

Final Report

ARTICULATING LIFELONG LEARNING IN TOURISM: DIALOGUE BETWEEN HUMANITIES SCHOLARS AND TRAVEL PROVIDERS

2010

**Project Team Members: Susan Broomhall, Tim Pitman,
Elzbieta Majocha, Joanne McEwan**



**THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**
Achieving International Excellence

Support for this project has been provided by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd.

This work is published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-ShareAlike 2.5 Australia Licence. Under this Licence you are free to copy, distribute, display and perform the work and to make derivative works.

Attribution: You must attribute the work to the original authors and include the following statement: Support for the original work was provided by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Noncommercial: You may not use this work for commercial purposes.

Share Alike. If you alter, transform, or build on this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under a licence identical to this one.

For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the licence terms of this work.

Any of these conditions can be waived if you get permission from the copyright holder.

To view a copy of this licence, visit

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/au/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 Second St, Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94105, USA.

Requests and inquiries concerning these rights should be addressed to the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, PO Box 2375, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012 or through the website:

<http://www.altc.edu.au>

2010

Report Contents

1. Executive Summary	5
2. Aims and objectives	7
3. Methods and data collection	10
4. Project deliverables and dissemination	14
5. Linkages	17
6. Evaluation	19
7. Project Findings	20
8. Challenges and Responses	45
References	48

Acknowledgements

The project team gratefully acknowledges the participation of the following organisations:

- Academy Travel
- Alumni Travel
- Australians Studying Abroad
- Centre for Continuing Education, The University of Sydney
- Odyssey Travel
- Renaissance Tours
- UWA Extension

Support for this report has been provided by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

1. Executive Summary

AIMS

This project investigated:

- the learning outcomes identified by the educational tourism industry for its clientele in comparison to the pedagogical concerns of humanities academics about the material they produce for travel companies;
- the wide variety of teaching competencies required for designing, writing handbooks for and teaching on tour;
- how scholars may be using their interactions in this domain as an opportunity for reflecting on their teaching practices; and
- ways to increase communication between humanities academics and the educational tourism sector.

FINDINGS

- Australian academic scholars currently participate in a wide range of educational tourism and travel experiences.
- Intentional, experiential, and structured learning are perceived by scholars, clients and companies as the defining features of educational tourism.

Educational tourism providers indicate that:

- Participation by academics is highly valued;
- Participation by academics can occur in a variety of ways, not just by leading tours; and
- Cutting-edge knowledge content created by academics creates a marketable educational tour product.

Academic scholars indicate that participation in educational tourism:

- changes the way they think about their work;
- enhances their communication and teaching skills in and beyond the classroom; and
- enhances their research both directly and indirectly through securing funds, accessing unique or important sites, and engaging with a learning community.

Educational tourism clients indicate that:

- They like to research their trip in advance;
- Sophisticated educational materials are important for this preparation;
- Group learning is preferred over independent learning;
- Meaningful contact with the local communities is a highly valued aspect of educational tours; and
- They perceive and desire educational tourism to be an ethically and environmentally sustainable form of tourism.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Educational tour providers should be encouraged to distinguish between leader and manager roles to allow leaders to engage more fully in the intellectual life of the tour learning community.

Dissemination documents must emphasise that there are many ways in which teaching participation in educational tourism may occur, only one of which is by physically leading a tour.

Finally, given the time constraints placed on the modern Australian academic, dissemination documents must emphasise that teaching through educational tours may be an opportunity to bring research and teaching goals into a stronger relationship.

Dissemination documents must emphasise the following reasons why universities should find increased involvement of their staff in educational tourism attractive at an institutional level, for instance, that educational tourism:

- could play a significant role in attracting new student groups, alumni and cross-institutional enrolments between universities;
- offers opportunities to diversify the student body, through interactions with members of the general public and enrolled students participating on the same program;
- provides universities with a receptive and engaged site for knowledge transfer, and interaction with commercial enterprises for whom high quality humanities knowledge is a key commercial asset; and
- is a form of lifelong learning, allowing universities to honour their social and ethical commitment to fostering learning however it may be obtained.

