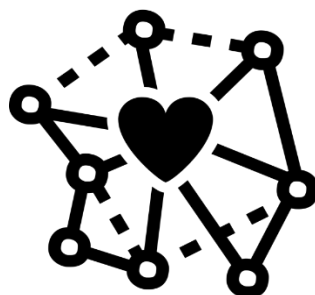




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OPENCARE

Open Participatory Engagement in Collective Awareness for REdesign of Care services

Deliverable 1.4: Deep Games protocol and intended audience

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Deep games

/open-source

A cross-fertilized Systems Thinking approach derived from educational and innovation research, using the LEGO® Serious Play® methodology enriched with Design thinking and Service Model Generation techniques,

applied for idea co-creation and development of community driven services
but can do much more



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Basic Principles and Philosophy

An introduction by Patrizia Bertini¹ adapted by Massimo Mercuri

The concept that creativity is a characteristic of the single individual, today is considered a wrong assumption: much research in recent years focused on the fact that creativity emerges in the interactional dimension², overcoming the traditional view of an isolated creative individual³.

Sawyer, Nussbaum and recent studies have proved that creative intelligence is social and it benefits from interaction, learning and cooperation with others. Nussbaum identifies 3 key factors that defines a creative team: trust, familiarity of members and shared commitment for a common goal. But the variables, when it comes to interaction among people, can be wider and more granular, and they can strongly affect the outcome of the collective creative process.

In such a perspective, understanding how creativity works in its social and interactional dimension can open up and reveal a range of new opportunities to exploit individual and collective creativity, to boost innovation, to make disruptive changes and lead to next paradigm shifts.

The goal of Deep Games is to take advantage of the relational dimensions that enhance creative and new ideas to emerge from a group. The intention is to use processes and ways to enhance the spark of creativity within a group of people, so that we can capitalise on the emergent resource of collective creativity⁴.

The flow of group dynamics and facilitated activities are grouped together in a model that allows to establish a deeply intimate playfield for psychological safety⁵ that engages collective creativity in a game environment, so that creative intelligence and collective creativity can become an organisational asset.

With that in mind, the Deep Games has the primary goal to apply the proposed flow of activities & group exercises in the OpenCare project for community service design, and as a secondary goal to collect valuable experience from those activities for future upcoming studies in education and learning.

¹ <https://patriziabertini.com/>

² Sawyer, R. K.(2007) 'Group Genius: the creative power of collaboration'. Basic Books.

³ Nussbaum, B. (2013) 'Creative intelligence'. Harper Collins.

⁴ <http://arxiv.org/pdf/1204.3890.pdf>

⁵

http://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Publication%20Files/02-062_0b5726a8-443d-4629-9e75-736679b870fc.pdf



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Methodologies

We have chosen LEGO Serious Play (LSP) as the methodology for the Deep Games laboratory. The intent of Deep Games is to amplify the creativity potential of the people that have proposed new ideas about medical and social care with an open and/or community approach. The Scimpulse Foundation is certified in the facilitation of LSP and has several years of experience in group dynamics, with access to a wide network of certified LSP facilitators worldwide.

The Deep Games workshops produce content offline via design thinking⁶ tools and online via a digital collaboration platform (i.e. the Edgeryders') with the amplified effect of the LSP workshops. In short, the Deep Games continues online and there the research happens.

Assessing collective creativity is possible thanks to technologies which let researchers collect, analyse and understand the data in ways which were unthinkable in the past. In the OpenCare project one key discipline is Ethnography⁷.

The proposed research to be performed after the Deep Games workshop events, adopts an ethnographic approach and observe the real use cases to collect data from available human sources, the interaction between individuals, their behaviours, their individual characteristics, the online conversations and eventually highlight the process of developing new concepts.

The workshop is intended for temporary working groups who are formed during an open participatory call to be announced in July 2016. The organizers of the workshop will add participants to each group, bringing in experts and specialists depending on the particular field or discipline needed to explore and/or develop the concepts further. This part is further explained in the section "intended audiences" of this document. Participating groups will take part to a script of specially designed creative enhancer activities for teaming⁸ and meaning-making process.

