



## 2024 ProLEER MEETING AGENDA

**At the Harvard Graduate School of Education, October 1-2**  
**Gutman Conference Center (GCC), GCC- Room E4/E5**  
 Gutman Library, Ground Floor, 6 Appian Way, Cambridge, Massachusetts

### Monday, September 30

**5:00-6:00pm**      **INFORMAL MEET-UP:** For those in Cambridge on Monday, **join us** at the NuBar, at the **Sheraton Commander Hotel**, 16 Garden Street, Cambridge.

### Tuesday, October 1 - Location: GCC- E4/5 & E3

**9:00-9:15am**      **WELCOME REMARKS**  
**Renata Villers**, Executive Director, Amigos del Aprendizaje, Costa Rica  
**Paola Uccelli**, Professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education

**9:15-10:45am**      **PLENARY 1: Ensuring Literacy Outcomes for Marginalized Populations**  
**Speaker: Nonie Lesaux**, Interim Dean, Harvard Graduate School of Education

**10:45-11:30am**      **COFFEE BREAK**

**11:30-1:00pm**      **SIMULTANEOUS PANEL A: Addressing Learning Poverty in Latin America**  
**Moderator: Ivana Corrado**, Assistant Professor, Universidad de Sant Martin,, Argentina (*Panel description in Attachment II.*)

.....  
**SIMULTANEOUS PANEL B: ECE: Addressing Problems of Practice**  
**Moderator: Armida Lizárraga**, Project Director, Zaentz Early Education Initiative, Perú (*Panel description in Attachment II.*) - **Location - GCC-E3**

**1:00-2:00pm**      **LUNCH**

**2:00-3:30pm**      **SPECIAL INTEREST DISCUSSION GROUPS**  
**Moderator: Kees Broekhof**, Senior Consultant, Sardes Educational Services, Netherlands

**3:30-4:00pm**      **COFFEE BREAK**

**4:00-5:30pm**      **PLENARY 2: Promising Paths to Strengthen Literacy Outcomes**  
**Speaker: Catherine Snow**, Professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education

**7:00-9:00pm**      **DINNER at the Home of Paola Uccelli**, Professor, Harvard G. School of Education  
**Location: 8 Hillcrest Road, Belmont.** (Plan for a Taxi or Uber there and back.)



**Wednesday, October 2 - Location: GCC- E4/5**

- 9:00-10:30am**      **PLENARY 3: Systems Challenges to Educational Policy in Latin America**  
**Speaker: Emiliana Vegas**, Professor Harvard Graduate School of Education
- 10:30-11:00am**      **COFFEE BREAK**
- 11:00-12:30pm**      **PANEL C: Writing Policy and Practice in Literacy Development in LAC**  
**Moderator: Paola Uccelli**, Professor Harvard Graduate School of Education  
*(Panel description in Attachment II.)*
- 12:30-1:30pm**      **LUNCH**
- 1:30-2:45pm**      **GROUP PLANNING: Building a ProLEER Country Agenda**  
**Moderator: Andrea Rolla**, Research Associate, WestEd, USA
- COFFEE BREAK**
- 3:00-4:00pm**      **REPORT BACK** by country group

**4:15-6:15pm**      **2025 PLANNING, Meeting of the ProLEER Steering Committee**  
**Location: GCC E8**



## Attachment I. – PLENARY SPEAKER PROFILES

### **Nonie Lesaux, Interim Dean of the Faculty of Education, Roy Edward Larsen Professor of Education and Human Development**

Nonie K. Lesaux, Roy E. Larsen Professor of Education and Human Development, is the interim dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE). Lesaux assumed the role of interim dean on July 1, 2024. She served as academic dean at HGSE from 2017 to 2021. A member of the HGSE faculty since 2003, Lesaux’s research focuses on strategies and innovations to improve learning opportunities and literacy outcomes for children and youth. Her teaching focuses on literacy development and reform, early learning, and leading system-level change. Lesaux works largely through partnerships with school districts, states, and communities. In school districts, Lesaux investigates language, reading, and social-emotional development; classroom quality and academic growth; and strategies to accelerate language and reading comprehension. In states and communities, she brings tools and concepts from improvement science to strengthen literacy plans and policy initiatives, grade-level reading campaigns, and birth-to-eight early learning initiatives. Her research-practice partnerships with large urban school districts, to improve literacy rates, include seven years with San Diego Unified and ten years with the New York City Department of Education.

### **Catherine Snow, John H. and Elisabeth A. Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education**

Catherine Snow is an expert on language and literacy development in children, focusing on how oral language skills are acquired and how they relate to literacy outcomes. Her current research activities include a study of how Boston Public School early childhood classrooms are supporting children’s development, and participation in a long-standing research-practice partnership (the Strategic Education Research Partnership, SERP) that is developing curricular tools to support teachers in introducing innovative classroom practices. Word Generation, a discussion-based academic language and literacy program developed by SERP, has been shown to improve middle-school literacy outcomes, in particular for students from language-minority homes.

### **Emiliana Vegas, Professor of Practice**

Emiliana Vegas is a professor of practice at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her research and practice focus on improving educational opportunities in developing countries. She earned a Doctor of Education from HGSE, a Master’s of public policy from Duke University, and a Bachelor’s in communications from the Andres Bello University in Venezuela. Before returning to HGSE, Vegas was co-director of the Center for Universal Education at Brookings. From 2012-2019, she was chief of the education division at the Inter-American Development Bank, where she oversaw the Bank’s lending operations and technical assistance projects throughout Latin America. Before joining the IADB, she spent over ten years at The World Bank. Currently she is a faculty affiliate at the [Harvard Center for International Development](#) and co-chair of the [Global Education and Research: Unleashing Potential](#) (GEAR:UP) program. She has written extensively on issues affecting education systems in Latin America. Her papers and books cover topics including policies to leverage technology to accelerate learning and skills to raise teacher effectiveness, school finance and early childhood policies. Her forthcoming book, *Let’s change the world: How to work within international development organizations to make a difference*, will be published by Rowman and Littlefield in September, 2024.



