

Seminar Series 2015-16

From smart cities to smart learning environments: a comparative study

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Room 432, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, University of Glasgow,
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We are in the midst of a new economic age, a complex competitive landscape defined largely by globalization and digitalization. That means that the utilization and production of knowledge and innovativeness have become critical to organizational survival.

Our study concentrates on the issue of challenges to the learning environment within the concept of smart city, characterized by multiple focus areas. The learning dimension is becoming more central within smart city discussions. Thus smart city initiatives will include more investments in training and in continuing education, in order to foster cities' learning and innovation capacities. In addition, it is now acknowledged that smart cities involve consideration of 'soft factors' that have to be holistically accounted for. The generally held precept is that accomplishment of this learning smart city goal requires new, innovative models for collaboration.

Universities are also involved in this novel vision of smart learning cities. This is because new organizational hybrids are emerging, compelling HEIs to cooperate with many different partners/stakeholders, all involved in the process of building such models of the city.

Our research is a comparative qualitative study. The material has been gathered from the cities of Helsinki and Catania. The target cities showcase varied successes and models of smart cities. In the cities key people involved in the smart city concept – with different kinds of professional backgrounds – were interviewed, both individually and in teams. All interviewees had at least a basic knowledge of information technology and of organisational learning processes. On the basis of these interviews it has been possible to create an overall picture of learning processes occurring in the organisations involved (universities and local government) and within the smart city programs produced or to be still developed.

Ilpo Laitinen is both a senior level director at the City of Helsinki and a researcher and thus works across the boundaries of academia and the public sector. The work that he undertakes in both of those realms seeks new solutions to improve the quality of the public sector in a city that is among the world leaders in providing service to its people. He is internationally experienced both in science and management in areas that include public administration, the role of HEIs within learning regions and HE policy research, He is an Associate Director of the Pascal International Observatory. See <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ilpo-laitinen-7a529a15>

Jari Stenvall is the Professor of Administrative Sciences at the University of Tampere. He has acted as a permanent expert for a Finnish parliamentary committee tasked to find solutions ensuring that government operations are functional, efficient, and strategic based on parliamentary principles. He has acted as the leader of an evaluation team to appraise the Finnish government reform processes, influencing those focused on municipalities. These reforms have been among the key issues of the Finnish government.

Roberta Piazza is Associate Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Catania, Department of Science of Education. She is PASCAL Associate Director in Europe. Her teaching activity concerns Adult Education, the Pedagogy of lifelong learning, the Pedagogy of education and school policy, and European policies on Lifelong learning (connected in particular to her work within the Jean Monnet Programme). Her main research interests are focused on widening participation to education, lifelong guidance for work transition, and teaching and learning in higher education. Her most recent work has been directed towards the field of learning cities and the role of the University in spreading lifelong learning culture.

All are welcome, but a reservation is essential. Please RSVP to cradall@gla.ac.uk to book your place.

Tea/coffee will be available at 1600 prior to the seminar.