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The good guide. Identifying and engendering generic skills in the training of tourist guides.

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1. DEFINING COMPETENCIES, SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

In this chapter we use the words capabilities, skills and competencies as synonyms. In the last twenty years apprenticeships in various trades and vocations have been replaced by a combination of on-the-job training and college based courses. Many governments embraced a new form of vocational education called competency based training (hereafter CBT) and invested huge amounts of money in creating national agencies to implement it. The system should have been more accurately termed ‘competency based assessment’ because the method of assessment was the key ingredient. Trade skills were analysed, learning outcomes specified and as long as students could demonstrate that they were competent (could do what was required) they were given a national trade certificate. The system was designed to avoid lock-step education, maintain up-to-date standards and certify people no matter where or how long they took to develop the desired competence. Another feature of the system was that people who were already doing a good job (tour guides who had interpreted a particular site or city for many years for example) could have their knowledge and skills recognised by submitting a portfolio and being observed at their work. Recognition of prior learning of RPL as it became known saved government, industry and individuals a lot of time and money and helped regulate standards and conditions within rapidly growing industries such as tourism.

Of course industry soon realised that in sensitive vocations such as tour guiding a knowledgeable guide might turn out to be a poor communicator or problem solver. Worse still if that person was guiding people in Kakadu National Park for instance in the Northern Territory of Australia it was crucial that that person was not a racial bigot. Because of this generic as well as specific competencies were introduced. While the movement was clear about specific competencies it was much less certain when it came to generic competencies. In Australia for example there were heated debates about the twelve generic competencies that all trainees should develop irrespective of their vocation or trade. National accreditation is common in almost all western countries today but in the specific area of tour guiding it is still possible to get a job without specific training. This is especially so when demand for guides outstrips supply or when start up

tourist companies seek to cut costs. In some cases the language one speaks can be a deciding factor in obtaining employment. In John le Carré's latest novel, *Absolute Friends*, Ted Bundy is an ex spy cum ex school teacher who works as a tourist guide showing people around a Bavarian castle. He is a good guide but as far as we can tell from the story he never obtained a licence or certificate in guiding. In an earlier article (Mason and Christie, 2004) we pointed out that one can be a guide in the USA without attending a university or college course. Licences are given to potential guides who are able to demonstrate they have good health, no criminal record and can pass a written exam which has one hundred questions some of which are multiple choice, while other are short essay type questions. Guides renew their licence for a small fee each year. No further testing or course attendance is required. However, as in Bundy's case, not all locations require a guide license. New York is one of only a handful of American cities which has traditionally done so (Pond, 1993).

As tourism has become more and more important economically local and federal governments have acted to ensure higher standards of quality within the industry. Guide training is often a prerequisite if one wishes to gain employment. As we noted in the article mentioned above the UK requires guides are required to attend courses, complete coursework and take exams. Such courses can take up to 28 weeks (320 hours) of study and all guides must pass both oral and written exams. Guides in Vienna, Austria are also required to take and pass exams. They need to be fluent in at least two languages, have good health and a basic knowledge of the city. Such courses can take up to three years to complete. In the USA, despite the licence system in some city and states, qualified guides can obtain a certificate, diploma or degree in tourism from at least 130 colleges and universities. Academic programs in the USA tend to be broad in scope. There may be a focus on natural sciences and a focus on resource management and conservation. There may also be the development of public speaking skills and communications theory (Knudson et al 1995). As they state undergraduate courses tend to give a broad view of the philosophy, principles and methods of interpretation and environmental education, while at the post graduate level there is more concern with theory, research, design and management.

In Canada there is now a national tourism human resource council (CTHRC) which can provide experienced guides who have not enrolled in college courses to obtain Professional Certification (http://www.cthrc.ca/procertification_steps.shtml). The programs offered by the council include a formal process of assessment to confirm that a candidate has the required skills and knowledge to perform a job competently. The formal assessment component generally includes a multiple-choice written examination and a practical, on-the-job performance evaluation (also known as an "Industry Evaluation"). Enrolled candidates are supplied with the study tools to prepare for assessment. Once ready, a candidate will:

- Demonstrate that he/she has the required pre-requisites or specified requirements (e.g. relevant work experience).

