Transformative Tour Guiding: Training Tour Guides to be Critically Reflective Practitioners

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Transformative tour guiding: training tour guides to be critically reflective practitioners

Michael F Christie and Peter Mason

Abstract
Tour guiding is part of the process of interpretation. In the past guides were usually untrained (McArthur, 1996), but guide training is now common in most developed countries. The training of tour guides is an adult education activity (Tilden, 1957; Pond, 1993). It can be a particularly effective one because well trained guides can educate as well as entertain their clients. Good training should lead to change - change in the way one thinks and acts. This article argues that if trainee guides learn how to critique their own knowledge, attitudes and behaviour they will be able to offer their clients something more than a superficial introduction to a new environment, country or culture. Current guide training practices are discussed and a model of training that could improve the quality of guiding, add commercial value to the tourist industry and help sustain tourism sites is proposed.

Introduction

There is growing body of literature to support the contention that tourism can alter people and places. A tourism destination, or a host people, that attracts tourists can be unintentionally exploited. Increasing numbers of tourists may change the nature of the location until it is no longer a popular destination and therefore no longer profitable for the tour operator (Butler, 1980; Hong, 1985; Mason and Mowforth, 1996). The economic, moral, social and cultural changes that have occurred can be seen as both negative or positive but negative change can outweigh the brief economic benefits that tourism brings to the site (O’Grady, 1980; Krippendorf, 1987; Lea, 1988; Mowforth and Munt, 1997).

On the positive side tourism can change the way people (tourists and those in host locations) think and act. Tourists who are exposed to political and social conditions that they never dreamed of can learn to appreciate what they have and become more willing to assist those who plainly have so much less. Those whose culture, country or landscape becomes the object of tourism can also be changed for the better. Part of that change may be a greater awareness that people do things differently and that illiteracy or oppression - to use Friere's (1972) terms - do not have to be accepted as one's lot in life. For the most part, however, tourism is an activity undertaken by people from richer countries visiting people and places in poorer countries and the potential for negative effects is high (Krippendorf, 1987; Mowforth and Munt, 1997).

In this article it is suggested that the training of those who guide tourists tends to ignore that tourism is a transformative experience. A more critically reflective approach to the practice of organised tourism is proposed and in particular a more thoughtful form of tourist guide training.

The Role of the Tour Guide
Tour guides may be the most maligned people in the world of travel. They are blamed for the problems of travel such as bad weather and traffic jams. They are also called the shepherds of the industry, as they herd tourists around safely and try to ensure that they return with fond memories of their holiday (Ang, 1990).

Early tour guides were usually unpaid, but had a strong motivation and a desire to share the feelings and values they held with others (McArthur, 1996). They also wanted to promote a conservation ethic, McArthur claimed, in order to ensure what they had first experienced was maintained in the same state.

In one of the major works on guiding, The Professional Guide, Pond (1993) suggested that a tour guide has five roles: leader, educator, public relations representative, host and conduit. Pond indicated that these five may appear as separate roles, but they are in practice ‘interwoven and synergistic’ (1993:76). Pond also suggested that the roles of tour guide and adult instructor are very similar. She suggested an adult educator has four key roles: a programmer who sets up the conditions to facilitate learning, a guide, a content resource and an institutional representative.

The guide’s role as educator has been regarded by some as the most important (see Pond, 1993, Holloway, 1981). Pond argued, however, that the roles of teacher and guide, although similar, are not identical. Guides must focus on the diversity of an audience, be more flexible and be more aware of their other roles (leader, host, public relations and conduit) than teachers, Pond suggested.

