

# BRICKING IT! USING LEGO TO ACHIEVE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF LEGAL CONCEPTS

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## Law is hard!

Students sometimes struggle to grasp theoretical legal concepts and the practical applications of them.

Using 'serious play' engages students' creative processes that foster deeper learning (Nordstrom & Lorpelainen 2011), and creates a welcome break from traditional study methods.

## Theoretical Concepts

Give students identical bags of LEGO® and ask them to create a model that represents a specific or general concept. Give them time to get over the novelty of using LEGO® at University and see what they create. Ask the students to explain what their model means to the class. The creative processes involved in constructing and then describing a LEGO® model can lead to a breakthrough in understanding a complex topic.

## Case Study 1

As part of the final class of the Equity & Trusts module, students were asked to create and explain a model of any topic within Equity & Trusts.



Here the student has created a protective trust, creating a safe environment for the beneficiary. The trust then becomes a support to 'boost' the beneficiary in life once the disability, e.g. minority, comes to an end.



## Case Study 2

European Union Law has many difficult concepts to grasp. Even highly complex abstract concepts can be turned into LEGO® models. Tutor-created models can help assist student understanding, or create a talking point.

### What happens after Brexit?



Does the Brexit door lead to the promised land of freedom, or a nasty surprise?

## References and Further Reading

Mann D, 'Serious Play' (1996) 97 Teachers College Record 446  
Nordstrom K & Korpelainen P, 'Creativity and inspiration for problem solving in engineering education' (2011) 16 Teaching in Higher Education, 439  
Queen Mary, University of London, *Booklet on using LEGO for A level Physics*  
[https://www.qmul.ac.uk/spa/media/school-of-physics/outreach/lego/Particle\\_Dec14\\_online.pdf](https://www.qmul.ac.uk/spa/media/school-of-physics/outreach/lego/Particle_Dec14_online.pdf)  
accessed 4 August 2018

## Practical applications

Getting students to understand theoretical law is one thing, but application of that to a practical situation is of more use in the 'real world'. LEGO® can also assist with this.

## Case Study 3

Students learn from the case of *White v White* [2000] UKHL 54 that an equal sharing of assets on divorce is the starting point, but how do you actually divide assets? Students were given bags of an odd number of LEGO® pieces and asked to divide them equally, and explain their division process. Some students opted for a rough division by eye:



Other students counted the number of studs visible on each piece and allocated each party the same amount of studs:



One student didn't look at individual assets but treated them as a whole, allocating equivalent but different assets to both sides. As there was also a child involved, this was not a clean break divorce!



Students then discussed the differences in these approaches and when they might be suitable for different types of client.

## Conclusions

Students enjoyed the break from 'normal' study, took photos of their creations and were observed to understand abstract concepts enough to explain without hesitation.