The aim of such creative enabling activities, which specifically focus on the key points identified by Nussebaum (trust, familiarity and commitment), have the potential to positively affect the creative process. These workshops work as mind training process for the participants by making a joint metaphoric representation of the topic (example: the doctor is the monkey, or the ambulance is the spaceship because is very modern) they

⁶ <http://dschool.stanford.edu/use-our-methods/>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/user-centred-design/user-research/ethnographic-research.html>

⁸ Teaming: How Organizations Learn, Innovate, and Compete in the Knowledge Economy – August 26, 2014
by Amy C. Edmondson of Harvard Business School



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built starting with individual models that become a shared model or landscape, with a new meaning owned by the group only. The participants exchange knowledge between each other by playing with the models in the fashion similar to a “strategy game”. That becomes the "prototype" to test the hypotheses and assumptions of the group. The proxy effect By stressing the prototype scenario in a game environment the players are learning how to deal with the diverse aspects, circumstances and variables related to the theme proposed. The game setting provides the psychological safety to experiment without consequences, allowing the participants to openly co-create without limitations.

Participants will be then asked to interact using online social applications (such as the Edgeryders’ platform) until they don’t produce the expected outcome. Each selected proposal initiative will engage in further coaching and prototyping facilitated by the project partners and their network of expertise, depending on the area or field impacted by each proposal. (examples are if a device needs to be prototyped, in case of designing a service or a new business model)

The data analysis process will benefit from both qualitative and quantitative analysis in order to be able to produce an initial model of how collective creativity works and to verify if creative facilitation methods can be advantageous and have an impact on the final result.

Data collected will be based mainly on the interaction among individuals: from the kind of interaction, quality, quantity, media used etc... data that may allow the research team to perform qualitative and quantitative analysis, which will include both Discourse Analysis and statistical analysis. By analysing the quality and quantity of the interaction among team-members and by applying social network theory to the results, researchers may identify an emerging pattern that can explain what are the variables - individuals and interaction related - that have an impact on the result.

This side-based research could reveal new insights into the collective creative process, providing new understanding of how teams capitalise on their collective creativity and how creativity can be improved and supported.

Such a work may eventually contribute to the hypothesis and/or formulation of new models to explain creativity and innovative methodologies that can support organisations’ and teams in their innovation path.



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Process facilitation

Scimpulse is part of a network of certified facilitators for the LSP method, assuring there will be a certified facilitator available for each group and event.

Note that one workshop group requires one facilitator. It is not possible to facilitate two groups 'side by side' (for example, two tables, each with eight participants, in the same room) because each group would need focused attention from the facilitator, at the same time – so this is not possible.

The facilitator's task is to get the group's dialogue to serve its purpose and make the participants capable of expressing the reflections and ideas that are needed for the group to reach their goal (for example, to resolve their issue, to plan their strategy, or to implement company values). The role of the facilitator is, therefore, to make the reflection and dialogue processes easier.

With the purpose of reaping most benefit from the process, the two most important things to keep in mind are:

- The purpose of the workshop process is to make way for constructive reflection and dialogue for the system to gain insight and find their own answers (the system being the group of individuals and their relations to each other). This implies a focus on open-ended building game challenges and facilitating questions as well as on the reflection and dialogue as a goal in itself.
- The concept provides a tool that should be utilized to its full potential. That tool is the LEGO models and their being physically present representations of people's thoughts, reflections, ideas, opinions, hopes, dreams, fears, and narratives. Using its full potential means exploiting the presence of the physical models as psychological proxies, fully engaging with them in a game and the meanings that they contain.

So combined with the basic value that 'the answer is in the system', the facilitator's main task is to help the participants express themselves, listen to each other, and take each others' reflections into account. The facilitator's goal when using the method should not be to drive the group to a certain conclusion, or a certain decision or opinion.



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Reflection and Dialogue

The process is focused on the participants' reflections and dialogue. The facilitator's job is to help participants reflect and express themselves via the models they build during the process.

The facilitator can best achieve this by demonstrating curiosity and showing an interest in the model the individual participant has built and the story they tell about it. The facilitator does this by asking questions that encourage the participant to dig deeper into the meaning of their model and the story attached to it.

Participants gain more insight through their own reflection and dialogue. The most efficient tool in the process is to ask questions and show genuine interest in taking a deeper look into the thoughts, feelings and ideas conveyed through the models and their assigned stories. Even though the facilitator must take this neutral position in the process, the facilitator still has a powerful way of influencing the process through the questions they pose. Good facilitating questions are an effective way of influencing the process.

Externalization

The term 'externalizing' describes how the thoughts participants share during the process are distanced from the person because they are built as models. The participants' thoughts are expressed in a way that makes it easy for participants to explore as a group what has been expressed individually. Externalizing individual reflections in this way distances them from the individual, making it easier to explore the reflections without challenging the person who expressed them.

At the same time, the models (as physical representations) help anchor what has been said during the process, which makes dialogue and subsequent reflection flow better from the individual and from the group. If a discussion has gone off on a tangent, externalization provides the perfect method for getting it back on track, by leading the discussion back to the physical models in front of the participants and what they can 'read' from them.

