

December 12, 2022

28th Biannual ISLS Newsletter

by International Society of the Learning Sciences



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Introduction to the newsletter

Welcome to our 28th Biannual ISLS Newsletter! This newsletter covers updates from...

President's Address

ISLS 2023 Conference

Journal of the Learning Sciences

Publications Committee

Equity & Justice Committee

Yours truly and always listening,
ISLS Communications Committee.

President's Address

Contributed by Joshua Danish



The last several years have brought a great deal of upheaval and change to both the world around us and to our professional society. My hope is that the ongoing efforts we have made as a society will help us emerge from this period as a stronger, more diverse, and more integrated community.

The most prominent of these changes have to do with our society's conferences. We have embraced the full potential of having a single annual meeting that brings our whole society together by integrating both of our prior conferences (ICLS and CSCL) into a single annual meeting so that people can move across and between these venues. We have also moved online, due to the pandemic, and then back again in 2023 to a face-to-face meeting in Montreal, where I very much look forward to seeing many of you in person again. However, I am also mindful of how a return to in-person meetings will exclude some of our colleagues and friends despite our best efforts. Fortunately, we have some brilliant colleagues thinking about how we can look toward the future of conferences, meetings, and community in new and more inclusive ways.

As I have reflected on the last few years both individually, and with my wonderful colleagues on the Board, Executive Committee, and the Equity and Justice Committee, I am also reminded of the many ongoing conversations that acknowledge what we have done, and how much more we need to do, to be a truly inclusive and supportive society. Some of these conversations have been ongoing for years but are only now becoming more public; others are prompted by more recent events. Either way, I value our shared commitment to expanding the Learning Sciences community, in terms of our membership, and in terms of the scholarship that we share and value, and in terms of our quality experience as members of the society. I want to make particularly sure that we look inwards during this process, making this a safe space for our current members as well as potential new members as we continue to expand. I am therefore excited that we have a new Equity Learning task force that emerged after last summer, which is now exploring how we can all learn together as a society to be more inclusive. We've also been talking increasingly about the truly international character of our society, with an eye to supporting equity within and across vastly different contexts.

As I work with colleagues on these committees, I have also reflected on what my

role is as the president of the society. For me, supporting our joint efforts means thinking continuously about who is present, who is absent or excluded, who speaks, and who is silent or may be silenced. I would like to think with you about how we can all learn to be more inclusive, how we can better recognize our complicity in these moments of exclusion and silencing, and what we can do to lift up our peers and colleagues. I believe we can create a space both in-person and virtual that invites equitable participation from colleagues regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, country of origin, or theoretical framework. We can embrace our differences, continue to learn from each other, and help the Learning Sciences reach its true potential as a field. I hope you will all join me in this effort not just for the next year, but for many years to come.

ISLS 2023

Contributed by Liz Charles

The local organizing committee and the Program Committees co-chairs (Crina Damsa, Marcela Borge, Elizabeth Koh, Marcelo Worsley, Paulo Blikstein, Rita Kizito, Karen Brennan, Jan van Aalst) for the 3rd Annual Meeting of the ISLS have been working hard to generate many innovations to make our conference more inclusive and diverse. As a start, we have assembled a small group from our community, including local Montrealers, to form an Accessibility & Inclusion (A&I) Advisory team. To date, the team includes J^rène Rahm (Université de Montréal), Jennifer Vadeboncoeur (University of British Columbia) and Catherine Fichten (Dawson College, McGill University, Adaptech); and, we hope to add a volunteer from the ISLS Equity and Justice Committee (see below for brief bios). The purpose of the A&I Advisory team is to support the organizing committee's efforts to foster broader participation of members from marginalized communities in terms of both identity and research. For example, we wish to raise awareness of issues related to planning for participants with disabilities and moving forward the bigger goals of increasing inclusive processes and practices at this year's event.

At the same time, both CSCL and ICLS Program Committees co-chairs have been creating new guides for reviewers, refining review templates, preparing webinars for prospective authors and for reviewers, in consultation with the A&I advisory team to make sure these new initiatives get ample feedback from our community. We also acknowledge the efforts at inclusive practices at the annual event started with the 2022 organizing committee and the ISLS Financial Task Force. They increased access to the annual event by developing a sliding scale for registration fees that lowered the financial cost for participants from middle and low income countries. We commend them and will continue this practice even as we return to an in-person event.

Below are brief bios from the A&I Advisory team members.

