

RENATA FOX, Ph.D., Associate Professor  
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of Rijeka, Croatia

## GLOBAL EDUCATION CHALLENGE: TRENDS AND IDEAS

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World-wide, education for tourism and hospitality is undergoing a major transformation. Approaches, strategies and programmes are being reassessed. Tourism and hospitality schools are being made more attractive to the prospective students and more appropriate to the needs of the hospitality industry. Because education is one of the greatest single investments in the life of a professionally qualified person, a student's choice of her/his school is unequivocally associated to value. This paper discusses the importance of innovativeness and knowledge in education in the light of global--social, intellectual and professional--mobility. It shows how the quality challenge has started major processes of change in education, and how implementation of strict, objective and transparent criteria in an educational establishment can lead to success.

**Key words:** Croatian tourism and hospitality education, excellence, spiral of knowledge, learner-oriented curricula.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

No matter how attractive Croatia may be to tourists, there is a number of constraints on the growth of its tourism, such as grossly inadequate infrastructure, poor range of offer, and comparably modest quality of services (Stavovi i potrošnja ... 2001). Apart from a very obvious need for capital, and expertise through joint ventures, what is most required are improved tourism and hospitality education and training (e.g., Dragičević 1995; Kivela 1997; Fox 1997, 1998; Fayos-Solà 2002; Gartner 2002).

Although academic circles show considerable differences as to the future of education in tourism and hospitality (e.g., Goodman and Sprague 1991, Becker 1993; Powers & Riegel 1993; Goeldner 1997; Dale and Robinson 2001), one fact is indisputable: education for hospitality industry in the whole of Southeast Europe, in Croatia too, is being reviewed, up-dated, and altered to reach internationally accepted educational standards. The implementation of a system of precisely defined norms for tourism and hospitality education and training will enable a high quality end product (the graduate) and 'help eliminate amateurism at all levels' (Global Tourism ... 1992).

Presently, all countries in transition are engaged in a variety of transformation and development projects, aiming to make their hospitality education more competitive (e.g., also Culpán & Kumar 1995; Tourism 2020 ... 1998; Williams and Baláž 2000; Fox and Fox 2002). Unquestionably, within the specific historical, political, economic, legal and social context this is far from easy. Willy-nilly, the gap between the developing and the developed, even in the most optimistic forecasts, is here to stay (Pizam 1999:332). To overbridge that gap, countries in transition will have to make an extra effort towards competitiveness in tourism and they will have to make it fast.

Thus, the aim of this paper is to ascertain the particular importance of innovativeness and excellence in tourism and hospitality education for countries in transition, such as Croatia. To meet the needs of graduates and their prospective employers, Croatian institutions in tourism and hospitality education must focus on the excellence in three segments: students, programmes and teaching staff. To do this, they will have to redefine their educational/training programmes, improve management education/training and implement international quality standards.

## 2.0 FUTURE FORECASTS

Some fifty years from now tourism and hospitality industry will still, by far, be the largest industry in the world. International arrivals are being forecast to amount to approximately 2 billion tourists per year and international receipts to some 2.1 trillion US\$. In size and value, domestic tourism will be at least 10 times that of international tourism (Pizam 1999). Leading trends of the tourism and hospitality industry are expected to be

- new forms of tourism (e.g. space, underwater)
- focus on theme offer
- emphasis on sustainable tourism.

Hotel management will increasingly rely on

- information technology (for reservations, transactions, customer information, researching customer satisfaction etc.) and
- robotisation (by mid-21<sup>st</sup> C. most routine operations will be performed by robots) (ibid. pp. 339-342).

Human resource management, which over the past decade has evolved into 'intellectual capital management' (Stewart 1996), is expected to:

- perceive and treat employees as the most important asset of a company (with emphasis on quality of their life, incentive pay, fairer promotion system)
- due to technological innovations, significantly reduce the number of employees
- empower employees and entice them to participate in decision making (Pizam 1999:342).