With the models, externalization is integrated into the method as a familiar and effective means by which to express participants' reflections. The facilitator must maintain focus on the models, consistently using them as tools as participants explore their own and each others' reflections. The facilitator's questions must consistently relate to models built during the process—and they must encourage participants to do the same.



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Recording and documenting in real time

Each workshop requires one recording device for the audio and the presence of a person who acts as the “scribe”, “photographer” and manage the logistics around the workshop.

At each stage, as is always the case in LSP workshops, the participants build, and then share the ‘story’ of what they have built with each other.

The scribe plays a very important role. He/she needs to be already familiar with basic Design Thinking tools like the User’s Point of View (PoV) quadrant, the What-how-why chart and the Prototype Evaluation quadrant among others. This extraction can be done in real time based on what the players are saying during some specific workshop activities. The latter is to be discussed and decided “per event” basis to contribute to the project as a whole.

Letting the brain reflect during the workshop is vital for creativity to recharge. Moreover, going through the script can take one full day, and participants are likely to become tired – this kind of play is hard work. Make sure that pleasant breaks, and a nice lunch, are scheduled. Do not provide too much distraction, or try to reduce external distraction to a minimum. With large groups (7-11 players) plan for up to two days, or better split in two groups. Can also be one afternoon/evening and one morning, and even allows better “reflection time” for the brain of the participants, overnight.

The breaks and pauses also serve as opportunity to attend the logistics of the workshops to prepare for the next following exercises.

Digital interaction activities after the workshop

This part is crucial if the intention is to perform ethnographic research with the outcome.

The process takes advantage of the after-effect of the Deep Games workshops that trains the participants in new ways of approaching the problematic or situation that their idea/proposal is solving. Capturing the online conversation for ethnographic research is the way we expect to generate more meaningful content. “Meaningful in this case is used as a combination of “in context” and “feasible”, but we don’t discard other potential aspects that may emerge from the teaming experience and the insertion of specialists on the workshop group for content enrichment. In principle anyone can make use of the data if it is recordable.

For this to work each participant should have registered in the online collaboration platform (Edgeryders’ or any other platform for this purpose) in advance. That is



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important to avoid the frustration involved in the user registration and familiarization with the platform.

The organization team must set aside some time in advance when the workshop players familiarize themselves with the digital platform.

It is also advisable to designate a “Lead” or “Owner” of each idea/proposal prototyped in the workshop, and that person is the first one that starts the conversation threads. To make sure the process is maintained fully open we should not prevent others from creating new conversations as a result of the workshop experience triggering new ideas or proposals.

After the workshop, the participants will get online and contribute to enrich the conversation describing the newly co-created idea in further detail. The duration in days or weeks is open to consideration by the researchers, with the advice to keep it open for as long as there is a valid frequency of response (meaning you do not need to “nudge” the group to maintain a desired level of participation) but that is not for Scimpulse to decide alone.

Intended audience

The workshop is intended to amplify the original topic of conversation, into a game of “what if”. The group uses models with metaphoric identity to prototype (and stress) a scenario that emerges from the collective intelligence of the group.

For the above statement to be true, it is important to enrich the group’s knowledge by inserting players with skills or experiences that relate to the core concept or topic. Equally advisable is to have one or two players from a completely disconnected knowledge background or field of activity (example: fishermen and insurance sales agents; gardeners and boardroom members, et similia). In each case the players need to be carefully selected.

Participant composition (Players)

For a workshop with the potential of co-creation, amplified by collective creativity and teaming training we need an “assortment” of profiles:

- The person who entered the selected contributions in the participatory call.
- Up to two players from OpenCare Partners
- Added players from two possible categories for thinking about the system:
 - Representing potential close-distance agents in the value chain.

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- Representing external agents at different degrees of dependency.
- A screwball, coming from a very distant field.

The result is simply all very different players.

To provide an example, think about dealing with the topic of “Can heart attack emergencies and first aid dealt with the personnel working in a community care center”:

- Community Care Center provider
- Community Care Center user
- Nurse or paramedic, knowledge of the topic.
- Doctor, broader knowledge of the theme.
- Insurance agent, related to topic.
- Legislator, next degree of relationship.
- Theoretical physicist, the screwball.

There are other possible formation. As an example: a workshop that aims at organizations may follow a complete different selection criteria, like having the representative of each community subgroup, such as neighborhoods in cities. Any analogy to a system is valid, then add the screwball.



