

# **A Study of Employability between Higher Technical and Vocational Education and Employer in Tourism and Hospitality: A Stakeholder perspective**

**Ching-Yi Tsai**

Graduate Institute of Education Administration, National Ping-Tung University of Education  
R.O.C., Taiwan

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between tourism and hospitality education and work in terms of employability development as well as to discuss how higher education can contribute to such a development. To begin with, as a background, the relation between higher education and work has been described based on the already mentioned discrepancy discussion. Later, the concept of employability will be explored and discussed in general terms as well as regarding the tourism and hospitality. Finally, different ways of integrating employability in higher education curricula are discussed. Based on this discussion, we have some suggestions regarding the employability development within the tourism and hospitality industry.

Keywords: higher vocational education, curriculum design, employability, Tourism and hospitality

## **Introduction**

An important function of the VET system is to provide the workers with a combination of skills proper to the economic conditions required into the future. To that point, the identification of required changes to the existing system, and any related stresses and tensions, requires both an expressed view about the future of the economy and a methodology for translating that view into the skill categories addressed by the system. In recent years, there has been significant interest in the role which 'employability' or general skills play in meeting future skill requirements. (Kuijpers & Meijers, 2012)

It is a well-known fact that vocational education plays a vital role in human resource development of the country by creating skilled manpower. Two greatest concern employers today are finding good workers and training them. The difference between the skills needed on the job and those possessed by applicants, sometimes called the skills-gap, is of real concern to human resource managers and business owners looking to hire competent employees. Most discussions concerning today's workforce eventually turn to employability skills. Finding workers who have employability or job readiness skills that help them fit into and remain in the

work environment is a real problem. Employers need reliable, responsible workers who can solve problems and who have the social skills and attitudes to work together with other workers.

Employability skills are those basic skills necessary for getting, keeping, and doing well on a job. These are the skills, attitudes and actions that enable workers to get along with their fellow workers and supervisors and to make sound, critical decisions. Unlike occupational or technical skills, employability skills are generic in nature rather than job specific and cut across all industry types, business sizes, and job levels from the entry-level worker to the senior-most position. Finishing schools are generally expected to build greater self – confidence, demonstrate self-direction, enhance communication skills, strengthen people skills, develop leadership skills, display a professional image and strengthen attitudes.

The emphasis should really be on developing skills in reading, writing, science, mathematics, oral communication, listening, learning, reasoning, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, responsible, self- confidence, self- control, social skills, honesty, honor, adaptability, flexibility, team spirit, timekeeping, being efficient, self -directed, good work attitude, well tutored, cooperative, self- motivated and self- management.

Useful knowledge and skills can be acquired in many ways. Liberal education is supposed to deliver the foundation knowledge and abilities to read, write, understand and apply numbers. Basic computer literacy has become the most recent addition to foundation skills. However, at work further general skills are required for employees to become productive and efficient. These include the ability to communicate, analyze and solve problems in production; to work to quality standards, handle relations with customers, clients and fellow workers, and supervise others. In addition, most workers need a specific professional competence in their chosen occupation to perform a certain set of tasks according to the occupational standards.

Employability issues are at the very core of current higher education. The changing notions of the extent to which the curriculum should seek to enhance employability reflect different conceptions of higher vocational education. Though earlier debates tended to focus on liberal concerns that higher education should seek to enable the individual to better fulfill their role in society, recent discussions have focused more on the notion that all academic courses should include employability enhancing content, not just those with a vocational focus.(Cranmer, 2006)

It is certainly far from clear that a broader general or liberal education is needed for the effective prosecution of many worthwhile human trades or services. It may be desirable that good auto-mechanics, chefs or hairdressers have substantial historical knowledge or enjoy reading poetry whenever they get the chance – and it may be hoped (for the enrichment of their lives) that they do have this wider commitment to liberal learning. But it is not at all obvious that a wide knowledge of history or poetry would much serve to make them better auto-mechanics, chefs or hairdressers. Thus, without denying that there may indeed be creative dimensions to auto-repair, cuisine and coiffure, any case for a broader liberal education rather than a more specifically focused training in the relevant skills of these trades and services might well be considered – for the purposes of adequate vocational training – rather surplus to requirements.

