Elisabeth Sylvan, PhD

Mountain View CA
617-233-4433

lisard@gmail.com
http://lisard.com

Expertise

Leadership: develop and execute strategy, drive and manage change, cultivate partnership, foster education innovation, identify and foster talent, develop and oversee grants.

Domain expertise: educational technology, education strategy, instructional design, design thinking, online and hybrid learning, learning communities, user experience, computational thinking, making, data literacy, the learning sciences.

Experience

Elisabeth Sylvan Consulting 2011 – Present

Principal

I help organizations to design and develop tools and programs for learning. I provide research and strategy support and early prototyping. Recent client work includes

- *Nexmap:* currently co-designing a data literacy project including content decisions, program strategy, learning materials, teacher professional development, and grant writing;
- *Bay Area Discovery Museum:* currently codeveloping a white paper and research study on educational technology and maker education learning for children 0-8.
- *Krause Center for Innovation at Foothill College:* developed a new makerspace for K14 learners and teachers. Set up team of seven who support members. Created programs, built partnerships, and developed training and camps.
- A large Asian education corporation: 1) supported the development of a 5-year strategic plan for bringing new technology into their education products and services & 2) adapted an Asian computer science program for the US;
- The *Computer History Museum*: defining the purpose and conceptual design of a new makerspace center; &
- *Silicon Valley Education Foundation*: developing strategy, research agenda and programs for a STEM school.

Krause Center for Innovation at Foothill College

Adjunct Faculty 2017-Present

Teaching blended classes– 'Designing Learning-Centered Instruction in Makerspaces,' 'Technology in the Classroom,' and 'E-portfolio,' and 'Online Collaboration Tools'– to high school and community college students, homeschoolers, and teachers.

Manylabs 2014 – 2017

Scientist in Residence & Director of Learning and Community

I supported laypeople, and civic groups to answer real-world questions with scientific data. I adapted existing environmental sensors, open data platforms, and visualization tools. I formed relationships with partners, created an internship program, wrote grants and established workspace practices and events.

The Tech Museum 2013 – 2014

Vice President of Education

I built a new department, developing a coherent vision for my divisions: gallery programming, labs, field trips, school and after-school programs, and The Tech Challenge. I developed a coherent set of programs focused on the museum's core by

- Examining the museum's existing programs and brand, then streamlining and expanding accordingly;
- Building a talented and dedicated team, supporting effective team culture and modern development processes;
- Establishing partnerships with content partners, edtech collaborators, schools, sponsors and funders.

Under my leadership the education team executed a cohesive set of educational programs. We

- Expanded signature yearly event, The Tech Challenge, to be a full-year initiative with a five-year plan;
- Developed the new The Tech Academies of Innovation from a disparate set of afterschool initiatives;
- Greatly increased the number and quality of hands-on floor programming;
- Defined programs and goals for a new educational Center for teachers.

TERC   2008 – 2013
Project Director & Research Scientist
As a Project Director I ran an NSF-funded STEM educational R&D project for youth to design, analyze and visualize surveys. The project included delivering software, curriculum, learning analytics, and outreach to after-school programs. My staff included software developers, curriculum developers, researchers, an outreach coordinator, and multiple contracting firms and individuals. As a Research Scientist I analyzed STEM educational games, co-developed and ran Scratch workshops on climate change for girls, co-analyzed programming camp, and co-developed a company-wide plan for e-publishing our textbooks. As a member of the Evaluation Group, I developed and implemented external evaluations for clients.

MIT MEDIA LAB   2000 – 2007
Graduate Student Research Assistant
My dissertation examined influence and interaction in 'Online Communities of Creators,' specifically Scratch and an international network of afterschool computer learning centers, the Computer Clubhouse. My general exams were on supporting group learning and creativity within physical, social, and technological context.

I developed/co-developed novel educational systems including a web and mobile system for youth to survey their social worlds, a construction kit for interactive play spaces, and an interactive outdoor pathway. I ran hands-on STEAM workshops around the world. I taught Research Methods class and co-founded Mediawomen, a social and civic group for women in technology.

Empirical Research Manager   2000-2001
I project managed and designed the social interaction of an autonomous conversational agent. I conducted experiments on 1.) social perceptions of agents and 2.) young children's interactions with an agent in a shared play space.

Various   1996 – 2000
Early roles in technology
I was a project manager and web designer at dot.com startups and a web designer/webmaster for a department at MIT.

Education

Massachusetts Institute of Technology: MIT Media Laboratory
Ph.D. Media Arts & Sciences   2007
Dissertation: The Sharing of Wonderful Ideas: Influence and Interaction in Online Communities of Creators.
Advisor: Mitch Resnick

M.S. Media Arts & Sciences   2003
Thesis: Analyzing and Designing for Task Switching at Work.
Advisor: Dan Ariely

Carnegie Mellon University   1996
BS. In Psychology

Leadership

Frequent invited speaker including at Berkeley, SRI, Exploratorium, Disney, IBM, MIT, Harvard, Georgia Tech, and more.

Conference paper and grant reviewer and conference program committee member.

Volunteering: mentor for technology professionals through Mozilla Open Leaders and the Jewish High Tech Council.

Authored 20+ peer-reviewed publications that can be found on my website: http://lisard.com.