These changes will place new demands upon education and training, which will be manifested in:

- increased teaching staff quality (as opposed to a decreased number): needs for greater knowledge and better skills (with emphasis on customer relations);
- advance of education and training forms and methods (for example, training for semi-skilled and skilled jobs will be done through interactive computers);
- life long learning and, in case of more enlightened companies, paid educational leaves.

The central features of new education and training processes will be innovativeness, dynamism and competitiveness, and the expected outcome increased productivity (ibid. p. 342).

### 3.0 THE EVOLUTION OF TOURISM EDUCATION

Traditionally, services in tourism were classified as convenience services rather than knowledge services (Tettero and Viehoff 1990). Globalisation has changed that. Today, knowledge and technology provide a competitive edge. Hospitality employees' education and their ability to innovate, evaluate, assess and build knowledge and skills into all levels of service have become key factors of success (Grönroos 1989; Go 1998; Pizam 1999; Human Resources ... 2002).

Internationally, the number of students on tourism and hospitality courses is being continually increased. This is a part of a tremendous growth in the tourism education and training sector (cf. Dale and Robinson 2001), caused by the rapid expansion of the tourism and hospitality industry. Surveys into the views of tourism educators and senior managers in tourism and hospitality industry (e.g., Lavery 1989; Go 1998) show priority to be given to mastering new technologies, improving pedagogical methods, public acknowledgement of significance of education and greater engagement of corporations in educational processes.

In their suggestions for revision of tourism education Jafary and Richie (1981) warned that an intensified empirical research and joint efforts of a number of educational institutions (rather than individual educators) in course and programme design would represent a more reliable basis for design of curricula. As from 1990s tourism education is--owing to numerous political and technological changes--becoming increasingly dynamic (e.g., Brown and McCartney 2003; Knowles, Teixeira and Egan 2003). Still, one of the general weaknesses of tourism education is its reliance on administrative, for example, governmental decisions. (Go 1998) and academic enterprise rather than industrial demand which, in fact, will be decisive in preparing today's students for adopting the role of tomorrow's managers (Honey & Botterill 1999:12; Lenderman and Sandelands 2002; Jones and Phillips 2003).

#### 4.0 SOCIAL TRENDS

Continually changing educational processes and institutions are perhaps the most obvious indicators of instability of our time. These changes are being directed by a number of social trends, some general (e.g., globalisation and acceleration of time) and some specific (emphasis on service sector and a shift towards multiskilled manpower).

Globalisation has created a 'global citizenship', a practice which has its hazards, rights, and duties (cf. Urry 2000:172-187), but is, paradoxically, a precondition of contemporary citizenship. Global citizenship is prompted by both formal associations, such as the EU, and by individuals' participation in the public sphere. A European public sphere, as suggested by Habermas (1998:7), is developing vigorously, promoted by members of upper-middle class, mainly scholars and professionals, whose affiliations are both European and global. An obvious sign of these processes is increased physical, cognitive, intellectual and academic mobility. Accordingly, educational institutions and processes can be internationally successful only if they meet the needs of global citizens.

The acceleration of time has ultimately lead to 'instantaneous time'<sup>1</sup> (Urry 2000), which, *inter alia*, results in heightened 'temporariness' of products, jobs and careers, ideas and images, a growing tendency of manpower to develop 'portfolios' of tasks, and increased 'modularisation' of leisure, education and training. There is a desynchronisation of time and space, which are less collectively organised and structured. In tourism this is primarily manifested in the expansion of a body of free and independent travellers who resist mass travelling in a group.

Finally, there has been an obvious shift from manufacturing towards a service, post-Fordist organisation. Accordingly, work is increasingly exploiting talents so far perceived not as academic, but just 'life skills' and 'common sense'. This has resulted in a process of de-differentiation between education and entertainment, 'edutainment' (ibid. p. 185), where advertising and branding have become central communicational components of any activity.