The ALTC should continue to support strategic change in institutions that enable more flexible perceptions about academic teaching and the wide variety of domains that it occurs, in and outside of the classroom.



2. Aims and objectives

As the Australian population ages, an increasing number of people have time and income to spend on their leisure pursuits. Higher education and tourism providers are two potential beneficiaries of this phenomenon and are increasingly intertwined. A greater proportion of the travelling public is made up of educated 'baby-boomers' who are seeking an educational experience as they travel. At the same time, educationalists – especially in the humanities – are teaching mature-age students who are well-travelled and familiar with the places and locations being studied. Both of these occurrences are linked through, and with, the concept of lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning is emerging as a critical means by which education can be made accessible beyond higher education institutional structures. In 1998 the Federal Government of Australia released a report into higher education entitled "Learning for Life" (West, 1998). It recommended that lifelong learning should become "the master concept for educational policies in the years to come" (p.44) and that "learning that occurs in less structured contexts [than universities] may make an equally important contribution to lifelong learning" (*ibid*). Since then universities have – along with the rest of the post-compulsory education sector – sought to frame curricula, pedagogies and key educational outcomes within the framework of lifelong learning. Such a framework has four distinguishing features:

- The recognition of both informal and formal learning;
- The importance of self-motivated learning;
- An emphasis on self-funded learning; and
- The idea that participation in learning should be universal (Watson 2003, p. viii).

Beyond the university sector, however, academia has rarely sought to articulate and apply such theoretical and philosophical frameworks to external domains where they could be intrinsically beneficial to industry and community, as well as provide a feeder pathway for communities (back) into higher education itself. Tourism, in particular, offers an obvious praxis to which lifelong learning frameworks might be applied. The importance of both informal and self-motivated learning – keys to any lifelong learning strategy as noted above – are grounded in the theories of experiential learning, of which those proposed by David Kolb and Jack Mezirow are seminal. Kolb (1984) proposes a dual-knowledge theory in order to harmonise any possible conflict between what he refers to as knowledge-by-apprehension (the empiricists' concrete experience including experiential learning) and knowledge-by-comprehension (the logical rationalists' mediating process of abstract conceptualisation). According to his theory, experiential learning is in no way inferior to abstract thought because each requires the other in order for knowledge to occur: in other words they interact. The learning of the organised travel and tour experience could be usefully structured and recognised as a form of lifelong learning. Furthermore, from a pedagogical perspective, the experiential environment in which learning occurs on educational tours has the potential to transform the individual, through a critical reflection of his/her prior conceptions and prejudices (Mezirow, 1990).

From tour to learning however is not simply a matter of perception. It requires academic and industry participants to identify and articulate the key learning outcomes desired of a particular tour design, and to structure it accordingly. It might adopt Mezirow's model of transformative learning (1990, 1991), as one which occurs when the learner is helped to focus on and examine the assumptions underlying



beliefs, feelings and actions and in doing so, foster critical reflection of personal experiences. This project investigated how tacit (informal) knowledge might be made explicit and whether it was possible for learning to be demonstrated (perhaps ultimately for the purposes of formal accreditation). Importantly, our project also sought to explore how scholars may also be participating in a form of transformative learning through their engagement with educational tours; that is, using their interactions in this domain as an opportunity for reflecting on their teaching practices. We sought to analyse the wide variety of teaching competencies required for designing, writing handbooks for and teaching on tour. The project asked what opportunities it might provide academic teachers for reflection on their teaching practices and delivery styles both on tour and in the classroom.

Until now, however, the relationship between higher education and tourism (especially tour companies) has largely been a haphazard arrangement and the lifelong learning opportunities for both clients and academic participants significantly under-exploited. The paucity of scholarly texts in this area can be seen in the references. Generating knowledge capital is critical to the on-going success of outbound tour operators responding to an increasingly sophisticated consumer market. Increasingly, companies such as these turn to academics to provide intellectually rigorous material for this audience. Typically, educational travel companies liaise with individual scholars to lead tour groups or provide content for handbooks and supporting materials. Yet, while content may be generally determined by the tour location, the approach to the material and the learning aims of the tour design and handbooks is frequently less clearly articulated between the two parties.