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Annex 1

Workshop facilitation method

This document includes textual fragments from multiple sources containing the basic principles of [LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® /opensource](#). The opensource version has been made available by the LEGO Group under a Creative Commons licence (“Attribution Share Alike”: see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/> for licence details) in 2010. The LEGO Group has supported the rigorous and careful development of the initial resources. New LSP applications are developed by the international community of users, and may be shared online. The method explained in this document builds upon the original Open Source LSP approach, adding extraction of real-time deliverables using Design Thinking⁹. We called the adaptation Deep Games and this version as deliverable by the OpenCare project is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 International License](#).

Origins of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP)

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP from now on) is a method built upon a process which stems from the heart of the LEGO system. Looking for a tool to unlock innovation within the company, the LEGO Group realized that a solution might be found in the LEGO System itself: just as the LEGO Group had been telling children to ‘build their dreams’ for decades, so perhaps adults could be asked to co-construct their strategy, goals, projects, products and services, in a group interaction.

Building upon the inclusive and participatory nature of the LEGO System, LSP rejects the idea that external ‘experts’ must be brought in to identify problems, and to propose solutions; on the contrary, begins with the assumption that the answers are ‘already in the room’, and invites participants to ‘think with their hands’ to build their understandings. Every member of the team participates, and everyone has a voice.

LSP went through a number of iterations from 1998 to 2010, and has been successfully used by businesses around the world. Furthermore, the LSP concept has been developed to meet the needs of teachers and educators, and specially designed LSP for Education’ products and training are available for this target group (see <http://seriousplay.training/>).

Why use LEGO bricks?

There are a number of reasons why LEGO bricks are particularly well suited to this kind of process. The material makes it easy for participants to put together satisfying models

⁹ <http://dschool.stanford.edu/use-our-methods/>



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which represent something that they wish to communicate. They do not need significant technical skills; the LEGO System is familiar to many, and even if they have not used LEGO bricks before, most people find it quite easy to build meaningful constructions. From now on we will call them just “bricks”.

Bricks come in many shapes and colours, and can often provide inspiration for metaphors through serendipity. They can be built into simple or complex forms, as suits the personality of the builder, and research has shown that people from all walks of life feel comfortable attaching diverse metaphorical meanings to them.

A LSP workshop typically takes at least one day. Users of these methods have to recognize that the strengths of the process lie in its cycles of building, reflection, and collaborative learning. It is a particular kind of facilitated process, used for particular purposes.

The workshop process

LSP is a method that enables constructive reflection and dialogue processes. During a structured process, participants use LEGO bricks to create models that express their thoughts, reflections and ideas. The LSP method is the framework within which the bricks are being used.

The core of the LSP method consists of:

- Process structure: A basic, step-by-step process structure
- Bricks: The use of the bricks as implements to create visible, tangible 3D-models that represent thoughts, reflections and ideas.
- Participants’ etiquette
- Facilitator’s code of conduct

The process structure

The method is built upon basic knowledge about how people and groups best learn and develop. The process structure builds upon a learning process that ensures that people take ownership of their own learning and learn the most. This learning process implies four steps that you move through in a spiral:

1. The first step of the ideal learning spiral is to help people connect to what they are going to explore, and to understand the context and meaning of what they are about to learn more about.



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2. The second step is to involve people in a process where they create a product connected to the targets of exploration, involving their own knowledge and reflections as well as their own creative skills – and their own hands.

3. The third step is to help people reflect on what they have created and look deeper into their own reflections about their own product, in order to become aware of what their explorations have brought them, and in order to gain more insights.

4. The fourth step is that people get a chance to connect their newly gained knowledge to new explorations they would want to pursue.

When people go through an iterative process like the one described here, they are learning something profoundly, and they take ownership not only for their own learning process but also for the things learned and even for taking the knowledge to the next level and developing even more with it.

The process structure builds on the insights about this effective learning process, and the method relies on this specific process structure to create an ideal environment for constructive reflection and dialogue. This structure consists of three basic phases that must be covered throughout every iteration of the process within the workshop. To exploit all the advantages of the method as a tool for constructive reflection and dialogue, it is imperative that the three basic phases of the process are covered every time and in the correct order.

The three basic phases of the LSP process

The three basic phases of the process structure are:

Phase 1: The Challenge:

The facilitator poses the building challenge to the participants.

Phase 2: Building:

The participants build a LEGO model representing their reflections on the building challenge.

Phase 3: Sharing:

The participants share the meaning and the story that they have assigned to their own models.

This sequence – challenge, building, sharing – is repeated several times in any session. It is the basic ‘building block’ of the process.



