**World-making graduates: Activating the Philosophic Practitioner**

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**Background**

In 2002, Tribe advocated for the development of curricula that nurtures the ‘philosophic practitioner’. This comprises a balance between liberal, vocational and reflective curricula, aligned with vocational, professional and humanities knowledge and skills that promote a balance between satisfying the demands of business and those required to operate within the wider tourism world. Whilst Tribe gave a full analysis and justification of the curriculum for Philosophic Practitioners, he gave little detail about how they might be educated. This paper builds on and develops the theory of the ‘philosophic practitioner’ and presents a model of how the tourism curriculum could embed critical thinking and practical application skills to make the next generation of tourism professionals more prepared to address the global challenges the world faces.

Diagram

Description automatically generatedPhilosophic Practitioners in tourism should be able to:

* Understand and critique higher order academic knowledge and skills
* Apply and critique higher order practical knowledge and skills
* Develop a critical self, with a critical understanding of the world
* Formulate reasoned visions of a better tourism world
* Participate in action for a better tourism world

The purpose of this summary paper is to provide an overview of how to practically embed this concept within the curriculum and the classroom. Teaching points to encourage practical engagement with theory and scatter some seeds for pedagogical change are identified as QS (questions for students).

**What does this mean for the curriculum?**

1. *A focus on critical pedagogy*

Critical tourism pedagogy calls for a move away from passive learning and application of knowledge and advocates the active challenging of knowledge to discover the power relations, interests and beneficiaries of such knowledge, which significant truths are omitted and what values are implicit. Boluk & Carnicelli (2019) advocate for a critical pedagogy of tourism to promote citizenship and agency that “allows and encourages students to interrogate institutions, their social relationships, and ideologies that dominate the power structures of society” (p. 177). Critical pedagogy helps students to answer the following questions:

* **(QS) Has my education challenged me to think differently about tourism?**
* **(QS) How has the tourism world been made?**

### (QS) Explain how the main built features of a specific destination have been made and any consequences that arise from this.

### Ideology critique

Critical enlightenment is central to rethinking the world rather than simply accepting it. Its most important component is ideology critique, with the first task being to understand the meaning of ideology. The theory of socialisation explains how the ideologies of society are acquired, internalised and adopted through *inter alia* families, education and peer groups. Ideological critique can be used to interrogate tourism texts and practices to reveal the dominant ideology they express and which opposing or alterative ideologies are silenced. Critical pedagogy helps students to consider:

* **(QS) Which values are especially promoted, and which are overlooked in the development of tourism?**

### Critique of power

Another important exercise is an analysis of power. This should start with an examination of what power is, where it lies in any tourism arrangement and the workings and effects of that power. This can help to identify the main beneficiaries and those who may be taken advantage of by an imbalanced distribution of power. Students may consider this question:

* **(QS) Identify power imbalances and the consequences of those imbalances in tourism.**

### Critique of technical rationality

The business of tourism conducts itself mainly in the paradigm which Habermas (1971) has called technical rationality. Here most intellectual effort goes into solving technical problems such as reducing airline costs, increasing revenue, maximising tourist arrivals and increasing customer satisfaction. These are all valid pursuits but for Habermas, when technical rationality dominates thought, it leads to an over concern with means and an insufficient consideration of ends. In relation to the latter, Habermas drew attention to the importance of the interpretive disciplines which have an emphasis on understanding and explanation of human conduct, interaction, development and purpose. For tourism education a critique of technical rationality is essentially a plea to reset the curriculum so that the purpose of tourism is given due consideration alongside the efficiency of tourism. Students may consider this question:

* **(QS) What is the balance in your tourism course between technical knowledge and critique?**

**What does it mean in the classroom?**

Rethinking the tourism world should not be just a negative or passive activity but rather offer ways of improvement through critical envisioning. As hooks (1994, p. 207) noted “The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility … to move beyond boundaries, to transgress.” The curriculum should be enriched with world-making activities as described below.

1. Workshop - A Vision for a Better Tourism World

Philosophic practice should offer a critical vision of the good life for tourism. Ask your students to:

* Articulate a vision for a better tourism world. This could be through prose, poetry, imagery, or drawing.
* Illustrate the beautiful and the ugly in tourism using photos.
* Consider what steps they can take on a personal level to be a good tourist.