Moreover, a brief survey of tours and handbook material provides no obvious discussion of learning objectives to be achieved by tour participants. Lecturers' engagement with the pedagogical aims of a particular travel provider is determined by the ability of companies to articulate their learning programme in academic terms, and the academics' willingness to ask and respond to these. Both activities result in lifelong learning of an almost accidental nature. Thus, this project sought to examine the learning outcomes identified by the educational tourism industry for its clientele in comparison to the pedagogical concerns of humanities academics about the material they produce for travel companies. It aimed to determine how we might increase communication between humanities academics and the educational tourism sector with the ultimate aim of developing traveller-students with enhanced reflective/action-learning capabilities, as well as indicating potential opportunities for academic scholars to reflect on their teaching practices through the delivery modes offered by educational tourism.

The project was designed to specifically address the ALTC (then Carrick Institute) Competitive Grant Program's intention to support: "strategic approaches by higher education providers to increase recognition of the importance of teaching in higher education, both within institutions and within the wider community."

The identified outcomes of this project were to:

- Improve communication between scholars and the tourism sector, with a particular focus on the adult educational tourism market and Arts and Humanities scholars;
- Support the development of educational tourism as a facilitator of lifelong learning;
- Equip scholars with the skills necessary to contribute to educational tourism; and
- Improve the learning experience of tour participants on educational tours.



3. Methods and data collection

The project adopted qualitative research methodologies, and employed an action research methodology. Evaluation after each stage of data collection, analysis and communication was reflected in changes to the future data collection as well as to the dissemination of the project findings to stakeholders. Data was collected for analysis through a number of instruments and over a period of time in response to previous, and at different, phases of the research.

3.1 Firstly, educational tour provider literature was assessed. Qualitative and quantitative content analysis was conducted on a range of publicly accessible forms of documentation produced by educational tour companies. These texts included website material, advertising flyers and brochures, specific tour itineraries, and detailed tour handbooks. This literature was collected during late 2007 and early 2008.

The literature was analysed for concepts related to educational tourism, language regarding ideas of learning or teaching, and discussions of learning objectives, and the educational qualifications of tour providers, leaders and designers, as expressed by the tour companies when marketing to potential clients. Phrases were analysed for content (content analysis) with a view to identifying recurring concepts, understandings and perceptions. The unit of analysis, therefore, was the theme (e.g. phrase, sentence). Systematic reduction was applied to each unit of analysis to arrive at themes and tropes relating to the focus area.

3.2 Two online surveys were then conducted. The “participant survey” collected data from individuals who identified themselves as having had previous experience of educational tours or as being interested in doing so in the future. We identified past traveller participants through the tour companies and potential travellers through university lifelong learning departments, and from an open invitation on the travel/place website (www.elsewhereonline.com.au). Because of this latter category, it was not possible to determine exactly the total number of people who were contacted. A total of 1091 participants were directly contacted and asked to complete the survey and 612 responses were received.

It became apparent that there would be much value in surveying a large cohort of academic scholars about what their understanding of educational tourism was, how they thought they might be able to participate, what objectives companies might have in seeking academic engagement with their tours, what learning outcomes students might hope for in this sphere, and finally what barriers they perceived to future participation in this form of teaching beyond the university classroom. A second survey was thus constructed for academic scholars in the Arts and Humanities fields in Australian universities. We identified and emailed over 1500 randomly-selected HASS academics across all higher education institutions in Australia. 1552 academics were invited by email to complete the “academic survey”. 228 responses were received. Scholars were also asked to contact the project team if they were prepared to complete a more detailed face-to-face, phone, or email interview. Responses to all questions were optional in an effort to encourage people to complete the survey. This explains the varying sample sizes across the questions.

