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ISLS Spring 2021 Newsletter

by International Society of the Learning Sciences



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Contributed by Victor Lee



I hope this newsletter finds many of you in a more optimistic position than where we were a year ago. The society has been very busy and very active on a number of matters. As shared via email several weeks ago, ISLS has received a substantial 3-year grant from the Wallace Foundation to support some major new equity and inclusion initiatives. Over the next few years, this funding will help to spotlight the exciting work done by several promising early career learning sciences researchers and help us learn about outstanding but likely less familiar lines of scholarship. These initiatives, and other Wallace funded activities, will ultimately strengthen the work of our society by ensuring we can develop a culture of inclusion and explore a plurality of generative ideas related to learning, collaboration, technology, and learning environments.

Another area where society members have been quite busy has been in the preparation leading up to the ISLS 2021 Annual Meeting. As many of you already know, this will be our first time providing what has in the past been offered at ICLS and what has been offered at the CSCL conference in the same year. It is also the first time ISLS will be supporting a research meeting that has been comprehensively planned to be completely online such that all accepted papers, symposia, and posters will be offered virtually. Over the past several months, the conference organizers, ISLS Board, and others in society leadership have worked together to navigate the many challenges involved in conceiving and shaping an inclusive and worthwhile event for the community. We have also simultaneously been establishing new practices to aid in our permanent transition from alternating conferences to this annual, dual program format. The conference organizing team, led by Nikol Rummel, Ulrich Hoppe, and Astrid Wichmann, are putting forth heroic efforts and have my sincere appreciation. We are truly lucky to have such a dedicated group giving so many volunteered hours, days, and weeks to help establish this new meeting structure and infrastructure. The chairs of the LS program, the CSCL program, and the Online Conference committee have all been helping figure out how to offer a high quality and complete conference experience that is sensitive to all the different time zones.

Other major activities that you may have noticed lately include our very successful CSCL in a Time of Crisis series and our very well-attended first ever ISLS Public Engagement Event where panelists shared some effective practices for engagement through social media. Be on the lookout for more CSCL webinars and another public engagement prior to the annual meeting. We have also transitioned to our new editor-in-chief team for the Journal of the Learning Sciences. Jianwei Zhang and Susan Jurow will continue to build upon the outstanding work that outgoing editors, Susan Yoon and Jan van Aalst, have done over the past five years. The reputation of the journal continues to be outstanding, and the scholarship that appears in JLS and our other highly-influential flagship journal, International Journal of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning, publicly demonstrates that the work produced within the ISLS community is pushing boundaries and advancing theory in generative ways. A number of other activities are afoot that will be exciting for many in our community and shared in due time.

As president, this is my second, and last, newsletter statement until my term ends at the conclusion of the ISLS Annual Meeting in June. This past year has tested us all in many ways. I know some of us have faced difficult losses. Many of us are just barely managing day-to-day in an atmosphere of total uncertainty with circumstances that feel far from fair. And we probably have all clicked Zoom links and said "You're on mute" to one another more times than we would have ever imagined. It has been and continues to be trying. At the same time, I think about the people I know in ISLS and am optimistic because of the amount of flexibility, resilience, and conviction I have seen and continue to see within our society. I see it in meetings (on Zoom), in email, through text messages, and on social media. I remain more convinced than ever before that ISLS is not only full of excellent scholars, but it is also overflowing with truly good people who not only want to produce good ideas but also want to actively work to make our world and are fields better. Even in these circumstances, there are great things happening in the professional world of the learning sciences, and I invite you to read more about them in the rest of this spring newsletter.

As a closing note, let me say that it has been and continues to be a privilege to serve our scholarly community. If there are matters you want to discuss, do not hesitate to reach out to me or to any member of the ISLS Board. Otherwise, I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our virtual conference playground in June. Until then, take care of yourselves, take care of your loved ones, and take care of one another. Remember to unmute yourself on Zoom. And please also remember to vote in our ISLS Board election that is currently underway.

-Victor R. Lee
2020-2021 ISLS President

ISLS 2021

Contributed by Nikol Rummel & Ulrich Hoppe



We are excited to share with you our program schedule of the ISLS Annual Meeting 2021, June 7-11. We organized the sessions so that people from around the world can participate both in scholarly sessions as well as social networking events enabling interaction across time zones.