Rogers (1983) has argued that the conduit, the facilitator of learning, is the most important role of an adult educator, particularly in a rapidly changing world; As he stated:

“A reliance on process, rather than static knowledge is the only thing that makes any sense as goal for the modern world. When I have been able to transform a group - and I here I mean all members of a group, myself included - into a community of learners, then the excitement has been beyond belief” (Rogers1983, )

The main interaction involved in tour guiding is between the visitor and the guide. Howard (1997) indicated the guide’s role in relation to the visitor is as follows: telling (provision of information); selling (interactive communication that explains and clarifies); participating (being a part of activity); and delegating (giving responsibility to some future behaviour). As Ang (1990) suggested, the tour guide has an important role as buffer between the visitor and the site visited. The role of the tour guide in this situation can be viewed as assisting in the interpretation of the site for the visitor. The relationship between tour guiding and interpretation is discussed in the next section.

**Interpretation and Tour Guiding**

Interpretation can involve a number of processes and activities. In what is widely regarded as the first major text expounding a philosophy of interpretation Tilden (1957) suggested that it is an educational process which employs objects, illustrative media and the use of firsthand experience. The aim of interpretation, Tilden claimed, is to reveal meaning and relationships. A variety of ‘objects’, such as urban monuments,
works of art and flora and fauna, as well as media such as print and photographs can be used to achieve this (Pond, 1993).

Tour guiding, with its key role to inform and educate visitors, is a part of the process of interpretation (Knudson et al, 1995 Pond, 1993, Prentice, 1995). A recent attempt to define interpretation (Prentice 1995) reveals that, in addition to the educational aim, the process can be place specific and is an attempt to modify the attitudes and behaviour of visitors. As Prentice suggested interpretation is:

“a process of communicating to people the significance of a place so that they can enjoy it more, understand its importance and develop a positive attitude to conservation. Interpretation is used to enhance the enjoyment of place, to convey symbolic meaning and to facilitate attitudinal or behavioural change”. (Prentice 1995: 55)

Interpretation can therefore be seen as part of the process of making places accessible to a public audience and providing visitors with insights into places (Stewart et al, 1998) Interpretation can be viewed as both a programme and an activity. The programme establishes the outcome for the agency who runs the program, be it private or public, while the activity has the general intention of attempting to create an understanding of the site for the visitors (Howard, 1997). The more specific aims of an interpretation programme are ‘to stimulate, facilitate and extend people’s understanding of place so that empathy towards conservation, heritage, culture and landscape is developed’ (Stewart et al., 1998: 257).

Interpretive guided activities takes place in recreational or tourism settings where visitors typically have freedom of choice and are in contact with natural or cultural heritage for only a short period of time. Howard (1997) uses Maslow’s (1943) theory to suggest that those who participate in guided activities are doing so to meet certain of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Maslow suggested that a need creates a tension, pleasant or unpleasant that has to be resolved. The goal of people’s behaviour is therefore to reduce the tension.

Howard (1997) suggested that the decision to participate in a guided tour will be based on the expectation that certain needs will be fulfilled. Howard suggested that the Maslow’s (1943) relatively high level needs of seeking friendship, personal development and recognition appear key motivations for participating in guided tours. Knudson et al (1995), however, suggested that many visitors find it necessary to satisfy their lower level needs and the need for refreshment, relief and details on the length of stay are uppermost on people’s minds.

To maximise the experience of visitors and minimise discomfort, Howard (1997) suggested three principles should be employed. These are as follows: i) minimise the threat to safety or to psychological needs ii) satisfy social esteem, self actualisation needs and iii) avoid mixing groups with different needs).
The process of interpretation, however, does not aim solely to provide a safe and comfortable experience for participants. As Stewart et al (1998) indicated a major aim is to stimulate interest and develop understanding in visitors. It has been argued that visitors can respond to interpretation in two major ways (Moscardo and Pearce, 1986, Moscardo, 1996). Moscardo (1996) suggested that visitors have two modes of response for dealing with new social situations: ‘mindless’ or ‘mindful’. A ‘mindless’ state is characterised by mental passivity and behaviour, while ‘mindful’ means a state marked by active mental processing (Moscardo and Pearce, 1986, Moscardo, 1996). Langer (1989) indicated that mindfulness is the active creating of categories. To be mindful is, therefore, to appreciate the possibilities of the way the world works, rather than be trapped by existing labels and preconceptions. Pearce et al (1998) suggested that mindfulness is more than cynicism and is the positive recognition of the ‘what if’ or ‘but perhaps’ approach to examining information. Moscardo (1996) argued the importance of promoting ‘mindful’ tourism through interpretation programmes.