The following charts display the broad demographics of the respondents:



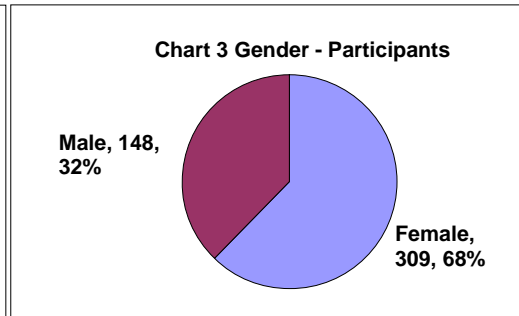
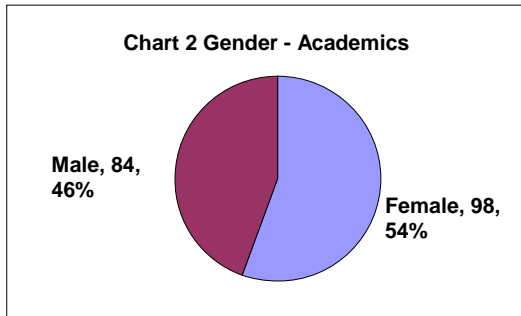
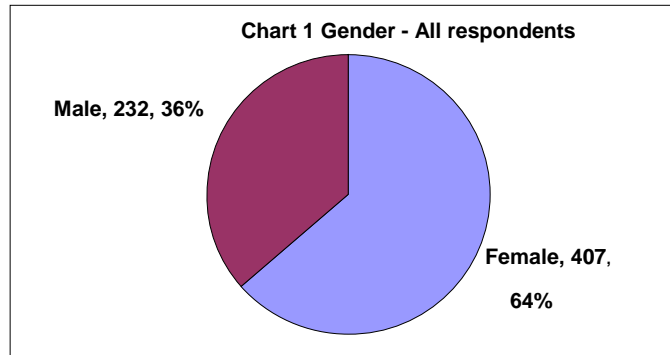


Table 1: Age range of survey respondents

Group	Academics	Participants	All
under 18	0%	0.4%	0.3%
18-35	11.0%	7.6%	4.5%
36-65	82.4%	39.8%	55.9%
Over-65	6.6%	52.2%	39.3%



	Overall	Academics	Participants
Northern Territory	0.2%	0.6%	0%
Tasmania	2.4%	5.0%	1.3%
ACT	4.1%	2.8%	4.6%
South Australia	6.4%	11.7%	4.4%
Queensland	11.0%	16.1%	9.0%
Victoria	18.8%	29.4%	14.6%
New South Wales	24.8%	19.4%	26.9%
Western Australia	29.0%	15.0%	34.5%
International	3.4%	0%	4.8%

The surveys contained a mixture of qualitative and quantitative questions. An example of a qualitative question was “What does the term 'educational tourism' mean to you?” Each respondent provided a free-text response. The content of free text responses was analysed to identify recurring concepts, understandings and perceptions, and reduction was applied to the units of analysis to arrive at themes and tropes relating to each question. For example, analysis of responses to the above question delivered themes relating to the nature, purpose and content of educational tourism.

Other questions generated quantitative responses. These fell into three categories:

- Demographic questions – for example gender, state of residence, age.
- Likert scale items relating to agreement – Measuring the extent to which a person agreed or disagreed with a statement, using a scale of 1 to 5. For example “People learn more by visiting new and different destinations each time they travel, rather than returning to the same destination over and over again.”
- Likert scale items relating to importance – Measuring the extent to which a person rated something as important using a scale of 1 to 5. For example, ranking the importance of musical, cultural, historical or architectural experiences on an educational tour.

Responses to these questions were analysed statistically to arrive at medians (for example, the overall extent to which a group agreed or disagreed with a statement) as well as to identify issues in which there was strong agreement, disagreement, or ambivalence.

