

Instructionally Related Activities Report Form

SPONSOR: Dr. Annie White
PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT: Early Childhood Studies
ACTIVITY TITLE: National Learning Stories Conference
DATE (S) OF ACTIVITY: May 4, 2019

Please submit via email to the IRA Coordinator along with any supporting documentation at david.daniels@csuci.edu within 30 days after the activity.
Thank you for your commitment to engaging our students!

A. ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

(1) PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY;

This activity funded California State University Channel Islands (CI) students to be able to attend the 2019 National Learning Stories Conference. IRA funds covered cost for student conference registration and bus rental to transport students to the conference in Costa Mesa, CA. CI students gained knowledge from attending the first National Learning Stories conference which featured workshops provided by CI students and faculty, including international leading experts on Learning Stories. The National Learning Stories conference topics were on Learning Stories which is NZ national early childhood assessment practice. Learning Stories are a formative assessment in which teachers' document children's learning through written narrative observations. The National Learning Stories Conference provided information for CI students and local educators on the application of learning stories documentation of young, diverse children and families.

On May 4, 2019 the first National Learning Stories conference was launched in southern California. CI students and faculty presented at the National Learning Stories Conference held at Orange County Office of Education in Costa Mesa, CA. The National Learning Stories conference was cohosted by CSUCI, Orange County Association for the Education of Young Children, Supporting the Advancement of Learning Stories in America (SALSA), Educa, Quality Start Orange County, and Orange County Department of Education.

At the National Learning Stories conference, CI students heard keynote presentation by international Learning Stories expert speaker, Wendy Lee, they chose two workshops (from total of nineteen workshops) by speakers from New Zealand (NZ), California, Arizona, Michigan, Hawaii, to name a few. Six CI students who participated in the fall 2019 IRA funded UNIV 392 NZ study abroad trip, presented a workshop titled, "*Voices of Students: Using Learning Stories to Document Study Abroad in Aotearoa New Zealand*". The CI students shared their experiences using learning stories to document their UNIV 392 NZ study abroad. Attendees learned how learning stories can be used not only for children, but also with students and adult learners as a

tool for reflection and inquiry. This presentation included video, sample learning stories, and a student panel presentation. Workshop attendees left inspired to learn how Learning Stories can be used with adult learning in and outside of the classroom settings.

In addition, CI students and faculty provided a second workshop titled, *“Honoring Diverse Voices: Narrative Stories used as a Tool for Self-Reflection”*. This workshop explored the My Stories research project which is an IRA funded interdisciplinary research project on the Santa Rosa Island. Workshop attendees gained understanding with the “My Story” narrative storytelling approach. They learned how My Stories is based from Learning Stories and adapted by California State University Channel Islands for an Early Childhood Studies course. The My Stories approach was highlighted, showing the importance of student teacher voice and family responses. Workshop attendees examined the essential My Stories components and evaluated the potential of each component, focused on the teacher learner identities while incorporating multiple perspectives.

CI faculty, Dr. Annie White, Jasmine Delgado and Elizabeth Lavin and three students discussed the My Stories three year research project, analyzed sample My Stories, and identified ways early childhood education programs can use My Stories as a tool for teacher professional development. CI faculty and students discussed their interdisciplinary collaboration, “My Stories,” on the Santa Rosa Island where students were provided a safe space to share their social and cultural identities through narrative stories, visual art, clay and sculpture, and interpretive dance modalities. CI faculty and students shared the impact these stories had on various university programs, students, peers, families, and communities. In depth examination of how programs can use My Stories, as a powerful approach to engage teachers as active learners in their own assessment and learning process was discussed. The importance of using My Stories for professional growth, as well as, the opportunities to consequentially include family member and community voices were presented. The workshop was well attended and positive feedback was received.

At the first National Learning Stories conference, in addition to the NZ keynote speaker, early childhood educators provided workshop presentations which were offered by family childcare providers, community college faculty and lab school teachers, higher education faculty, administrators, teachers, consultants, and more (Please see attached Learning Stories program brochure for list of presenters and bios).

Early education programs and CI students, faculty and staff benefited from hearing about the Learning Stories approach which has impacted local, state, national, and international children's assessment practices.

Please see attached Program and brochure.

(2) HOW DID THE ACTIVITY RELATE TO A COURSE(S) AND/OR LEARNING OBJECTIVES?

The ECS Learning Stories Seminar activity supported the learning objective for the following ECS courses:



California State
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INSTRUCTIONALLY RELATED ACTIVITIES

C H A N N E L

ECS 460- Infant/Toddler Educaring
ECS 461- Infant/Toddler Student Teaching
ECS 456- Family & Community Engagement
ECS 470- Teaching and Learning Preschool/Primary
ECS 471- Preschool/Primary Student Teaching
ECS 462- Supporting Dual Language Learners
ECS 463- Creating and Supporting Reciprocal Family Community Networks
UNIV 392- Narrative Stories in New Zealand

The National Learning Stories conference helped increase ECS students understanding of the benefits of the Learning Stories formative child assessment approach. Attendees learned about NZ historical shift from checklist model of assessment to a formative assessment approach. In addition, attendees learned how Learning Stories assessment method includes child, parent, family, and community voices. Students gained increased awareness of diverse, cultural and linguistic representation through Learning Stories, as a way to support children who are dual language learners and also inclusion of children with special needs. The National Learning Stories Conference supported CI mission of multicultural, international learning, and integrative learning. The seminars supported deep understanding and increased knowledge for ECS students who develop learning stories as part of their CI student teaching course work with infants and toddlers, preschool, and school age children.

