



# THE POWER OF NARRATIVE STORY

## Strengthening Our Learning and Teaching Communities



### Dr. Annie White

Associate Professor,  
Early Childhood Studies,  
California State University  
Channel Islands



### Wendy Lee

Director of the Educational  
Leadership Project,  
Aotearoa, New Zealand

### Teacher inquiry and Learning Stories: A site for pedagogical change

How documentation of formative assessment has the capacity to engage and strengthen teacher inquiry and enhance pedagogical practice in an early childhood setting.

### My Story

A four year interdisciplinary research project between a university's Early Childhood Studies, Art, Performing Arts, Theatre, and Clay/Sculpture programs.

### Mentoring Stories

How to use Learning Stories to strengthen relationships between mentors, university supervisors, and university pre-service teachers.

Thursday 24 November  
2:30 - 6:00pm

Copthorne Hotel, Palmerston North

\$50.00 per person

Early-bird price until 21 October

*Afternoon tea provided*

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## **Teacher inquiry and Learning Stories: A site for pedagogical change**

Presented by Wendy Lee, Director of the Educational Leadership Project, Aotearoa, New Zealand

Wendy will share how documentation of formative assessment has the capacity to engage and strengthen teacher inquiry and enhance pedagogical practice in an early childhood setting. Learning Stories provides the platform to explore pedagogy and recognises that teaching is fundamentally inquiry in the domain of human attention and awareness (Mason 2002). Teachers' reflections on the children's learning and the teachers' learning as a consequence of this illustrate how inquiry and documentation makes a powerful contribution to both strengthening teacher practice and enhancing pedagogical practice. Workable strategies for teachers, developed from assessment data, can construct opportunities for inquiry that recognise the learning journeys of both teachers' and children. This creates powerful changes in pedagogy.

### **My Story**

Presented by Dr. Annie White, Associate Professor, Early Childhood Studies, California State University Channel Islands

Annie will share this qualitative case study, which examined a four year interdisciplinary research project between a university's Early Childhood Studies, Art, Performing Arts, Theatre, and Clay/Sculpture programs.

Building on the work of Learning Stories (Carr & Lee, 2012; 2019), this study examined an adaptation of this approach referred to as My Stories, a process where students identify and share their social and cultural identities through narrative stories, visual art, clay and sculpture, improvisation, and interpretive dance modalities. The project focused on this interdisciplinary narrative approach on diverse students' multiple learner identities and its impact on interactions and relationships, and the theoretical framework of Funds of Identity.

### **Mentoring Stories**

Presented by Dr. Annie White, Associate Professor, Early Childhood Studies, California State University Channel Islands

At California State University Channel Islands, the Early Childhood Studies program uses Learning Stories to strengthen relationships between mentors, university supervisors, and university pre-service teachers. In addition to writing Learning Stories to young children, university student teachers' write Learning Stories to their mentor teachers where they are assigned to centres located in the local community where they complete practicum student teaching.

Learning Stories are being used as a tool for professional development, formative assessment of student field teaching experience and learning, and strengthens relationships among adult learners. In a community of practice, pre-service teachers learn to write Learning Stories in the classroom settings with young children, and in addition, have found this approach a powerful self-reflection tool that can be used for mentoring, coaching and professional development that supports reciprocal life-long learning

## About the presenters:

### Dr. Annie White

Associate Professor, Early Childhood Studies, California State University Channel Islands

Dr. Annie White is an Associate Professor with the Early Childhood Studies program at California State University Channel Islands where she teaches early childhood courses. She is part of an innovative program where Learning Stories are used as the primary assessment approach in all of the early childhood curriculum and assessment courses. Dr. White is passionate about Learning Stories and incorporates the formative assessment approach in all of her University courses including student practicum, students write to mentor teachers, families and community educators, student own learner identity through "My Story", interdisciplinary courses, study abroad, and as part of community service learning.

Dr. White has conducted research in the USA on Learning Stories with Head Start programs, homeless shelter child care centers, infant and toddler programs, and diverse family child care homes. Her Learning Stories research findings is having a positive impact, influencing policy and assessment practices in the United States.

Dr. White's research interest include how Learning Stories transform relationships, strengthen family engagement, and provide a new pathway to address the pressures early childhood teachers are facing across California and the USA with the increased required use of standardized assessments. Dr. White's current research focuses on Learning Stories written to adults that celebrates the journey as lifelong learners.

Dr. White has participated on multiple study tours in New Zealand, including two Learning Stories Intensive studies with Wendy Lee and the Educational Leadership Project. Dr. White is a scholar practitioner, and holds a doctorate in Leadership in Education from University of California, Davis and Sonoma State University.

Dr. Annie White lives in northern California with her husband and granddaughter. She also lives in southern California and has a University "family" who support her passionate work with Learning Stories.

### Wendy Lee Bio

Director, Educational Leadership Project, Aotearoa New Zealand

Wendy Lee is the director of ELP Ltd, which provides professional learning opportunities for teachers in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector in New Zealand. Over the past two decades, her team has provided professional learning for kaiako/teachers interested in the application of Learning Stories in many other countries including England, Germany, the USA and especially China.

Wendy started her career as a kindergarten teacher and was then a head teacher before becoming a lecturer in ECE at the North Shore Teachers Training College, Auckland. Later, she was a manager at the Waikato Kindergarten Association before leaving to form her own company, providing professional support for all teachers in the New Zealand ECE sector.

Her passion for ECE resulted in her becoming national Union President of the Kindergarten Teachers Association and then, as a mother, her strong advocacy for the role of mothers and children in society lead to community work and ultimately to her role as a City Councillor for the Rotorua District Council.

Wendy's strong belief in life-long education, social equity and the key role of the ECE sector in achieving this, lead to her increasing collaboration with Professor Margaret Carr over a range of ECE research projects emanating from Te Whāriki. These included co-directorship of the National ECE Assessment and Learning Exemplar project resulting in the Kei Tua o the Pae books on assessment. More recently she has assisted Margaret in the co-authorship of several books on Learning Stories. Her determination to provide all ECE kaiako with practical tools that are deeply embedded in the principles of the Whāriki is reflected in the development and application of Learning Stories for both assessment and professional learning. This focus has resulted in a growing, global interest in the application and adoption of Learning Stories not only in ECE but across the school sector as teachers grapple with the complexity of children's learning.