A series of common question were posed across the survey groups intended to highlight commonalities or distinctive views between understandings of the groups regarding:



- the meaning of educational tourism;
- their reasons (and perceived reasons of those in the other cohorts) for participating in educational tourism (or not, and if not, why not);
- their experiences (good and bad) of teaching/learning in this environment;
- the need for scholarly knowledge (and perceived need by other cohorts) in various facets of educational tourism (ranging from tour design, written content, as tours leaders etc); and
- the kinds of learning tools required (and perceived by other cohorts) for successful educational tourism.

3.3 In-depth interviews were conducted with key staff from educational tour operator organizations and a range of academic scholars from different disciplines, and with varied educational tourism experiences. Interviews averaged 45 minutes in length. A total of 29 interviews were conducted.

Six Australian educational tour providers were approached for interviews. Personnel from five companies agreed to recorded interviews, including company directors, tour program developers, tour leaders, tour managers and trainers, operations managers, and marketing and sales staff.

Scholars from five universities were interviewed. All worked within the broad disciplines of arts and humanities. Some had extensive experience as tour leaders, program designers or course material designers, while others had some experience of organising study tours and volunteer tourism for university students. Finally, some academic scholars were interviewed as interested future leaders.

An open-ended approach to questioning was adopted, allowing the interviewer to investigate individual issues of interest that were raised, whilst at the same time ensuring that the same foundation questions were asked of each interviewee. Content analysis was employed to conduct the data analysis, as outlined above.

3.4 In the next phase of the research, 17 scholarly and industry attendees participated in a full-day workshop that aimed to identify ways to overcome perceived challenges to academic engagement, input into recognising the value of scholarly teaching in this capacity, and also input into articulating how academics could support their own research and learning through this domain. Key statements, comments and points of discussion from both the workshop's informal conversations and formal sessions were recorded anonymously by projects scribes. Furthermore, notes from the tables' discussions were retained for analysis by the project team.

3.5 Finally, we invited a series of academic scholars, in both Australia and abroad, who interacted with Australian companies to compose reflective statements that responded to a series of targeted questions. These questions were designed to focus more explicitly on aspects of the learning process created by the format and content of educational tours, which they identified for both participants and themselves.



4. Project deliverables and dissemination

Deliverables for the project are:

4.1 Report articulating best-practice models for academic participation in education tourism, anticipated for delivery to industry and academic communities

This objective has been met in the following ways:

4.1.1. Educational Tourism Project Report to Tourism Providers (December 2008)

This interim analysis detailed client and academic learning objectives and practices drawn from the survey data and was disseminated for the information and feedback of industry stakeholders.

4.1.2. Academic Learning and Teaching in Educational Tourism: A Dialogue on Future Possibilities (February 2009)

This interim report detailed the project analysis of tourist literature, company and academic interviews, and all survey cohorts. It was disseminated for information and feedback from academic and industry stakeholders.

4.1.3. A Classroom like no other: Learning and Teaching in Australian Educational Tourism (forthcoming, 2010)

This booklet explores a range of issues related to the theory and practice of learning in educational tourism and is aimed to be of use to academic scholars. It analyses definitions of educational tourism that are used in scholarly educational and tourism research as well as in the marketplace, and explore the forms of learning that these imply. It then explores individual academic relationships with educational tourism and what roles they play as facilitators of learning. It analyses perceptions of what and how clients learn, in terms of content, facilitators, and tools; how educational tourism changes the way participant scholars teach both on-site and in the tertiary classroom as a result of their experiences in this sector. In what way might educational tours enable new insights into teaching practices and delivery techniques? In addition, the text includes the reflective statements collected during our research, as case studies of diverse approaches to teaching in educational tourism from a range of academic practitioners in different contexts.

4.1.4. Australian Learning and Tourism Council Project Final Report (October 2009)

The analysis and recommendations concerning future communication, relationships and practices of academic and industry stakeholders in educational tourism contained within the project's final report will be made available to all academic and industry stakeholders.