#### 5.0 INNOVATIVENESS

Sociological research (Urry 2000:210-211; cf. also Ritzer 2000) shows that most important social developments originate from social movements with 'emancipatory interests' such as, for example, various students' movements and the women's liberation movement. These movements create the space which generates new ideas. The role of universities and individual disciplines is seen in their significant

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<sup>1</sup> Urry (2000: 126) uses the term 'instantaneous time' in three senses: first, in reference to 'new informational and communicational technologies based upon inconceivably brief instants which are wholly beyond human consciousness; second, to stress the 'simultaneous character of social and technical relationships which replaces the linear logic of clock-time characterised by the temporal separation of cause and effect'; and third, as a 'metaphor for the widespread significance of exceptionally short-term and fragmented time' (Urry 2001:126).

contribution to the quality of new knowledge. Having provided the frame and context for knowledge, the academia has to respect the rules of public life and global social trends.

Most scientific innovations are, as research into the twentieth century social sciences shows, triggered off by academic mobility across disciplinary borders. It is the interdisciplinary academic mobility that generates 'creative marginality' (Dogan & Pahre 1990), which is a result of complex overlapping and disjunctive processes of migration, occurring across disciplinary, geographical and social borders.

Innovation in any activity, and education too, Ikujiro Nonaka, a famous Japanese organisational theorist, argues (1998:25), is 'as much about ideals as it is about ideas'. It is ideals built into the vision that promote innovations. There is no end to what a university could undertake. It can even participate in the tourism industry itself (cf. Roppolo 1998:197), by organising summer-courses, offering accommodation either on the faculty campus or in the nearby hotels.

## 6.0 EXCELLENT INSTITUTIONS

Globalisation and mobility--geographical, cultural and intellectual--seem to have become the central concepts of excellent education. Participating in these processes, which presume new technologies and modes of visual appreciation, is one of the preconditions of social equality (Urry 2000:84, 195). While, on the one hand, global enthusiasts perceive globalisation as offering new opportunities to overcome limitations exercised by national states on the freedom of companies and individuals (Ohmae 1990), others see the global world as a new medieval world, characterised by lack of clear territorial boundaries, and domination of numerous powerful empires (transnational companies) affecting economies as it suits them (Cerny 1997, Urry 2000). Both views, however, do coincide in the prediction about future social relations being established through *inhuman* objects: machines, technologies, texts and images. This will, as forecast by WTO (Tourism 2020 ... 1998), further intensify the alienation of the individual, and prompt him to communicate through travelling.

Wishing to offer top standards in the three areas-- students, teaching staff, programmes--educational institutions aspiring to excellence are aiming to

- create stimulative, innovative, interdisciplinary programmes;
- provide internationally competitive education and training for their highly (geographically and professionally) mobile students;
- successfully host an ever increasing number of students wishing to participate in international student exchange schemes.

### 6.1 Spiral of knowledge

Western culture, as argued by Nonaka (1998: 21-45), has a rather narrow view of what knowledge is, and tends to rely more on quantifiable data, and less on

subjective insights, intuition and ideals. New knowledge, however, begins with the individual.

A central activity of a knowledge-creating company, of which a school is an example par excellence, is sharing knowledge with others. It is a continuous process of interaction of explicit (formal and systematic, easy to communicate and share) and tacit (informal, intensively ingrained and usually taken for granted, often difficult to articulate) knowledge. Interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge - socialisation, articulation, combination, internalisation - starts a spiral of knowledge, and leads towards a new, holistic approach to knowledge. The organisation is thus reinvented and the nature of its knowledge serves a cutting edge on the educational market.

## 6.2 Educating for mobility

In today's society human powers are increasingly realised through interaction of people with *inhuman* objects, such as machines, technologies, texts and images (Urry 2000:14). These relationships increase mobility, affect intensity and forms of tourism, and, inevitably, influence educational processes.

