

November 05, 2021

26th Biannual ISLS Newsletter

by International Society of the Learning Sciences



26th Biannual Newsletter

Theme: Equity and Justice

Introduction to the newsletter

Welcome to our 26th Biannual ISLS Newsletter! Many of you kindly responded to the survey we (the Communication Committee) sent out last spring about our communication practices and had some wonderful suggestions and helpful critiques. We have begun to implement some of these in this communication venue. We changed the North-hemisphere centric (fall/spring) nomenclature of the newsletter. We are also trying to make the newsletter more thematic while still including all relevant updates. This newsletter is focused on Equity and Justice and includes several entries focused on this theme. In this issue we include two new types of contributions. The first is a tribute to Paulo Freire written by members of the Learning Science Brazil Affiliate Group, to commemorate Freire's inspiring scholarship and activism, as this year would have been his 100th birthday. The second is a current feature by Dr. Tugce Aldemir about Diversity/inclusion statements and the job market. We hope to use these current features to begin conversations in the community, so please do reach out to us with any commentary.

Yours truly and always listening,
ISLS Communications Committee.

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Statement from the President



In my first newsletter contribution as ISLS President I want to share transitions in Board members as well as several ongoing ISLS initiatives. These initiatives emanate from the Society's Committees as well as discussions among Board members.

Board Transitions. We welcome four ISLS members elected this past Spring to six-year terms of service (June, 2021 - June, 2027): Paulo Blikstein, Yotam Hod, Sahana Murthy, and Miwa Takeuchi. Thank you with deep appreciation for your past service to Jan van Aalst, Heisawn Jeong, and Jim Slotta who completed their elected terms of office this year.

Newsletter Reboot. The Communications Committee is making several exciting changes in format and content. First, each newsletter will be thematically organized beginning with the equity and justice focus of this newsletter. Second, featured topical issues and questions will be addressed by members of the ISLS community. The Equity and Justice theme of this issue seems particularly timely in light of ongoing ISLS efforts in this area, including programs supported by a 3-year grant from the Wallace Foundation. Many thanks to Victor Lee for securing this grant.

Emerging Scholars Grants Program. Leema Berland and Maxine McKinney de Royston are co-chairing a selection committee for these Wallace Foundation funded awards. The committee received 39 very strong applications, a very promising sign for the future of the learning sciences.

ISLS Annual Meeting 2022. Diversity, equity and justice are the theme for the ISLS Annual Meeting 2022, "International Collaboration toward Educational Innovation for All: Overarching Research, Development, and Practices." Organizers Jun Oshima, Toshio Mochizuki, and Yusuke Hayashi in collaboration with the program chairs for the ICLS conference and the CSCL conference have posted Calls for Submissions and the due date is just around the corner – November 19. A new format for the CSCL program this year is the "technology innovation paper," which will be reviewed with a focus on technology and computer science.

The meeting is being planned as a hybrid meeting with both online and onsite components. Nevertheless, there is uncertainty as to the final format of the conference given the ever shifting landscape of international travel and quarantining conditions. A final decision regarding the onsite meeting in Hiroshima will be made prior to conference registration opening sometime in February, 2022. We have learned a lot over the past two years, and we are very grateful that we can draw on the experiences of the very successful ISLS Annual Meeting 2021 run by the Bochum team as we proceed with the planning and execution of the 2022 ISLS Annual Meeting.

Financial Task Force. Since its incorporation in 2002, the ISLS has been funded by a two-tiered dues structure (non-student members, student members) with membership fees that have not changed. Conferences have been funded by registration fees. While this financial model has worked reasonably well for the past 20 years, there is a need to re-examine the financial model. This need arises due to increased management overhead and conference costs in combination with the Society's commitment to make membership and annual meeting attendance more financially accessible to all persons interested in the learning sciences. The Task Force will be exploring various proposals for broadening sources of income and support for ISLS activities at the same time as it cultivates growth and inclusiveness of members. The Task Force welcomes ideas from all members of the ISLS community.

