



SALSA NEWS

Supporting the Advancement of Learning Stories in America

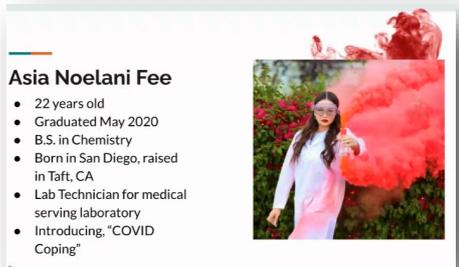
2nd Annual National Learning Stories Conference a Great Success!

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More than 300 registrants from six different countries attended the second annual – and first virtual – Learning Stories Conference held on Saturday October 3, 2020. The conference theme, “Reclaiming Voices of Equity and Diversity in Early Care and Education,” included breakout sessions and a delightful keynote address by Wendy Lee, co-author of *Learning Stories in Practice* and Director of the Educational Leadership Project in New Zealand.

The SALSA Board would like to offer its heartfelt thanks to Wendy Lee and her colleagues at the Educational Leadership Project, the staff of our sponsor and partner Educa, and the many early learning professionals who gave their time and expertise for this event. Also, the board would like to announce that it has voted to hold a virtual conference annually, so please watch for more information to come in this newsletter and through our listserv.



Above right is a screenshot from one of the conference presentations.

Get Involved Now with the 2021 Learning Stories Conference

As you may know, the 3rd Annual Learning Stories Conference will be held on June 24-25, 2021 in Seattle, WA (Duwamish Territory) hosted by Hilltop Children’s Center and Educator Institute.

The conference theme is *“The System Wasn’t Built for Us: Challenging and Confronting Injustices in ECE.”*

Mark your calendars! Or better yet... apply to be a presenter! The conference organizers are looking for presenters and facilitators, especially BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) presenters and facilitators to share their story with the world! Applications to speak are now open at <https://hilltopcc.com/institute/lsc21/> for all the info or skip straight to “Request for Proposals” form. Anyone can apply. Please share with your friends, colleagues, communities, and networks to help spread the word.

Not a fan of public speaking? How about supporting the conference with a sponsorship or donation? The hosts want to make this conference **FREE** for everyone. If your organization, community, or colleagues would like to be an official sponsor, check out this [Sponsorship Proposal Form](#). We also accept individual contributions.

Any questions? Contact Mike (he/him) from Hilltop at institute@hilltopcc.org

Please also see the article Mike Browne has written on this topic, “The System Wasn’t Built for Us: Confronting and Challenging Injustice in the ECE System” at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IS8jpDqh1ZxzODILrKpl0s680tFw6bLS/view?usp=sharing>

Mike is the Senior Community Engagement Officer at Hilltop Children’s Center and Educator Institute.

Mission

SALSA, Supporting the Advancement of Learning Stories in America, advocates for the Learning Stories approach that enhances intentional teaching, reflective practices, and advances equity and diversity by acknowledging early childhood educators, families, and children as both learners and teachers.

Vision

SALSA represents children’s learning with integrity and respect, recognizing their individual value and competencies. We advance Learning Stories in the United States as an authentic narrative approach to bring joy into teachers’ work of documentation, observation, and assessment.

Board of Directors

Regan Bynder, Chris Carducci, Isauro M. Escamilla, Jeannette Mulhern, Lorena Ramos, Lindsey Shafer, Joyce Stone, and Annie White.