[J^rène Rahm](#) is an Educational Psychologist and Full Professor at the Université de Montréal, Canada. She brings a cultural perspective to children and youths' learning and identity development in science at the intersection of formal and informal education. Through multi-sited and longitudinal studies grounded in sociocultural and critical theory, driven by a space-time lens, she explores marginalized youths' complex navigations of community organizations, gardens, and other educational venues, driven by future aspirations of becoming somebody. That interest led her to document counter-spaces and educational pathways driven by equity and social justice with ethnically diverse urban youth as well as with indigenous youth and their communities. She currently explores youth-voice driven methodologies attending to relations and the more than human as well as the embodied and affective. She is the author of [Science in the Making at the Margin](#) and co-author of [Putting Theory into Practice](#), both published by Brill.

[Jennifer Vadeboncoeur](#), Professor, in Education & Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, University of British Columbia (UBC), and the Area Coordinator for the Human Development, Learning, and Culture program. Her work builds from

critical ethnographic research in Canada, Australia and the United States with young people and teachers in alternative programs examining the ways in which they can both become safe spaces and perpetuate inequity.

[Catherine Fichten](#) from Dawson College & McGill University, co-director of the [Adaptech Research Network](#) (ARN). Adaptech Research Network (ARN) was formed in 1996 and based at Dawson College in Montreal. It conducts research in both official languages (English and French) with college and university students with a variety of disabilities in Canada. Their goal is to provide empirically based information to assist and inform decision making that ensures that new policies and new information and communication technologies reflect the needs and concerns of a variety of stakeholders including students with a variety of disabilities, professors, campus advisors.

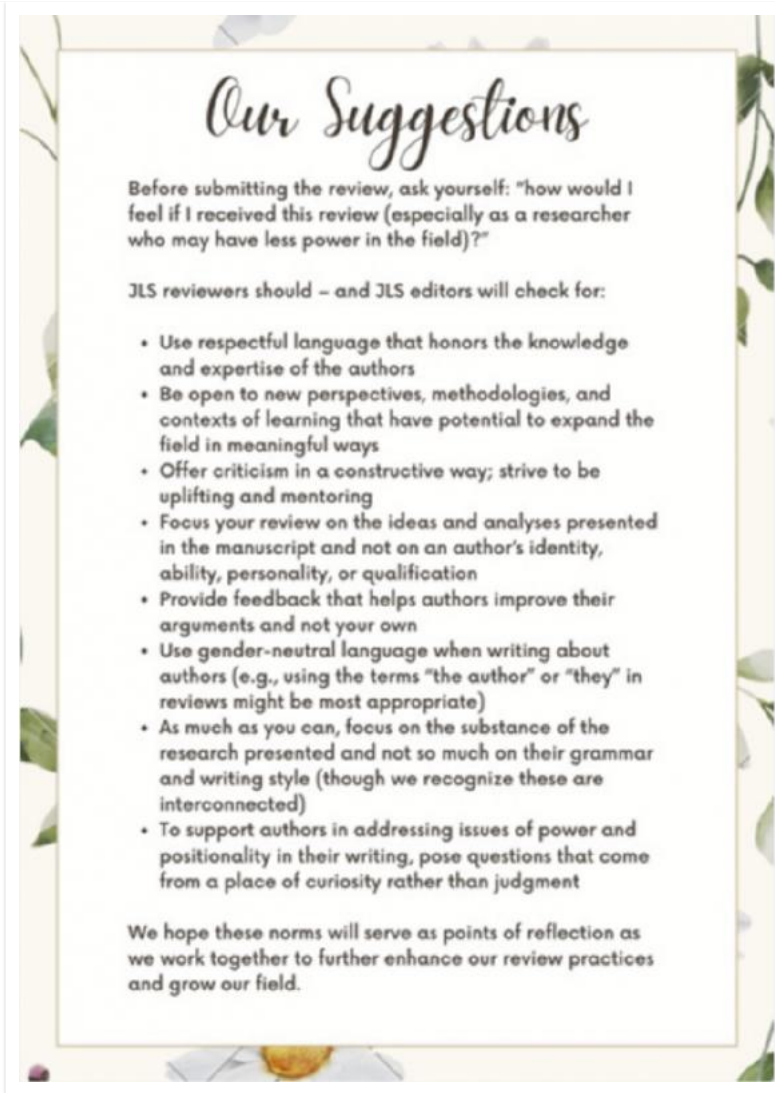
Journal of the Learning Sciences

Contributed by A. Susan Jurow & Jianwei Zhang

1. JLS Norms for Peer Review

JLS is committed to providing respectful and constructive reviews to all our submitting authors. With input from the JLS Editorial Board and the ISLS Publications and Equity & Justice Committees, we developed a set of norms for writing reviews (see <https://www.isls.org/journals/jls/jls-norms-for-peer-review/>). We hope that these norms will serve as resource to guide and enhance our peer-review practices.

We would like to thank all our reviewers for their time and intellectual energy devoted to writing detailed, rigorous, and supportive reviews. We welcome first-time JLS reviewers (including new doctoral graduates) to volunteer as ad hoc reviewers. If you are interested to review for JLS, please contact us at journalofthelarningsciences@gmail.com.