4.2 Practitioner workshops working with humanities academics in Australia who wish to work with industry

This objective has been met in the following way:



4.2.1 Academic and industry full-day workshop, Sydney, May 4, 2009

In February 2009, a national open call was made to identify interested academics to attend intensive workshops with industry representatives on the future of educational tourism. The response resulted in a workshop that brought the identified participants together and aimed to articulate the nature of the learning that occurs within educational tourism, and how scholars can use educational tourism to support their research and inform their teaching. It further sought to explore institutional recognition of the value of educational tourism and to identify ways to overcome the perceived challenges to academic engagement in educational tourism.

In exploring learning through educational tourism, workshop attendees considered how and what participants learn in this mode, how the learning environment compares to formal learning environments, the importance of structure in the learning experience, and the significance of learning preparation (pre-tour) and reflection (post-tour). Regarding the potential value of educational tourism in supporting tertiary teaching and research, the attendees reflected upon how tour teaching enhanced classroom delivery, how it enhanced learning for the clients on tour, and how tour learning enhanced learning for the academic in their area of research.

Finally, on the issue of how scholarly participation in educational tourism is valued and integrated in Australian universities, the workshop group explored how educational tourism activities could be recognised by institutional structures, what forms of compensation were appropriate for academic involvement, the potential for educational tourism to assist in the development of alumni relations, or student recruitment, and whether there should be greater emphasis on institutional agreements i.e. universities working with companies, rather than individuals working with companies?

4.3 Peer-reviewed papers and proceedings reporting the project results

This objective has been met in the following way:

4.3.1. Tim Pitman and Susan Broomhall, "Australian universities, generic skills, and lifelong learning," *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 28, 4, 2009, 439-58.

4.3.2. Tim Pitman, Susan Broomhall, Elzbieta Majocho, "Defining Client Learning in Educational Tourism", submitted to a scholarly refereed journal, November, 2009.

4.3.3. Tim Pitman, Susan Broomhall, Elzbieta Majocho, "Teaching ethics beyond the Academy: educational tourism, lifelong learning and phronesis", submitted to a scholarly refereed journal October, 2009.

4.3.4. Tim Pitman, Susan Broomhall, Joanne McEwan, "Transformative learning in educational tourism," Teaching and Learning Forum 2010 'Education and Sustainability', Edith Cowan University, January 28-29, 2010, refereed research paper.

4.4 Additional dissemination through the project web portal

4.4.1 Elsewhereonline.com.au

An overview and outline of the project was communicated to the international academic and general community through the ARC-funded *Elsewhereonline.com.au*



website. This website provided a nexus between academic, industry and community contact concerning intellectual, cultural and visual research about travel, tourism and place. Surveys were also made available through the website. However, this site is currently undergoing redevelopment and its future ability to present the findings of the project is unclear.

4.4.2 ALTC Exchange

Therefore, we have also made the project's interim Report 2 and booklet available on the [ALTC Exchange](#). This offers a more stable platform, informative navigation, increased usability and improved search facilities. We hope to use the Exchange to facilitate dissemination and encourage comment and discussion about the project's outcomes.



5. Linkages

Through the various project instruments, contact was made with academic leaders in educational tourism delivery in Australia and overseas, as well as with emerging scholarly practitioners. At every stage, these networks crossed disciplinary demarcations, bringing together scholars in the arts, humanities and social sciences, and highlighting distinctions in their pedagogical practices both in the classroom and on tour.

International as well as Australian connections were forged through the survey, which was completed by a range of clients and academics working overseas. A number of scholars contacted the project team to learn how they could become involved in future stages of the project. In addition, the reflective statements that were invited by the project team from a range of academic scholars working in international and Australian higher educational institutions added an additional dimension of international linkage to the project.

The project was also able to bring together many interested scholars working in Australian universities at the full-day project workshop in Sydney. Here, they were brought into contact with representatives from the educational tour companies, forging links not just between academic institutions, but also with scholars and wider communities of practice beyond academia. One of the major aims of this project was to increase linkages – that is, communication – between scholars and the educational tourism sector about quality teaching practice in this domain. The ongoing interaction of these workshop participants with the project team has enabled them to function as an informal reference group in the last stages of the project.

