

Creativity,  
Imagination and Play  
essential elements in  
university learning



Finn Stone: Lego Stilettoes

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“Where does the play of imagination come from? When are sounds music? When are patterns and colors art? When are words literature? When is instruction teaching?

*(Nachmanovitch, 1990:5)*





# A Conversation In A Bag

Adapted from, and inspired by, the Capsule Conversation created by  
Giskin Day, NTF, Imperial College London

Unroll your scroll



one task at a time



6 Tasks to complete in  
10 minutes  
in pairs or groups  
as instructed

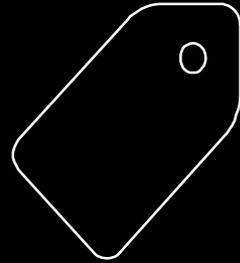
(but ignore some of the  
paper instructions...)



Off you go!

# Let's look at your labels...





*How do we define play?*

*Go to*

*[www.todaysmeet.com/play](http://www.todaysmeet.com/play)*

It's fun and without predetermined purpose  
(Brown)

Can encompass pastimes, recreation,  
entertainment, hobbies (Sutton-Smith)

All play means something (Huizinga)

It's not a matter of idleness or diversion but  
about "taking reality lightly" (Kane)

There are too many types of play to name  
them all (Fagen)

Play is defined by context – not what we do  
but how we do it (Nachmanovitch)



*What is play for?*

## *Huizinga*

It is central to  
navigating human  
existence  
Older than culture  
Animals knew how  
to do it  
before civilisations  
emerged

## *Nachmanovitch*

for self expression  
and creativity:  
“everything in  
nature arises from  
the power of free  
play sloshing  
against the power  
of limits”

## *Brown*

For fun  
For healthy brain  
development  
To ensure healthy  
socialisation and  
combat deviancy

## *Sutton Smith*

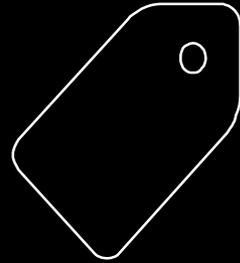
Survival:  
It is ambiguous  
and  
not always  
innocent  
7 (contrasting)  
Rhetorics of Play

## *Kane*

Play as a generator  
of originality,  
growth and new  
development

## *Plato*

One of the quickest  
ways of learning  
about someone



*How many types of play  
can you think of?*

*Go to  
[www.todaysmeet.com/play](http://www.todaysmeet.com/play)*

For example, biologists, psychologists, educators, and sociologists tend to focus on how play is adaptive or contributes to growth, development, and socialization. Communication theorists tell us that play is a form of metacommunication far preceding language in evolution because it is also found in animals. Sociologists say that play is an imperial social system that is typically manipulated by those with power for their own benefit. Mathematicians focus on war games and games of chance, important in turn because of the data they supply about strategy and probability. Thermonuclear war games, it appears, can be either a hobby or deadly serious. Anthropologists pursue the relationships between ritual and play as these are found in customs and festivals, while folklorists add an interest in play and game traditions. Art and literature, by contrast, have a major focus on play as a spur to creativity.

[Brian Sutton Smith, \*The Rhetorics of Play\*](#) chapter in the Game Design Reader, Salen and Zimmerman

