

Building Critical Interpretation and Reflection through LEGO®

ALT Conference April 2026

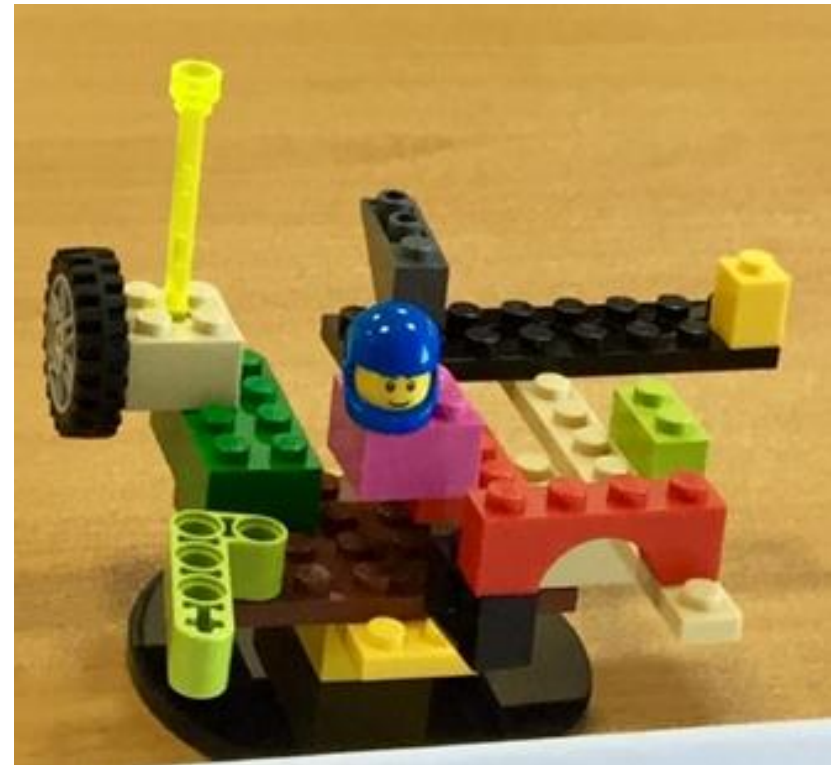
Dr Philip Drake

Content

- LEGO® Methodology
- Some Student Reflections
- Applying a Critical Realist methodology to reflective practice

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Methodology

- Constructing LEGO® models representing metaphoric stories
- Kinaesthetic method to conceptualise complex abstract thoughts, tacit hidden experiences and expose emotional issues
- Participants feel less pressure and more comfortable in discussing identities and experiences
- Reflective learning occurs through individuals constructing models external to themselves (Papert & Harel 1991)

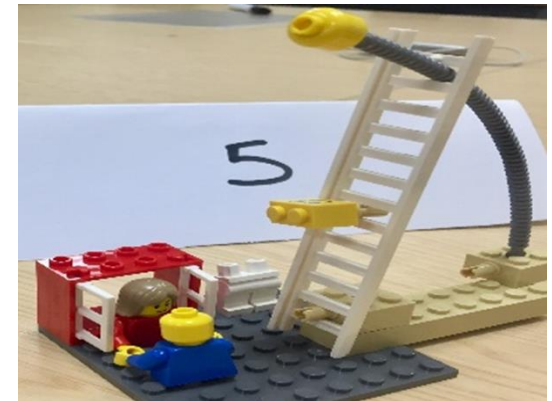
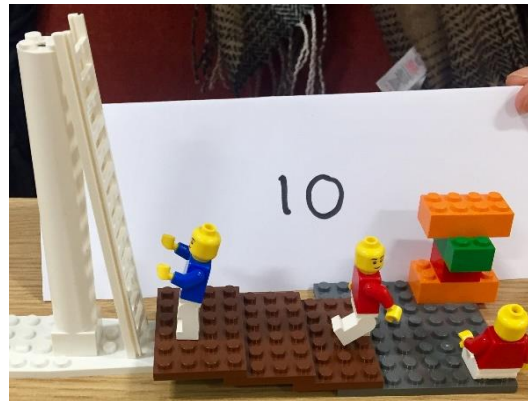
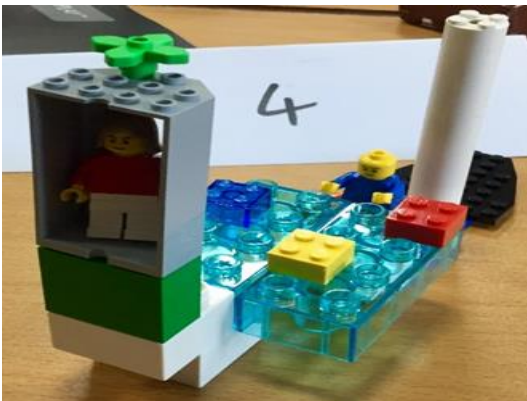