-Oskar Lindwall
2021-2022 ISLS President

ISLS 2022

Contributed by Jun Oshima & Toshio Mochizuki

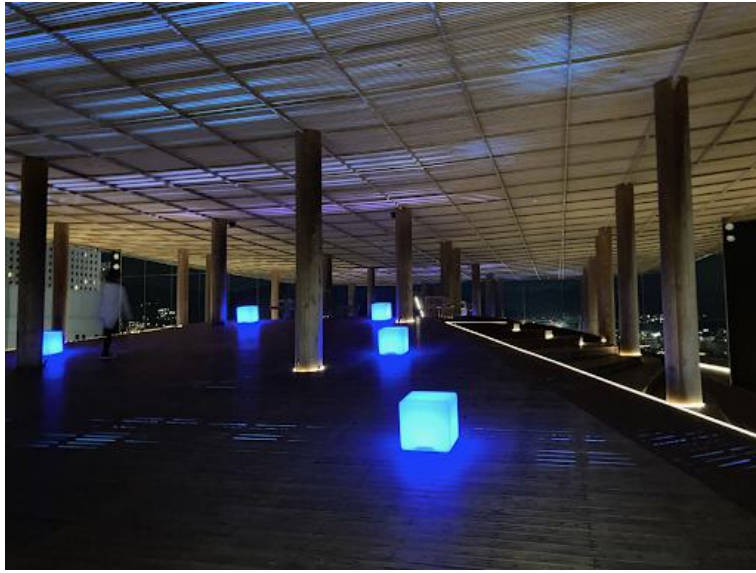
Center Hiroshima is located within the Peace Memorial Park. This place is popular for students to visit for their peace education. US president, Barack Obama, visited this place to attend the peace memorial ceremony. During the annual meeting, you can bring your lunch box outside to be relaxed on the bench!

The first two photos are the conference center's entrance, and some other photos around the site, such as the world heritage Atomic Bomb Dome and the Peace Memorial Park where students walk around for their field trip.





This picture is from the conference dinner venue. It is a rooftop bar at Orizuru center near the conference venue. The rooftop has a wood floor, and you can see the city around 360 degrees.



Equity and Justice Committee

Contributed by Shirin Vossoughi & Kris Gutiérrez

The ISLS Equity and Justice Committee charge was developed through a dialogic and iterative process both within the committee and with the larger ISLS Board. The charge is meant to be pedagogical, grounded in historicity and the enactment of possible futures. It is also a dynamic and evolving document that we hope will continue to grow. Please view the full charge [here](#).

Journal of the Learning Sciences

Contributed by Susan Jurow & Jianwei Zhang



Two special issues are brewing at the Journal of the Learning Sciences!

The first – *Learning in and through the arts*, – co-edited by Dr. Erica Halverson and Dr. Keith Sawyer will be published in early 2022. Authors are exploring how the study of arts-based ways of knowing, doing, and perceiving can contribute to our understanding of learning in all areas.

The second, edited by Dr. Antero Garcia and Dr. Nicole Mirra, is underway and is focused on *Designing for racial equity through speculative education*.

Both issues draw critical attention to new possibilities for design, designers, and our theories of learning. We're eager to engage with all of you about these ideas and where they might lead us as a field -- follow us on socials to read, comment, question, and share! @JrnlLearningSciences on Facebook and Twitter.

We will release another call for special issue proposals soon. If you want to develop a special issue with us, check out our [guidelines](#) and feel free to reach us – Dr. A. Susan Jurow and Dr. Jianwei Zhang (co Editors-in-Chief) at journalofthelarningsciences@gmail.com.

ijCSCL

Contributed by Sanna Järvelä & Carolyn Rosé

International Journal of Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (ijCSCL) has its first special issue in the editorial process. Lenka Schnaubert, University of Duisburg Essen and Freydis Vogel from University of Nottingham will be the guest editors in a special issue “Integrating collaboration scripts, group awareness, and self-regulation in computer-supported collaborative learning”. The special issue brings together international researchers from different research areas using various methodologies to study the intersection of SRL, collaboration scripts, and GA including respective tools in CSCL.

ISLS Student Association

Contributed by Laura Zeller

Student Writing Groups from ILSSA

The International Learning Sciences Student Association is hosting writing groups for students. Sessions will run monthly between November and June. The goal is to provide a comfortable space for students to enhance their writing skills. All students are welcome, regardless of ISLS membership, so if you know someone who would like to join, please let them know. The best way to get information is through the ILSSA twitter [@ISLS_ILSSA](#).

Keep an eye on twitter for when the first session will be; it will feature Mr. Noel Kuriakos (he/him) sharing reference and writing tools.