One key question: by what principles should the vocational tourism and hospitality curriculum be ordered? It may be thought that the purposes of a vocational curriculum are self-evidently

to provide graduates to operate in their chosen career. But in this study, the curriculum is defined as a whole educational experience packaged as a degree program. Its component parts are modules or courses, which in turn may be specified as a series of syllabi or course contents. The curriculum can be filled with various knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Tourism and hospitality students take different educational journeys according to how their curriculum has been framed. Different framings mean that students will exit tourism and hospitality courses with a variety of perspectives, attitudes, and competences. The idea of frame (Mason, Williams, & Cranmer, 2009) helps to understand that curriculum design involves choice, including or excluding some components. As noted, educational sites play a role in selecting which discourses are to be disseminated (Andrews & Higson, 2008). It is common for universities to frame their own curricula, but surprisingly little tourism and hospitality literature discusses the aims and values that guide the design.

The curriculum aim for the graduating philosophic practitioner is to promote a balance between satisfying the demands of business and those of the wider tourism and hospitality society and world. It integrates knowledge from across the fields to encourage vocational competence balanced by ethical competence. The foundation value of this vocational curriculum is to improve business practices and also the wider world they affect.

### **Employability as a concept**

As a solution to the problem, the discussion regarding employability development has arisen, and not least in connection to the Bologna process become particularly intense. What is then meant by the concept of employability?

The concept of employability was initially formulated during the 1950ies but did not have a real impact until the end of the 1990ies. According to (Lum, 2003) there are no real consensus on the meaning of the concept and no homogeneity regarding the measurements of employability? The concept can be used for several purposes. ell as (Winch, 2002) define employability in terms of fitness for work as a graduate.

More specifically the concept is described as:

a set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (Jae-Bong, 2001). Harvey puts forward some reservations regarding this definition. First of all it builds on probabilities. There is no true connection between being employable and actually getting a job, too many other variables are involved (Winch, 2002). According (Mackenzie, 2002) to a low graduate employment rate is not the same as bad employability. Secondly, (Pring, 2004) argues the great difference between getting a job and to actually perform well. Academic grades indicate for the previous efforts of the graduate, but cover far from all the desirable ingredients necessary for success. In accordance with this, Knight and Yorke emphasizes the importance of making a difference between employability and employment as well as the weakness in research using employment rates as a quality criteria for Higher education.

Regarding employability as a purpose for Higher education makes a revision of curriculum and its implementation necessary (Jae-Bong, 2001). In research regarding employability, the two identifiable constructions of employability both have as goal to increase employability in

graduates but from two different point of views. In line with (Mackenzie, 2002) we call the first view, "skills-based" while the other is called "beyond skills".

Discussing employability without relating the discussion to the concept of competence would be hard or even impossible. Above, the relation between Higher education and the work of graduates was described in terms of the discrepancy between the competence of the new graduates and the competence demanded from employers. The concept of competence and competence research are (as regards employability) wide and complex phenomenon. Several definitions and perspectives prevail, often without sorting out what is really meant. Several researchers have however described educational perspectives on competence (Carr, 2000; Williams, 2007).

According to (Carr, 2000), competence from a rationalistic perspective is looked upon as attribute-based. Those who perform most competently are supposed to own superior set of attributes (each determined in an absolute way, independent of context).

### **Employability – "as skills"**

The employability definition, mentioned above, mirrors mainly the construction of employability as skills. (Sakellariou, 2003) as well as (Mackenzie, 2002) accounts for definitions in terms of skills on the argument that it is built on a technical-rational assumption. One approach within this kind of thinking as regards solving the mismatch problem is to find out what kind of skills or competencies that should be developed in graduates within Higher education as preparation for working life and to address them accordingly in curricula.

There is an array of tourism examples on how skills making graduates employable can be defined (D. Ashton, Green, Sung, & James, 2002; *Global Dialogue Forum on Vocational Education and Training (Geneva, 29-30 September 2010)*; King, McKercher, & Waryszak, 2003). One example is (*Global Dialogue Forum on New Developments and Challenges in the Hospitality and Tourism Sector and their Impact on Employment, Human Resources Development and Industrial Relations (Geneva, 23-24 November 2010)*) who, departing from a study concerning job advertisements, have made a list of skills regarded important in event management jobs. They divide the list into three types of skills, general skills, practical skills and personality attributes, each group divided into smaller categories. All in all, 26 qualities desired in event management graduates are described. A similar example is (*Global Dialogue Forum on Vocational Education and Training (Geneva, 29-30 September 2010)*) who departing from post graduate student survey, divides skills into personal qualities, core skills and process skills.