The main conference program includes:

- First-class keynote speeches on highly relevant and central topics in our field.
- Multi-Track CSCL and LS live stream paper sessions, symposia and interactive demos over 4 conference days.
- Engaging live with poster presenters and their virtual poster exhibits before and during our poster sessions
- Networking opportunities with peers and leading researchers in the field during senior expert meet-ups, research speed-dating sessions, and theme-based discussions via a community board
- Breaks “Meet & Chill” with virtual meals, meditation, shared cooking etc.
- Social events promoting rich community experiences, virtual engagements incl. games; dance and everything else you love about conferences.
- Prestigious Best Paper Awards in three categories, including the “Naomi Miyake Award” for the Best Student Paper and a Best Poster Competition

Please note that the first day of the main conference is June 8.

Please register at: <https://2021.isls.org/registration/>

If you experience financial challenges, please request a fee waiver at:
<https://2021.isls.org/scholarships/>

More information can be found on our [Conference Website](#) and [Twitter](#).

We look forward to welcoming you in June!

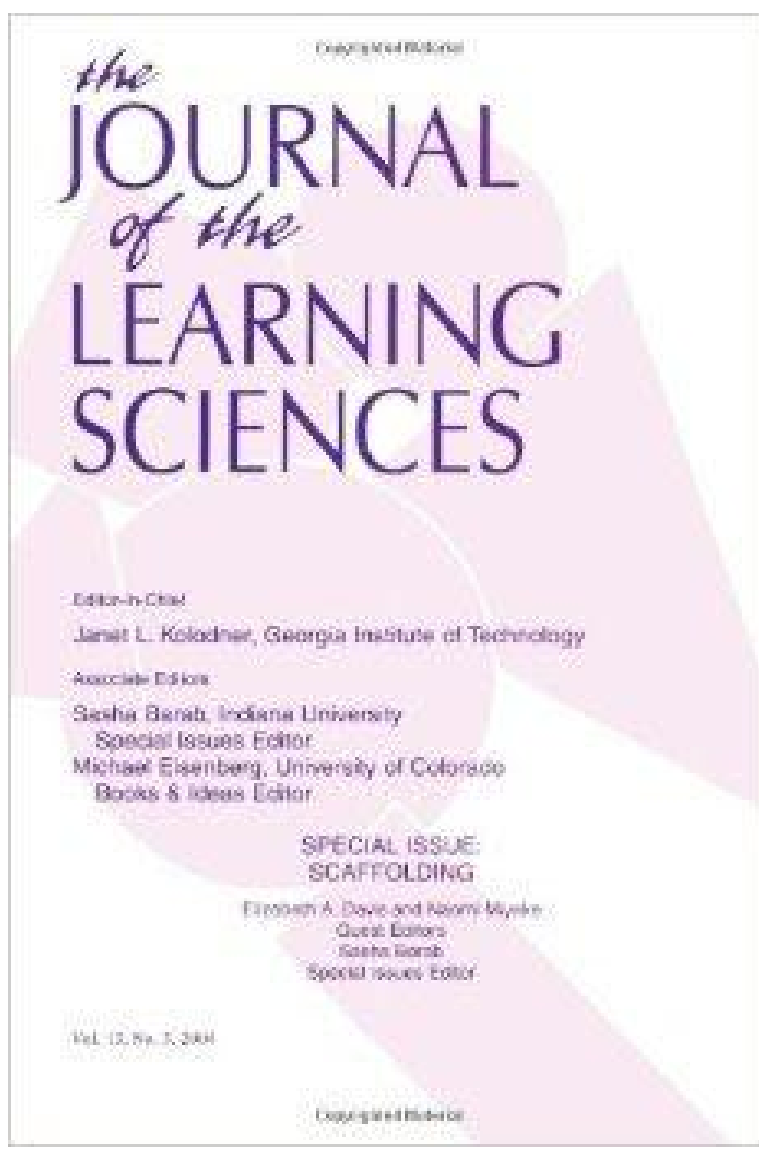
			Main Conference				
NY	Bocillon	Tokyo	Tuesday, June 8	Wednesday, June 9	Thursday, June 10	Friday, June 11	convenient for:
02:00 AM	08:00 AM	03:00 PM		Tracks with mini-breaks: - Paper Sessions (Long, Short) - Symposia - Interactive Tools & Demos			Africa, Asia & Europe
03:00 AM	09:00 AM	04:00 PM			Various Tracks (Meet the Editors...)	Meet & Chill	
04:00 AM	10:00 AM	05:00 PM			Meet & Chill	NAPLeS Open House	
05:00 AM	11:00 AM	06:00 PM			Keynote	Poster Session II	
06:00 AM	12:00 PM	07:00 PM		Keynote	Poster Session I	Keynote	Closing Session
07:00 AM	01:00 PM	08:00 PM		Reception		NAPLeS After Hour	all time zones
08:00 AM	02:00 PM	09:00 PM	Welcome & Opening				Africa, Americas & Europe
09:00 AM	03:00 PM	10:00 PM	Keynote	Poster Session I	Keynote	Closing Session	
10:00 AM	04:00 PM	11:00 PM	Reception			NAPLeS After Hour	
11:00 AM	05:00 PM	12:00 AM		Tracks with mini-breaks: - Paper Sessions (Long, Short) - Symposia - Interactive Tools & Demos			
12:00 PM	06:00 PM	01:00 AM			Poster Session III		
01:00 PM	07:00 PM	02:00 AM					
02:00 PM	08:00 PM	03:00 AM					
03:00 PM	09:00 PM	04:00 AM		ISLS 2021 Lounge	Social Event	Student Research Crossover Party	
04:00 PM	10:00 PM	05:00 AM					