Only a limited amount of research has been conducted into the effectiveness of interpretation. Stewart et al (1998) indicated that what evaluation studies of interpretation exist usually determine their effectiveness by how much factual information visitors can recall. Such studies, however, provide little idea of how people use interpretation to help them understand places they are visiting, they argued.

Orams (1994, 1995) suggested that interpretation programmes are usually designed not just to inform, but to change visitors’ behaviour. There is little evidence, however, to suggest that interpretation programmes will necessarily lead to a change in the behaviour of visitors, Orams (1995) indicated. He suggested the need to conduct evaluation to ascertain any changes in behaviour and advocated the use of ‘cognitive dissonance’ as a way to get visitors to modify their behaviour. The theory of cognitive dissonance was developed by Festinger (1957). The central concepts of the theory are ‘dissonance, consonance and irrelevance’. Festinger suggested that the existence of dissonance is psychologically uncomfortable, and hence this will motivate a person to reduce this and attempt to achieve consonance. Orams (1994) argued that cognitive dissonance can be used in interpretative programmes to challenge people’s belief systems. Such programmes would be an attempt to throw people off balance and put questions in their minds. Orams suggested that the eliciting of emotional responses from visitors, as part of a strategy involving cognitive dissonance, may be the way to counter the problems inherent in educating tourists.

This section has reviewed the role of tour guiding within interpretation. Interpretation, it has been suggested, is an educational process, which involves not only the transfer of knowledge but the development of values to the environment and culture of the site visited (Prentice, 1995, Stewart et al, 1998). It has been argued that visitors to a site have particular needs and interpretation can be used to meet these (Howard, 1997). Interpretation can also be used to transform visitors thinking and behaviour, with the intention that they become ‘mindful’ tourists (Moscardo and Pearce, 1986; Moscardo, 1996). Orams (1995) however suggested that there is little evidence that education programmes within interpretation necessarily lead to changes in behaviour. He argued for the use of interpretative programmes which provoke an emotional response and challenge visitor’s beliefs. In this way he hopes such programmes will lead visitors to modify their attitudes and behaviour.
Interpretation is an educational process (Tilden, 1957, Prentice, 1995). Tour guides have a major role in delivering interpretation programmes. Guides will therefore require the skills to be (at least) an educator. Such skills can be developed and improved through training programmes. The next section discusses the provision of education and training courses for guides.

The Training of Tour Guides

Howard (1997) suggested that despite its long history tour guiding has no theoretical base and that consequently there is a need to create benchmarks and best practice principles. Ang (1990) argued that guiding should be a more professional activity, and claimed that training is vital. Ang stressed the importance of guides when she said:

‘they exist not merely as a mouthpeice, mindlessly rattling information or as a merciless shopping sales person ...The job calls for commitment, enthusiasm and integrity as ‘the entire experience of the tourist lies in their hands’ (Ang, 1990:171)

Pond (1993) suggested that guides need the following qualities: broad based knowledge about the area they are guiding within, enthusiasm, committed to life long learning, have empathy and sensitivity for people, flexibility, pride in serving others and the ‘ability to interpret by painting mental pictures’ (1993:93). She argued that some of these qualities could be developed through training. Knudson et al (1995) also discussed basic qualities of a guide when discussing how to be an effective speaker. They suggested these are amiability, enthusiasm, confidence, delivery and organisation. While Knudson et al (1995) acknowledged some of these qualities are not subject to an educational input, they indicated it is vital that interpreters are trained. They suggested that good interpreters usually develop slowly through careful study, the gaining of much experience and continued training.

Cherem (1977) argued for the best possible training for all in guiding. He stressed the importance of the skills of delivery over the actual knowledge when he claimed all guides are interpreters first, and subject specialists second. Hence Cherem argued for courses in interpretive methods, as well field courses, research and theory.