(*Upskilling out of the downturn: Global Dialogue Forum on Strategies for Sectoral Training and Employment Security (Geneva, 29-30 March 2010)*) as well as ("Agreement between the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO)," 2008) points to the confusion regarding definitions of employability in terms of skills as well as competence. According to (Sakellariou, 2003) the use of expressions like "core", "key", "transferable" and "generic" "skills" only a couple of ways of describing employability as a result of Higher education. An even more complex problem is the question of how employability can be measured. Most common is to measure in terms of how many had got a job on a certain level, a certain period of time after graduation. Criticism has been directed towards these measurements for several reasons; it is viewed as too short-termed and too directed towards institutional success instead of the significance or the individuals.

Furthermore the critics (Wright, McMahan, & McWilliams, 1994) point to the fact that too many other variables are involved in measuring employment rates, which makes the impact of education unclear. One variable that is forceful (at least in England) is the university in which the graduate comes from. In accordance, (Mackenzie, 2002) argue that these kind of measurements rather implies employment than employability, as was mentioned above.

### **Employability – “beyond skills”**

Another view on employability is to define it as a potential ability to act in different contexts, based on scientifically based knowledge as well as on ability for continuous learning and empowerment. In addition to the ability to understand and act in a given situation, transfer skills and ability for self- development as well as development of others and a perceived space of action are key ingredients. As opposed to the construction of employability as skills, these ingredients are interrelated and internally dependent. (Mackenzie, 2002) name this view “beyond skills”. In order for graduates to be able to develop this kind of employability, far more and elaborate changes in curricula is needed. These abilities have to be integrated and reflected upon throughout curriculum as a whole.

The construction of employability beyond skills comprises basic and interrelated abilities not easily framed and described. It regards thorough development in the individuals in connection with how contexts are experienced and how meaning is constructed as well as how tasks are understood and set about. It is also about developing approaches to and learning from the situations that occur, to dare acting upon the theoretical knowledge and to critically reflect and assess what they are facing. Over all, in shorter terms; it is about learning to learn, development of agency or empowerment as well as the ability of critical reflection. All together one can express this in terms of identity development. These components are overlapping and rather aspects of employability as a coherent phenomenon.

One example in relation to employability beyond skills within the tourism and hospitality education area is (McDonnell & Boyle, 2012) case-study exploring processes of critical storytelling as a means of enhancing reflective thinking. In the study, the authors emphasize capacity of students to be critically reflective and reflexive in relation to experiential learning. Self-empowered and autonomous learning is highlighted as crucial for self-reliance and self-awareness.

However, over all there seem to be less examples concerning employability beyond skills. In order to think more clearly about this in a tourism and hospitality education context, we have instead turned to (Chiang & Birtch, 2010) focusing his concept of the philosophic practitioner as a kind of ideal type. We perceive his concept as an attempt to combine vocational, liberal and reflective aspects of professional tourism and hospitality work. Tribe’s model claims to locate tourism graduates on a more philosophical level without them losing active engagement in the world of tourism and hospitality. Philosophic practitioners must have the potential to practice with high quality in the industry.

### **Qualitative research of employability from the stakeholder’s perspective**

The study one is an exploratory research in employability from school (higher education) provided and employer (human resource practice in industry of tourism and hospitality). Foremost, a qualitative research methodology was utilized herein to map the structure among

employability between school provided and employer. It offers useful insights that cannot be achieved with other approaches. In particular, it provides high levels of detail and allows for multiple data collection methods.

Teachers who provided the curriculum in school, internship students majored in tourism and hospitality, managers of Human Resource Department in the industry were chosen because they are the stakeholders in different employability development. Moreover, this study has characteristics of an exploratory study that is focused on the gap of employability between school provided and market requested, and thus, It is with this understanding of economic and socio-cultural environment in Taiwan that tourism and hospitality educator are challenged to develop timely and relevant tourism and hospitality curricula that are context related and not context bound.

Tribe's (2002) idea of curriculum space is based on the premise that there is a vast expanse of knowledge from which tourism and hospitality educators/academics can define what constitutes a tourism and hospitality degree. He describes this expanse of tourism and hospitality knowledge as curriculum space that contains the range of possible contents of curriculum. In his words:

...the curriculum can be filled with different knowledge, skills and attitudes. Students embarking on tourism and hospitality course take different educational journeys according to the way in which their curriculum has been framed. Different framings mean that students will exit tourism and hospitality courses with a variety of perspective, attitudes and competencies.