Support the 2021 ISLS Annual Meeting

Several individuals have inquired about the possibility of making personal donations to support conference attendance for those who request it. Accordingly, we have set up a fund account called Annual Meeting Support Fund for those who wish to make such a donation (<https://www.isls.org/donate/>). Thanks for everyone's patience, support, and creativity as we work to maximize participation in the 2021 Annual Meeting.

Journal of the Learning Sciences

Contributed by Achey Susan Jurow & Jianwei Zhang



In January 2021, we - Dr. A. Susan Jurow (CU Boulder) and Dr. Jianwei Zhang (SUNY Albany) - started our role as the new co-editors-in-chief for the Journal of the Learning Sciences (JLS). On behalf of our editorial team, we thank the outgoing co-editors-in-chief, Dr. Susan Yoon and Dr. Jan van Aalst, for their productive leadership to advance JLS during their term. We are excited to expand upon the journal's standing in the field as a place for sharing creative research, new practices, and questions about learning and design.

A few areas where we are most excited to encourage scholarship include:

- Inquiries examining the intersection of equity and justice, learning, and, design;
- Studies and reflective pieces focused on consequential issues such as learning how to take collective action against climate change and racial injustice, which demand interdisciplinary perspectives; and,
- Methodological innovations that can expand how Learning Scientists are studying the cognitive, social, emotional, and ethical dimensions of learning and investigating social and technological interventions across scales.

As a way to commemorate JLS' 30th anniversary and envision its growth over the next decade, we invite Reports and Reflections papers that offer deliberate discussion of the conceptual and methodological development of the Learning Sciences and articulate new challenges. These papers might (a) consolidate "big ideas" related to critical research themes and envision future research agendas that synergize different dimensions of learning; (b) re-consider foundational concepts and design approaches in a new context; and/or, (c) present exploratory studies of new concepts, research methods, designs or technologies that are significant for the next generation of Learning Sciences scholarship.

We are also developing new strategies for encouraging contributions to JLS from around the globe (e.g., publishing abstracts in languages other than English, expanding our editorial board membership). Our aim is to seed and grow our conversations about learning and design in situ by increasing whose perspectives are included in the journal, what issues are represented as significant, and how.

You can find the reflective notes from the outgoing and the new editors in the new issue of JLS 30(1).

We welcome suggestions from our authors, readers, and reviewers on how to advance JLS. Please continue to submit articles and agree to review and follow JLS on Facebook and Twitter.

NAPLeS

Contributed by Daniel Sommerhof & Freydis Vogel

NAPLeS Research Topics abstracts

Thanks to the tremendous efforts from **Marcela Borge** and **Shulong Yan** from Penn State University, we can see a growing amount of informative and insightful abstracts for our collection of Research Topics: <https://www.isls.org/research-topics/>

All abstracts are processed through a peer review process organized by Marcela and Shulong. Beyond the original contributors to the contents of the research topics pages, we would like to thank the many ISLS members who have participated in this endeavour as abstract authors or reviewers. Some abstracts are still on their way being reviewed and revised. We are looking forward to seeing these pages growing further.