When arguing that education is a particularly important part of the evolution of any profession Pond (1993) suggested that it was particularly significant within guiding. She indicated, however that there are great variations in guiding standards and qualifications across the world.

Knudson et al (1995) stated that there at least 130 universities in North America providing a professional education for interpreters at undergraduate and post-graduate level. They indicated that 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.
However it is still possible to be a guide in the USA without attending a university course (Pond, 1993). Licences are given to those 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, not all locations require a guide license although New York is one of only a handful of American cities which does (Pond, 1993).

In UK guides are required to attend courses, complete coursework and take exams. By law, qualified guides are to wear the highly respected “Blue Badge” (Pond, 1993). In London obtaining the Blue Badge takes approximately 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. Potential guides are required to take courses in art, music, drama, politics, history, geography, Austrian history and additionally speaking techniques. A course takes three years to complete and exams take place in all subjects, a foreign languages and the particular language in which guides will take tours.

In Canada attempts have being made to produce a nation wide set of standards for guide training (Pond, 1993). The organisation attempting this is supported by Tourism Canada, the official government body for tourism.

In the early 1980s, the Yukon State (Government of Yukon, 1982) proposed a model of guide training which was concerned mainly with developing knowledge and understanding. This model also had a particular emphasis on skill development, some of which was to be applied to certain circumstances, such as wilderness areas. In relation to leadership skills the course did however make reference to guide ethics and responsibilities, although these were not spelled out in detail in the report.

In the Caribbean a self teach guide for guides has been produced. This has been produced for the islands of Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, the Grenadines and the Bahamas in conjunction with the Organistion of American States and covers topics such as assertiveness, communication, and social skills and voice training (Pond, 1993).

In Australia and New Zealand courses for guides 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.

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 would argue 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.

This point is best made by reference to an actual course. In the Northern Territory of Australia would be tourist guides can undertake the national Certificate 2 in Tour Guiding or a Certificate 3 in Tour Driver Guiding. Training takes place at Jabiru, a town in the heart of Kakadu National Park, a world heritage area. Apart from the natural beauty of the Park and its dangerous and unusual wildlife (crocodiles are common) visitors are drawn by the fact that Aboriginal culture is still strong in this part of Australia. In addition to commercial tour operators there are seventy five officers of the Australian National Conservation Agency working in the park and they run a number of educational programmes. A large a proportion of the staff (40% of the total) are Aboriginal and they often take guided walks. Ryan indicated that this had been benefited tourism in the Park. As he stated:

The ability of Aborigine’s to share, learn and where necessary re-discover traditional values within a context of environmental conservation is perhaps one of the success stories of ....the Park. (Ryan,1998:137)

Most of these Aboriginal rangers have undertaken the Certificate 3 in Tour Driver Guiding and the current intake is made up of Aboriginal people from communities that have tourist facilities and non Aboriginal people who hope to get work with private tour companies. All students benefit from the practical training they get in the use and maintenance of four wheel drive vehicles, first aid, health and safety, and other skills. These fit well in a competency based training package. It is clear from Ryan's study (1993) and the structure of the course itself that cultural awareness and the ability to intrepret Aboriginal history and lifestyle are important aspects of training for Kakadu National Park guides. Our question is how appropriate is a competency based training program for teaching and testing this ability. How appropriate is it for training guides to promote what we call 'transformative tourism'.

This larger question begs many subsidaiary ones. How does one train and test the ability of a mixed group of student guides in interpreting the richness and variety of Kakadu's cultural environment? Does one test for attitudes as well as knowledge? Can a person who is hostile to Aboriginal culture still interpret that culture competently? The situation that Ryan describes (Ryan, 1998) where traditional owners, some of whom are trained as guides, conduct walks is ideal. But over a million visitors enter the
Northern Territory every year and over a quarter of them end up visiting Kakadu (Ryan, 1993). Many of these tourists are catered for by non Aboriginal tour companies, employing white guides some of whom have completed the Certificate in Tour Guiding. Can we be confident that having passed the course they are competent in the area of cross cultural communication. How does one demonstrate this? Someone who can change a tire in a competency based test can be deemed competent in tyre changing. Someone who can mouth cross cultural platitudes is not necessarily a good cross cultural communicator. Guiding in cross cultural situations requires sensitivity as well as erudition and this is better taught and tested in a more holistic program.