- Write a national exam (multiple-choice format).
- Be evaluated while on-the-job. This is a practical assessment of one's skills (core performance requirements).

In Australia and New Zealand there is also the opportunity for tour guides to obtain recognition of prior learning and after undergoing a process similar to that in Canada gain a National Certificate. The normal path however is to undertake a course. These courses tend to be skills-based and as such are part of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, rather than being based in universities. In Australia the National Training Authority (ANTA) oversees the accreditation of courses and the production of core modules. The nationally accredited course for tour guides is called Certificate 2 in Tour Guiding. VET providers use national modules as the basis for their own customised courses. The Certificate in Tour Guiding has many advantages - it offers prospective tour guides a modularised course that can be undertaken in stages, a nationally accredited award on completion and much lower fees than apply in higher education (HE). But there are also shortcomings.

A major concern is the lack of a philosophical and theoretical base to many training programs. This can lead to an over emphasis on developing those skills that can be easily measured by some form of competency based assessment while ignoring the development of qualities that are more difficult to measure - the capacity for critical, analytical thought for instance, the ability to communicate in cross cultural situations and the techniques to help tourists expand their tourist experience so that it benefits them and the site they visit. In the *le Carré* book Ted Bundy has many of the skills needed in a good guide – he knows how to control a group of listeners, how to gain and hold their attention and inject into his interpretation of a site interesting details and anecdotes. Clearly he developed these skills independently of any training system. Which raises the question that is central to this chapter. To what extent are generic skills teachable? How do we differentiate for teaching and learning purposes those generic skills that students bring with them to a course as opposed to those that are acquired as a result of their training? Even prior to asking these questions we need to ascertain what are the skills that a good guide needs? Can we differentiate between generic and specific skills in guiding? If we can then how do we define, engender and assess generic skills in the training of tourist guides?

A less important question but nevertheless an interesting one is why different countries use different terms for the vocational education they offer. In the 1980s when community colleges and vocational training centres began to run courses in tourism the focus was very much on specific skills. In Australia and New Zealand the movement was commonly referred to as a competency based one, whereas in England and Canada it tended to be called skills or capabilities based. Of the three words 'skill' is probably the simplest to use and understand. It means knowing how to do something. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as 'expertness, practised ability, facility in an action or in doing something'. The terms 'capability' and 'competence' are more complicated. Originally capability meant 'an underdeveloped faculty or

property'. The eighteenth century English landscape gardener, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown got his nickname because of his habit of looking at land he was asked to landscape and saying 'it has capabilities'. However Brown was also capable in the modern sense of the word. He had 'the power, ability, competence and talent to do something'. Brown combined specific knowledge and practical skills in his chosen profession with more general talents: the ability to see the big picture, to communicate with his clients, to motivate his workers and to combine economics and aesthetics. No matter what terms we choose there has been in recent years much more focus on developing generic as well as specific skills in students undertaking courses at universities and colleges. Unfortunately the terms are often used loosely and in different contexts. In this chapter we intend to specify some of the generic competencies that the good guide needs and suggest some ways of teaching or engendering them. The most difficult question we try to answer is how does one know that one has been successful in developing generic competencies in students who undertake tourism training courses.