## Attachment II. – PANEL DESCRIPTIONS AND PANELISTS

October 1, 11:30am - 1:00pm, **GCC E4/E5**

### PANEL A: Addressing Learning Poverty in Latin America

**Moderator:** Ivana Corrado, LEAN, Argentina

**Panelists:**

**Valeria Abusambra**, CONICET, Argentina

**Valentina Uribe Zarain**, Fundación Zorro Rojo, Mexico

**Teresa Covarrubias**, Estudios y Consultorías Focus, Chile

**Beatriz Cardoso**, Laboratório de Educação, Brazil

#### **Brief description of the panel:**

The objective of the panel is to address the issue of learning in vulnerable contexts. As an initial step in addressing this problem, we will examine the results of a study evaluating the disparities arising from various educational opportunities. Subsequently, as part of the solution, the presenters will showcase programs that support the work in school by providing teacher training and simultaneously offering support to families. This support aims to maintain stimulation inside as well as outside the school environment, even during school breaks, to promote equal opportunities in learning development.

The panel's structure will be as follows:

**Valeria Abusamra** will present the findings of a study on reading comprehension among children with varying educational opportunities in Argentina. (12 minutes)

**Terressa Covarrubias** will present recovery programs for public schools, which include literacy resources for families, teacher training, and tutoring. (12 minutes)

**Valentina Uribe** will present an evidence-based project that currently impacts 1,300 schools, 7,000 teachers, and more than 600,000 children in Mexico related to literacy and teacher training. (12 minutes)

**Beatriz Cardoso** will present material to support families during vacation to maintain stimulation during school breaks to support early language development from a systemic perspective. (12 minutes)

**Discussion:** 30 minutes



**October 1, 11:30am - 1:00pm, GCC E3**

## **PANEL B: ECE: Addressing Problems of Practice**

**Moderator: Armida Lizárraga**, Harvard Zaentz Early Childhood Initiative, Peru

### **Panelists:**

**Kees Broekhoff**, Sardes, Netherlands

**Carolina Maldonado**, School of Education, Universidad de los Andes

**Pelusa Orellana**, Universidad de los Andes, Chile

### **Brief description of the panel:**

Implementing effective reforms and programs in early childhood education (ECE) can present challenges. A key issue is the uptake of real-world evidence by policymakers and practitioners, which affects how ECE practices are implemented and scaled. To address these challenges, we need robust methods and measurement systems that ensure practices are effective in improving learning outcomes. This panel aims to explore real-world research and interventions in ECE settings. It will feature diverse stakeholders, including children, teachers, and families.

**Kees Broekhoff** will present work from Sardes in the Netherlands, focusing on the challenge of teaching children who lack instructional language. **Carolina Maldonado** will share studies from Colombia on teacher professional development. Finally, **Pelusa Orellana** will discuss an evaluation of a read-aloud program implemented with families, highlighting the role of family engagement in ECE.

The panel's structure will be as follows:

- **Kees Broekhoff:** How to address the needs of young children who have no command of the instructional language? How can teachers help these children to feel seen and to master key vocabulary rapidly? (17 minutes).
- **Carolina Maldonado:** Evaluations of early childhood quality in Colombia, and professional development programs for early childhood teachers (17 minutes).
- **Pelusa Orellana:** The Alma Family Literacy Program: effects on Chilean Preschoolers' Early Literacy Outcomes, Home Language and Literacy Environment, and Parental Self-Efficacy (17 minutes).
- **Discussion:** 30 minutes

.....



October 2, 11:00-12:30pm, GCC E4/E5

## Panel C: Writing Policy and Practice in Literacy Development

**Moderator:** Paola Uccelli, Professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education

**Panelists:**

**Ana Maria Rodino**, Estado de la Educación, Costa Rica

**Soledad Concha**, Pontificada Universidad Católica, Chile

**Renata Villers**, Amigos del Aprendizaje, Costa Rica

### Brief description of the panel:

Over the past decade, Ministries of Education across Latin America have reformed their Spanish language programs, shifting from a traditional focus on decoding texts and teaching grammar to a more modern emphasis on using reading and writing as tools for communication. While there is substantial evidence on student performance and teacher practices related to reading comprehension, much less is known about student performance and teacher practice in writing as a communicative process. This gap is significant, as research shows that reading and writing are interrelated skills, with progress in one often supporting gains in the other.

This panel will delve into the connection between writing policies and classroom practices in Latin America. **Ana Maria Rodino** will begin by exploring the landscape of writing instruction in the region, highlighting key findings from the UNESCO ERCE 2019 writing assessment. Following her, **Soledad Concha** will discuss Chile's approach to writing education, which has driven significant policy reforms and classroom interventions aimed at enhancing writing skills. Finally, **Renata Villers** will share findings from a pilot project in Costa Rica, which adapts Chile's initial intervention strategy to foster improved writing practice in the classroom, and discuss the implications for policy.

The panel's structured will be as follows:

- **Ana Maria Rodino**, What we can learn from the ERCE writing assessments in Latin America and why it matters. (17 min)
- **Soledad Concha**: Transforming Chilean policy and practice in writing Instruction (17 min)
- **Renata Villers**: Piloting the Chilean writing intervention in Costa Rica, and its implications for practice and policy (17 min)
- **Discussion**: 30 minutes