

**EXPLORING THE UTILITY OF LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY IN MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES TO ADDRESS COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES IN MULTICULTURAL PROBLEM-SOLVING DISCUSSION GROUPS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The authors have been involved in the development and organization of an annual Model United Nations conference called Japan University English Model United Nations (JUEMUN) for the past 7 years. At each annual JUEMUN conference, university-aged students from around the world experience cooperative, hands-on learning allowing them to confront some of our world's most pressing issues in English with the perspective of their assigned country. Over 275 students from more than 45 universities representing over 30 different nationalities convene at each annual conference. The problem-solving discussion groups of ten to twelve students comprise approximately of 70% Japanese English speakers, and 30% native English speakers, and other non-native speakers of English. After analyses of video data, post-conference questionnaires and interviews, the authors identified a number of issues that inhibit Japanese English speakers' from contributing more in multicultural English problem-solving discussions. The authors will outline these issues and illustrate how the LEGO® Serious Play (LSP) methodology, which is a teaching methodology designed to enhance communication skills and problem solving processes, can be adapted to address these issues and enhance multicultural English problem-solving discussions at Model United Nations (MUN) conferences.

**Keywords-** discussions, LEGO® Serious Play, Model United Nations