1.1. Specific capabilities at the subject or discipline level

It is not so difficult to describe what we mean by specific capabilities at the subject level. These are usually mentioned in course handbooks. One way to locate them is to go to the aims and objectives of a course. For the most part the specific capabilities that are mentioned there relate to knowledge of the subject. For example a course in tourism might require that its students can demonstrate specific competencies in regard to a key concept like safety. Those competencies might include both intellectual capacity (the ability to solve cases involving dangerous situations) as well as more practical skills (the ability to build put out a fire or give artificial respiration). Even in disciplines like maths, literature or history that rely so much more on mental skills there are always some practical skills that are needed, even if it is simply using computer tools such as matlab or literary or historical databases. The term specific capability can, it seems, embrace both intellectual and practical skills. Sometimes the course handbook will also contain references to attitudes and values. For example a handbook from the Law faculty might mention that the aim of such and such a course is to develop an understanding of and commitment to client confidentiality. A similar aim might be mentioned in medicine where client confidentiality is also important. Does the fact that such an aim crosses discipline borders mean it is generic rather than specific? We would argue that as long as the capability can be linked directly to the subject or set of subjects it is best referred to as a specific capability. Client confidentiality for example is not of concern to traditional historians whose work is based on documents that are in the public domain. On the other hand as disciplines change so do the sort of capabilities required of graduates. Now that oral history is an acceptable form of research an ethical attitude towards client confidentiality is also important.

1.2. Generic capabilities at the subject or discipline level

Occasionally course descriptions will mention aims that are not directly related to the course content. They might say for example that an aim of the course is that students should learn how to think laterally or be able to work in groups or be capable of effectively presenting the results

of a project. Such capabilities are obviously useful no matter what the subject. Since they transcend subject and discipline boundaries we can call such capabilities generic. Generic capabilities, like the specific capabilities mentioned above, can refer to both cognitive and behavioural capacity. Problem solving ability could require an ability to think analytically or laterally, but it might also require the capacity to carry out a procedure (a fire drill) that depends on knowing how to use equipment in a competent manner. Being adept at the use of 'scientific method' is a fairly obvious case of a generic capability that applies across the sciences, just as logical, rational argument is generic to the humanities. One needs to be careful. Postmodernism presents a potent challenge to this claim for both science and the humanities. Most of the knowledge produced in western universities has been founded on these rational, empirical 'skills'. When postmodernism challenges the truth claims produced by these methods it inevitably challenges the methods or skills themselves. In a post-modern world knowledge, skills and values are relative. Nevertheless if a course description refers to desirable knowledge, skills or values which transcend the particular subject or course, for example the ability to make ethical decisions, then we can argue at least for its generic nature. That different groups might define ethical behaviour differently is another issue.

1.3. Specific and generic capabilities at the degree level

VET programs work particularly well for training people in practical skills, skills that a trainee can demonstrate rather than describe. Tourist guides in Australia are expected to complete a module in health and safety, including elementary first aid. Such a skill can be tested at the completion of a course and this is one of the strengths of competency based training (Gonzi, 1992: 240-2). An assessor in this system is generally less interested in how a trainee arrived at a competency than in the level of the skill they demonstrate on graduation. Trainees who already have skills when they begin training, or are particularly quick at picking them up, can be fast tracked through a program. While this system works well with skills-based programs we have argued previously that it is less appropriate for training programs where less tangible qualities are inculcated. Tourist guides are more like teachers than tradespeople and their training should reflect this (Mason and Christie, 2004). Which takes us back to our central question: what constitutes the good guide? This is a loaded question since it begs further inquiry? Good for whom? Good for what?

There is no doubt that the conferring of a certificate, diploma or degree involves a wide range of interest groups. A degree is after all a meal ticket. Because of this industry will stress certain specific and generic capabilities, government others while the vocational college or university will advocate capabilities related to its own vision (see below). Teachers and students will tend to endorse the sort of capabilities that were integral to the various courses making up the degree. Many of the capabilities will overlap but if we take the example of tour guide training most will agree that a guide needs to have a fundamental understanding of the site he or she is interpreting (specific capability) as well as the ability to find that information and communicate it in an