Several of the project team members have formed intellectual linkages with other scholars involved in related work and these will be pursued through further research, joint publications and collaborative research funding applications. At UWA, the identification of a broader group of researchers with shared interests in tourism as a form of lifelong learning and/or academic teaching beyond the classroom has led to the submission of a number of applications that stemmed from this project. These include applications for:

- a further ALTC grant on scholarly involvement in in-bound educational tourism; and
- a successful UWA Faculty Teaching and Learning Competitive Grant on study abroad as experiential learning.

Springboarding from this project, Susan Broomhall (History) and Dr Martin Forsey (Anthropology), a participant at the Sydney workshop, have already been able to secure a UWA Teaching and Learning Grant (2009) to investigate student exchange programs as forms of experiential learning. Their project explores whether students are able to identify and articulate the experiential learning – learning that incorporates physical/active as well as intellectual experiences – that may be derived from such study abroad and student exchange programs.

As a result of this project, the team was able to lobby the Executive of UWA to join the Australian & New Zealand College for Seniors Ltd (ANZCS). Membership was approved in August, 2009. ANZCS is a not-for-profit organisation with limited liability, which provides on-going educational opportunities for the over 45s market by the provision of travel programs specifically designed with an educational component.



There are currently 25 member universities and colleges throughout Australia, New Zealand and Asia. Membership with ANZCS offers each university the following benefits:

- Assists universities to provide continuing education and lifelong learning opportunities, particularly via community outreach.
- Sponsoring research opportunities.
- Facilitating “special interest” and “Inter-University” exchange programs.
- Development of educational programs led by suitably qualified university lecturers or academic staff.
- Odyssey (the educational tour company affiliated with ANZCS) offers a work experience program/internship for students with the opportunity to gain insight into the travel industry.



6. Evaluation

The evaluative strategies for this project were formative – from the discussion of data and methods above, it is clear that our ongoing evaluations were significant in assessing both our data collection and dissemination strategies.

The project team met fortnightly throughout the project. At each meeting, we addressed any matters arising in the interim, documented in further detail specific upcoming tasks, and allocated responsibilities. We reviewed our project timeline, which consisted of:

- Actions to be undertaken;
- A person responsible for the action;
- An anticipated completion date; and
- A 'worst-case' completion date.

Feedback to the surveys from all the cohorts (tour providers, academic scholars, clientele) served as another informal but significant source of evaluation and commentary. All groups provided feedback on our approach, questions and focus, and the project team considered these comments at the meetings as part of the evaluation methods.

Further critical comments were explicitly invited and received on the two interim reports released during the course of the project (in December 2008 and February 2009) from tour providers and academic scholars.

Six-monthly reports to the ALTC also enabled the team to assess the state of the project, measuring progress towards its objectives as well as identifying issues to be resolved. Responses to these reports from the ALTC Executive were of great benefit.

The project team was keen to maximise opportunities to involve the academic community through the provider and scholar workshops in the final year of the project. Although the email report was important for reaching the full scholarly community, there were benefits to presenting the workshop for academic teachers and especially in bringing them together with each other as well as with industry participants. The workshop participants acted as a reference group for the team's findings to date, providing valuable feedback and advice on data analysis and future recommendations.

Finally, peer review of articles served as an additional form of evaluation from anonymous academics – about the focus, and clarity of the presentation of the ideas – which assisted in the preparation of the final public documentation and will continue to benefit planned and ongoing outputs.

An important aim of this project was to suggest that forms of educational tourism could provide opportunities for the experimentation, renewal and development of academic teaching practices, as well as the delivery of academic content. The project has used dissemination in a number of forms (email, website, hard copy reports and booklets as well as face-to-face workshops and discussions with academic scholars) to remain high profile and to contact and include as many scholars as possible.



