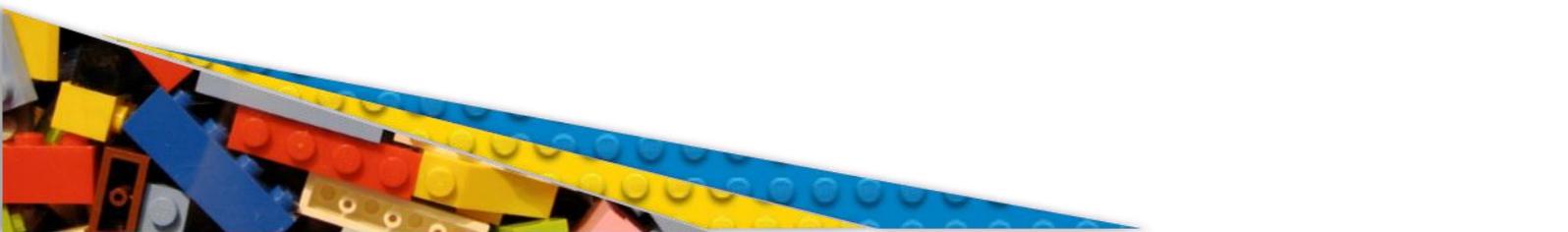




S-PLA 

LEGO SERIOUS PLAY Learning for SMEs



Summary report including information from Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Greece and UK

Participants

General information

The main aim of the project is to adapt the Lego Serious Play method and LLED to the requirements of SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises) training. To test whether the method works, workshops were conducted in each of the partner countries. This summary includes the result of 5 workshops which have taken place in Poland, Germany, Switzerland, Greece and UK

All in all number of participants taken part in the workshops: 34 participants

Number of participants taken part in the evaluation: 32 participants

Number of SMEs (differ from the number of participants) taking part: 24 SMEs

Kind of sectors SMEs were coming from:

- health sector,
- tourism (e.g. hotel management, restaurant, bars)
- textiles / manufacturing
- IT
- services
- marketing
- construction sector
- news and media
- business advisory services

Topics of the workshop were very different and it was interesting to find out if the LSP-Method works for all these different topics. Topics were:

- diabetes, how to train patients to deal with the illness in an appropriate way
- instructional design of the third edition of futour.net (<http://www.futour.net/?lang=en>), the professional training for Ticino's hoteliers and tourist operators
- identification of training needs
- innovation
- strategies to approach new tourism markets

Acquisition of participants

Each partner had to acquire SMEs for their workshop. The acquisition was mainly done by using existing networks.

Swiss: eLab closely collaborates with webatelier.net, a Research & development lab of the Faculty of Communication Sciences (USI, Lugano), which promoted the Futour.net project, together with the Department of Finance & Economy of Canton Ticino and the Tourism and Hotel High School (SSAT, Bellinzona). The project manager of Futour.net contacted some participants of the former editions of the training program and invited them to take part in the LSP workshop.

GB: Members of the team were involved in discussions with local business organizations. Amongst these, one CEO expressed interest in trying an innovative CPD tool such as LEGO.

DE: The S-Play method was used during an already existing seminar. Employees attending this are being trained to become a “Fachwirt Gesundheit und Sozialwesen”, which is a sort of business administrator of social and health services. The acquisition of participants was done by different means such as advertisements in newspapers and the website of the chamber of industry and commerce, information in the vocational training programme and during personal consultations.

PL: UITM closely cooperates with SMEs in the region through EU projects, business associations, clusters and networks of enterprises. Information about workshops was distributed among these groups and companies interested in participating in workshops about innovation contacted the project coordinator. Additionally, organizers invited representatives of trainers, VET, high school teachers to participate in the workshops to widely disseminate the method and find potential partners for further workshops.

GR: Participants of the workshop are owners of local enterprises related to the Cretan tourism sector. The group was covering a great spectrum of professions from construction companies to business advisors and media owners. The selection was made based on their common perspective on the development of marketing for Cretan product and services as to approach new markets.