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Phase 1: The Challenge

Considering the purpose of the workshop in advance, the facilitator formulates each building challenge in a way that will open up reflection and dialogue. When the process starts, the building challenge is posed to the participants, the building time is made clear, and the facilitator asks participants to build a model with their bricks that expresses their thoughts on, or response to the building challenge.

The facilitator's choice and formulation of the building task is crucial for participants' experience of the process. The challenge for the facilitator is to formulate the building task so that it best serves the purpose of the workshop while following the basic principles of the method.

Phase 2: Building

In the building phase, participants build their response to the building challenge using the bricks.

While building their models, participants assign meaning and narrative to their models by means of metaphors, figures of speech, and narratives. During construction of the model, the individual participant undergoes a reflective process through which they gain a clearer and more detailed conception of and insight into their own reflections and thoughts.

The building process both inspires and supports the reflective process, and participants are given a chance to think with their hands. The fact that participants use their hands to build concrete, three-dimensional models of their reflections and ideas, gives them easier access to the knowledge and experience that is stored in their minds and it catalyses new trains of thought.

Phase 3: Sharing

The point of the sharing phase is that participants share their stories and assigned meanings about their models with each other. So one at a time, each participant shares the significance and story that they have assigned to their own model. It is very important that each participant gets the chance to share the story about their model. The sharing is in itself a reflection process, in that when they share their models, participants explore their own expressions more closely. Those listening also have an opportunity to explore in more detail what the narrator expresses through the model. The facilitator plays a crucial part in the sharing phase when asking facilitating questions. Facilitating questions are

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asked with the purpose of getting participants to reflect more and share more about their thoughts and ideas with each other.

It is crucial that each person's voice is heard during this process. Everybody shares what is on their minds, and everybody is listened to. This is very important to reach one of the purposes of the LSP process: to let everyone share their thoughts in a constructive way and to give everybody a chance to hear each others' points of view. This is on the one hand to create a shared understanding of the group's way of handling the situation, and on the other hand to create the best starting point for people to feel ownership for the reflections and ideas expressed. Eventually this will help them to arrive at the solutions and actions that need to be taken in order for them to handle the situation the best way possible.

The Etiquette of LSP applied in Deep Games

The process should be carried out in accordance with a set of principles that are managed and controlled by the facilitator. This set of principles is an integral part of the method, and is known as 'the Etiquette'.

To ensure the integrity of the process, and to gain the greatest benefit from it, participants must remember and adhere to these guidelines. The facilitator has the task of making the etiquette clear to participants throughout the process.

The principles build on a set of values that are central to the method and the thinking that lies behind it.

The basic values

- The answer is in the system. Therefore, the method is all about participants expressing themselves and listening to each other.
- The multitude of contributions to the dialogue is the important part. The method has the overall goal of getting participants to express their reflections and thoughts — never to produce 'correct' answers or facts.
- There is no ONE right answer. Everyone has different views, and this is a good thing. The process enables these different perspectives to come out in the open without anybody saying which is 'right' or 'wrong'.



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- The LEGO models are tools, and means to an end. The model in itself is not the result – the model building is a helpful process while reflecting on an issue or problem, and the model is a tool for participants to express and to understand more. The meanings attached to each model are what make it valuable.

Participants' Etiquette

The basic values listed above translate into the following etiquette that participants should adhere to:

- The facilitator poses the building challenges, sets the building time and guides the process.
- The model you build is your answer to the building challenge.
- There are no wrong answers: There is no right and no wrong way to build. What the model looks like is not the most important thing. What is important is what the participants can share/ describe through the model. If the participant says that a model represents something specific, then that is what it is!
- 'Think with your hands': If you don't know what you want to build, it is often a good idea just to start building. The facilitator may encourage participants to do this and say that they should let their hands do the thinking.
- What counts is your meaning for your model and only the person who built the model knows what it means. This means that:
 - Participants are free to ask questions about each others' models and stories—but they may not express an opinion about or interpret each others' models or stories.
 - The facilitator asks questions about the model and the story—not about the person. Focus must be on the model and the story around the model—not on the person describing the model.
- 'Listen with your eyes': Look at the model that is being shared – use your visual sense to grasp and understand even more of what the other participants are describing.
- Everybody participates during the full process.



