



Global Learning Cities: Empowering Citizens and Transforming Communities

A Pre-Conference Gathering at the International Transformative Learning Conference 2018
Teachers College, Columbia University
November 7, 2018 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

A pre-conference gathering for the 2018 International Transformative Learning Conference, *Global Learning Cities: Empowering Citizens and Transforming Communities*, will be held on Wednesday, November 7, 2018. The session connects to the overall conference scope that is diverse, inclusive, and global, and allows for collaboration between the International Transformative Learning Conference, PASCAL International Observatory, LearnLong Institute for Education and Learning Research, and UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities. The Learning City literature connects strongly to a transformative learning approach.

The Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities (2013, p. 1) defines a "learning city" as one which effectively mobilizes its resources to:

- Promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education;
- Re-vitalise learning in families and communities;
- Facilitate learning for and in the workplace;
- Extend the use of modern learning technologies;
- Enhance quality and excellence in learning; and
- Nurture a culture of learning throughout life.

A "learning city" thus aims to enable and reinforce individual empowerment and social cohesion, economic and cultural prosperity, and sustainable development.

When citizens engage in deep learning about their community, they have the potential to more fully investigate complex social systems and reflect on human behavior mitigated by the macro environment. This level of understanding is needed in families, neighborhoods, and cities in order to address complex problems such as violence and poverty, and foster stronger education and growth. Thus, this approach has the potential to transform lives and communities, increasing the quality of life for individuals and families.

A Learning City approach can be used to complement an educator's transformative learning focus – fostering the notion that one's frame of reference becomes more “inclusive, differentiating, permeable...critically reflective of assumptions, emotionally capable of change, and integrative of experience” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 19). Cultivating the context for transformative learning in this way – making stronger connections for individuals with and within local communities – can be a powerful force for inclusive sustainable change. Integrating self-reflection; contemplation, spirituality and/or consciousness-raising; trust and respect for co-learners and mentors/teachers; and experiential learning activities can also allow for the possibility of overcoming barriers to change and individual and social levels.



The goal of the *Global Learning Cities* pre-conference is to build a connection between Learning Cities and Transformative Learning, two areas of study that share common interests in Lifelong Learning, the Learning Society, and Adult Learning (formal and informal). Connecting these fields in a tangible way could spur new lines of research, help develop global and local partnerships, and strengthen a transformative learning focus in community development research and practice locally and globally. It could allow for discussion around transformative learning and intersections with power and marginalization, quality of life, leadership and mentoring, spirituality and mindfulness, and sustainability.

Please submit a 800-1200 word abstract outlining a paper / presentation that makes explicit connection to the theme of the pre-conference, drawing connections between learning cities and transformative learning theories (be clear about your theoretical framework). This word count includes references. Proposals may highlight specific case studies of learning cities or works-in-progress. Presenters will have approximately 15 minutes to share their work via pre-recorded video (for international participants who may not be able to participate in person), Zoom, or in-person. Refer to the [ITLC 2018 Proposal Guidelines](#) for reference.

Selected presentations will be incorporated into the Global Learning Cities pre-conference as well as a proposed symposium during the International Transformative Learning Conference on Thursday, November 8, 2018. Pre-conference attendees have three options for registration (the link will go live in early March 2018):

1. Pre-conference only (Nov 7, 2018): \$100
2. Pre-conference + 1 day special rate registration for ITLC 2018 (Nov 7-8, 2018): \$225
3. Pre-conference + full conference rate registration for ITLC 2018 (Nov 7-10, 2018): \$550 (early bird before June 30, 2018)

Please indicate in your proposal your anticipated intentions for participation (this is, of course, not binding, but helpful for us in the planning process).

Please note: Limited pre-conference gathering scholarships are available for international / student participants. If you are interested in applying for a scholarship, please email ITLC2018LearningCities@gmail.com prior to registering for the conference.

Proposals Due: March 26, 2018

Notification: April 16, 2018

Registration and Confirmation by June 30, 2018 for early bird registration (ITLC 2018)

The link to upload your proposal submission and register will be available shortly. Please see www.itlc2018.com for more information after March 2, 2018. Direct questions to ITLC2018LearningCities@gmail.com.