### The world-making workshop

Just as design students can develop their skills in a studio and pilots learn to fly in simulators, tourism students could develop their practical wisdom in a workshop. There are two approaches to this. The first is a case study approach. The method for this would be to use role play to articulate and justify desirable actions that arise from problems posed by case studies. For example, each group might provide a critique of a campaign for change in tourism, identifying the problem and evaluate why the campaign was a success or failure.

The second approach is to reinterpret Schön’s (1987) reflective practicum. The purpose of Schön’s reflective practicum was to improve the practice of professionals for better work but here it is adapted to improve professional practice for a better world. It would entail framing manageable projects in groups and designing solutions the problems identified. These are likely to be complex, messy problems. This is a demanding and exciting project where students can experiment and improvise with ideas and plans. Here teachers act as coaches, facilitating, supporting and engaging students in Socratic dialogue. Classrooms would be reimagined as lively, creative studios.

### Internships for change

Internships are a common part of tourism courses. Internship for change would add “developing practical skills and knowledge for improving tourism” to its benefits and extend traditional placements to include those organisations whose missions are focussed on societal improvement. Examples might include tourism related NGOs, campaign groups and trade unions as well as generalist organisations whose interests impinge on tourism.

Good practice in work placement for change should follow that of regular internships with a careful vetting of placements, the setting of clear objectives, briefings for students and providers, diary keeping, monitoring during placement and post experience reflection (Sweitzer, 2013).

### Activism

Activism is perhaps the most potent expression of world-making. Student activism has a legacy of reshaping society, challenging the status quo by connecting to a variety of social, political and environmental issues, interests and movements.

Students might be asked to consider:

* **(QS) What opportunities exist for me to engage in tourism activism?**

#### Social Media Activism

Vegh (2003) identifies three categories of social media activism:

* + - Awareness and advocacy - involves the creation and distribution information online
    - Organization and mobilisation - social media is used to recruit supporters to a cause and to create and coordinate online and offline events.
    - Action and reaction - social media to encourage activism. This may take the form of reposting, boycotts and the participation in discussions and posting of replies that further a particular cause.

#### Other campaigns for change

#### This can include boycotts, petitions, direct engagement, Artivism and community projects. Creating a petition is another way of appealing for change and [www.Change.org](http://www.Change.org) offers a global platform for petitions.

#### Students may opt for direct engagement with tourism organisations or legislators where they have specific calls for changes to business practices or the law. They might contact the CEO, or their local or national government representative with a clear statement of the issue, supporting evidence and a recommendation for what needs to change.

#### Creating publicity around the issue can help to progress a cause. Students may identify print titles and broadcast media programmes that have a special interest in their area of concern and create a press release, write letters to editors and contact reporters to generate a supporting campaign.

* + Artivism

Aladro-Vico *et al*. (2018) define Artivism as “a hybrid form of art and activism which has a semantic mechanism to use art as a means towards change and social transformation” (p. 9). They further advocate its potential as an educative method for social action “to break the classroom walls, and to remove the traditional roles of creator and receptor, student and professor, through workshop experiences” (p. 9). Professional role models include the UK graffiti artists Banksy and the Chinese dissident Ai-Wei-Wei, and for students, Artivsm offers a creative alternative to the word-centric pedagogy of universities and a way to campaign for change through video, photography, paintings and posters.

#### Pressure group participation

#### There exist several pressure groups which have well established organisation, finance and strategies for achieving change in matters related to tourism. In this case students should be encouraged to research pressure groups whose aims align with their vision for better tourism with a view to membership, participation and fundraising.

#### **Summary**

The practical steps advocated to achieve a shift from a predominately world-taking passive stance to a more active world-making of the tourism curriculum are fourfold. First, the aims of the tourism course should be amended to include the following: “to develop world-making graduates”. Second, the curriculum should be enriched with world-making activities described above. A more ambitious approach would be to introduce a new module titled “Rethinking and remaking tourism” drawing on knowledge from critical theory, philosophy, sociology and political economy and developing practical change-making skills. Third, learning should be facilitated using a problem-based workshop approach. Fourth, the internship coordinator should extend placements to include change-orientated organisations and support materials should be adapted accordingly.

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