody else’s, without being influenced by others or by feeling intimidated.

- Enables their own pure response.

- As doing each other’s things, the process enables you to see different interpretations of things.

- Each person gives their own contribution and then comment, they are not influenced because they are able to express thoughts and ideas from a model.

- Explore your understanding, when you have in your mind come out in it.

- It gives possibility throughout and exploration

- I was able to unlock my own unique response

- I contributed more

- The model and method gave me a new language

- We have broken our habitual way of thinking

- We learnt it

- Interpersonal were suspended

- We had authentic conversations

- A multi-sensory approach

- A safe space

- A trademark

- An efficient and focussed process
ENGAGEMENT WITH CONCEPTUAL MODEL — PHASE THREE

Written or verbal feedback requested on a proposed conceptual model

Comments compiled and utilised to further develop and adapt the conceptual model
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial themes</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Combined emergent themes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The process is a fun and illuminating journey</td>
<td>‘The environment’ which developed into ‘Process level’</td>
<td>• Efficient and focussed&lt;br&gt; • Multi-Sensory&lt;br&gt; • A safe space&lt;br&gt; • Ignites possibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A safe space where emotions were allowed giving a deeper meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>• I felt listened to</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>• I was listened to&lt;br&gt; • I unlocked my own unique potential&lt;br&gt; • The model and method gave me a new language&lt;br&gt; • I contributed more</td>
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<td>Organisation</td>
<td>• We benefitted from diversity&lt;br&gt; • We committed to working differently&lt;br&gt; • We have broken our habitual way of thinking</td>
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<td>• We were engaged</td>
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<td>The problem in question</td>
<td>• We have taken our insights and ideas to another level</td>
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Adapted framework capturing the ‘values’ in Lego® Serious Play®

The problem in question

Organisation

We have taken our insights and ideas to another level

We have broken our habitual way of thinking

Team

We benefitted from diversity

We committed to working differently

Individual

We ‘leaned in’

Hierarchies were suspended

I unlocked my own unique potential

Process values

I was listened to

We had authentic conversations

The model and method gave me a new language

I contributed more

Efficient and focussed

Multi-sensory

A safe space

Ignites possibility
Emerging framework capturing the ‘values’ in Lego® Serious Play®

A multi-sensory approach

We ‘leaned in’

We benefitted from diversity

We developed a shared understanding

We have taken our insights and ideas to another level

We committed to working differently

We had authentic conversations

We have broken our habitual way of thinking

I was listened to

Hierarchies were suspended

I unlocked my own unique potential

I contributed more

It ignites possibility through play and exploration

A safe space

The problem in question

The model and method gave me a new language
Responses included:

“I think it’s the measurable that’s difficult. What does that mean, that it’s measurable? How do you measure that we just accomplished more in one day than we ever have before?”

“It’s very hard to measure it other than in the feedback you get. For me, measurable suggests consistently measurable.”

“A lot of the learning is in the process. It’s the actual process that changes something in the group and changes something in someone’s head. How can you measure this?”

‘Often you are trying to impact behaviour and impact how they communicate with others. That doesn’t change in a month, it takes time for them to change habits’.

Others highlighted the challenge of outcomes i.e. what you set out to achieve is something very different to what actually develops from using the method.
Evaluation taking place tended to relate to reviewing the facilitator’s performance and the actual workshop, rather than the impact or change to the participants or business.

Most report they did not follow up months later as they don’t have an evaluation tool for this and it is hard to prove and measure the changes that have taken place.

Some facilitators noted that people don’t like doing evaluation forms and just do them as quickly as possible.

Others hoped a tool could be developed to help endorse their work and demonstrate LSP’s worth.
How could you measure the value of LSP?

2 minutes to build 😊
‘Whatever the company wanted to set out to change and focus on, then that is how I would measure success. That gives me a clear indication on how they want to be measured and what they want to impact. It’s not about inventing something in addition, but being clear on how the business already measures success, for example employee engagement.’

The Goal Attainment Scale (GAS) and Canadian Occupational Performance Measure were discussed from a facilitator with a healthcare background as measurements that could be of use.

The ‘Interaction Network Tool’ (Howell et al., 2017) would be interesting to use in research. The tool was actually developed to assess Acquired Brain Injury patients, with a social communication impairment. It relies on video footage followed by analysis, to track interactions among participants.
RECOMMENDATIONS — WHAT NEXT?

- Circulate the iterated values and visual frameworks for further feedback
- Define and confirm the key values in LSP, and the significant aspects to evaluate
- Take it to the bricks ‘How could you measure the value of LSP?’
- Review current evaluation tools in practice across a broad range of industries
- Create a working group to develop and pilot evaluation tools
‘Once you have experienced it, you do see things differently’.

The challenge is to know ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘when’ to evaluate.

The momentum and interest in capturing its evaluation is growing.

It’s time to build on this.
THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

Thanks to all those who contributed to the project and to my supervisor Professor Russ Vince

Please get in touch – I would love to hear your thoughts and insights

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REFERENCES