Therefore, a depth-interview was conducted, stakeholder (the higher education institution, students and employer) were chosen from the department of tourism and hospitality of higher technical and vocational university and tourism and hospitality industry to represent different points of view. In so doing, five professors of university, five internship tour guide, five internship tour leader, five managers of hotels where Taiwanese internship students were sent in Singapore, five managers of hotels, five managers of restaurants, five managers of travel agents, five senior tour guides and five senior tour leaders were selected. For the internship students, I did focus group of 60 internship undergraduate students majored in tourism and hospitality in one technical and vocational university in southern Taiwan. Students were majoring in tourism and hospitality. Table 1 shows the profile and characteristics of the interviewees.

Table 1: Profile and Characteristics of interviewees

Interviewee No.	Stakeholder	Respondents Position in the Firm
P001-P005	the higher education institution	Professor of University
IG001-005	Student	Internship tour guide
IL001-005	Student	Internship tour leader
SH001-SH005	Employer	Manager of Hotel in Singapore
H001-H005	Employer	Human Resource Manager of Hotel
R001-R005	Employer	Human Resource Manager of Restaurant
TA001-TA005	Employer	Manager of Travel Agent
TG001-TG005	Employer	Senior Tour Guide
TL001-TL005	Employer	Senior Tour Leader

### Data collection

Data was collected from first, focus group of 60 internship undergraduate students majored in tourism and hospitality in one technical and vocational university in southern Taiwan. The first sample included internship students, newly returned from placement of Taiwan, Singapore and Swiss. The predominant method of data collection was via focus groups, which allowed the gathering of collective views and the collation of a joint construction of meaning (Schein, 1996). The questions posed were:

- (1) What is your understanding of the term employability?
- (2) Are the core/transferrable skills that might make up employability?
- (3) For students: To what extent do you expect the university to support the development of your employability, and how?
- (4) How much does university support the development of your employability, and how?

### Validity and Reliability in qualitative research

Yin (2009) showed that triangulation can occur with data, investigators, theories, and even methodologies. The need for triangulation arises from the ethical requirements to verify the validity of the processes (D. G. Ashton, F., 1996).

The data in this study follow four conventional types of triangulation (Chang, 1996) to ensure validity. First, for data source triangulation I collected the data from multiple sources (at least two interviewees from each stakeholder, along with documentation) to ensure equivalency across different contexts. The rationale for using multiple sources of data is the triangulation of evidence, thereby maximizing reliability and validity. In the context of data collection, triangulation serves to corroborate the data gathered from other sources. Second, investigator triangulation implies the use of two interviewers to examine the same phenomenon. Third,

theory triangulation is accomplished by using agency theory and social exchange theory to interpret the same data, thus improving the explanation. Finally, methodological triangulation, was used first to confine the data and then to follow up the semi-structured questionnaire survey to increase confidence in the interpretation.

### **What is employability?**

It is suggested that one potential problem with trying to develop employability is a lack of coherence about what is meant by the term itself and the subsequent measurement of it. Most authors agree that employability is complex and multidimensional and warn against being simplistic when trying to define it (Winch, 2002). However, similarities exist across many of the definitions used, which resonate with that of Yorke, who defines employability as:

a set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes, that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy(Jae-Bong, 2001).

This definition and others (Little, 2001; Winch, 2002) distinguish between the ability to get a graduate-level job and employment. Thus, as Wilton states:

‘it is possible to be employable, yet unemployed or underemployed’ (Wilton, 2011). This difference, between employment rates and employability, makes measurement of the concept challenging. Currently, most stakeholder groups use statistics from graduate destinations surveys to measure employability, whereas what these provide is a limited snapshot of employment. Yorke’s definition also places focus on quality and sustainability of employment, who stress the future-oriented nature of employability, with a need for adaptability and transitioning in future career market places.

Most definitions recognize that employability requires the possession of skills, but also personal attributes, which are aligned to personality theory. This link to personality theory, along with the qualitative nature and future orientation of the definitions, presents yet further challenges to measurement of the concept of employability.

### **The employers’ perspective**

Branine (2008) found that graduate employers are more interested in personal attributes and soft skills than degree classification, subject or university attended(Branine, 2008). This view is supported by the Confederation of British Industry (2008), with 86% of board executives putting skills and attitudes at the top of their list of demands; degree result was rated as important by 32% and university attended was rated as important by just 10%. Nevertheless, this is contradicted by other evidence(CBI, 2011).