Communications Committee

Contributed by Irene-Angelica Chounta

On behalf of the Communications Committee, we are so excited to announce that in September 2021, we launched a new section on the ISLS website that features highlights (for example, keynotes and invited panels) from the Annual Meetings - starting from the ISLS Annual Meeting 2021! Currently, we host three keynotes - from Dr. Carolyn Rosé on “Interdisciplinarity as a Core Value and a Core Skill: Challenges and Opportunities for the Field of CSCL, from Dr. Carol K.K. Chan on “Knowledge Building and the Learning Sciences: Past, Present and the Future”, and from Dr. Onur Güntürkün on “Learning: How the Brain Sees it” - and the Presidential Invited Session “Celebrating Black Excellence in the Learning Sciences” organized and facilitated by the ISLS President for 2020-2021, Victor R. Lee. The new section can be accessed following the link: <https://www.isls.org/annual.../annual-meetings-highlights/>

To support communication, awareness, and outreach, we are additionally working towards establishing processes for sharing videos of recorded events and talks on a regular basis through the ISLS YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_HvFC6yeQ-gYavI49TSrwg).

Technology Committee

Contributed by Jim Slotta

Announcement of New Website Features!

Earlier this year, the technology committee completed development of the new ISLS Website, just in time to support the ISLS 2021 conference! Now up and running, we hope this website can serve the Society well and take advantage of its many new features. As our wider world finds a new normal of online interactions (e.g., teaching, meetings, conferences and workshops), we hope the website may find an important role within the networking, knowledge sharing, and practices of our Society. In addition to supporting membership and conference registration, journal access, and committee work, we have built new functionality to support special interest groups, which you can find available under the “Members” menu. Three types of groups have been defined: (1) Research Topic Workgroups (e.g., embodied learning, or Student Identity) can support resource sharing, discussions, and announcements of relevant events, and even photos; (2) Student Groups can support students from across the society who want to network around emergent topics, writing support or other activities; and (3) Research Labs provide an opportunity to showcase among our members the many research labs that constitute the work of our Society through activity feeds that allow other subscribed members to receive regular or digested updates, such as links or resources, or join their discussions. With opportunities to develop additional group types, we could conceive of mentorship groups for learning together, project groups for internally showcasing ongoing progress, or other undetermined possibilities. With options to “follow” members and subscribing to groups, you can receive notifications of activity across the Society. When browsing groups, you can either jump to view your personal groups or browse by group type to see focused lists of relevant groups. We are not sure how such community functionality will develop, but there is only one way to find out -- start using them! Members of the Society are free to join any public groups, form new (private or public) groups, and participate in building knowledge together!

Happy 100th Birthday, Paulo Freire

Contributed by Cassia Fernandez, Fabio Campos, Livia Macedo, Paulo Blikstein, Raquel Coelho, Tatiana Hochgreb

Paulo Freire’s foundational book, the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, is the 3rd most cited book in the social sciences--and the only author from the Global South in such lists. More than citations, Freire achieved something more important: changing how we think about education. His life was anything but typical: he spent his childhood in poverty, was jailed and exiled by a military dictatorship, helped countries (especially in Africa and Latin America) rethink their educational systems, was secretary of education of São Paulo (Brazil), and received honorary doctorates from more than 30 universities. His extraordinary life launched theories so influential that they get rediscovered every other decade. As early as the 1960s, he proposed that learners’ culture and lived experiences should be at the core of education, instead of simply depositing content in their heads (“banking education”). Based on these ideas, Freire created a revolutionary literacy program in the city of Angicos, Brazil, in which 300 adults learned how to read and write in a mere 40 hours. Freire insisted that reading “words” should be a door for adult workers to become conscious of the limiting situations and injustices they were faced with--and a tool

to take action to overcome them. The military government which took power months after the program's graduation deemed it "too subversive" and put Freire in prison. Not coincidentally, one of his main ideas is that education is inextricably political and a powerful instrument for oppression, especially when it teaches students to accept the world as it is. Instead, he proposes for schools to embrace the politics of education and strive against injustice, emancipating students to see that they can be agents of social change. In his words, "History is the time of possibility and not determinism, the future is not inexorable: the future is problematic."

Freire was not a traditional academic: his theories were deeply rooted in praxis, and not mere armchair exercises of critique. They were complex, subtle, and ever-evolving, developed in close contact with students and teachers, in real learning environments. Today, his foundational influence is everywhere: culturally-relevant/sustaining learning, justice-oriented education, and critical pedagogy. On September 19th 2021, he would have turned 100: Happy birthday, and thank you, Paulo Freire!