Description of Assessment Process

(3)WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE STRENGTHS OF THE ACTIVITY?

The strength of the activity was CI students having the opportunity to attend and for some present at the first National Learning Stories conference and deeper connection to course content. In addition, there was an incredible collaboration between so many partners (see list above). Due to the commitment and extensive amount of time partners gave to plan, organize and launch the first ever National Learning Stories conference in the United States, there was incredible interest and participation by attendees. There was close to 375 attendees, including volunteers and presenters.

The National Learning Stories conference was a powerful, transformative experience for CI students and early childhood educators. Attendees gained knowledge about NZ historical move away from deficit based assessment practices to the Learning Stories narrative formative assessment approach. Students and the early childhood educators were inspired by the National Learning Stories conference and gained new knowledge to implement the Learning Stories approach in early childhood settings throughout California and the United States.

Another strength of the activity was the collaboration that occurred between CI, SALSA and OAEYC and other partners (see list above). IRA provided funding for student registration costs and to rent a bus to transport students to the conference. OCAEYC provided staff to help with



planning, marketing, program brochure, and staffed registration, sign in and provided breakfast and lunch for the conference. Prior to the seminar, collaborative planning occurred monthly with all partners for eight months.

In addition, a few CI student Learning Stories were selected as examples used at the conference display area. This provided visibility of the high quality work of CI students to the greater early childhood education community, including local, state and nationally.

(3) WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE/WERE THE ACTIVITY'S WEAKNESSES?

It would have been good to have had CI, SOE and ECS leadership representation at the conference. However, three ECS lecturers also attended the conference which demonstrated to the ECS students the unity of the program.

(4) HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THIS ACTIVITY FOR NEXT TIME?

Next time, I would like to have more SOE and ECS faculty leadership participation. Also, I would like to have CI students host more workshops. The next annual Learning Stories conference will take place spring 2020 in Michigan. I plan to request IRA funding for students to travel to present and attend the National Learning Stories conference.

(5) WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE PROCESS?

I learned how much work it takes to plan a National Learning Stories conference with multiple community partners. It takes an incredible amount of time, organization, communication, and commitment to work with so many different organizations. However, because of the amazing collaboration, the event was successful and well received. Therefore, I am glad that the first National Learning Stories was not solely hosted by CI. Instead, this activity strengthened CI community partnerships both in California, nationally, and beyond.

(6) WHAT ARE STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE ACTIVITY? ATTACH STUDENT EVALUATIONS OR ASSESSMENTS (IN ACCORDANCE WITH FERPA RESTRICTIONS YOU MUST REMOVE ALL PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE STUDENT INFORMATION)

There was very positive feedback from the students and early childhood community. CI students completed reflection essays about their experience attending the National Learning Stories conference. Here are some excerpts from student reflections:

"The first workshop I attended was Voices of Students: Using Learning Stories to Document Study Abroad in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The presenters were fellow CI students. At this workshop students shared their experiences and knowledge they gained from the New Zealand study abroad trip. What I learned from this workshop was the impact New Zealand had on the students' lives. The presenters shared their experiences of going into classroom that use Learning Stores and how it affected them. They exposed their vulnerability as they described how the trip impacted their growth as people and as educators. I was pleased to learn how the

New Zealand experience contributed to the students wanting to advocate for Learning Stories to be used as an assessment tool in their classrooms. The second workshop session I attended was, Honoring Teacher Voices: Narrative Stories used as a Tool for Self-Reflection. The presenter was Dr. Annie White, two other faculty and students. She and the university students shared how narrative stories can be used for teacher learning and self-reflection. What I learned from this workshop is how “My Stories” connected the student speakers and their families. The students were able to self-reflect on experiences and events that impacted their lives.”

“As an early childhood education teacher, I never stopped to reflect on the value of the information that I was writing about children. As a professional, I valued before children’s learning experiences but I had a deficit mentality about what needed to be changed or improved, now after attending the conference, I have changed my perception of assessment from just seeing it as piles of tedious paper work to complete, to seeing it as information that matters because documentation has the spirit and value of the child, as stated by keynote speaker, Wendy Lee. Child’s learning experiences are the most exciting, enjoyable and valuable work and it should be celebrated. Recognizing the ‘child’s effort and uniqueness’ sends strong messages to the child and ‘builds her/his future.” After attending this conference, I feel more passionate about the changes proposed by Wendy Lee and her colleague Dr. Annie White (CSUCI Professor, Learning Stories advocate with SALSA org.) promoting Learning Stories as an assessment in America.”