- “We are, as a species, addicted to story. Even when the body goes to sleep, the mind stays up all night, telling itself stories.”
- Jonathan Gottschall

LEGO® Methodology

- Facilitator poses a challenge
- Participants think & build metaphorically
- Participants share their story
- Facilitator asks questions about model



Emotions, Confidence & Anxiety

“That just show’s I’m taking more control. And that just acts like a shield, like, sometimes that you put up a shield, when you’re not confident or whatever but I’m like breaking that down and getting more comfortable”



Emotions, Confidence & Anxiety

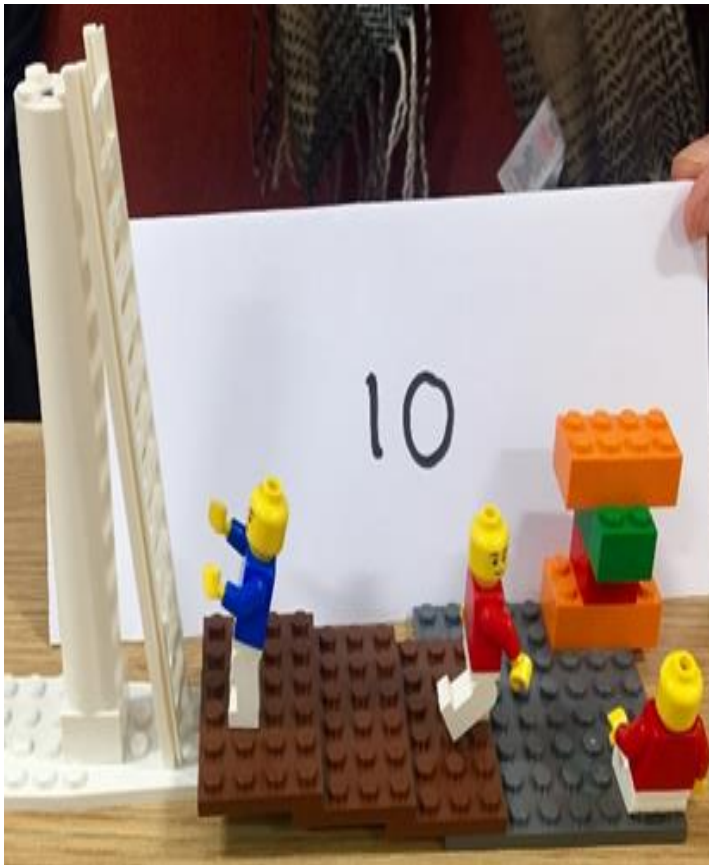


“I’ve got a helmet, so that is for when you’re dealing with a client and sometimes you have to be very... like you have to remember to be very... objective. And you can’t let things get to you emotionally. So you have to... you just have to keep... a hard head and just not let things get to you”