## 6.3 Exchanging students

Long ago did students realise the value of international experience, not just in terms of education, but also as significant for developing social and cultural skills. For a number of reasons - globalisation of business companies, forming of European Union, and the fall of communism (Roppolo 1998:191) - international exchange in education is expected to continually rise. This trend is presently more noticeable in Europe than in America which is still marked by a doubt of the seriousness of other countries' academic programmes, quality control and motives.

In order to participate in exchange processes universities should generally encourage their students to study abroad, and assure the financial support for the international exchange schemes. The host institutions should, specifically, contribute to promotion of international networking and provide guest-students with a clear understanding of a host country's culture. Needless to say, receiving guest-students often imposes revising a teaching process at a host-institution: the process has to be academically and conceptually compatible with that of the home institution, and the overall experience worth the students' while.

## 7.0 IMPROVEMENT PROCESSES

While there are many aspects to the excellence in education for tourism and hospitality, most improvement projects generally focus on three elements: students, teaching staff and programmes.

## 7.1 Students

The business world is becoming increasingly competitive and both students and employers want to be sure that educational processes meet industry needs. Competition on the education market makes it essential for the student to make a right choice, and enrol at the institution where s/he will be sure to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and aptitudes demanded by the employer. Increasing students' and graduates' mobility makes the geographical location of the school insignificant: in demand are institutions with reputation of offering programmes that ideally match leading employers' needs.

## 7.2 Programmes

Hospitality education programmes are being reassessed, resulting in a dilemma about the appropriate balance between applied and pure research (applied research is usually limited in its scope; it is the conceptual research that significantly adds to the body of knowledge /Cooper et al 1994:126/). A question of approach to education for tourism and hospitality often posed is: are we to develop generic or specific knowledge/skills (cf. Goodmann & Sprague 1991; Umbreit 1992; Ashley et al 1995)? There is a considerable lack of understanding of what constitute a tourism degree as degree titles come in various forms: for example, 'tourism management' and 'tourism studies', and are commonly prefixed with terms such as 'leisure' and 'hospitality'. As tourism education does not seem to have kept pace with either changing nature of the industry or tourism as a field of study, programmes in tourism and hospitality education seek additional legitimacy (Dale and Robinson 2001; cf. also Tribe 1997). For these reasons tourism and hospitality education programmes will have to demonstrate greater coherence and an increasing 'responsiveness to stakeholders' (Cooper and Westlake 1998).

Conventional tourism curricula are occasionally criticised for emphasising practice rather than theory, and focusing on acting rather than thinking (Go 1998:336). Indeed, rationalisation of hospitality management curriculum, at the University of Central Florida showed that hospitality industry values general management knowledge - people skills, creative thinking ability, financial skills, communication - both written and oral skills, rather than specific, industry-related ones (Ashley et al 1995:76-77).

The key task in developing the new hospitality education programme at the University of Central Florida was to find an optimal ratio between theory and practice, i.e. general knowledge and specific skills. The representatives of the industry insisted on the need for a new set of competencies, i. e. on a definite turn towards more general managerial skills. They clearly stated that training new employees in the specific skill area was something they preferred doing themselves. The new curriculum development focused on: (1) defining (set of knowledge, skills and competencies of a future employee), (2) rendering (interpreting industry requirements through the language of education), (3) feedback (evaluating of the graduate by the customer). The University of Central Florida experience indicates the importance of striking the right balance between theory and practice: hospitality programmes have to be both vocationally

oriented and provide academic skills and opportunity for industry related research. The case also highlights the importance of interaction with the industry in the development of hospitality education programmes.

### **7.3 Teaching staff**

There seems to be a general shortage of experienced tourism educators. Specifically, faculty teachers often lack a tourism background and insights into industry (Go 1998:337). For this reason, accreditation processes lay such a great importance on faculty teachers' industrial experience. But probably the most conspicuous indication of industry's interest in interfacing with educational institutions and helping educators' development is the keenness of trade associations and business organisations to co-sponsor international conferences on tourism and hospitality.