CSCL in a Time of Crisis webinar series – a collaboration between the CSCL Community Committee and NAPLeS

We are glad that the **CSCL Community Committee of ISLS** has approached NAPLeS to team up with them to carry out a webinar series about the contributions of CSCL research and practice for teaching and learning in the current time of crisis. The weekly series is already in its 10th instalment and has a wonderful audience participating in the live stream including presentations and Q & A interaction. The recordings are well received, too. You can find more information about the series on the webpage <https://www.isls.org/cscl-times-of-crisis-webinars/> and in the more detailed news published by the CSCL community.

ISLS Student Association

Contributed by Tuğçe Aldemir & Joey Huang

Cassia Fernandez from the University of São Paulo has joined ILSSA as a student representative of South America. Also, we are welcoming students to join our social media groups to stay connected: Twitter (@ISLS_ILSSA), Facebook group (@ISLS.ILSSA), and Slack workspace (isls-ilssa.slack.com).

Please let us know if you have any questions!

Education Committee

Contributed by Julia Ebeler and Crina Damsa

The Education Committee and ILSSA (students association) are planning a joint venture during the ISLS Annual Meeting 2021 that will involve a series of 'Chats and Coffee with Professors' mentoring opportunities. These will be informal meet-ups

between our junior colleagues (graduate students, postdoc researchers) and experienced researchers with the aim of helping rising scholars better understand how to build a research career, navigate the academic context, build academic networks, and manage work-life balance. We will organize two 30-minute, moderated group sessions, during fixed timeslots at the conference (scheduled with differences in time zones in mind) and one-to-one meet-ups for shorter 15-20 minute conversations. We invite the experienced colleagues in our community to express interest in participating in these conversations with junior researchers. You can still indicate whether you are willing and available to participate as a senior scholar by using the alternatives provided in this [survey](#).

Equity and Justice Committee

Contributed by Kris Gutiérrez and Shirin Vossoughi

The Equity and Justice Committee, a standing committee of the Society, has been meeting monthly to add specificity to its charge of supporting the Society's commitment to a justice orientation. Attending to issues of equity and justice in the Society's practices, communications, committees, and initiatives involves developing a dynamic and robust notion of equity that can serve as resource, as ISLS continues to move forward as a society that is expansive in its scholarship, inclusive in its membership and participation, and imaginative in its approach to design and change-making. As our work unfolds, the Committee has begun to define its role as pedagogical and its equity efforts as those which focus on processes and practices in the Society, rather than individual scholar's work. Here equity and justice are not add-ons but rather provide a lens to reflect on and examine existing norms and practices and the continued articulation of commitments that are responsive to social and historical conditions and can guide our work. This involves the ongoing generation of spaces for deep thinking and collective dialogue around these issues. More recently, the E&J Committee has begun to coordinate efforts with Professors Maxine McKinney de Royston and Leema Berland, co-chairs of the ad hoc Wallace Foundation Grant Committee, a new initiative of the Society that shares an equity focus through its conference scholarships, small grant awards, and speaker series. This initiative will create new opportunities to increase participation from underrepresented groups in terms of geography, scholarship, and race/ethnicity, for example. The E & J Committee also engages questions of equity and justice that emerge across a range of committees, thinking together to improve our work.

Silver Lessons of the Pandemic: Your Stories

It has been over a year since the pandemic erupted and daily life as we knew it came to a screeching halt. Since then, we have learned a lot about the virus, about our societies, and about ourselves. To capture some of this learning, the Communications Committee solicited inspiring and humorous stories for our limited-edition Silver Lessons of the Pandemic section of the this newsletter. We are honored and pleased to share a handful of them here and hope they make you smile.

Designated Audience and Edmond, the Furry Agent of Chaos

Contributed by Pantelis M. Papadopoulos

Having moved to the University of Twente during the pandemic, I knew that teaching online would be a challenge. No rapport with the students yet and no "feeling" of the academic culture in the new workplace. At least, the new apartment was finally furnished and I could do the online lectures from my dinner table/office desk instead of the stationary bike that I had been using until then for my meetings. First lecture starts with all students having their cameras and microphones closed. Despite my best efforts to engage students, most of the time it felt like talking to myself. I asked students to open their cameras, but they told me that audio was getting messy when too many people were using their cameras. Moving forward.