Emotions, Confidence & Anxiety

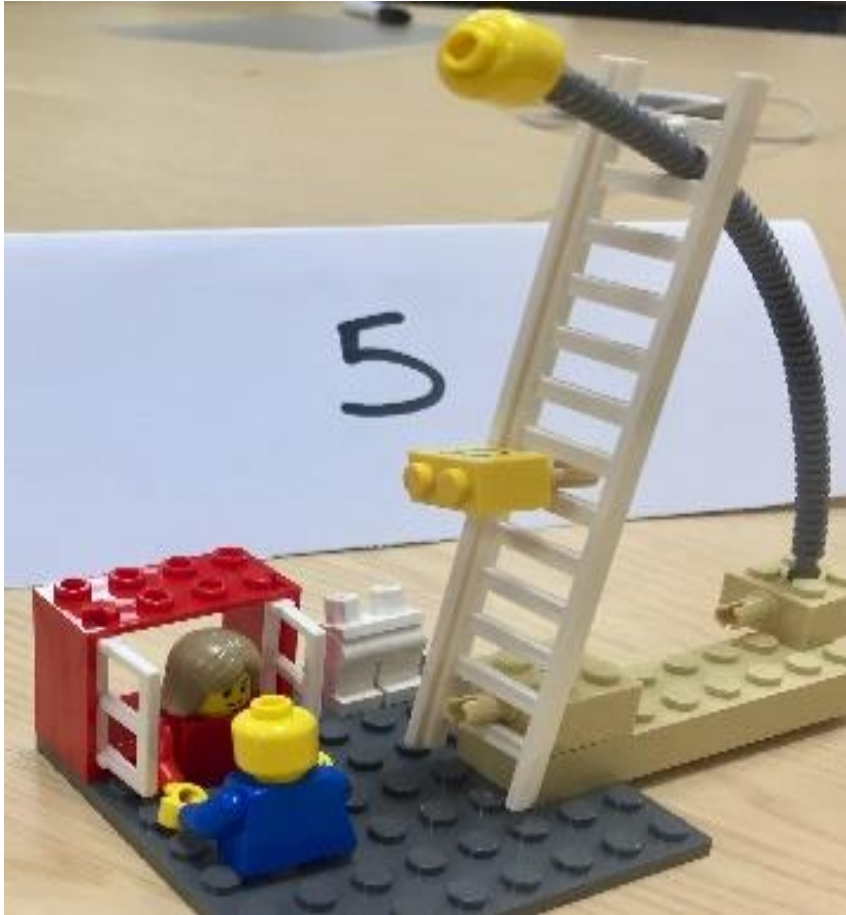
“And you could see that in how he was coming across in the interview. Sometimes he was raising his voice a little bit and you could see the emotion and the anger and confusion as well... But you have to learn as an advisor you can’t show your emotions, you know, as much as the client. So, if you know that the client seems to be confused with what you’re saying then, you can’t look confused as well. Because then it’ll decrease the client’s confidence in you. So, you have to keep that in control in your emotions.”

Helping Others



“Okay... so that’s me. Stepping up. So, because it’s my second year, I feel like I have that bit of experience. And then that’s someone there, that’s struggling, that’s just started and doesn’t have any help. And as opposed to just carrying on and improving myself, I’ve stopped and looked around and seeing if anyone needs help and then helping them... Because I think I’ll do that. I think I’ll turn around and say “do you need any help?” As opposed to just thinking about myself and thinking about my own progression but thinking about others around me, as well. So we’re all progressing at the same stage, as opposed to some of us doing really, really well and then the others not understanding what to do...”