A model for Transformative Tour Guide Training

Competency based courses rarely ask the bigger, philosophical questions that go to the heart of what we refer to as transformative tourism. We believe that any educative experience (and we place the tourism experience in this category) results in some form of change. Such a change might be slight - the acquisition of some new facts or a new insight into the way other people live. On the other hand the change could be considerable - a rejection of certain stereotypes and attitudes or a new way of viewing the world. If change, however miniscule, is inevitable do we train guides to be aware of the changes they may deliberately or inadvertently effect? We would argue that the guide has a role to play in transformative tourism.

The definition of transformative tourism is more specific than the one presented and discussed so far. It can be defined as ‘the practice of organized tourism that leads to a positive change in attitudes and values among those who participate in the tourist experience’. The good tour guide offers his clients the opportunity of seeing the world differently (Knudson et al., 1995; Pond, 1993), hence ecotourism guide training must prepare guides for this role. This is not to suggest that a guide should badger or indoctrinate clients. In the model proposed here, any change, to be effective, must be voluntary. Hence, it is up to the clients to act on their new insight and so transform themselves.

There are a number of assumptions in the preceding paragraph. We assume for instance that the good guide will not simply entertain but also facilitate learning. We do not see these two things as mutually exclusive. Learning can be fun just as fun can be instructive. Many of us have experienced the horror guide who appeals to the lowest common denominator in a tourist group by regaling it with sexist, racist or distasteful jokes about the people or places they are visiting. At the opposite end of the spectrum we have the well meaning guide, besotted by the target country or culture, who patronises clients by an over enthusiastic explanation that assumes ignorance of or antagonism towards that country or culture. We assume that both extremes are bad for the tourist industry and that guides should be trained to avoid them. Within that assumption lies another. We assume that good guiding should help preserve and enhance the natural and cultural site that has attracted the tourists in the first place. In the context of this article our most important assumption is that the right sort of training can help prepare guides who can satisfy their customers’ basic needs (see Maslow, 1943) while at the same time offering them the opportunity to change the way they think and act. In this way they may become ‘mindful’ tourists (Moscardo, 1996), who develop a better understanding about, and positive attitudes to, a location (Prentice, 1995, Stewart et al, 1998).
A training program that concentrates on skill development alone fails to take into account the complex nature of such guiding. Graduates of many competency based programs may have all the organisational skills needed to move people physically but too often lack the skill to move them intellectually and emotionally. What we propose is a program that gives guides a thorough knowledge of their subject (or the means to attain it), practical guiding skills and the capacity to transform themselves and the people they guide. Such a transformation should always be for the better and therein lies our most dangerous assumption. Who decides what is better? How does one decide this? For this article let us agree on some basic criteria. A well informed, contextualised explanation of a tourist site is better than an ignorant, prejudiced one. An explanation of another country or culture that modifies a tourist's ethnocentric attitudes and behaviour would also be, we suggest, a change for the better. An explanation that is clear, varied and appeals to all the senses of the client is better than a rote learned spiel. And finally, a tourist experience that is organised and presented in such a way that it helps sustain the natural and cultural object visited is better than one that hastens its destruction.

Our notion of transformative tourism and a training system that prepares guides for it, draws heavily on the writings of adult educators and theorists such as Dewey (1916, 1933, 1938), Lindeman (1926), Knowles (1975, 1980, 1984a, 1984b), Jarvis (1983, 1987), Boud et al (1985), Mezirow (1977, 1981, 1990), Brookfield (1985, 1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1995) and Cranton (1989, 1992). Our argument is linked most closely with Brookfield's (1995) modification of Mezirow's (1990) theory. In one sense, all these writers have contributed to the concept of transformative learning. Dewey insisted that people learn best from experience but that such learning is only effective when it is acted on. In this sense tourism provides a perfect opportunity for learning because people experience as well as read about the places they visit and can act on their new knowledge immediately.