Research by Wilton (2011) confirmed findings from previous studies, by showing that new university students fared less well in the labor market than those from older universities. This could indicate that employers’ actions may not be matching their words.

### **The students’ perspective**

For many graduates the economic drivers are strong. They recognize the value of employability skills and that a degree on its own may not be enough (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006; Tomlinson, 2008). The number of students graduating in Taiwan has increased dramatically in the last two decades, which has potentially led to an over-supply of graduates who find it hard to start their

careers. This is evidenced by an increase in graduate unemployment, increased competition between graduates, and higher levels of uncertainty about what graduates can expect from higher education (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006).

Not surprisingly, the increase in the number of graduates has also changed employers' expectations. A degree, once a bonus or differentiator, is now almost seen as a prerequisite for a job, even in sectors which in the past would not have needed a degree at entry level (Tomlinson, 2008). Graduates are increasingly conscious that they need additional skills and attributes for career success.

For the view of current students, they are the intended recipients of employability skills development, their views are important. Most textbooks on learning theory highlight the need for learner motivation and engagement with the process to ensure effectiveness (Gold, R. Holden, P. Iles, Stewart, & Beardwell, 2010). What employability is from their perspective? Do they have similar views to other stakeholders on what transferable skills, or attributes, might be necessary? Do they think employability can, and should, be learned?

### **The teachers' perspective**

From the higher education institution perspective, the argument is simple: league tables can affect student numbers, which in turn affects funding. Despite arguments about the correlation between employability skills development and actual employment, higher education institutions need good employment figures. Therefore, they need to continue investing in, and promoting, employability development.

### **Findings**

It could be deemed to be evidence of enhanced communication skills and self-confidence, which regularly appear in employability skills frameworks, and which may suggest that these skills have been developed over the academic years.

Questions 1 and 2: what is employability and the skills/attributes it may encompass? There is some configuration between the views the students expressed and the literature on the definition of employability and the skills and/or attributes it may include. All of the students of focus group agreed that employability involved possession of skills linked to the needs of employers. In the literature, communication skills and internal communication were most commonly mentioned. Planning and organizing and information technology skills were also commonly mentioned, and these appear in some of the frameworks reviewed for this article. They also agreed that personal attributes were a characteristic part of employability, with the most commonly mentioned being: flexibility, adaptability, hardworking, commitment and dedication. Again this shows some alignment with the literature.

This could suggest that these students are more concerned with the instrumental or economic view of employability discussed by Cornford and Wilton (Cornford, 2005; Wilton, 2008).

Question 3: development of employability skills in the university

Echoing the findings from Moreau and Leathwood (2006), top of the list on university support, was the placement opportunity. This was closely followed by the (faculty) placement office's curriculum vitae writing support and the (central) careers and jobs center. This implies that getting a placement and gaining experience was well recognized as a university support.

Question 4: to what extent does employability matter?

For those who did expand upon why employability matters, reasons tended to be individually and instrumentally focused: 'job security', 'better pay', 'increased choice of jobs'. Employability may improve quality of employment, with statements such as: 'It will give you a more enjoyable career' and 'It helps you plan your life and shows your development needs'. This suggests that, for only a small number of students, employability may be a wider and more valuable concept than employment. Very few groups mentioned the benefits to others, such as employers, higher education institutions, taxpayers and society in general. The lack of expansion on this question, for first and second year students at least, leads one to consider whether or not they really do believe that employability matters, and are therefore engaged with the development of employability skills.

### **Conclusion and Implication**

The results of this study not only contribute to fill in a research gap, but also offer managerial implications for the tourism and hospitality industry's practitioners and educators. Interviewees were undertaken with key managers to determine the views of individual enterprises on necessary employability skills, approaches to developing, tracking and assessing employability skills and how educational providers could play a more effective role in developing employability skills.

They also seek to broaden traditional approaches to education to include the wider community and, in the case of VET, require productive partnerships to be developed with industry.

The goals most specifically related to the development of employability skills include:

First, Schooling should develop fully the talents and capacities of all students. In particular, when students leave school they should:

- have the capacity for, and skills in, analysis and problem solving and the ability to communicate ideas and information, to plan and organize activities and to collaborate with others;
- have qualities of self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, and a commitment to personal excellence as a basis for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members;
- have employment-related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways to vocational education and training, further education, employment and lifelong learning;
- be confident, creative and productive users of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, and understand the impact of those technologies on society.