“During this workshop a couple students shared their “My Story” with moving, remarkable self-reflections that transformed and helped them improve their lives by helping them realized the importance of self-evaluation as future teachers. There was also a video presented showing the fun activities that students got to be part of during their trip to the Santa Rosa Island and I hope Professor White continues to make “My Stories” part of the ECS program for many years to come, so other students can experience personal and professional growth as well.”

“It was very empowering to hear the testimonials from the students sharing their “My Stories” and I got to write “My Story” as well in one of my ECS courses; I found it very challenging to explore my identity, my past, present and future ideas and memories that make me who I am now but there was valuable learning that came out of it and it did the same for other students. I hope to attend more Learning Stories conferences in the future along with more practice in doing them in my future classroom.”

“It was very interesting getting to know all these wonderful students and peers who shared their experience in New Zealand. It made me realize that after all, we all learn from each other and it was a group who showed real collaboration, respect, and humankindness, especially sharing their personal Learning Stories.”

“To see my Professors, Annie and Adria in collaboration to help us to go to the conference. The Bus driver who made me feel comfortable by driving with caution and caring, so I would be able to attend the Learning Stories Conference and to come back and see my beautiful family again.”



California State
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INSTRUCTIONALLY RELATED ACTIVITIES

C H A N N E L

"The Learning Stories National conference has been one of the events that has marked my life forever. Now I have more information to create a habit in my life and write Learning Stories to my own children, family, and the children where I work. It makes more sense to me now how Wendy Lee and people from New Zealand live and respect all children. This is all we need here [USA] and in the rest of the world to recognize and respect all children, to observe and see the needs to stop injustices, and to provide more love and care for each other."

"After hearing the presenters read their learning stories, I learned that they are a great tool for adults to grow. Some of the presenters shared that writing about themselves was hard and asking someone to provide a response was difficult as well. It is a vulnerable act to share your own story, thoughts, and feelings with another person."

"What I enjoyed the most at the conference was meeting experienced educators who have been working in early childhood for a long time. It was great to hear different ideas, perspectives, and receive advice."

"The presenters shared about their experience going to the Santa Rosa Island and creating their own "My Story". This is a way for educators to write about what defines them and what has shaped them into the person that they are today. One student beautifully expressed that in knowing what has shaped us into who we are now is very important to the type of teachers we will become, and I could not have said it better myself, or agreed more. This "ah-ha" moment, in a way, ties into evaluating ourselves as educators to improve our teaching. This workshop really opened my eyes to just how deep and impactful Learning Stories can be to those of us that are open to the idea."

"I loved hearing the CI students read their My Stories and share their experiences from the Santa Rosa island trip. When I saw that one of the CI student's parents had come to see her present, I was brought to tears. It just showed me how powerful these can be in order to reflect on yourself as a person."

8) GIVE A SUMMARY OF EXPENSES FOR THE ACTIVITY.

Approved IRA funds:

National Learning Stories Conference Registration Fees- \$3,120.00

Roadrunner Bus Rental- \$3,102.00

Total projected costs =\$6,222.00

Actual Expenditures:

National Learning Stories Conference Registration- \$2,400

Roadrunner Bus Rental fee- \$ 2655.70

Total Costs Spent= \$5055.70

Remaining funds= \$1,166.30



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INSTRUCTIONALLY RELATED ACTIVITIES

C H A N N E L

There are remaining IRA funds due to the original projection of 75 students & 3 faculty attendance at the National Learning Stories conference. However, in actuality, only 60 students (and 3 faculty) attended the conference. Furthermore, instead of the original proposal for two buses, only one large Roadrunner bus rental was needed due to the reduced number of student who attended the conference. Thus, the remaining under budget funds.

