



Educator Development Award 2017 Winner

Introducing LEGO® Serious Play® into Medical Education

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Following an experience of LEGO® Serious Play® during the distance Digital Education MSc programme at the University of Edinburgh, Clare Thomson introduced a strand into the medical education curriculum. There is growing interest in this methodology in other fields, where LEGO® is used as a mediator, allowing complex conceptual ideas to be built (James, 2013; Nerantzi & Despard, 2014). Workshops are inherently safe, tactile and fun for participants, with individuals/groups sharing and developing their learning. To date a successful programme has been established with first-year medical students for the topics of professionalism and reflective practice. Sample student feedback:

“The lego workshop was particularly memorable and useful for reflecting on medicine as a career and our expectations for the remainder of our university time. Through play people seemed to open up a bit more about their personal motivations and how they see themselves - it was interesting.”

“Before starting medicine i was quite nervous, the LEGO workshop allowed me to easily meet and begin to build friendships with individuals in my year group in a relaxed and fun atmosphere. Whilst also getting to meet one of my lecturers, gain knowledge on eportfolio and practice skills of communication and teamwork.”

Outwith the undergraduate medical curriculum successful workshops have also been delivered at the INMED 2017 conference in which medical educators reflected on developing their capacity as researchers and the Queen’s University annual Teaching and Learning Conference 2018, where educators across the institution explored creative teaching methods.

The ASME EDC Educator Development Award allowed the team lead to attend LEGO® Serious Play training in London in May 2018. This four-day intensive workshop resulted in facilitator certification and an additional toolkit to widen the applications of the methodology. The outputs will also feed into the coming year’s Welcome Week activities activity design to provide a stronger link in students’ minds between their metaphorical models and their future reflective practice skills as students and doctors.

Future plans include working with the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences Gender Equality Office to plan workshops and exploring possibilities for research with the Postgraduate School within Queen’s.

References:

James, A. (2013). Lego Serious Play: a three-dimensional approach to learning development. *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education* (6).

Nerantzi, C. and Despard, C. (2014). Do LEGO® Models Aid Reflection in Learning and Teaching Practice?. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 2(2).