

**GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinar**  
**Prioritizing Early Relational Health in Tutoring for**  
**Equitable Learning Recovery**

May 31, 2022

Presenter, Moderator & Discussant Bios

**PRESENTER**

**Junlei Li, Ph.D.**

**Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Education**  
**Co-Chair, Human Development and Education Program**  
**Harvard Graduate School of Education**



Junlei Li serves the co-chair of the Human Development and Education Program and the Saul Zaentz senior lecturer in Early Childhood Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. His research and practice focuses on understanding and supporting the work of helpers — those who serve children and families on the frontlines of education and social services. Li studied and learned from a wide range of developmental settings with low resources but high-quality practices, including orphanages, childcare, classrooms, and community youth programs. He developed the “Simple Interactions” approach to

help identify what ordinary people do extraordinarily well with children in everyday moments and made that the basis for promoting positive system change. Li frequently delivers keynote presentations and workshops for national, state, and international conferences focused on improving practices, programs, and policies for children, families, and professionals, with a particular emphasis on early childhood development. He teaches about improving human interactions and supporting adult helpers. He serves on boards and advisory panels, including Child Care Aware of America, Parents as Teachers, Turrell Fund, Head Start National Center for Family and Community Engagement, and various initiatives at the U.S. Administration for Children and Families. Li’s work is significantly influenced and inspired by the pioneering work of Fred Rogers (creator of Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood). He previously served as the Co-Director and Rita M. McGinley Professor for Early Learning and Children’s Media at the Fred Rogers Center at Saint Vincent College.

**MODERATOR**

**John Gomperts**

**Executive Fellow, Campaign for Grade-Level Reading**



John Gomperts is a long-time leader in non-profits and government organizations devoted to civic engagement and to creating greater opportunity for children and youth. From 2012 - 2020, John served as President & CEO of America's Promise Alliance. Prior to that, John served as the Director of AmeriCorps in the Obama Administration. Earlier in his career, John worked in the US Senate (Sens. Wofford, Kerry, Daschle), practiced law and served as a judicial clerk. John earned his JD from Georgetown University Law Center and his AB in History from University of California,

Berkeley. John has served on a wide range of boards in including FoodCorps (Chair), Points of Light, Presidio Institute, News Literacy Project, and others.

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## DISCUSSANTS

### **Diana Claus**

#### **Literacy Consultant, Raising Readers, Story County, Iowa**



Diana Claus is a literacy coach, who serves on the board of Raising Readers in Story County in Ames, Iowa, a partner of the Story County Reads Campaign for Grade Level Reading consortium. As a retired elementary teacher, lecturer in the Iowa State University College of Education, and coordinator of the Reading Clinic, Diana has worked with students ranging in ages from preschool through college. Partnering with RRSC personnel, she designs free literacy tutoring programs with a dual purpose: incorporating best practices for instructional strategies and encouraging positive social-emotional growth through the development of the tutor-student relationship.

### **Jennifer Joyce**

#### **Managing Director of National Programs, Reading Partners**



Jennifer Joyce is a fierce advocate for literacy support for students and families passionately committed to helping all children become successful readers. Jen is a former kindergarten teacher and literacy specialist bringing these experiences and foundation to her work at Reading Partners. Starting out as part of regional teams in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. Jen saw the first hand impact that evidence based tutoring programs could have on student literacy gains. As the managing director of national programs Jen has written curriculum, lead pilots and professional development to scale the Reading Partners program as well as ensuring the program could continue to adapt and grow for students during the impact. As a student who relied on public education and literacy supports for learning challenges as a child, she knows and believes continual investment in public schools, their students, and high quality programming is the pathway forward.

### **Paola Milbank**

#### **Co-Leader, DC Virtual Storytime and Senior, School Without Walls**



Paola Milbank is a high school senior at the School Without Walls High school in Washington, D.C. In her sophomore year, she and some of her classmates began the DC Virtual Storytime Program, in which DC high school students serve as tutors for elementary school students and read together two to four times a week over Zoom. Through this program, Paola discovered a passion for education and plans to pursue a career in educational equity. In the fall, Paola is starting her college years at Yale University and hopes to study linguistics and sociology and participate in the education studies program.

### **Cara Schrack, Ph.D.**

#### **Director of Education and Evaluation, Experience Corps at AARP Foundation**



Dr. Cara Schrack joined AARP Foundation Experience Corps in January of 2021 as Director of Education and Evaluation. Prior to this work, she spent 16 years with Save the Children's U.S. Programs as Director of School-Age programs. She also has served as a reading staff developer and coach. As Director of Education and Evaluation, Cara is using her expertise in literacy to help raise student achievement targeted at underserved children. She has presented at multiple national conferences and serves as an adjunct professor at Notre Dame of Maryland University. Cara holds a PhD in Educational Leadership focusing on summer reading interventions.

**Anne Sinclair**  
**Chief Learning Officer, Ampact**



Anne Sinclair is Chief Learning Officer at Ampact, a nationally focused non-profit that administers the AmeriCorps programs Reading Corps, Math Corps, and Early Learning Corps. Anne oversees the development of effective training and coaching models for AmeriCorps Members and their coaches. Anne's research background is in Special Education and her research interests include evidence-based practice in intensive intervention, and effective training, coaching and professional development models for educators.