B. ATTENDEE LIST- SUPPORTING DOCUMENT:

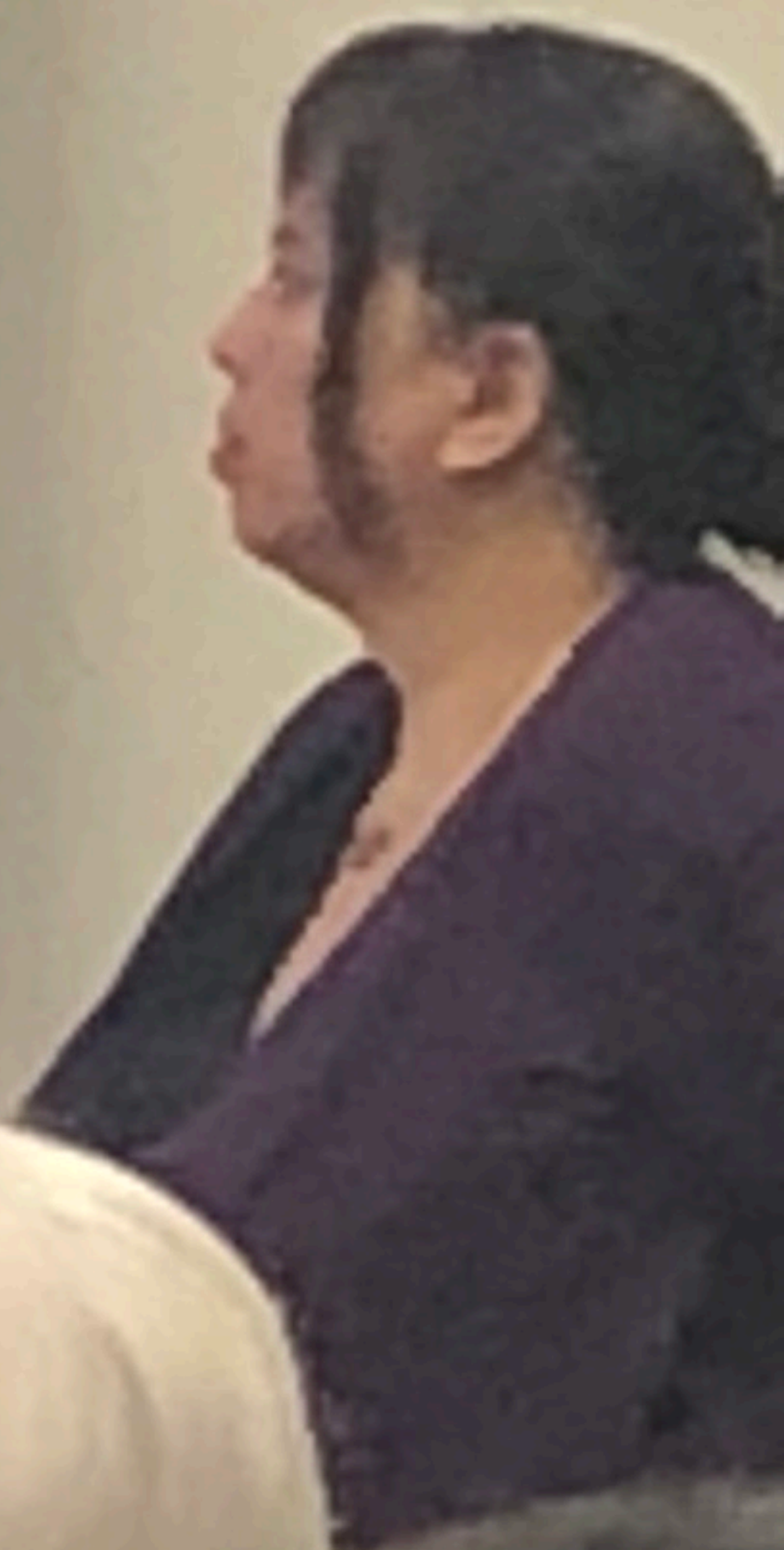
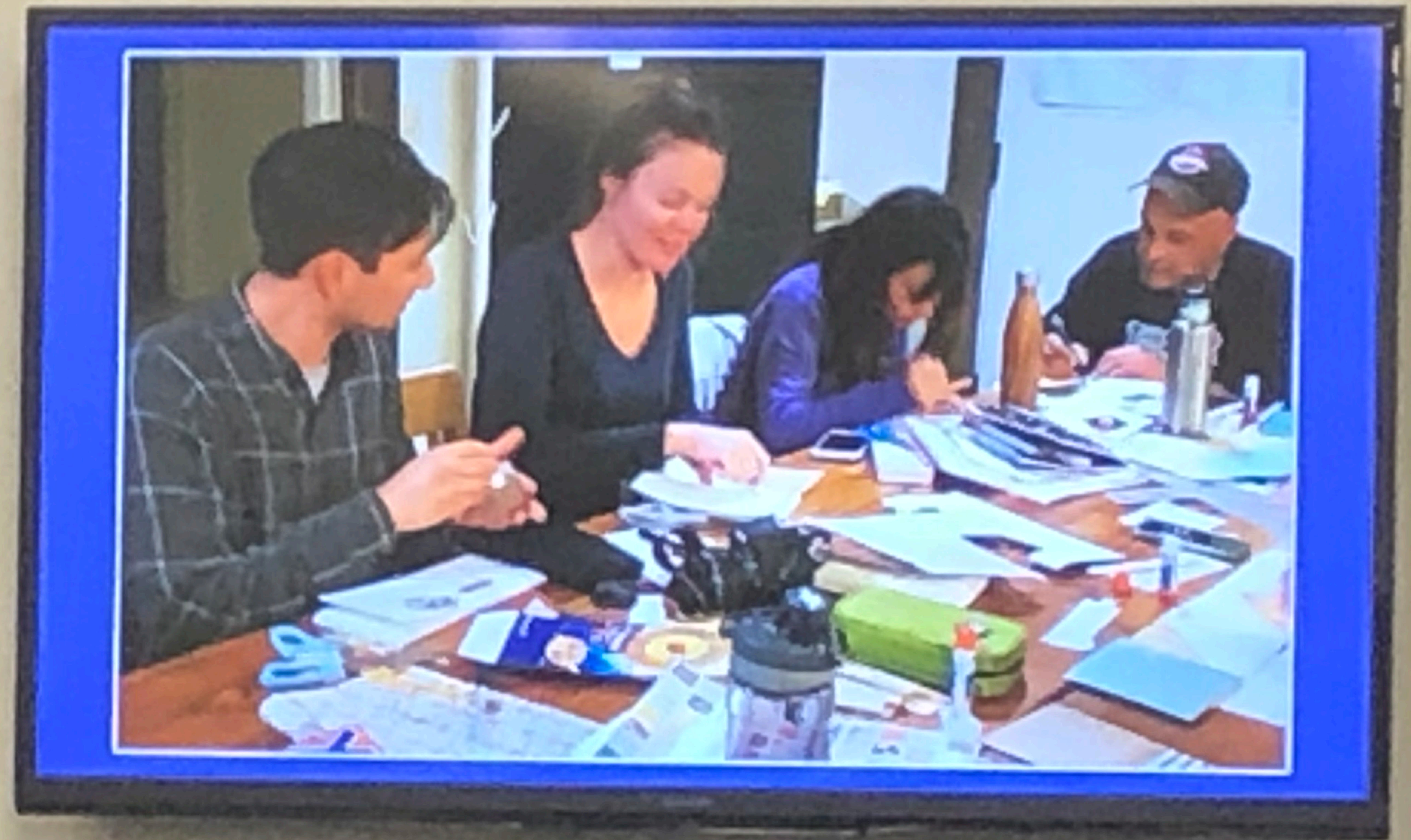
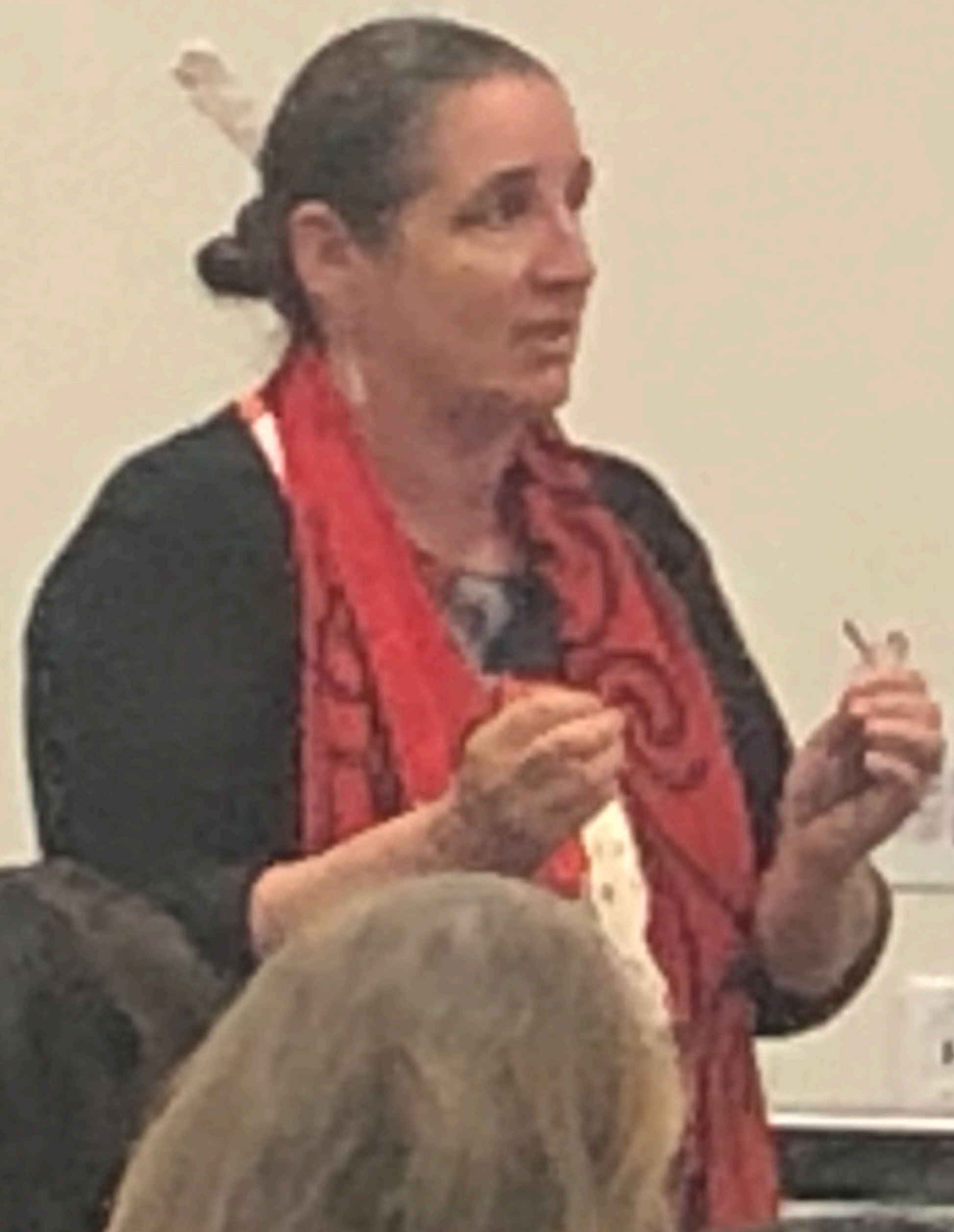
In addition to the report form, *in a separate document*, attach to your email a list of attendees complete with each student major and grade level. This for IRA Committee reference only and will not be published on the IRA website. Include your name and the title of your IRA activity on the document.