appropriate way. Wrapped up in the word appropriate, however, is a whole range of generic capabilities. Empathy with an audience so that the tone and vocabulary are suitable. Awareness of gender and multicultural issues. Sensitivity to environmental factors and so on. Because there are a number of stakeholders involved it is essential that all those concerned in the delivery and awarding of degrees map the sort of capabilities a good guide should have. This means a regular updating of specific and generic capabilities at the subject and discipline level. Because universities and colleges are founded for particular purposes they can, in their turn, support the development of a special set of specific and generic capabilities. Small rural universities for example often have as part of their vision the aim to develop specific and generic capabilities in their graduates which will serve the community that supports them. The Northern Territory University in Australia for example, which is established in an area where 25% of the population are Aboriginal people aims at developing graduate attributes in its tour operators and guides qualities that include multicultural awareness.

2. IDENTIFYING, IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING KEY CAPABILITIES

As a first step identifying the qualities of a good guide we interviewed a number of students enrolled in a tour guide course in the tourist town of Vadstena in Sweden. Our sample was small (25 students) but the process was seen as a pilot for a larger survey. The students were simply asked to write about a tourist guide they admired. They did this prior to a workshop where they sat in small groups and discussed the qualities of the guides they had written about. The group was asked to reach consensus on what they thought were the three most important qualities of those they had discussed. We also used participant observation. One of the authors travelled with another group of students from the same town during their practicum. This field trip consisted of taking a train north and visiting sites in and around the mining town of Kiruna in the north of Sweden. The group also travelled to a small settlement on the northernmost border of Sweden, (Riksgransen) where they visited an ecological centre. During the tour the students, in pairs, were asked to interpret sites they had studied as well as attend tours where professional guides were in charge. One professional guide took the group two kilometres underground to see a working iron ore mine. Discussions were held throughout the tour on the qualities of a good guide and examples were taken from both student and professional interpretation of sites. The iron mine experience was subsequently compared with three other mining tours, one in a former coal mine on the border of Holland and Belgium, one in disused gold mine at Sovereign Hill in Victoria, Australia and one in a small abandoned iron mine outside Örebro in Sweden. In addition we also acted as anonymous observers on conventional tours in a number of European cities in order to compare and contrast different styles of tour guiding.

What is interesting to report is that the resulting list of qualities that we identify with the good guide is one that most lay people would intuitively agree with. We have mentioned some of these qualities above but the keystone qualities identified in our survey are knowledge ability of the

site and good communication skills. The responses from the student tourist guides (who had, during their studies, meet many professional guides on field trips and practicum placements) allowed us to fine tune these two fundamental qualities. Knowledge was the bedrock but how it was presented was crucial. The students responded most positively to guides that could use their knowledge in versatile ways. For example a guide at Universeum in Gothenburg, Sweden, was able to interpret the animal and other exhibits in an informative and interesting way to a whole range of different groups, ranging from small children and to rowdy schoolboys to adults and serious science students. He did this by adapting to the group. Literally, getting down to the level of the small children or psychologically by giving responsible and prestigious tasks to the most likely ringleader of schoolboy mischief. Elin, for example, said of this guide ‘Klas not only was an inspiring guide. He also did his best to make sure that everyone in the group enjoyed themselves. If he noticed someone in the group was quieter or shyer he sensitively drew them out a little. It was a good way of underlining that one doesn’t just listen to the nosiest in the group’. The main reason she thought Klas was a good guide however was his pedagogical skills. ‘The main reason Klas is the guide I want to write about is because he didn’t just teach or preach (like a lot of guides I have experienced) but rather he inspired the group to ask questions and discuss the exhibits. In other words he allowed everyone to take part in the guided experience’. Other students wrote about this guide and a common theme was that he was not just a good guide but also a delightful person. Which takes us back of course to generic skills and competencies and whether or not they can be taught.

