

УДК 377

## VOCATIONAL ASPECT OF TEACHING TOURISM MANAGEMENT

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**Abstract** — **These article is devoted to the features of teaching tourism management.**

**Key words:** **case study, role-play, teaching method, tourism management, vocational training.**

Over the recent decade foreign tourism has become one of the fastest growing industries in Ukraine having spurred an increasing demand for the highly qualified professionals. At the same time processes of globalization of the world economy, integration of Ukraine into the European community, socio-economic and political changes and the dynamics of the labor market encourage the development of advanced models of training of competitive professionals. Similarly fast changing business environment and boom of informational technologies influence the approach to the tourist company effective management and lead to the regular skillful personnel shortage in the industry even with more universities graduates of tourism [1;4].

There are several reasons of a gap between the academic curriculum and practical career needs; one of them lies in the discordance of market requirements and class room opportunities which are still not used to the full. Therefore the graduates often are far too incompetent to meet practical challenges of the industry and the market. This article deals with the focus on vocational approach in tourism management teaching which would enhance the training process to meet practical business needs.

### 1. Working out Effective Curriculum

Emphasizing the requirements of the industry and forming the teaching content in accordance with it would definitely become the main part of training tourist managers. The experts are arguing about whether universities

should provide vocational training or deliver more traditional theoretical learning. However the employers require that graduates possessed established skills for a professional management career like effective teamwork and negotiation skills and therefore are thrusting educators to introduce more practical curriculum. Some tertiary sector institutions have responded with a vocational orientation to whole degrees, others by adding vocational and business skills to subjects.

Although most experts agree that the major foundation of the tourism management should be rooted in the business management discipline including the basic theories and methods of business management with new research incorporated regularly, the curriculum is getting more founded in tourism management realty in different countries of the world. Successful models of course design in Europe, America, Asia or Australia present the curriculum in module structure enhancing the flexibility of professional learning, which is favorable for the formation of adaptability of the graduates.

The curriculum implies carrying out research of the current situation of the industry, learning the market leaders' experience, the industry problems and development trends to update the teaching materials. Students should be encouraged to participate in the research or to do their own research which would allow them to develop their investigation skills and acquiring valuable experience.

### 2. Case studies as a core teaching method

Predominantly case study education provides students with real situations to analyse and research the existing environment, enabling them to understand actual problems and look for original solutions. During the case study process, teachers and students analyze the most burning situations, discuss the various possible

options and are practically involved into the decision making, putting forward their own options. The efficiency of case study education, which is very “student centered”, depends on the proper class room interaction. The interesting ideas or unique insights of the students would help them summarize, deduce solutions, hone and deliver them. The teacher’s role here is to motivate and thrust the discussion participants and to perform the overall guidance. This interactive method helps promote students’ independent thinking and analysis, develop their ability to solve practical problems, enhance understanding of daily work pressures and competition challenges.

Currently tourism management education often uses hotel management related cases, which are simple and realistic. The specific events occurring in the hotel industry make up the unique engine of teaching materials and the whole learning process. It is vital that the current experience of international tourism management should be used in flexible teaching methodology. The multimedia teaching with the use of diverse electronic devices enables to expand theoretical information, enhance student’s interest, rearrange the learning process and provide the sustainable progress.

### 3. Role-play facilitating

Role-play presents a consistent stage of case study regarded as a separate teaching method. Thoroughly organized role-play gives the students an opportunity to review the delivered theoretical course, to implement the conceptual patterns into practice and to achieve a greater understanding of stakeholder positions.

Emotional aspect of the interaction allows to get involved deeper into professional issues and creates additional incentives for the vocational development.

There are several objectives which a teacher or a coach bears in mind preparing a role-play, which usually summarizes a separated learning module [3]. Firstly, the method encourages students to practically apply their theoretical knowledge to a real-life situation which allows them to adopt and master specific patterns. The second objective is to develop higher education

skills such as doing research, collecting, analyzing and interpreting data and communicating them in an active way. The third objective is to provide the opportunity to practice vocational skills like holding meetings or persuading the colleagues in a non-threatening environment. Therefore the students gain an insight into a typical professional activity and get personally involved into it.

Using role-plays in most universities of America and Europe was prompted by employers’ expectations of graduates. [2]

### 4. Focus on vocational training

Strengthening practice teaching is the necessary way of improving teaching quality of tourism managers.

If the teaching plan does not include enough practice hours, it should be adjusted. Surely the question is what does “enough” implies quantitatively within tourism management education context. In most foreign tourism colleges, the proportion of practice teaching is almost half of the whole teaching plan. Ukrainian universities should draw lessons from foreign experience and improve the practice course from the original auxiliary courses to the professional compulsory examination class, introducing proper number of hours and tests. The goal of practice teaching and vocational training is currently becoming the core of the teaching process.

Many foreign tourism colleges have vocational laboratories to provide students with comprehensive simulation of a professional environment and a virtual practice routine. Building such laboratories or upgrading the traditional classrooms or campus premises could present new opportunities for effective professional training.

Another essential option of vocational education is internship in established tourist companies or tour operators where the students can contact directly with the outstanding professionals and top managers of the industry. The contract with these experts should give the students unique life hacks which are impossible to be found in textbooks or online resources. In their turn the tour companies needs to provide

feedback to the universities which would allow to adjust theoretical courses according to the updating requirements of the industry.

Therefore vocational training both develop young professional skills, providing them with substantial practical experience and influence the tourism teaching materials.

#### 5. Increasing teachers' practical expertise

The requirements for the teachers' qualifications are a subject to be reformed as well.

The university should give teachers opportunity to interact with the tourism industry and encourage them to do research, to obtain practical experience in the industry and to adapt to the job requirements.

The tourism teachers, who take the initiative to interact with tour companies, become the vocational education drivers, as they are able to translate management experience into the specific cases, to update their teaching materials and to use operation experiences in class.

It is also a wide spread practice to invite the tour companies managers as visiting professors or trainers who can discuss new horizons and trends of the industry with the class. This approach would help the full-time teachers and students develop deeper understanding of the tourism industry advance.

#### 6. Progress Evaluation Shift

The tourism theory examination is as important as skills assessment to track the progress of tomorrow's professionals [5]. The course thesis presenting, analysis of acquired skills and practical abilities e.g. of problem solving should be the main evaluation criteria in testing students' expertise. The internship feedback from the tour companies and experts based on meeting working requirements during the internship, level of professional attitude, relationship with colleagues, the ability to act independently under pressure as well as individual creativity and innovation should be included into the assessment procedure. These aspects should become integral parts of the final evaluation tests.

The specialists educated, trained and evaluated this way could be more prepared to act in a competitive environment of modern touristic industry of Ukraine.

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Manuscript received 09 February 2018.

Published as submitted by the author(s).