Profile of a SALSA Board Member: Isauro M. Escamilla, Vice-president



- **How and when did you first become involved with Learning Stories?** I first learned about the Learning Stories philosophy on a study trip to New Zealand in the spring of 2017 facilitated by Eliana Elias and Margie Carter. Later that summer I met Dr. Annie White, who was leading a presentation on Learning Stories at the NAEYC Professional Learning Institute in San Francisco.
- **What makes Learning Stories such a compelling choice for assessing children's learning?** Learning Stories is much more than an educational approach or a pedagogical strategy. It is a philosophy that permeates all aspects of education in the classroom, the school, the family and the community. Learning Stories, as an educational philosophy, offer educators a strength-based lens through which we see children, families, and even ourselves as competent and always learning and improving.
- **What is your current professional position: your title and responsibilities?** Currently, I teach in a dual language classroom preschool class in the San Francisco Unified School District. This semester I am a Graduate Assistant in a graduate class on Early Childhood Education in International Contexts and next semester, I'll be Adjunct Faculty at San Francisco State University. I am also a doctoral candidate in the Ed.D in Educational Leadership program at San Francisco State University.
- **How do you incorporate the use of Learning Stories in your daily work?** Learning Stories have given me and my co-teachers an incentive to reconceptualize the role of early childhood educators. We have become more aware of what children do, say, dream, and hope. We have learned that children are constantly learning, finding solutions, creating, improvising and improving.
- **What can early learning educators do to help promote Learning Stories?** Perhaps they can find out more about the power of story, narrative and inquiry to change the prevalent approach that looks at children's learning as compartmentalized and easily quantified or measured by a number, percentage or rating.
- **Is there anything else you would like our readers to know?** We are indebted to Margaret Carr, Wendy Lee, Brenda Soutar, Linda Michell, and all the early childhood educators in New Zealand who, in the last two decades, have refined the use of Learning Stories in their classrooms. I would encourage educators to give it a try and tell a story of your classroom and your students.

Note: Space considerations prohibited publishing the full profile of Isauro Escamilla; to access it please go to:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T9-eX3dfzGKEKU1ms9MMB0eO8AT-lveB/view?usp=sharing>

SALSA News Briefs

Inquiry Groups Going Strong

The SALSA Online Learning Stories Inquiry Group is starting its second year! The group typically meets monthly via Zoom, and currently has ten members living in four different time zones. Members comprise an eclectic learning community of early educators including teachers, directors, parents and students; each person joined the group with different levels of familiarity and understanding of Learning Stories. Some meetings employ a set formal protocol to practice skills of intentional inquiry, while other meetings use a more informal process of emergent discussion. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Dr. Chris Carducci at ccarducci@gmail.com. Below are comments from two members.

Nathan Johnston, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: I gain so much from seeing what the other group members are doing and exploring our questions together. Participating in the group has helped me understand that I am doing more with Learning Stories than I thought. So far, I have come to most group meetings feeling like I have nothing to offer, but then a question comes up and I find that I have developed a strategy to help my teachers address similar issues. As an administrator I am not involved as the primary writer of Learning Stories, but I did get to share my personal story.

Vasudha Chaobal, Dublin, CA: The characteristics that resonated with me were attention to detail, actively listening, responding properly and promptly along with capturing the surprising, disbelief, the joy of watching the child succeed in their journey, milestones or memories. Similarly, just as a time capsule addresses an individual in the form of a letter or journal and after a few days, years or months, the individual reflects on their finds, the inquiry group has a positive impact on me. It is a reflection piece of myself and others.

New Book on Learning Stories Coming Soon

Two members of the SALSA Board of Directors, Isauro M. Escamilla and Dr. Annie White, are co-authors of a new book coming out next year. *Learning Stories & Teacher Inquiry Groups: Re-Imagining Teaching & Assessment in Early Childhood Education*, published by NAEYC, is also co-authored by Dr. Linda R. Kroll and Dr. Daniel Meier, and focuses on how ECE practitioners can establish teacher inquiry and reflection groups, and integrate the use of Learning Stories to strengthen assessment, teaching practices, and knowledge of child development. It will be available at naeyc.org/store

For More Information... The Editor would like to thank all of the contributors to this newsletter.

If you are interested in receiving more information about SALSA, upcoming events, or any of the items mentioned in this newsletter, please email us: SALSA.USA10@gmail.com or visit our website: www.salsa-global.org