There were a number of variations on theme of good communication. One touched on the specific language skills. In a number of descriptions students spoke about guides like Monica who could speak at least three languages fluently. Like Ed Bundy in *Absolute Friends*, who wore a bowler hat, carried a soap box to gain height and drew people into a tight circle around him so he could be heard, Monica had a blue cap and insisted her group come near enough to hear comfortably. How do we summarize such pedagogical qualities. Surely they are common sense. Jessica spoke of a guide who interpreted a cloister church, a subject she had no interest in at all. And yet, by dint of the guide’s erudition and a pleasant and varied speaking voice Jessica was enthralled. In another insight into pedagogical issues Jessica pointed out that the guide restricted himself to those things he really knew about. In a couple of responses the students touched on the issue of credibility. Jonatan experienced a guided tour of a theme park by the director of the park. He was impressed both by the man’s wide knowledge and his use of educational technology (a slide show) to enrich the experience. Jonatan touched on another quality that reappeared often in the student descriptions, namely enthusiasm for the subject and site. Another aspect of good communication that reoccurred was the use of humour to maintain interest. One student wrote about Annette, a guide in her sixties, who was in charge of a bus tour in Mallorca. Apart from being extremely knowledgeable she also happened to be very funny. What is interesting to note in going through these responses is how similar they are to responses in another research project conducted in the area of teacher training. The same simple question was

asked: wrote about a teacher you admire. The qualities that were prioritised in the subsequent discussions were almost identical to those we found in this study. The good guide should be knowledgeable in his or her area, a good communicator, enthusiastic about the site or subject, capable of relating to and managing a group and have a pleasant voice and a personality.

In our participant observations we observed the same set of skills or competencies. What was interesting was that in the guided experience of the four mines the various guides exhibited most of the above qualities but in different degrees. The female guide in Kiruna was extremely knowledgeable and had the advantage of building on the experience itself – a journey in a small buss into the bowels of the earth. In all the mines the dramatic location added to the experience but what was interesting to observe was how the guide built on or took advantage of the site itself. In almost all cases guides interpret places of interest. But what interests one tourist, as Jessica mentioned above, might not interest another. In the abandoned coal mine beneath the Dutch and Belgian border the guide relied heavily on his use of humour and his own confident and playful personality. The experience of a former gold mine in a world class theme park called Sovereign hill was extremely interesting but owed more to the site itself than any memorable ‘performance’ on the part of the guide. What is interesting to note is that in that case there was a large clump of tourists whereas in the Swedish iron mine we were a small group of family and friends who had rung and arranged that the mine be opened and explained to us. In the latter case the guide was not qualified but the intimacy of the experience gave more than the production line feeling we had at the theme park.

All this brings us back to the questions posed above. Whose responsibility is it to identify and engender desirable generic capabilities in tour guides. How can it best be done? And to the question implied in the title of this paper. How will one know if the process has been successful? How one answers these questions depends very much on one’s view of vocational education. We have argued that the world of formal adult education changed radically in the latter part of the twentieth century. The key to this change was increased government control, mainly due to a perceived need that tertiary education had to be more accountable and more instrumental. Tertiary education and training went from an elite to a mass form of education. A significant turning point occurred in the 1980s when the battle over which institutions could be called universities was lost and governments in many parts of the western world created a unified system. Colleges of advanced education, technical colleges, teaching colleges even agricultural colleges were merged and multi-campus universities created. In more isolated areas even community colleges that offered a few degree courses were called universities. At the same time in a number of western countries a system of vocational education and training was established (see above) and attempts made to give the degrees that they awarded similar status to a university degree. The rationale for such changes was economic rationalism. The same argument was used to kill off courses and disciplines (classics for example) that were deemed no longer useful. The pressure from both government and industry was for universities especially to ask a fundamentally different question. Not ‘Is it true?’ but rather ‘Is it useful’. This pressure is being

maintained today both in the areas of research and teaching and as we saw above in the USA many universities offer degrees in tourism. Another interesting development, although one beyond the scope of this chapter, is that many universities have created their own departments of continuing education or travel associations that run educational tours.

Who is responsible for identifying generic capabilities?