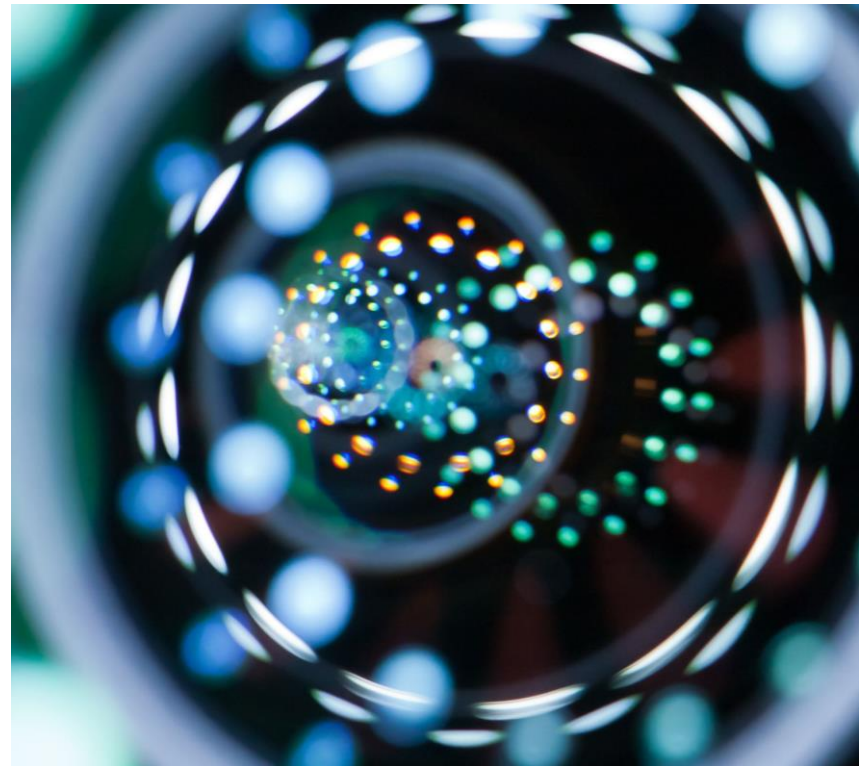
Helping Others



“Right. So... this is the clinic. That’s me and that’s the advisor. This piece of LEGO® had legs on it but I took them off to show that when we get clients in the clinic we like to... be on the same sort of level as them. So, they know that they can come and speak to you and you’re not... you’re not judging them in any way.”

Applying a Critical Realist methodology to Reflective Practice

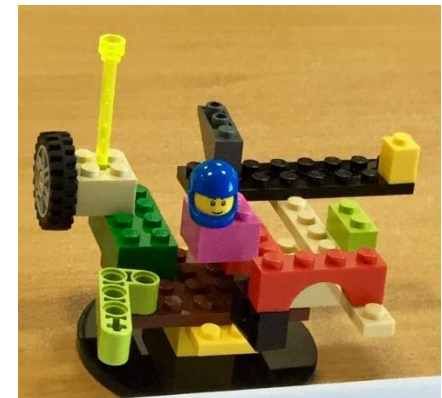
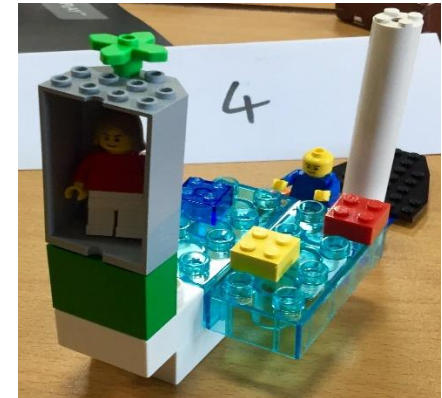
- An ontological & epistemological perspective for reflection (Blaikie 2000 & 1993).
- Critical Realism (Bhaskar 1978)
- Whilst structures present conditions for the way that people live, agency creates causality for what happens (Danermark *et al.* 2005)



- “... people in their conscious human activity, for the most part unconsciously reproduce (or occasionally, transform) the structures that govern their substantive activities of production. Thus people do not marry to reproduce the nuclear family, or work to reproduce the capitalist economy. But it is nevertheless the unintended consequence (and inexorable result) of, as it is also the necessary condition for their activity” (Bhaskar 1989)
- Reality exists objectively and independently of our knowledge, but knowledge of reality can be conceptually mediated through theory

- Law that is taught reflectively in the context of the social, political and economic structures that influence it (Kennedy 1982).
- Reflective consideration of not only what the law *is*, but also what *influences* it and what it *does*

Any questions?



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