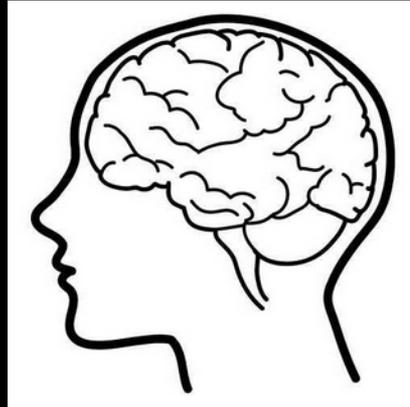


The science of play

Neoteny

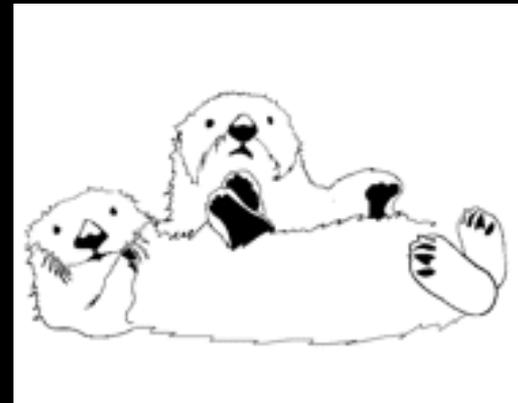
Play sculpts  
the brain

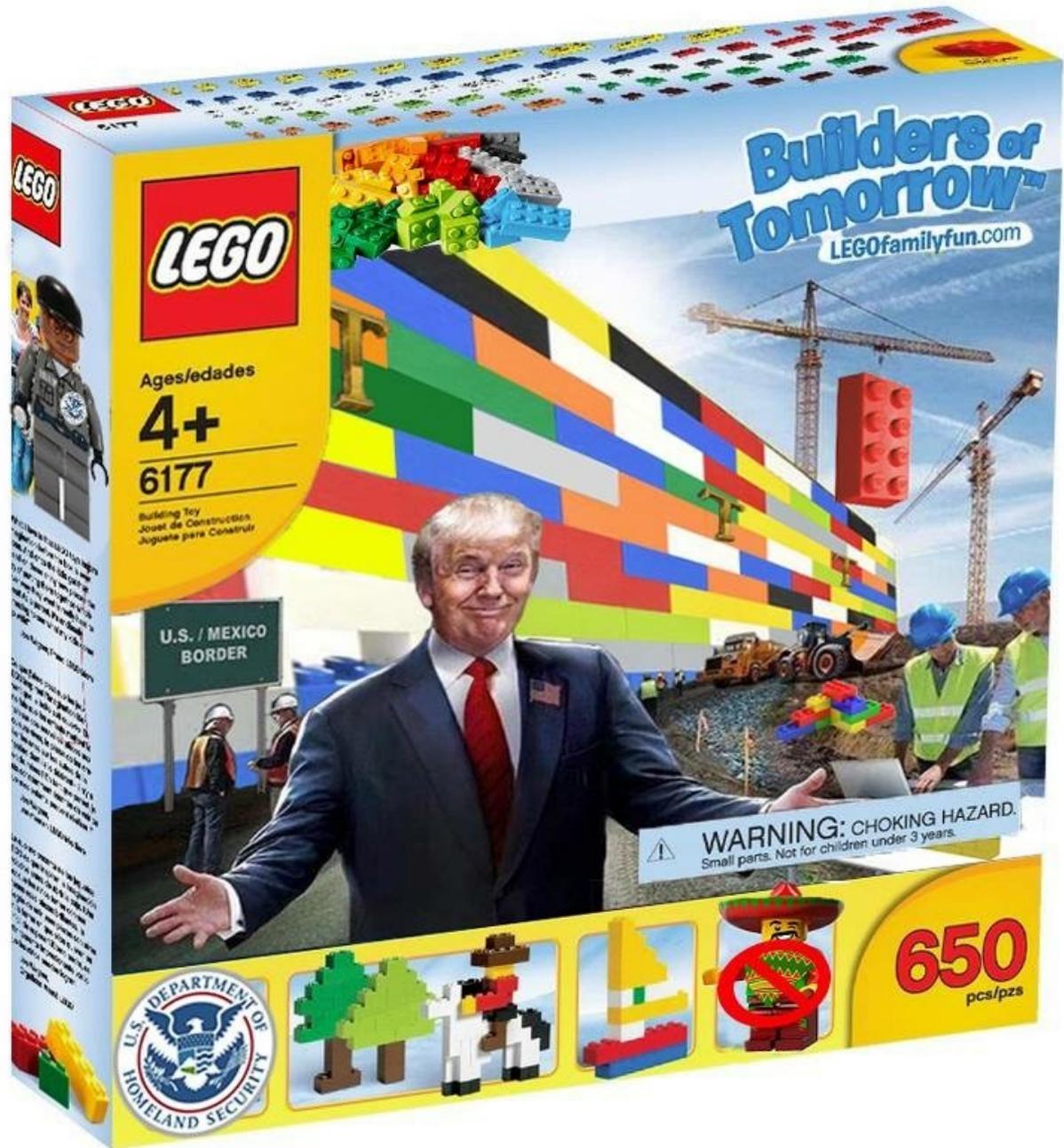
Play and brain  
size correlation



Rat research

Otters





**LEGO**

Ages/edades

**4+**

**6177**

Building Toy  
Juguete de Construcción  