Second, In terms of curriculum, students should have participated in:

- programs of vocational learning during the compulsory years and have had access to vocational education and training programs as part of their senior secondary studies;
- programs and activities which foster and develop enterprise skills, including those skills that will allow them maximum flexibility and adaptability in the future.

Enterprises continue to focus on adaptation, cost reduction, increased productivity and new markets and/or new products and services. Enterprise choices with regard to recruitment and training are largely being driven by these business strategy directions. In this environment,

there is an increasing requirement for employees to be able to support competitiveness, innovation, flexibility and customer focus.

Enterprises are seeking a more highly skilled workforce where the generic or general skills are broadly distributed across the organization. Considerable research both here and overseas has discussed the way in which people will work in the future. The action within some universities to specify generic skills as an overt outcome, allowing students' time to practice these and assess them, will assist graduates in understanding their employability potential and provide employers with an easier reference point.

Given the unique approaches taken by individual or groups of universities, DEST commissioned the ACER to develop a generic skills test (Graduate Skills Assessment Project) that could be used by universities to measure the development of skills in four areas:

- Written Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Problem Solving
- Interpersonal understandings.

It is not possible yet to determine the effectiveness and community and market acceptance of this test, given that it is still being introduced. However, it has the potential to assist employers in understanding a graduate's employability skills.

At the institutional level, it has become common practice for professional associations to contribute to the development of desired attributes of graduates.

### **Curriculum aims and content**

This then brings to the fore the second issue: the stakeholders' views on the aims they deem appropriate for the tourism curriculum. The tourism curriculum should embrace both the vocational and liberal elements. The three main vocational aims of the tourism curriculum advocated by the stakeholders included the preparation of leaders for the local tourism industry with a particular focus on entrepreneurship, the development of industry specific and general transferable skills and an understanding and practical experience of service quality.

The main aim of a tourism degree is for the student to understand his/her role in national development. Tourism is not the end. Tourism is one of the means to an end. The end is to improve the quality of life of the people.

This perspective truly encourages liberal reflection in the tourism curriculum because her argument is that students must be able to critically analyze tourism in relation to national development. A tourism society where the development of tourism is planned, there is proper stewardship of the natural resources and the local culture is preserved. In other words, students must be prepared to work *in* tourism and *for* tourism.

The main aims identified by the stakeholders can be summarized as:

- To prepare students for key managerial roles in the tourism and hospitality industry
- To prepare students to develop and impart quality service
- To develop transferable skills
- To develop the student's ability to think flexibly and critically
- To gain a holistic understanding of tourism
- To develop a practical understanding of preserving the natural environment
- To enable the student to understand his/her role in national development

- To prepare students to contribute to the overall planning of tourism development
- What is significant about this balance of knowledge in the tourism curriculum is that the student is offered more than a partial knowledge perspective that may limit and constrict understanding of the tourism phenomenon in the islands. This balance in knowledge enables students to better analyze the tourism phenomenon in the islands and places them in a better position to make informed decisions as potential leaders regarding the growth of tourism and hospitality.

<p><b>Vocational Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tourism Marketing</li> <li>● HR Management</li> <li>● Business Development</li> <li>● Foreign Languages</li> <li>● Entrepreneurship</li> <li>● Quality Service</li> <li>● Information Technology</li> </ul>	<p><b>Liberal Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tourism and the Environment</li> <li>● Planning and Development</li> <li>● Sustainable Tourism</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reflective Vocational</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Problem Solving</li> <li>● Creative Thinking</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reflective Liberal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tourism and Politics</li> <li>● Culture and Heritage</li> </ul>

Figure 1: Curriculum Content

This implies a short-term, instrumental concern with knowledge — a pursuit of means of technical efficiency rather than the means to a stimulating and penetrating education. Following this, a gap has been unearthed within the context between the students’ and teachers’ understanding of the purpose of higher education for tourism and hospitality, and the nature of the current provision. At the same time as the stated focus of provision remains that of preparing graduates for the world of work in the tourism and other industries, teachers and students in tourism higher education take a broader perspective, seeking a deeper set of

experiences. It is argued here that closing, or at least narrowing, this gap represents an outstanding challenge to tourism and hospitality higher education — a challenge that has meaning at all levels of scale and for most activities in tourism.

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