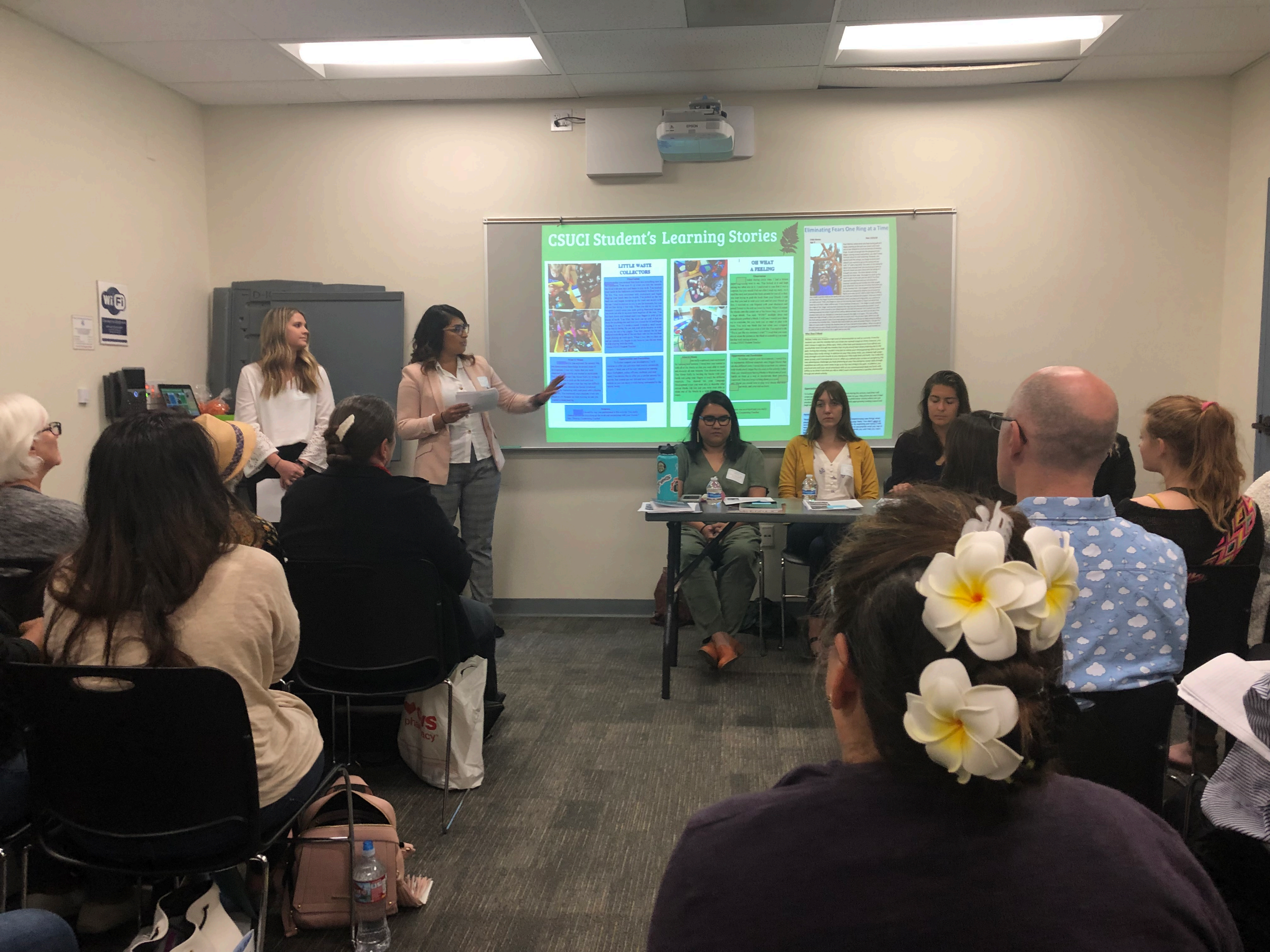
Please see attached registration list for the Learning Stories conference bus transportation and the actual conference registrations. Please note, some students chose to drive themselves to the conference because of proximity to their home. Thus, not all 60 CI students conference attendees rode the bus.