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The basic values also translate into the following code of conduct that the facilitator should keep in mind when using this method:

Facilitator's code of conduct

- ALWAYS follow the 3 basic phases of the process.
- Maintain flow in the process. Introduce participants to the method in accordance with the section on “skills building”. Be process-oriented and aware of participants’ needs as the process develops.
- Assign building challenges that are clear and serve the workshop’s purpose: When creating the process, the facilitator must take into account their knowledge about the participants’ starting point.
- A building task must always be completed individually before it may be completed in a group. The level of reflection achieved in the LSP processes is a movement from individual reflection to group reflection (where group model building is utilized).
- Use the models actively – look for answers in the models and look for details about the stories, the thoughts, ideas and reflections in the models. When the LEGO models are used actively in the process, they are ideally suited as tools to promote constructive reflection and dialogue. Therefore, the facilitator should keep focus on the models, i.e. trust the method and return to the models when facilitating the process.
- Remember that asking questions of the person who built a specific model is optimal utilization of the model’s potential as an implement in the process. Such questions must be aimed at exploring the model and/or the relationship between several models and the story told. Never ask questions that require the person to explain why they intended the model to express what it does.
- The models are ideal for bringing out more details and nuances in participants’ descriptions of their reflections; and helping participants focus specifically on the reflections they are sharing, rather than on the individuals involved.
- Everyone must be given the chance to explain their model. When participants are asked to build and do their best, it is crucial that they feel that their stories are listened to. Similarly, it is crucial that their contributions to the process are accepted and recognized—never as a simple truth, but for the way, that person shares their story today and from a personal perspective.



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Skills building

The method must be implemented correctly to be successful. Thus, participants must be introduced to the method and its use in accordance with the skills building program. As soon as participants are proficient in the method and the process, they will be able to use the method constructively and efficiently during a facilitated workshop.

In order for a workshop to be successful, it is vital that participants are introduced to the use of the method by first exploring the three phases and the act of building itself. Letting the participants become acquainted with the method before using it for workshop purposes, will ensure the participants' experience of flow in the subsequent processes.

What is 'flow'?

The theory of flow, developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi,¹⁰ states that individuals gain most from a learning or developmental process when they are committed to and enjoy the process. It is imperative for a participant's engagement in a developmental process that they experience 'optimum stretch' in terms of cognitive and emotional involvement – in other words, that their skills and resources are suitably challenged. Flow theory states that if a developmental process is not enough of a challenge, the individual gets bored and the learning curve tails off.

By contrast, if individuals are presented with too difficult a challenge, they become anxious, have difficulty memorizing, and lose grasp of the situation, which also results in a falling learning curve. Humans feel good and develop best, and therefore learn the most, when they are presented with assignments that challenge them optimally – neither too little, nor too much.

With this knowledge from the flow theory, workshops should start off with people in flow so that they – as individuals and as a group – gain the most from the process. The facilitator has the responsibility of ensuring flow in the process. To ensure flow, the facilitator must use their knowledge of the specific group of participants as individuals and as a group, closely monitoring the process and adjusting questions to promote the participants' experience of flow.

The most important time to ensure flow is when a group of people begin learning the process, and the facilitator does this by following the skills building process and principles.

¹⁰ Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience, Harper Perennial Modern Classics
by [Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi](#) 2008



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Principles for the skills building process

The first time a group of people uses, the first couple of hours are of crucial importance in ensuring participants' experience of flow. The facilitator ensures flow by applying the principles for skills building and taking participants through the skills building process. The aim of the skills building program is to acquaint participants with the following aspects of the method:

1. The three basic phases of the process.
2. The Etiquette.
3. Use of bricks as personal metaphors.
4. The use of the built models to share thoughts and present stories.
5. The function of the models and stories as implements in active listening and constructive dialogue.

The skills building must be taught to participants hands-on. It cannot be conveyed to the participants only verbally – telling people about the method and what they are supposed to do during the process will not bring them into flow with the method. They will have to experience it.

Therefore it is necessary that at the start of any workshop, participants should be led through a series of skills-building exercises, such as the following example:

To introduce participants to the bricks and to the experience that they are all able to build with the bricks, they are invited to each build a tower. The towers can be 'tested for stability' by the facilitator, causing some of them to break. Participants will typically be sad to see their tower shatter, and this is taken as a learning point: illustrating the emotional connection we can quickly develop to things we have built with our own hands. When participants have built their towers, the facilitator should ask them to share something about their own tower – such as their immediate thoughts about it. Including the sharing phase at this stage will make sure that the participants are introduced to the basic phases of the process from the very beginning. The facilitator can lead the participants' attention to the fact that the participants' etiquette includes that you have to share the story about your model each time you have built a model.