Learning Science Brazil Affiliate Group (<https://www.cienciasdaaprendizagem.org>)

To be or not to be: Diversity/Inclusion Statements in the Academic Job Market

Contributed by Tugce Aldemir & Ravit Duncan

The academic job market — can be a nerve-racking experience for both candidates and search committees given the multiple, and often competing, facets that both candidates and search committees need to consider when making their decisions. Among these are equity and inclusion-related practices and expectations. While prevalent in institutional mission statements, and featured in most job descriptions, this is a rather illusive element in preparation for the job market. What considerations regarding equity and inclusion-related practices do search committees employ during the hiring processes? What are their expectations around these issues from the candidates? These and related questions need further critical discussions where both parties—i.e., candidates and search committees—voice their side of the story. Aiming to initiate such discussions in the ISLS community, we talked to three candidates who have recently taken an academic job and three members who have served on search committees (often multiple times) from the USA, Canada, and Australia. In this short feature, we summarize some of the main themes that emerged from our conversations.

The most salient equity and inclusion-related practice in the academic job market is the diversity/inclusion statement. Even though it is not the *sine qua non* of the job applications, as opposed to other required documents (e.g., cover letters), less than half of the academic job calls, according to our conversations with the three successful candidates, required a diversity/inclusion statement. Whether it should be a requirement for academic job applications was an issue of controversy across our interviewees. Those supporting the need for diversity/inclusion statements underlined their role in ensuring inclusive hiring processes, and some found the lack of such a requirement troubling.

Those opposed to requiring diversity/inclusion statements argued that, in their experience, search committees overlook it, compared to the other documents (e.g., cover letter, CV). "*I honestly don't think that the hiring committees care about them,*" one of our candidate-interviewees lamented. This sentiment was also supported by some of our interviewees who served on search committees and who noted that relevant expertise is a key consideration often outranking others, and that "*...the more criteria we put in there, the more boundaries... [it creates]*". Despite some divergent views, all our interviewees agreed that it is very challenging to evaluate such statements. This sentiment surfaces an apparent lack of transparency in

evaluation procedure and criteria; Fodder for further discussion in our community.

As part of our process we compiled some tips, from our interviewees, that offer some guidance regarding inclusion/diversity statements for both sides.

For Candidates:

- Regardless of where this might appear, it is a good idea to explicitly connect diversity, inclusion, and equity practices with one's scholarship and teaching, e.g., pointing to the implications of one's scholarly work for diversity, inclusion, equity issues;
- Aligning one's diversity, inclusion, and equity practices with the institution's policies, initiatives, and stances around these issues;
- Ensuring consistency across different application documents, e.g., plans for how to address the needs of diverse students in class in diversity/inclusions statement also should be referenced in teaching statement;
- Providing concrete action plans regarding how to support students from diverse backgrounds with diverse needs and how to do research with and about them;
- Clearly defining what equity, inclusion, and diversity mean to you. These terms are bandied about and hold different meanings to different people, be clear about where you stand;
- Reflecting on one's positioning and perspective and how those impact practices and plans regarding issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Taking an intersectional lens to this internal and external work— i.e., diversity comes in many shapes.

For Search Committees:

- Specifying university/department/program practices and plans around diversity, inclusion, and equity to give an idea regarding the stance and values about these issues;
- Being transparent, as much as possible, regarding the expectations from the candidates for diversity, inclusion, and equity practices and goals. As well as how these are evaluated in applications and later on the job.

To sum up, we aimed to begin a conversation among ISLS membership around the issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion in the academic job market, and here, we mainly focused on one facet of the topic: the diversity/inclusion statement practices and recommendations. Let's continue the conversation --we would like to hear from you about these issues! Email us if you would like to respond to this feature.

Thanks to the valuable contributions of (in alphabetic order):

Camille Dickson-Deane, Ph.D., University of Technology Sydney, Australia

Christopher Ostrowdun, Ph.D., Mount Royal University, Canada

Joshua Danish, Ph.D., Indiana University in Bloomington, USA

Lisa Breman Giacumo, Ph.D., Boise State University, USA

Noah Glaser, Ph.D., Old Dominion University, USA

Shu Long Yan, Ph.D., Boston College, USA