Preparation

The preparation of participants was mainly done by handing out information, either before the workshop or at the beginning and by explaining the method. In addition, most partners handed out material such as information sheets, project leaflets and consent forms to be signed.

Swiss: Participants received some basic information before the workshop, such as the main goal of the workshop, the methodology that would have been used (LSP) and logistic aspects (time, location, duration, etc.) Participants received an information sheet and a consent form to sign before the workshop.

GB: The participants were prepared for a training session using LEGO. In the session participants were given a short presentation which outlined the rationale and theoretical basis of LSP method. Some basic rules and conventions were explained. Project flyers were made available before the session. Information sheets and consent forms were handed out and signed by the participants, in accordance with local ethical guidelines.

DE: Participants received some information about the project, the method and the range in which the method can be used. No specific information was handed out

PL: Participants received some basic information before the workshop, such as the main goal of the workshop, the methodology that would have been used (LSP) and logistic aspects (time, location, duration, etc.). They were also informed about S-PLAY project – aim, activities, upcoming events. Participants received an information sheet and a consent form to sign before the workshop. They also received project leaflets and the White Paper on LEGO®SERIOUS PLAY®.

GR: Prior the workshop, participants received all the information regarding the LSP method, the workshop topic and logistics. Also a short power point presentation regarding the methodology was used as an introduction before the warm up activities. Participants received the project’s brochure, the information sheet regarding the workshop and the consent form to sign.

Feedback

Procedure: participants received a questionnaire and were asked to give their feedback at the end of the seminar. The questionnaire was mainly consisting of closed-ended questions. Please be aware of the fact that not all participants have always answered all questions. Therefore sometimes the figures are different.

All in all 32 participants gave feedback regarding the following aspects:

A. Overall Evaluation:

The workshop was well organized:

Strongly disagree: 0
Disagree: 1
Undecided: 0
Agree: 13
Strongly agree: 18

The workshop achieved its objectives:

Strongly disagree: 0
Disagree: 0

Undecided: 3
Agree: 13
Strongly agree: 16

The knowledge and information gained from participation in this workshop will be useful / applicable in my work:

Strongly disagree: 1
Disagree: 4
Undecided: 4
Agree: 10
Strongly agree: 12

B. the Facilitator

- was knowledgeable about the methodology (LSP)

Strongly disagree: 0

Disagree: 1

Undecided: 1

Agree: 8

Strongly agree: 22

- was well prepared and organized

Strongly disagree: 0

Disagree: 1

Undecided: 0

Agree: 10

Strongly agree: 21

- explained the LSP methodology / process clearly:

Strongly disagree: 0

Disagree: 3

Undecided: 0

Agree: 10

Strongly agree: 19

- stimulated participants' interest and participation:

Strongly disagree: 0

Disagree: 0

Undecided: 1

Agree: 14

Strongly agree: 17

C: The LEGO Serious Play method -

My insight, knowledge and ideas were brought fully to the table:

Strongly disagree: 0

Disagree: 3

Undecided: 4

Agree: 15

Strongly agree: 10

I fully comprehended other participant's insight, knowledge and ideas (including team roles, relationships and culture):

Strongly disagree: 0

Disagree: 2

Undecided: 4

Agree: 16

Strongly agree: 10

I experienced new knowledge or I deepened my knowledge:

Strongly disagree: 0

Disagree: 3

Undecided: 3

Agree: 13

Strongly agree: 13

I developed clearer perceptions and greater awareness of organizational needs:

Strongly disagree: 1

Disagree: 2

Undecided: 6

Agree: 10

Strongly agree: 13

I find the LSP approach useful for creating new ideas:

Strongly disagree: 1

Disagree: 4

Undecided: 4

Agree: 9

Strongly agree: 14

Compared with other learning methods (e.g. E-learning, lecture-style teaching) I find the LSP approach a good way to transport information and knowledge:

Strongly disagree: 0

Disagree: 5

Undecided: 1

Agree: 14

Strongly agree: 12

The workshop helped to create an individual and common understanding of goals:

Strongly disagree: 0

Disagree: 1

Undecided: 5
Agree: 11
Strongly agree: 15

I felt a stronger commitment to take action in accordance with what was shared:

Strongly disagree: 1
Disagree: 2
Undecided: 6
Agree: 13
Strongly agree: 7

I created a social bond and increased the shared sense of responsibility:

Strongly disagree: 1
Disagree: 2
Undecided: 5
Agree: 15
Strongly agree: 9

All participants expressed themselves openly, honestly, and directly:

Strongly disagree: 0
Disagree: 2
Undecided: 5
Agree: 8
Strongly agree: 17

My participation contributed to the outcomes achieved with my insights, knowledge and ideas.

Strongly disagree: 0
Disagree: 2
Undecided: 3
Agree: 15
Strongly agree: 16

All participants contributed to the outcomes achieved with their insights, knowledge and ideas:

Strongly disagree: 0
Disagree: 1
Undecided: 4
Agree: 6
Strongly agree: 15

Overall, I'm satisfied by the outcomes of this workshop:

Strongly disagree: 0
Disagree: 3
Undecided: 2
Agree: 9
Strongly agree: 17

I would attend another workshop in which the LSP method is used

Strongly disagree: 1
Disagree: 3
Undecided: 2
Agree: 8
Strongly agree: 18

In addition participants were asked to give their comment regarding positive and negative aspects of the workshop or the method used.

For most participants (28 out of 32) the workshop met their expectations. One participant mentioned that the workshop was too generic and that it should be more focused on a particular SME. The others did not have any expectations. This does not mean that they did not like the approach.

Most of the participants liked the approach since it:

- Was creative
- Was encouraging participation, empathy and spontaneity
- Helped to foster innovation
- Helped to identify organizational needs
- Helped to gain new findings /insights
- Was brilliant, since the work was done through playing

Less positive remarks were a mixture of practical matters and remarks related to the method:

- Too little space available
- Time too short to fulfill individual tasks
- Dislike of “connection exercises” due to technical difficulties of construction
- Couldn't see the connection with the practical work

In addition to the questionnaire filled in, participants willing to participate were interviewed regarding the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the method.

Strengths of the method

- Made it interesting, fun, maintains engagement and alertness
- In discussions around a table, it is easy to forget what has been said. The models helped people to remember and think about them. Allows ideas to be 'parked'
- The LSP method stimulates creativity
- One can touch things
- The LSP method is very concrete, it forces participants to build, and thus, speak about very specific aspects/elements/ideas
- It improves / fosters the team spirit
- Everyone is equal
- Using LEGO was bringing back good feelings connected with childhood. It helped to open up and share ideas.

Opportunities

- Allows time to think through ideas rather than answer on the spot. Allows you to answer with what you want to say.
- Everybody is forced to speak. Compared to other methods, there is more chance to generate new and innovative ideas.
- The method can be used for various topics
- The method unleashes hidden potentials of a team

Weaknesses

- Sometimes, initially, you have an idea which is difficult to express
- Can be strange to work this way with people you don't know
- Might take willpower to accept this "playful" method
- The method is rather time consuming. If some participants are taking much longer to share their ideas than others, it is difficult to keep patient
- One has to believe in the method. Otherwise it will not work

Threats

- The output of the session itself could be a threat (i.e. finding something that you did not expect, and that would be difficult to manage).

- The “technical” difficulties in building/assembling LEGO could be a threat (specially, in the connection exercise)
- The playful aspect of LSP could be a barrier: people could be very skeptical
- The joy of playing might distract from the topic being tackled
- Drifting away from the model when sharing

Facilitators

All in all 8 facilitators were leading the workshops. All facilitator received training in the LSP-Method in special workshops. One of the facilitators is a certified LSP facilitator, who obtained his certification in June 2013.

The facilitators leading the workshops were also asked to give their feedback regarding the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the method.