2. JLS Special Issues

We recently released a new call for special issue proposals (see [link](#)). 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 journalofthelearningsciences@gmail.com.

Special issues are an important way to expand the field of the learning sciences through engaging in new theory building, the development of methodological innovations, and/or sharing empirical analyses of under-investigated learning processes and contexts.

If you want to learn more about our most recent special issue on Learning in and Through the Arts co-edited by Dr. Erica Halverson and Dr. Keith Sawyer, check out our Webinar hosted in June 2022. You can watch the recording on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnKy_TGGNj0.

We also have two exciting special issues underway:

- 2023 Special Issue: Designing for racial equity through speculative education (co-edited by Drs. Antero Garcia and Nicole Mirra)
- 2024 Special Issue: Researching the Ecologies of Interdisciplinary Learning (co-edited by Drs. Lina Markauskaite, Baruch Schwarz, Crina Damşa, and Hanni Muukkonen).

We hope these issues inspire and engage you!

Publications Committee

Contributed by Irene-Angelica Chounta

The Publications Committee had a change in leadership and is now co-chaired by Anna Keune (Germany) and David Stroupe (USA). We are sending our deep appreciation to Sherice Clarke, long-term chair and later co-chair of the Publication Committee, who is now co-chairing the Equity & Justice Committee.

The Publications Committee is soliciting new members for their regular initiatives and task circles. We are especially interested in members who can commit to taking an active role in the committee, including joining regular committee calls and signing up for particular action items. If you are interested in joining and learning more about the committee, please contact Anna Keune and David Stroupe. We are looking forward to hearing from you!

The Publications Committee develops editorial and publications policies, maintains the [ISLS Publications FAQ](#), and provides copyright permissions for ISLS conference proceedings. The committee is also involved in a number of ad-hoc tasks circles that we will announce soon.

Equity & Justice Committee

Contributed by Ravit Duncan

The Equity and Justice Committee is continuing its efforts to educate, support, and transform our society towards a more equitable and just future. “To this end we understand equity not as an add-on, but as requiring ongoing reflection and examination of existing norms and practices, and the development of commitments that can guide the work of the Society.” (Committee Charge).

Last year the committee engaged in the thoughtful and critical work of developing the charge and establishing subcommittees to begin addressing different dimensions of the E&J charge. We want to whole heartedly thank the outgoing co-chairs Kris Gutiérrez and Shirin Vossoughi for their unwavering leadership and care in setting the vision and bedrock for the ongoing work of the E&J Committee. With these foundations in place the new co-chairs- Sherice Clarke and Ravit Duncan, are honored and enthusiastic to continue this important work as promised: ” As part of its charge, the Equity & Justice Committee will assist ISLS in fulfilling these commitments, supporting the Society in all engagements with the scholars, communities and broader publics with whom we work. The Committee will work with all other ISLS Committees to identify and address specific issues related to diverse representation, the systemic marginalization or erasure of particular voices, and equitable community practices, including membership and participation. This includes working to address ongoing barriers to participation such as inequities in publishing and reviewing processes, language barriers, and access to resources to participate in conferences, among others. The committee will also help provide tools and resources that aid this work, and initiate programs that create learning opportunities for the field” (Committee’s charge statement).

Our efforts this year are focused on three interrelated and synergistic areas:

- **Perspectives:** Leading the efforts associate with the Wallace Foundation grant, we are planning a speaker series that will help us understand equity issues and perspectives from around the globe. The aim is to broaden our understanding of these issues and how they manifest across diverse contexts- historically, socially, politically, and culturally.
- **Barriers to participation:** In close collaboration with the ISLS2023 Local Organizing Committee (LOC) and the recently established Access and Inclusion Advisory Team, we are working to identify and address some of the pernicious barriers to participation in terms of ability to attend and fully participate in the meeting. This is part of a larger and long-view process through the ChangeLab convenings and discussions, also spearheaded by

the LOC. We hope that handful of solutions will be put in the place for this year's meeting and that many others can be instituted over the course of the next few meetings in upcoming years.

- **Education:** In close collaboration with the newly minted EquityLearning Task Force led by Dr. Kimberley Gomez, we are working on opening channels for discourse that will support ISLS members to educate us about the difficulties and marginalization they experience and for us, in turn, to educate the broader ISLS community. There are many varied definitions of equity and diversity, and different ways in which power and privilege play out across sociopolitical contexts. Having brave and productive conversations about these is key to our education efforts and critical to any change making.

We share our intents and efforts through the Newsletter venue to help make them visible and transparent. We recognize that change takes time and needs to be deliberate, consistent, and constant. Some hard -earned progress has been made over the past few years in our society and our aim is to keep this forward motion going; we know it is slow but we aim to keep it steady.