Juguete para Construir

U.S. / MEXICO  
BORDER

**WARNING: CHOKING HAZARD.**  
Small parts. Not for children under 3 years.

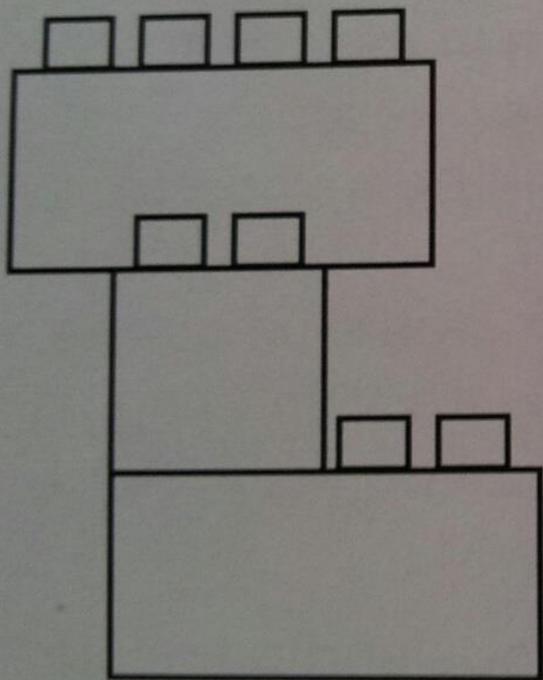
**650**  
pcs/pzs



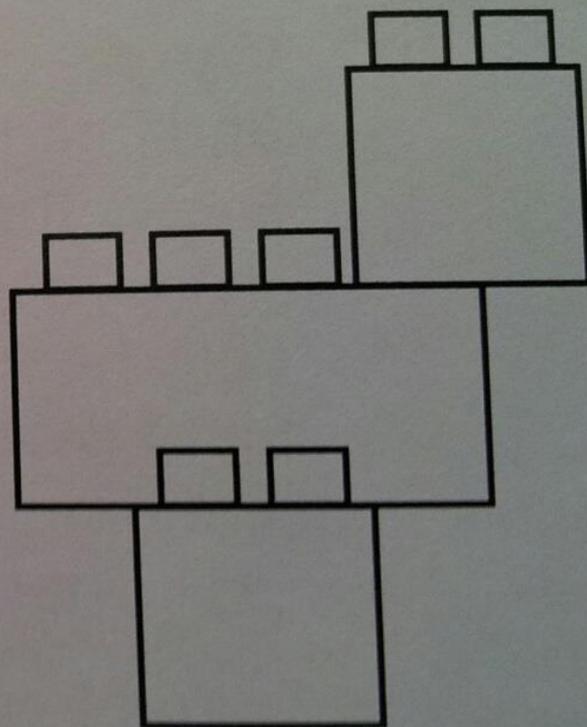
## Challenge A:

Fiddlers and Thinkers

Brick Visualizer Challenge Sheet.