The day before the second lecture. Message to the students “Be camera-ready! A handful of you are going to be selected randomly to be my designated audience tomorrow! Cams and mics open during the lecture!”. Day of the second online lecture. Five students were randomly selected and I finally had an audience that I could see and hear. Audience feedback was finally back! My teaching felt better and at least the five people in the audience engaged with me. Some participation from the rest of the audience as well. The ice was cracked, but not broken yet. Until a furry tail appeared in one of the open cameras. Edmond, the playful Siberian cat of a student, probably missing other people as much as his owner, made an appearance! He immediately lightened the mood and shattered any traces of ice. In the next lecture, some students volunteered to be in the designated audience. Coincidentally with their pets in the frame! Teaching online became easier after that.

There's Nothing Wrong with Bringing your Mother to Computer Science Class: Electronic Textiles at Home

Contributed by Luis Morales-Navarro, Gayithri Jayathirtha, Yasmin B. Kafai, and Deborah A. Fields

“Tying knots is a big issue,” Mr. Gutierrez [1] said, acknowledging that he learned to sew only a couple of years ago. For him, introducing students to sewing circuits with conductive thread, in the electronic textiles unit of his computer science class, is always exciting and challenging. In previous years, he invited a seamstress from his community to help students with sewing. This year, he worried that when learning to sew, students could get lost without the just-in-time tangible peer and teacher support of an in-person classroom. However, looking to support students while learning at home, he reached out to parents and invited them to join their teenagers’ class on Zoom. A week later, eight mothers came to class. “It’s been really fun to have the moms next to them,” because it feels like a community, he reported. The story of Carlos, in particular, filled him with joy. This student had significant progress to make in his electronic textile project. After Mr. Gutierrez contacted Carlos’s mother, she came to class and helped with sewing. That day, for the first time in the unit, Carlos submitted an assignment: a picture of his sewn circuit. “The circuit board is kind of backwards, but it works! I had to message my coworkers because [...] that was just a really big moment,” Mr. Gutierrez said. He has found that the support students need is often available at home, even if parents don’t have experience with computer science or electronics. Just the other day, when another student said she didn’t know how to sew her circuit, he encouraged her, “do try sewing, get some help from a family member if you’re struggling [...] there’s nothing wrong with bringing your parents to class.” [1] Names in this vignette have been anonymized. This is part of a semester-long study on debugging electronic textiles in ten computer science high school classrooms.

Poetry DBR

Contributed by Kit Martin

The morning light shone through my window on the morning of March 25th, 2020. The dread of the pandemic had hit with all that force that it felt like being under the waves. I had one of those only in a pandemic thoughts: “oh, I am going through a lot right now, maybe I should write some of it down.” So, every morning until May, I wrote poems, poems about what was happening, what I was feeling, what I hope for, and what I fear. All told, it was about 200 hundred of them. I started advertising on instagram if anyone wanted a chapbook with some of them in it. I’d send it, and because some friends, and then friends of friends and then strangers started asking for a copy. I chose different poems for each person, and doodled on them as they came off my home printer. This was sort of a first iteration in a ‘poetry DBR’. Eventually, I got a list of 30 poems I really liked, and published the collection as “The Zen of Corona” I guess that’s like a second iteration. It was an odd, and rapid transfer of feeling, I’d never thought to write a book of poetry. I think a lot of us never thought of doing everything we did this past year. It’s been a year of change, trying on new things to make ends meet, and reflection. I am grateful for this community, and look forward to its next convening. Kit kindly shared one of his poems with us. The [entire collection](#) can be found on amazon.



THE FUTURE

So what happens when the capitalist machine turns back on?

I think we can all now better imagine what climate action would look like: the clear skies as our octane addiction has taken a hiatus allows the sun to shine.

I feel we can better see what open streets would be like. Kids and cars and bikes all roaming together like a village square.

I think more people may come to feel what isolation is like, and better empathize with those capitalism marginalizes.

I don't think of it as a machine, we will turn back on. Instead it's a fabric, and this has changed the very fibers that hold it together. Each change is small, but I think we'll feel the difference.

We have only shared a few of the wonderful entries we received; you can find the rest of them [here](#).