Metaphors

To introduce participants to the use of metaphors, they should first be asked to build a creature with bricks (a normal, non-metaphorical representation). After this, the facilitator gives the participants just four minutes to turn the creature into a representation of the ideal boss or the worst imaginable boss you can think of. This is a turning-point which shifts participants into building on the metaphorical plane. When participants have shared the meaning of their models, it will be obvious that each model has a number of different,



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metaphorically meaningful features which the facilitator can highlight in order to emphasize this special way of using the bricks.

To further develop experience with building metaphors and add the storytelling element, participants are invited to build a metaphorical representation of ‘My Monday mornings’. This challenge will help participants see that they can use the bricks and their metaphors to share a storyline and share personal experiences.

In each of these stages, as in every stage of a session, participants should build (individually, simultaneously) and then share (going round each participant in turn, each telling the ‘story’ of their model). The facilitator should be aware of conveying the Participants’ Etiquette to the participants during the skills building challenges. If these three building challenges do not seem to get participants into flow with the use of the method, the facilitator should make sure that they reach a state of flow by having them go through some more lightweight building challenges that build their skills in using the method rather than rushing to the workshop process.

Reflection, ownership and collaboration

A central strength of the game process is that participants in the process are encouraged and enabled to understanding each other’s points of view on a deeper level.

The process of reflecting while you seek to translate your thoughts into metaphors, is a helpful process for:

- Think and reflect
- Contribute to the communication process
- Listen to each other
- Think and communicate in a different way than they usually do.

Having participated in the intense creative democratic and all-inclusive process of a Deep Game session, participants are more likely to feel ownership of the analysis and decisions made. Having been central to the creation of something – and having been listened to – individuals are more inclined to take ownership of the consequent actions.

Collaboration, too, is strengthened through listening and experiencing a positive, constructive dialogue. Participants come away with skills to communicate more effectively, to engage their imaginations more readily, and to approach their work with increased confidence, commitment and insight.



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Accessing new and/or different information in the mind – setting people free from the usual thinking patterns and automatic thoughts you 'run into' when confronted with the topic.

Helping the individual keep different points in mind – as they are represented in the model – while working further on the associative trail.

Starting and inspiring an associative process where the metaphors as well as the bricks work as 'inspirators' for new thoughts and connections.

Externalizing thoughts, feelings, experiences from the person, thus giving the person a possibility to look at these things from an outside view, and consider it all as something that can be acted on, instead of as something that is a part of themselves.

Using LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

As noted above, participants in a LSP workshop should be taken through a basic skills building session in order for them to obtain the experience of flow when working with the bricks and the method, and in order to gain the most benefit from the workshop.

After the skills building has been completed, the facilitator can take the participants to the actual workshop level, where the participants use the LSP method to engage actively in a process with a specific focus or theme. The LSP method can be used in a variety of different ways and adapted to different purposes by combining the sequence of exercises and crafting the questions accordingly – as long as the core of the method is kept intact by making sure that the basic process steps are followed, and that the facilitator and the participants adhere to the Etiquette and code of conduct. The different ways of using the method can be combined in different ways in order to serve the purpose of the workshop.

Each of these different method flavour, follows the three basic process steps every time.

The Bricks

Participants should have equal access to a good range of bricks and pieces, so that they feel they have a pleasing opportunity to express themselves.

The brick sets developed for LSP processes are recommended as ideal for this purpose, as they contain many different pieces, shapes, animals and other useful parts. It has been found that using only the most basic rectangular bricks can be frustrating for participants, who do not necessarily want a difficult building challenge. Instead, animals, flags,



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minifigures, domes, and a wide range of other attractive shapes make it easy for people to pick out metaphorical elements. More guidelines on the brick *kits* will follow later in this document.

Individual models

A LSP process typically begins with participants building individual models. They might then be asked to build additions to models they have already built, and to build connections between models already built.

Additions could, for instance, be building challenges that ask participants to further investigate a detail concerning the issue they have just reflected upon, or could be a building challenge that ask participants to add another dimension or perspective to the model they have already built.

Connections are built between two or more models, and they can be shown with placement – by placing the models at a certain distance and in a certain direction towards each other – or by physically building the relation between two models in a manner which represents the kind of relationship.

Handling shared model building

Additions and connections can be built in relation to shared models as well, and these can be built individually, or together as a group. Shared models are built by combining individual models into one model, through a process of dialogue and negotiation.

Shared model building requires a very skilled facilitator, as there may be a lot of complex group dynamics in play. Shared model building requires skilled facilitation during the building phase, which the individual model building does not.

When planning to use shared model building in a session, it is crucial to keep the following in mind:

- A building challenge for shared models must always be posed as an individual building challenge before it is posed as a shared building challenge. This means that whenever a shared model is being built, participants have always built their individual response to the building challenge before they are asked to engage in the shared model building process. This ensures that everybody's voice is heard, and that everybody will have something to contribute to the shared model.