In the changed world of tertiary education one thing has remained remarkably stable. Although courses and even disciplines might die a slow death those that remain healthy are still given a fair amount of academic freedom. This is in contrast with what has happened in vocational education where national curriculum bodies are common. When it comes to specific capabilities, as we have defined them, university academics themselves are still largely responsible for identifying them. They also have a large degree of input into choosing generic capabilities. Industry and government, especially through funding and quality assurance agencies, exert a great deal of power but nowhere near the same power as in vocational education. In order to compete for funds universities and academics themselves tend to include in their curriculum those sort of generic capabilities that are in vogue. The enormous investment that universities have made in information communication technology and the pressure on teachers to make all courses available in a flexible learning mode is an example of this. Computer skills are a generic capability that all university students are expected to develop, irrespective of the course they take. The fact that many academics are reluctant to adapt their courses so that such skills will be engendered naturally via email contact, discussion forums on the web, net based assessment and so on, highlights the point that others, outside the subject or discipline level, are often the ones who call the shots when it comes to generic capabilities. In the vocational education field the established norm in western societies is that local, regional and national agencies that often include college, government and industry representatives oversee the skills audits that are used to define generic and specific competencies in a particular field and make sure that they are regularly updated.

Organised attempts to define specific and generic competencies for tourist guides is much less common in developing countries. Even in countries like India, which is currently challenging western countries in terms of economic development and technological know how, the organised training of tourist guides is still under developed. The tourism offices of the Government of India offer a training course but it has only been offered a few times in the last decade. The Indian Institute of Tourism Management (IITM) has now authorised the Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management to introduce a one year postgraduate diploma in Tourism Management which includes some material on guiding. This course began in 2002. Applicants must have passed the all India admission test to gain entry. In Gujarat the Tourism Corporation runs a tourist guide training course but as yet there is no national body such as ANTA mentioned above that oversees vocational training in this area.

2.1. Who is responsible for the development of generic capabilities in tourist guide training?

In one sense it is the responsibility of all the various stakeholders in tourist guide training to agree on and engender appropriate generic capabilities. This is obvious if we take a fundamental capability such as communication skills. At the subject and course level individual teachers and teaching teams can affect the development of this skill by varying traditional ways of teaching. Lectures can help engender communication skills by making sure that students have to work together in and across subjects, by videotaping them presenting ideas verbally as individuals and in groups and by adapting lectures so that they are more interactive. Field trips such as the ones mentioned above are also excellent opportunities to develop a range of communication skills. Lecturers occasionally do pair work in lectures. Administrators can design teaching and meeting places that really encourage interaction. Industry, government and other funding bodies can also seek expert guidance on how generic capabilities might be fostered before committing large sums of money to teaching and learning infrastructure. Lecture halls may persist at tertiary institutions because of economies of scale but there is no reason why the seating arrangement has to always imply one way communication. Rows of fixed seats be replaced with groups of swivel chairs to allow students to communicate more easily with others nearby. In other words timely planning by funding bodies can help ensure that the media they pay for deliver the right messages.

2.2. The ultimate responsibility for developing generic capabilities

There is a simple answer as to who is ultimately responsible for developing desirable generic capabilities. Since such capabilities have to be learned the responsibility rests with the learner. Learners learn. Teachers, institutions, government, professional bodies, industry and ultimately society can facilitate or hinder their learning. In a world where established values have been eroded some of the most important generic capabilities are linked to values. Tourist guides are crucial agents in the changing paradigm of tourism business. They are the face of a large sector within tourism. Because it is they who interpret the site, whether that site be an historical building like the Taj Mahal or a national park controlled jointly by government and indigenous landholders such as Kakadu. What do major stakeholders in the tourist industry want from its guides? Again the question is complicated and can only be answered with reference to other discussions in this book. These discussions touch on the rapid development of tourism in new destinations and regions (often culturally and environmentally sensitive), the balancing of commercially viable tours with sustainable ones (not killing off the goose that lays the golden egg) and the creation of more holistic tourist experiences. The good guide has to have a much better understanding today of his or her role in this changing paradigm. As tourists seek new and more exciting experiences and look for people to help interpret them the guide must be conscious of conflicting values and the ethics involved in resolving them. Rapid changes within tourism raise many ethical issues. Tour guide training must take account of this and try to inculcate the ethical values associated with this vocation. It is important that students also develop a generic capability that enables them to analyse their own actions and those of others and make ethical judgements about them. More importantly they need to act on the basis of such judgements. In a recent tour of New Zealand some fellow tourists asked the guide about the Maoris. The response was a garbled mixture of racist prejudice and muddled history. The guide had not been trained