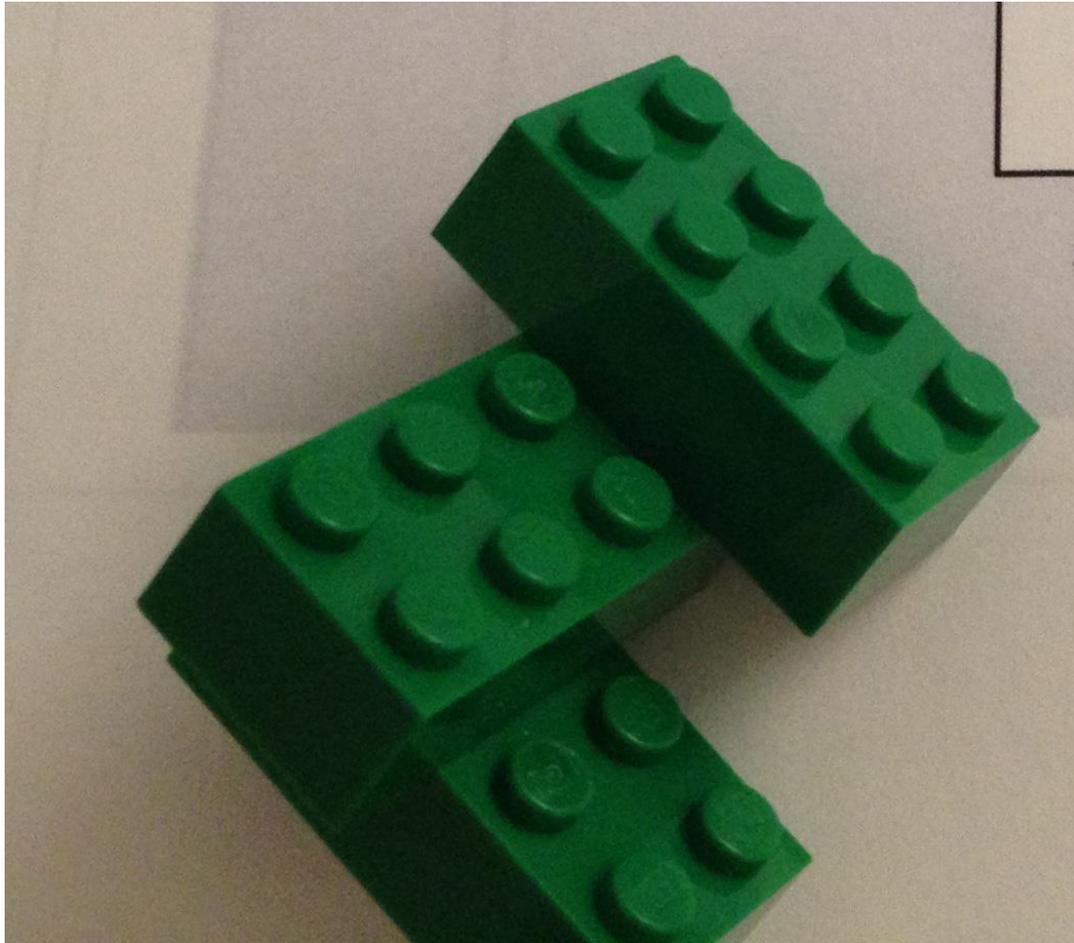
This is one view of a stack  
of bricks..



...this is another view  
of the same



Did yours look like this?





## Transforming public spaces with the Hidden Door Festival in Edinburgh



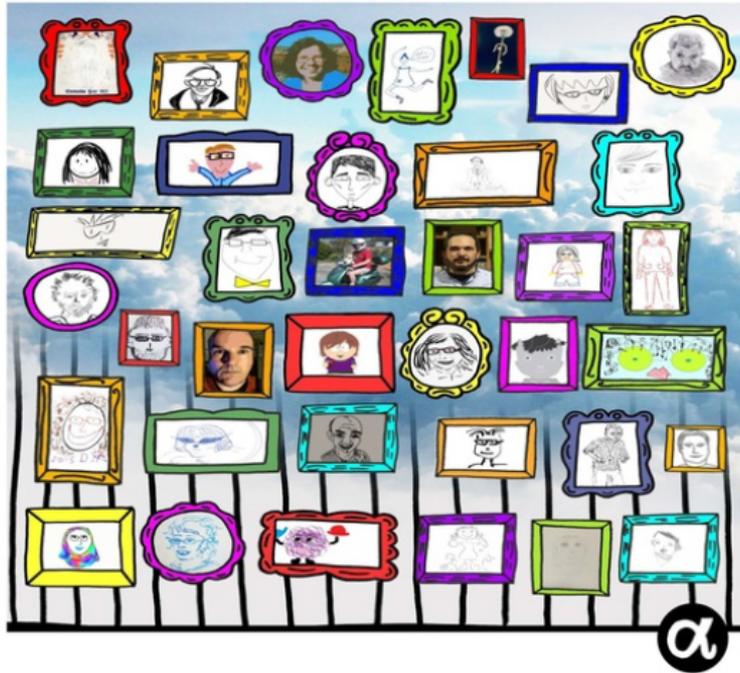
The hidden door festival in Edinburgh explores how we use disused and abandoned public spaces.