Strengths

- Everyone is allowed to have their say – everyone is equal
- Nobody shies away but has to make their point
- LSP-LLED forces every participant to give his/her contribution
- There is no wrong answer
- The team spirit and the common experience will be furthered by this method
- It is a way of thinking with the hands. It furthers creativity
- It combines creativity and communication
- It is a haptic and visual approach
- People are familiar and relaxed with LEGO, ready to play
- Results can be gained quickly
- The method is value-free
- It visualizes unconscious aspects
- Using this method shortens the distance between facilitator and participants
- The LSP-method focuses on the team dynamics and offers a tool to promote most of the adult learning techniques based on participation, motivation and self-expression

Opportunities

- It is a good method for groups which are little communicative
- It is a good method for participants who don't know each other

- It is a good method to express oneself
- The method is a good way to come up with new ideas.
- The method could be used for team meetings
- The method could be used within conflict management
- The explanation is an important part of the process. Not just a statement, but an explanation of why
- The method allows people to present themselves in different ways, provides an open and equal environment which values everyone's opinion
- With this method one could neglect hierarchies. This can be a rather important aspect in case different departments within one company are supposed to work together using this method

Weaknesses

- For some participants it needs a lot of willpower to open up themselves to this method.
- For people without creativity it is difficult to find access to the approach
- Some people do have inhibitions to work in this way with people unknown to them
- It is time-consuming
- Some people think it is easier to write down the ideas.
- The facilitator has a fundamental role. He/she has to give the "right" challenges and he/she must find the exact words for the instructions. If you don't pose a very precise question, participants won't understand it and they won't be able to build something meaningful.
- LSP method works better with heterogeneous groups. If all participants have the same role, same needs and expectations, the result of the workshop may be less interesting.
- Since the time of a LSP session is limited, the final result may be not complete.
- The LLED methodology still needs some refinement: the second challenge posed during the workshop ("Build a model of a learning objective or of a content of Futour 3.0") was not clear enough, as the models built by participants have showed. It would have been better to pose two different challenges, asking participants to build a model of a content first and of a learning objective after, but this would have required more time.
- This method needs a lot of space and good preparation
- One has to take in mind that all the boxes with lego bricks have to be carried

Threats

- The advantages of LSP might be in its novelty, it might only work in small doses. If used commonly, people might get used to it and not engage fully

- Sometimes participants have already in mind something to say, so they “force” their models to represent their ideas, without really answering the challenge that is posed. Sometimes participants do not start from the model, they do not explain it, but just share their ideas.
- LEGO could be also a distracting element (participants could start to play and build models that are not related to the workshop topic)
- The LSP method could result in answers that are common places for the participants adding no new information to their knowledge
- If you convince people to leave their jobs and to “lose” precious time, you must be 100% sure that the workshop will be helpful/enriching.
- One of the main threats for the method is the comprehensiveness of the subject. If the main topic in question is not well understood then the method may fail or have poor results.

Threats - In particular focusing on the implication the LSP-method might have on the role of the trainer / facilitator

- In the first run the method might seem to be some childish game. If that is the case participants would not take it seriously which affects the group dynamic and might affect the outcome. It would also have a negative effect on the reputation of the facilitator.

Partners who has been organizing the workshops had the chance to give a final statement while reflecting the workshop for SMEs

- The method used in workshop 1 seemed to be successful. These were technical workers who may not be used to such representations. The start was quite worrying and difficult. Perhaps some small simpler tasks might be used to get people used to the ideas of building symbols. We need to think of some activities to reintroduce some lightness and play into the procedures. Often the humour and play has left the situation. This is quite an intensive 3 hour workshop.
- The number of participants in workshop groups should be balanced carefully but rather kept to small amounts. It is also up to the facilitators to guide the participants and manage the time for each participant to ensure smooth workshops.
- The method was very well received and therefore UITM plans to introduce LSP-method into its training portfolio and offer it regularly to SMEs. In addition, it will also be implemented into the university curriculum and offered for high schools.

Partners contributing to this summary:

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