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- Building a shared model should not be a matter of finding the lowest common denominators from the individual models. A shared model building process should have the purpose of getting as many details and nuances of the group's reflections in the shared model, and it should strive towards capturing that essence which each of the group members can accept and recognize as part of their shared reality. Reaching this will be the responsibility of the facilitator and requires excellent facilitation skills.

When different ways of building have been used during a workshop, participants can reflect on the different responses that have been built in order to gain deeper understandings.

Creating workshops that work

The facilitator has the task of planning the workshop process. In advance, they need to prepare building challenges relevant for the particular workshop. As mentioned above, the formulation of building challenges has a crucial impact on the process, and it is important that the building challenges are formulated in a way that means they will serve the purpose of the workshop, and ensure the integrity of the method.

The LSP method is built upon an 'open-ended' approach. The basic philosophy is that challenges should open up to reflection, rather than ask for definitive 'correct' responses. The approach presupposes that a challenge has a developmental effect when there are several different correct or 'true' solutions.

This means that when participants are presented with a challenge, there are many different ways to meet and solve the challenge, and a challenge should be formulated exactly to meet this rich approach to reality.

In formulating building challenges, the facilitator must strive to ask open-ended questions that encourage reflection and dialogue. In this context, open-ended questions are often all about thoughts, imagined future scenarios, and things that have yet to happen.

The aim of the building challenges is to reach the core of what participants should reflect on. Questions should also focus on experiences and characteristics, rather than on hard facts and concrete knowledge.

Participants tend to see a good building challenge as one that is easily understood and that triggers their thoughts in an unusual way. When formulating each separate building challenge, the facilitator will naturally benefit from consultancy experience and professional perspectives about the specific participant group.



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Progression from one building task to the next

Building a process with several consecutive building challenges that form layers often works well to move teams on in their exploration and learning.

Questions forming layers are questions that move from one level of reflection to another. The aim of constructing several layers into building tasks is that several 'rounds' of reflection on the same theme from a variety of perspectives will expand the scope of participants' reflections and produce more nuanced dialogue.

The facilitator prepares – i.e. creates and plans – the LSP workshop, and in doing that there are several things that they should be aware of and should consider. First and foremost, the process will be formed and influenced very much by the building challenges that are making up the workshop.

The facilitator's tasks

- Planning and preparing the process
- Setting the scene, conveying LSP etiquette
- Facilitating the process open-endedly
- Ensuring participants' experience of flow (see theory of flow in other sections of this document)

Size and scale of a workshop

A workshop typically involves three to seven people. Scimpulse has experience with workshops of up to 40 people and dynamics up to 3 days in duration, but in the case of the OpenCare Deep Games we expect groups of 5-7 participants and duration of one full day. If there is a large group (7-11 players we recommend to set aside two days)

Groups of more than eight tend to be too big, so that the process of going round the table hearing about constructions might become tiresome (or might put pressure on individuals to speed up), and can make it difficult for participants to remember all of the meanings and stories. A workshop can involve as few as two participants, although a group of four to eight is optimal – bringing the energy of different people and more ideas.

Scimpulse has the materials required for the workshops. Each participant is given a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Starter Kit. (item no. 2000414) for the skills-building exercises, or an equivalent set of bricks. The kits are assorted with incomplete sets by design, to avoid the player's tendency to build a pre-determined model, forcing creative thinking by design. The workshop group will also make collective use of one LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Identity and Landscape Kit (item no. 2000415), and if connections are to be built between models, one LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Connections Kit (item no. 2000413).



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Advice for the preparation before the workshops

To run the workshops you need to consider how you make the project organization team ready to manage the event so that the participants will get the most out of using it.

Running an efficient and successful workshop requires a skilled facilitator, deep knowledge about the process, and experience with facilitating such processes. Being a skilled facilitator requires that you have insight into the pitfalls and essentials of the method and that you have practical, hands-on experience with the use of the method.

Running a workshop that delivers meaningful and usable content requires a surrounding organization team equipped with the skills, tools and technology to capture what is happening in the workshop itself in real time and be capable to use the outcome later for the ethnographic research purposes.

It is recommended to train the organizing team in the process by facilitating a “test” lightweight workshops for the team itself in settings where the process is not likely to do any harm if any mistakes occur. The theme of the workshop should be the organization itself.

Finally, be aware of the fact that the workshop method and process can bring up things in the dialogue that you could not have foreseen – and prepare for this situation.



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