There's a vibrant and imaginative feel, with both daytime and evening events populated with art, music, cinema, food and drink. It makes for an ideal learning environment, and shows what you can achieve with collaboration, and a vision.



A LIVE ART GAME FOR KIDS AND ADULTS  
**PLAYING UP**  
A LIVE ART GAME FOR KIDS AND ADULTS

PLAYING UP

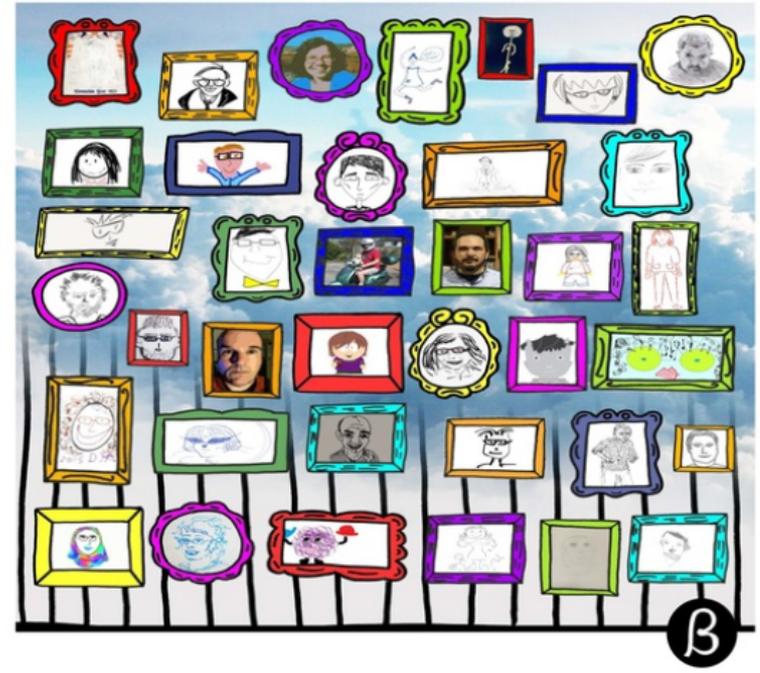


# Exploring Play in Higher Education

Issue Number 2A



**creative academic  
magazine**



# Exploring Play in Higher Education

Issue Number 2B



**creative academic  
magazine**

Taking improvisation strategies from music and interweaving them into **law**

Analysing simulation-based **medical education** using computer games

Reinforcing concepts within wildlife conservation (**zoology**) with a table top board game

Outdoor learning centres and pop up “playscapes”

Raft-building, sheep dog handling (**team/leadership building**)

Pattern and play in **mathematics**

Playful public engagement activities led by students (**chemistry**) which encourage audience participation

Juggling in **functional biology and plant science** classes

Building 3D threshold concepts in

**English/Engineering/Other**

Labyrinth walking (**creative writing, music, law, dance, other**)



# PLAY AND CREATIVITY FESTIVAL

MONDAY 3 APRIL - FRIDAY 7 APRIL 2017

The Festival is an opportunity to showcase the ways play and creativity permeate our teaching, research and professional activities. Whether physical, game-based, digital, imaginative, communal, noisy, quiet or solitary, play makes an important contribution to University life.

Throughout the week of the Festival, we will offer an array of activities, including a play map and passport, talks, active play sessions, board games, performance, imaginative trails, making sessions and LEGO model building to explore wicked problems.

We would like every programme and department to offer a play activity for the Festival. We also want you to take part!