Tourists can do this in a self directed way and many backpackers and travellers take this approach. There are, however, others, who for various reasons, seek the services of a guide to interpret for them the site that they intend to visit. In doing so they hand over responsibility to the tour guide assuming that the information they will receive and the actions they will perform will be monitored by an expert. Both sets of tourists learn but the ones who pay for a guide can expect to avoid the sort of cultural gaffes the unwitting backpacker makes and hopefully impact less on sensitive environments. If we concentrate on the latter group we can begin to argue for a model of tour guide training that incorporates the best elements of adult and vocational education theory.

Knowles (1984a) focused on the importance of discovering the needs of the adult learner (in this case the tourist) and catering for those needs. While the principle is sound, the good guide needs to do more than this if he or she is to practise transformative tourism. The guide who simply tried to cater for the needs of all clients would find him or herself tugged in several opposing directions, not all of them desirable since tourists have a variety of needs and interests and it is not always possible to meet all of them. Fortunately, visitors who take tours usually understand this and hand over responsibility for the tour to the expert. What tends to happen is the tourist agent or guide decides what is best for their customers and set up an experience that they assume will be the most interesting one for the majority of their customers. Economics and ease of operation are often the deciding factors in this process.
(Arsenault et al., 1998). Guides and agents, however, who receive the type of training we recommend can add value to the standard tour by finding ways of accommodating individual differences among their clients. The guide who learns a spiel by rote and delivers such an interpretation of the site without reflecting on the appropriateness of the spiel is unlikely to entertain or educate clients.

We can, with Knowles (1990), assume that many adults are self directed learners, that they have a wealth of experiences that can be utilised in the education process, that they learn best when they reach a developmental transition point in their lives and that they prefer problem centred learning to the discussion of abstract issues. However, simply catering for adult needs does not necessarily make a good adult educator. The adult educator, or, in our case the tourist guide, has to be proactive rather than reactive.

The critical theorists and those who applied their ideas refused to see education as a neutral activity. The educator's role according to Freire (1972, 1974, 1990), Mezirow (1997) and Brookfield (1997) is to raise a learner's consciousness, to question the political status quo and devise a means of changing and improving the learner's circumstances. They see the importance of helping learners realise that they view the world in a particular way and that their thinking and actions are often circumscribed by their world view. They argue that the adult educator's role is to provide their learners with the tools for 'hunting assumptions' (Brookfield, 1986:297, Mezirow, 1990:354), the means of judging whether their assumptions are valid or invalid and the motivation to change invalid assumptions and the behaviour that stems from them. It is this process that Mezirow calls 'transformative learning' and which we suggest should be incorporated in the training of tourist guides. In keeping with Freire's ideas it is important, we suggest, that both teachers and learners involve themselves in this process (Bell, 1990:115-130).

Our proposal requires modifying the competency based nature of tourist guide training. In addition to studying a skills based curriculum, guides would learn a number of techniques that promote critical reflection of one's own values and assumptions. Brookfield argued that all education is bound up with the values of those who teach and learn. He insists that we cannot separate ourselves from our values, even in a classroom. Those values are based on assumptions which he refers to as paradigmatic, causal and prescriptive. In the first of Brookfield's categories we assume that the world works in a certain way. We say 'this is how the world is'. In the second we say 'things are like this because of such and such' and in the last we say 'this is how things should be'. We rarely think about our assumptions unless required to do so. Challenges to our assumptions can occur when we have unexpected insights into the world of others through travelling or reading; when we are knocked a little off balance by a powerful person with different values and assumptions; or when we encounter a disorienting dilemma that forces us to accept that the assumptions we hold are not necessarily valid. In such moments we are surprised to find that other people assume different things about the way the world is, or should be and have different reasons for explaining these beliefs and values. By referring to values education we are arguing for the use of the affective as well as the cognitive domain in teaching. As Iozzi says:

It would seem that cognitive and affective factors should be considered holistically in the teaching and learning process. In practice, however, such an approach is the exception rather than the rule. (Iozzi, 1989:3)
If we can convince tourist guides of the significance of values education we stand a chance of making them better critics of their own practice and better interpreters of the sites they visit.