and because of his position as guide no one challenged him. It was not our position as participant observers to do so but it underlined the need for training that includes the development of generic competencies such as ethical behaviour, critical reflection and a sense of sustainable tourism. Multiply this experience thousands of times and one of New Zealand's greatest assets (its Polynesian history and culture) could be undermined.

2.3. Engendering generic capabilities

So how should we try to engender and test for such capabilities. Just as specific capabilities are best planned and implemented at the subject and discipline level, so generic capabilities are most effectively considered and enacted at the course level. The Australian model is probably a very useful one for developing countries that are considering a national approach. ANTA has rules and procedures for the defining and implementation of specific and generic competencies in various vocational fields including tourism and tourist guide training. The academic board of each institution has the responsibility to specify more exactly the generic capabilities that fit the national template but also suit the local situation. The course team has the responsibility to ensure that these generic capabilities are incorporated into its curriculum. The subject team needs to define the ways these capabilities are engendered and assessed in its particular subject. Finally it is the students' responsibility to develop portfolios that demonstrate their progress in attaining the generic capabilities that are identified by academic board.

2.4. Assessing generic capabilities

Assessing generic skills is particularly difficult. Fortunately the competency based training movement (CBT) helps somewhat. If guides undertake training over a number of months or years and are required to do a substantial amount of practical work the lecturers involved in the course have the opportunity of making a professional judgement regarding the students communication skills, cross cultural awareness, ethical behaviour and concern for and understanding of the sustainable tourist experience. Students should have the opportunity of submitting a portfolio where they can give proof of their reflection on and acquisition of generic skills. The portfolio would be a complement to their observed practice. The criteria on which the student is assessed should be made clear from the beginning and activities designed that do indeed test, continuously and in a varied form, the acquisition of the sort of generic skills mentioned above. These skills could be acquired before or during the course but even if a student already possesses such a skill there should be an indication of further development or refinement of them during the course. CBT was originally introduced as a non graded system. People who underwent courses were assessed and deemed competent or not competent. We think it is important that in any assessment of generic capabilities grading should be avoided. We would argue that grading generic capabilities is next to impossible, especially when one tries to do so with those that involve attitudes and values. In this respect vocational education can learn a lot from non-formal adult education. If training institutions, course teams, and individual trainers committed themselves to developing the capability for 'transformative learning' in all their graduates they would lay the foundation for a successful generic capabilities program.

Essentially transformative learning equips the individual with the capacity to recognise the paradigmatic, causal and prescriptive assumptions that underpin his or her belief system, to hunt down those that are invalid and enact changes accordingly. Changing behaviour is of course the hardest thing to achieve in this process. It ultimately depends on the individual's willingness to change. The influence of peers and mentors and the educational environment itself can help here. But until the trainee guides recognise that there is a need for change, that their 'habits of mind' or 'frames of reference' need changing then no such change is possible. Tour guide training can help develop this capability by emphasising in all subjects analytical, critically reflective thought. But sometimes this is not enough. A commitment to transformative learning, which deliberately hunts the assumptions underlying all aspects of tourism training (knowledge, skills and attitudes) and helps trainee guides determine their validity is a first step in engendering the sort of generic capabilities that characterise the 'good guide'.

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