**To find out about the event and how to join in/discuss your ideas please email:**

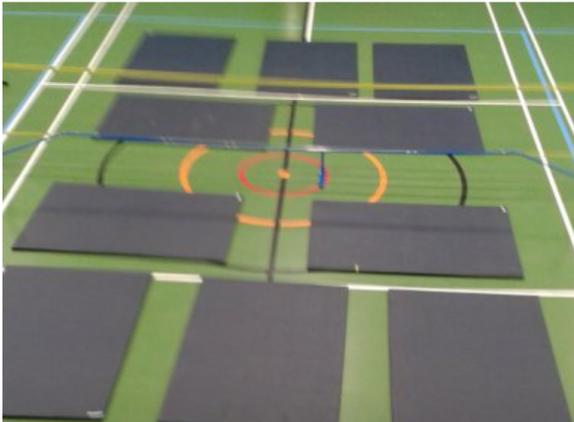
[play@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:play@winchester.ac.uk)



## Our aims

To enliven and cheer  
Boost curiosity  
Intrigue and challenge  
Address complex issues  
Bring people together  
Shed new light





*The Power of Play in HE:  
creativity in tertiary learning*

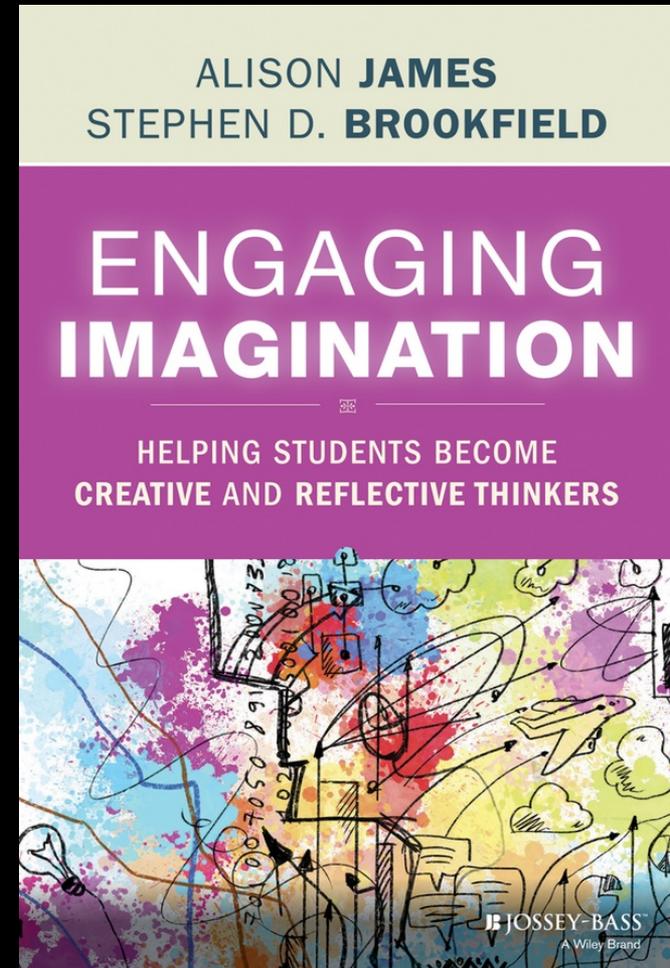
Alison James and Chrissi  
Nerantzi (Eds)  
Palgrave Macmillan  
2018



*“Whoever wants to understand much, must play  
much”*

*Gottfried Benn, German Poet and Essayist,  
1886-1956*

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the Higher Education Academy website. The page title is "Innovating in the creative arts with LEGO". The header includes the Higher Education Academy logo with the tagline "TRANSFORMING TEACHING INSPIRING LEARNING" and a search bar. A navigation menu lists categories like ABOUT, RECOGNITION & ACCREDITATION, DISCIPLINES, FRAMEWORKS & TOOLKITS, RESEARCH, SERVICES, EVENTS, and CONTACT. Below the navigation, there is a section for "Innovating in the creative arts with LEGO" featuring a small portrait of Dr. Alison James and a brief description of her report. A yellow button at the bottom of the section reads "Innovating in the Creative Arts with LEGO".



To talk to us about play...

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