## **8.0 CRITERIA OF EXCELLENCE**

Success on the global educational market is attainable only through measurable, demonstrable, objective and consequent criteria. In other words, institutions whose ambitions extend beyond national borders will have to subject themselves to a scrutiny of an independent quality assessment body.

One such independent body is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England to conduct subject reviews in England and Northern Ireland in 2000-01. During this time eleven subjects are reviewed, among them Hospitality, Leisure, Recreation, Sport and Tourism (QAA 2000). Through a Graduate Standards Programme QAA is setting guidelines for provisions in all subjects (Honey & Botterill 1999:13).

The purpose of contracting the QAA is

- to secure value from public investment (to assure that educational processes are of approved quality, and to enable quick corrective actions where necessary);
- to encourage improvements through publication of reports;
- to provide effective and accessible public information on the quality.

The method of evaluating quality of educational provision within a subject area is comprised of the following features:

### **8.1 Peer Review**

Reviews are carried out by a team of registered subject specialists, whose main responsibility is to collect evidence and evaluate the quality of education. Subject specialist reviewers are drawn from the higher education sector and industry, and are specially trained by the QAA.

## **8.2 Self-Assessment**

Self-assessment presents the aims and objective of the provision and provides an evaluation of the students' learning experience and achievement. A self-assessment should discuss both strengths and weaknesses, in which case steps of improvement should be stated.

## **8.3 Review against the Subject Provider's Aims and Objectives**

The statement of the aims and objectives provides a reference point for the review. Reviewers evaluate the extent to which the students' learning, experience and achievements in each of the aspects of provision contribute to meeting the objectives set by subject provider. Reviewers also evaluate whether the objectives set allow the aims to be met.

## **8.4 Aspects of Provision**

This provides a common structure for each stage of the subject review process. The aspects of provision are:

- Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation (this also includes the intended learning outcomes, curriculum currency and innovation).
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment (the learning objectives, teacher's contribution, student's workload, academic guidance and supervision, including study skills and research methodologies).
- Student Progression and Achievement - the match of assessment to intended learning outcomes, promoting learning and quality of feedback to students, consistency and rigour of marking. Student profile - entry qualifications, completion of the programme, qualifications awarded, evidence of students' knowledge and skills. Evidence of students' achievements - external examiners' reports, reports of professional bodies, meetings with current and former students.
- Student Support and Guidance (academic guidance and tutorial support, evidence).
- Learning Resources (strategies, services, equipment, administrative support, liaison between academic and support staff).
- Quality Management and Enhancement (internal monitoring data on the quality of teaching and learning, external examiners' reports, the views of the staff/students/employers/professional bodies, staff development needs, revision of the curriculum aims and objectives, evidence of quality enhancement, effectiveness of the processes of self-evaluation and continuous improvement).

### **8.5 The Subject Review Visit**

The purpose of this is to gather, consider and test the evidence of the quality of education in light of the subject provider's aims and objectives.

### **8.6 The Graded Profile**

The Graded Profile shows the extent to which the student learning experience and student achievement demonstrate that the objectives and aims have been met.

### **8.7 The Overall Summative Judgement**

The Overall Summative Judgement is derived from the profile. A profile with all aspects graded 2 or better will be reported as *quality approved*. A profile with three or more grade 2s will result in a request for the institution to provide an improvement plan. A profile with one or more aspect graded 1 will be *subject to further review within a year*. If, after the further review visit, the profile contains one or more aspects of provision graded 1, then the provision will be reported as *quality not approved*.

### **8.8 The Subject Review Report**

A Subject Review Report is published after each review visit and is the main documented outcome of the review process.

### **8.9 Evidence**

The key concept of the outlined quality control process is evidence. All assessment phases are based on proofs of student attainment, clear assessment processes and criteria, student progression and achievements. In other words, every statement is supported and verified.