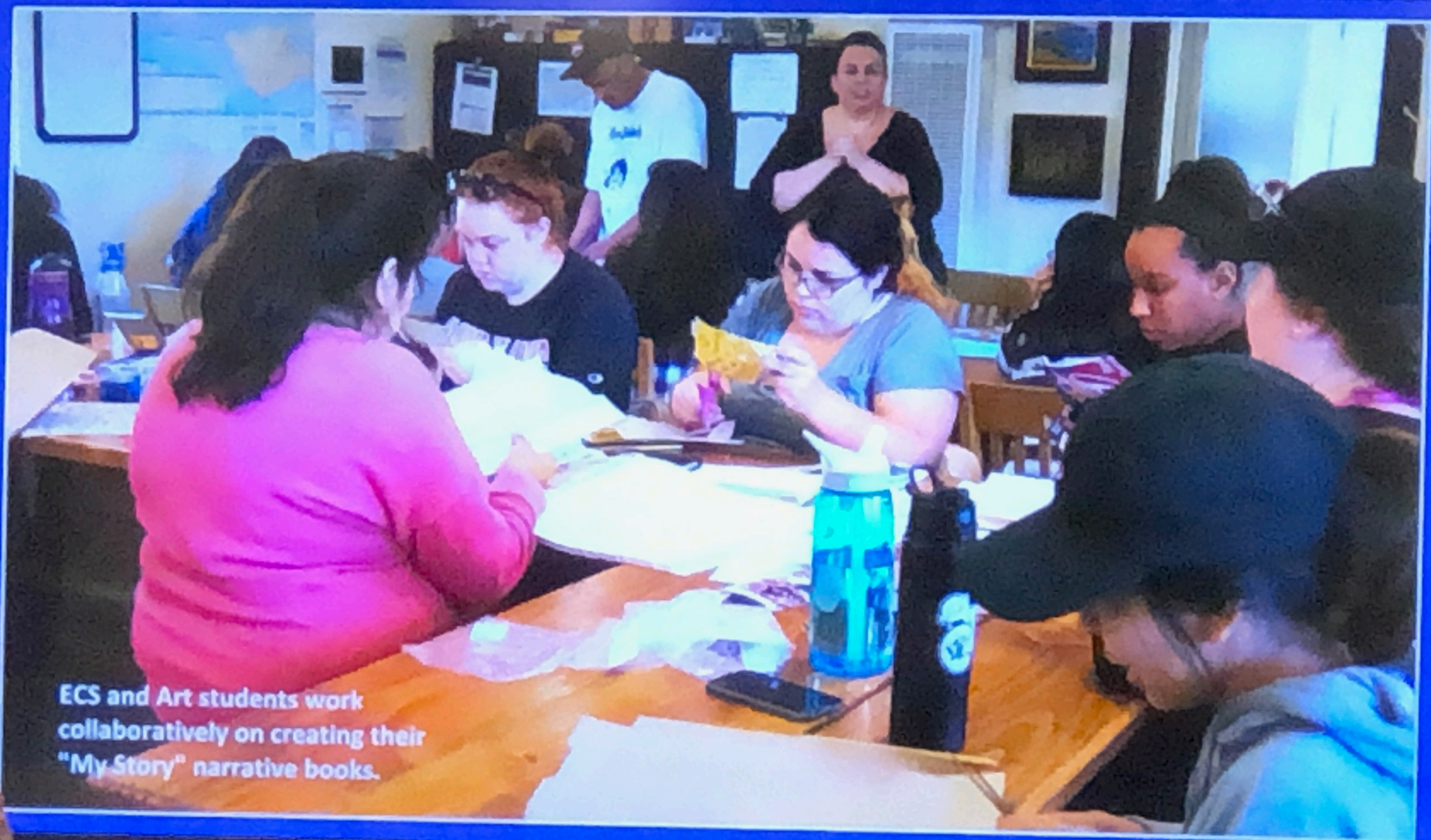
C.IMAGES FROM ACTIVITY:

Finally, attach to your email up to 6 images demonstrating student participation (under 2 MB total) with captions/titles. Please attach these photos in .JPEG format directly to email. Thank you!

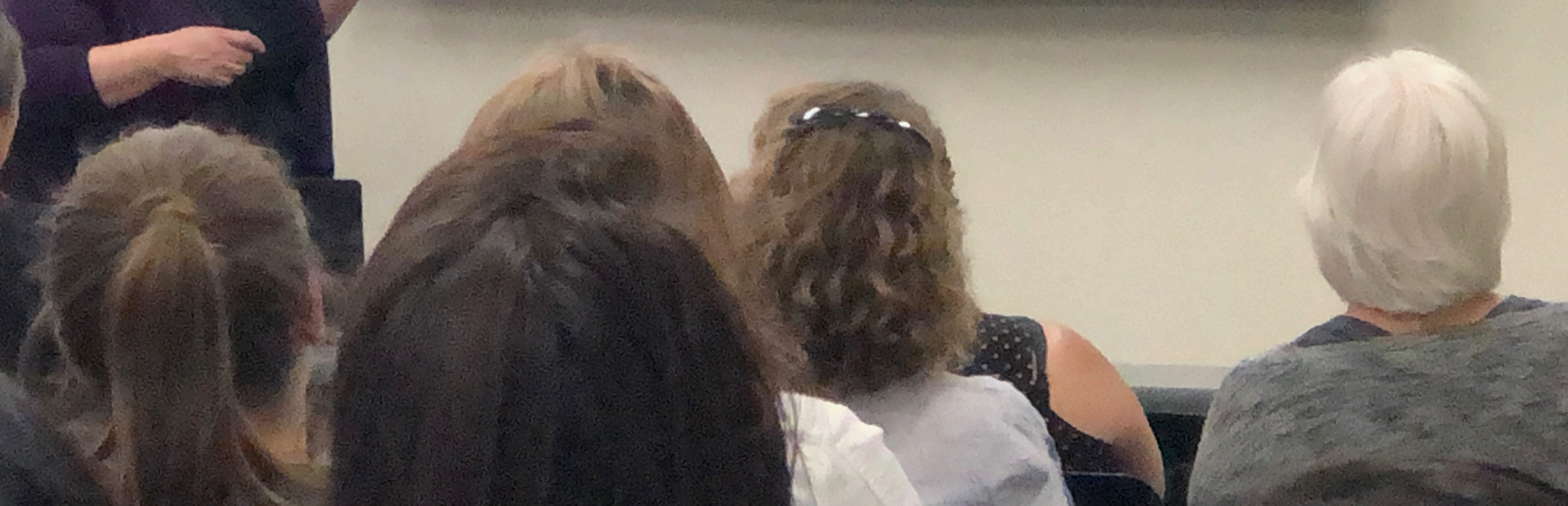
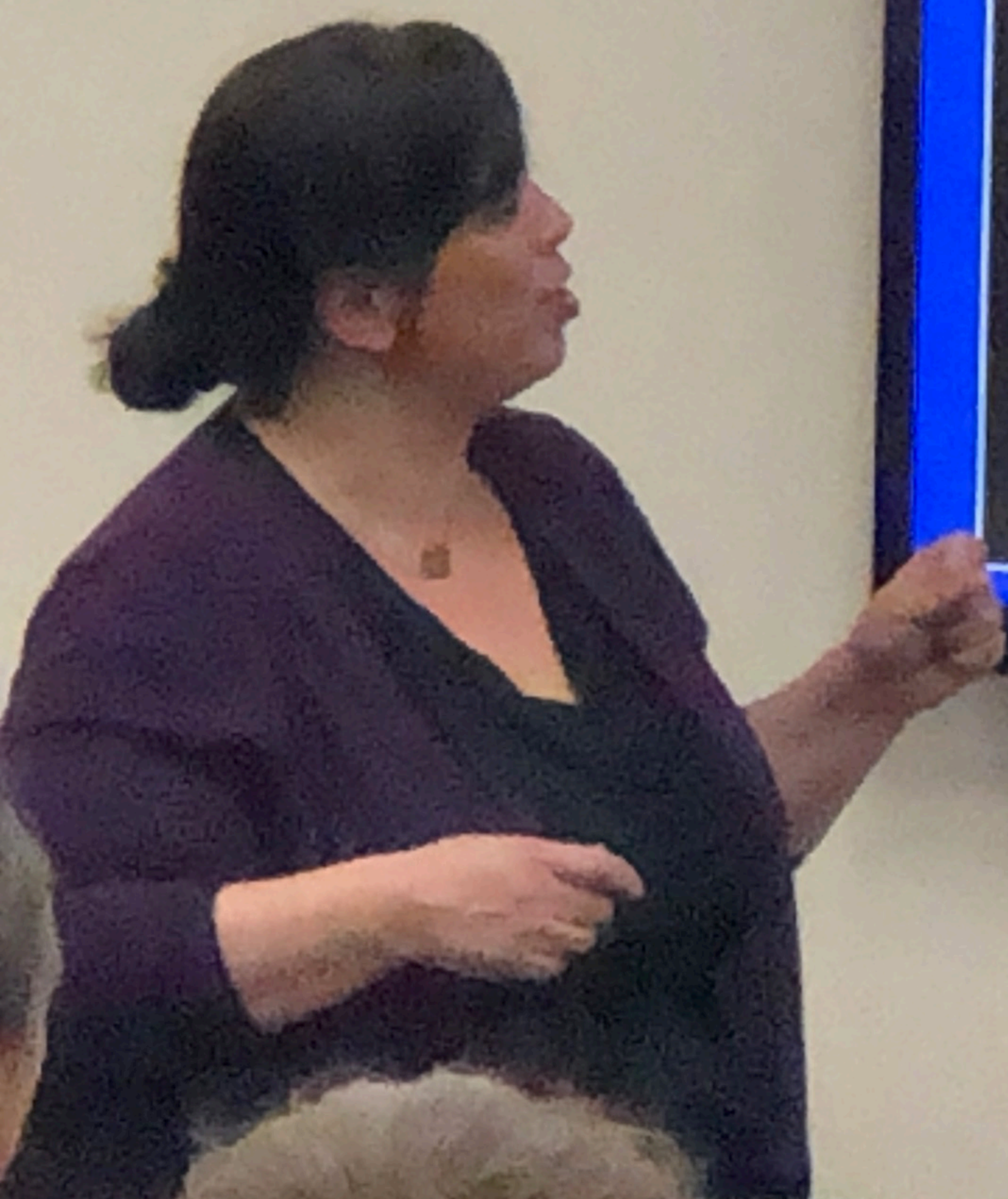
See attached photos







ECS and Art students work collaboratively on creating their "My Story" narrative books.





Barbara's My Story





Voices of Students

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