

10th International Conference on Transformative Learning: November 1-4, 2012**“Re-Imagining Learning for a Transforming World”****CONFERENCE PROPOSAL*****Transformative Learning through Intercultural Dialogue: Principles to Guide Praxis***

We live in a world of constant change. “Profound transformations are currently underway on many dimensions... To engage these challenges and opportunities, we must collaboratively re-imagine how individuals, institutions, and societies can learn new capacities and habits of being” (<http://meridianuniversity.edu/index.php/about-the-conference>). An essential skill to facilitate “thinking together” about global challenges and opportunities is that of intercultural dialogue. This experiential session will examine the design of learning encounters that facilitate dialogue within intercultural contexts. The specific domain is within education (including both formal and informal contexts) and the system level will be within a group. This interactive presentation will be facilitated by two experienced intercultural educators who have worked in a variety of both formal and non-formal educational contexts throughout the world.

The skills of critical reflection and the negotiation of new meanings through dialogue are central to the process of transformative learning in collaboration with others. When “others” represent experiences, backgrounds, and cultures which differ from our own, then the dialogical process itself may provide opportunities for the construction of new perspectives, meanings, and understandings of ourselves and our world. The role of the educator is essential to the research, design, facilitation, and evaluation of this process.

This session will build on participant experience in intercultural dialogue and discuss the factors that help to facilitate or hinder effective intercultural dialogue in a learning context.

We'll examine research on essential adult learning principles and how these apply to intercultural learning contexts, and consider how these principles might further facilitate transformative learning in an intercultural context. We'll propose a four-part model for learning design (adapted from Vella 2000) that intentionally incorporates these essential principles for intercultural dialogue. Finally, participants will have opportunity to apply the model to their own teaching context.

The two individuals who will facilitate this interactive session each bring 25+ years of experience in the field of teaching and learning. Their passion, experience and knowledge of the model they will teach in this session mean they are committed to offering a practical hands-on session in which learners will each learn and implement the content in a way that is relevant to their own teaching contexts. Together, the sharing of personal stories, analysis of the principles and the model, as well as personal application will all facilitate deep and holistic learning in this session. The principles and the model which are used in this session will first (and foremost) be demonstrated by the two session facilitators by collaborating in the planning process for this 90-minute session. As the entire conference proposes to exemplify congruence in theory and practice, so too this session will model what it teaches from beginning to end.