Transformative tourism seeks to do more than entertain. It is based on the belief that no action is value free. The tourist company and the guide who declare themselves to be apolitical, unbiased and acultural are deluding themselves. The declaration is in itself value laden. Better to recognise the ubiquity of values, hunt the assumptions on which the particular tourist experience is based and critically assess it for validity. We concede that this will normally take place in a culturally circumscribed context but even that admission is an advance on the position which assumes those we guide and those we visit share our world view.

Rather than deny the existence of entrenched values and assumptions among prospective tour guides the course we recommend would focus part of the curriculum on it. It should be noted that the process we are advocating is a challenging and at times threatening one. Before introducing it teachers must be sure they have undergone the process themselves and continue to employ it in their teaching. In addition adult educators must ensure that critical reflection occurs in a supportive and non-judgemental atmosphere and that change is always an option rather than an imposition.

There are a number of activities that promote critical reflection. To fully explain them would require a separate article. It is enough to list them here and refer the reader to texts that explain their purpose and implementation in specific situations. Cranton (1992) provides a straightforward summary of many of these techniques. In general the use of

- journal writing
- life histories
- case studies
- critical incidents
- idea writing
- small group discussion
- role playing

could assist learners to confront their own assumptions and decide whether or not they are valid. We should be aware that learners will not necessarily thank us for highlighting inconsistent and invalid assumptions. Quite often the first reaction will be anger and denial. It is common, however, that over time some of the insights gained in this learning process will settle in the individual’s consciousness and gradually lead to positive change.

In the model we are proposing good guides are trained not only to hunt out assumptions underlying their own lifestyle but also to detect the assumptions upon which tours to specific sites are based. Obviously a newly employed tourist guide will not risk the sack by criticising his or her employer’s schedule. However, if the guide is capable of critical reflective thought this will inform any interpretation of that site. There is another advantage. If the guide has been trained to keep a journal or note down critical incidents, reflection on them should help improve future presentations.
The habit of critical reflection will also enable the guide to clarify the aims and objectives of particular tours within a context of broader tourist aims and objectives. This assumes that one can define appropriate aims and objectives for particular tourist experiences. We would argue that one of the best ways for a regional or national tourist body to do this would be through research based on the experiences and evaluations of individual tourist guides and their clients. Critically reflective guides would be able to provide excellent data from their journals, critical incidents and tour evaluations. Such data would help a researcher make general conclusions and recommendations over time and place. Better still researchers could be encouraged to utilise action research methods that involve guides as co-researchers, thereby improving both research and practice.

Conclusion

It is difficult to conceive of any tourist guiding that is value free. Values interpose themselves into the way guides interpret a site, in the way they relate to the local population and the way they interact with companies they use to supply accommodation, food and transport at the tourism site. If we accept this then it makes sense to train tourist guides to recognise values in themselves, their interpretation, their clients and the sites they visit. This is not a skill that can be easily taught or tested in a competency based program. In a more holistic program it can be introduced, practised and internalised. The true test of the 'transformative' tourist guide is his or her professional practice. The most appropriate examiners are the employers, the clients, the people who are visited and the self reflective guide. It is important that companies, training institutions and guides recognise the pervasive nature of values and assumptions and in becoming conscious of them analyse their impact on the people and places they visit. One crucial criteria for judging the validity of the values and assumptions upon which they operate is whether or not the people and site they visit benefit from the visit. If such an evaluation generates debate within the industry and training milieu and leads to agreed on standards, then the tourist industry will be the richer for it. Richer in the sense that it becomes self regulating, more attentive to the needs of both its customers and the sites that are visited and more interesting and intelligent in its interpretation of those sites.

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