This, of course, is not to say that self-analysis is not important: on the contrary, the most accreditation processes start with a self-assessment of the institution (cf. Fox 1998). Approaches vary, SWOT being just one of the many. Self-analysis, in order to be effective, has to be thorough, objectively highlight the relevance of the assessed programme for the industry needs, and support all statements by the evidence (graduates' employment records, names of companies, position in the company, satisfaction of the company etc.). After all, the self-analysis is not just a story of how the school works. It should include critical discussion of operations, processes, developments, mission and vision.

## 9.0 DISCUSSION

To meet the demands imposed by dominant social trends, Croatian tertiary education for tourism and hospitality will have to offer global products (curriculum/graduate) to global consumers (student/ employer). Institutions wanting to keep up the pace with tourism and hospitality will have to generate change, improve standards, build a new learning culture and cooperate more intensively with industry.

Generally, Croatian tourism and hospitality faculties will have to

- redefine their educational/training programmes at all levels through feedback from hospitality industry;
- improve management education/training;
- implement international professional standards (cf. Fox 1998).

Specifically, Croatian university curricula will have to become more learner-oriented - in design, content and organisation. In practical terms this means:

- increasing flexibility and student choice
- staging and regulation of student progression and achievement
- exactly defining student workloads
- academic guidance and supervision
- external examiner system
- establishing small expert teams to provide benchmark information on standards
- introduction of an independent and public reporting of quality (this might encourage the replacement of the rather *bona fide* arrangement between the Croatian Ministry of Science and Technology and faculties with exactly defined rules, requirements and criteria: set of obligations and rights to be respected by both sides /Fox 2002/).

A word of warning: the knowledge creating process in any institution is not to be left to a specialised department or individuals. It can only be successful if it becomes a way of life for all concerned: students, teaching staff and prospective employers. Any school, which takes quality seriously, will have to design a new 'structure', in order to accomplish continuous innovation. This will, in turn, enable the institution and its employees to be both reactive, i.e. promptly react to the emerging issues, and proactive, i.e. become factors of social processes.

Countries in transition, such as Croatia, might be tempted to use circumstances of transformation as a pretext for weaker educational standards and reduced criteria with respect to staff and/or students (Fox 1998). This 'transitional trap' should be carefully avoided. There are, admittedly, great conceptual and cultural differences between Croatia and developed countries. Nevertheless, if appropriately handled, these differences should affect the education transformation processes positively, and enable new curricula to develop within the frame of national educational tradition, specific cultural values and identities.

The Bologna Declaration affirms the importance of cultural diversity for the system of education by stating: 'The vitality and efficiency of any civilisation can be measured by the appeal that its culture has for other countries. We need to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions'. We need, however, to bear in mind that such an objective can be reached only as a *consequence* of excellent education. While plurality of education constitutes a precondition for achieving excellence, it is only excellence that can make a particular school or a particular degree course competitive on the global education market.

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Sažetak

**IZAZOV GLOBALNOG OBRAZOVANJA: TRENDOVI I IDEJE**

*U čitavom svijetu obrazovanje za turizam i ugostiteljstvo prolazi kroz proces transformacije. Pristupi, strategije i programi neprestano se procjenjuju. Fakulteti za turizam i ugostiteljstvo nastoje se učiniti privlačnijima za buduće studente i prikladnijima za potrebe turizma i ugostiteljstva. Kako je školovanje jedna od najvećih pojedinačnih investicija u životu profesionalno kvalificiranog pojedinca, izbor obrazovne ustanove u prvom redu ovisi o njezinoj vrijednosti. Tema ovog rada je važnost inovativnosti i znanja u okvirima globalne--društvene, intelektualne i profesionalne--pokretljivosti. Rad analizira odnos potrebe za kvalitetom i procesa ključnih promjena u obrazovanju. Pritom se ističe važnost primjene striktnih, objektivnih i transparentnih kriterija kao bitnog uvjeta uspjeha obrazovne ustanove.*

*Ključne riječi: hrvatsko obrazovanje za turizam i ugostiteljstvo, vrsnost, spirala znanja, nastavni programi za potrebe studenata.*