7. Project Findings

7.1 Overview

7.1.1. Australian academic scholars currently participate in a wide range of educational tourism and travel experiences.

7.1.2 Intentional, experiential, and structured learning are perceived by scholars, clients and companies as the defining features of educational tourism.

7.1.3. Educational tourism providers indicate that:

- Participation by academics is highly valued;
- Participation by academics can occur in a variety of ways, not just by leading tours; and
- Cutting-edge knowledge content created by academics creates a marketable educational tour product.

7.1.4. Evidence from academic scholars indicates that participation in educational tourism:

- changes the way they think about their work.
- enhances their communication and teaching skills in and beyond the classroom.
- enhances their research both directly and indirectly by securing funds, providing access to unique or important sites, and engaging with a learning community.

7.1.5 Educational tourism clients indicate that:

- They like to research their trip in advance;
- Sophisticated educational materials are important for this preparation;
- Group learning is preferred over independent learning;
- Meaningful contact with the local communities is a highly valued aspect of educational tours; and
- They perceive and desire educational tourism to be an ethically and environmentally sustainable form of tourism.

7.2. Australian academic scholars currently participate in a wide range of educational tourism and travel experiences

When surveyed, many academic scholars within Australian universities indicated that they had experienced teaching in forms of educational tourism. This included acting as leaders or hosts of inbound programmes, roles as fieldwork and excavation supervisors, providing touring advice to students and colleagues, delivering public lecture series in regional areas, and facilitating student exchange. Indeed Australian universities act as service providers of tourism experiences by offering a variety of short programs, often fee-paying, with the express aim of combining learning and travel. Such travel options range from study abroad and student exchange to group study tours, field work at various Australian locations, holiday programs and customised short courses designed upon demand. Although such programs market themselves on their leisure aspects and include a range of entertainment activities, their focus is generally educational.



The majority of these programs are aimed at existing and prospective students of the university, especially prospective *international* students, although some universities have also extended such offerings to members of the public. A common thread running through advertisements for all of these 'study + travel' options, whether they are run in Australia or internationally, is the promise of a beneficial cultural experience. For programs run locally or at other destinations in Australia, the opportunity to 'immerse yourself in Aussie culture' and 'experience the 'real Australia'' is a recurring motif, while overseas programs are promoted as a way to 'expand horizons'. Specifically, overseas study is lauded as a means of providing students with 'insights into another culture and society which you can't get from just travelling'.

Most notably, all of the Australian universities offer study abroad and student exchange programs, whereby students can study for up to a year abroad at a host institution whilst gaining credit towards their degree at home. Recommended study packages are often made available to incoming study abroad students, many of which emphasise further opportunities to combine travel and learning via fieldwork, excursions and encounters with sites of Australian culture or heritage. Students can incorporate field trips to the Great Barrier Reef or famous shipwrecks for example, by choosing particular subjects as part of their study program. Many universities also offer welcome and orientation weekends aimed at new international students. While some of these programs advertise their intention as familiarising students with their new surrounds and fellow classmates, the majority also seek to offer a learning experience by introducing students to, and immersing them in, Australian culture. The definition of Australian culture propounded in these instances is noticeably determined by the location of the university and the tourist attractions situated nearby. One, for example, hosts a three day 'Beach Welcome' for international students, visiting some of Victoria's most coveted sightseeing destinations – the Great Ocean Road, the Twelve Apostles, and Bells Beach – *en route* to the popular holiday destination Lorne. Another offers a 10 day camping safari in remote outback WA, providing international students with the 'chance to experience the vast and breathtaking beauty of Australia in 'true blue' Aussie style'.

A number of Australian universities maintain collaborative links with partner institutions or research networks, with a particular focus on facilitating exchanges and short term study options for students in overseas locations. Additionally, Monash University has a research centre in Prato, Italy, which it uses to 'provide opportunities for experience abroad' as part of its undergraduate programs. In contrast to exchange programs, which send students to a different institution, a number of Australian universities also conduct study tours run by their own staff at overseas locations during university holiday periods. These vary from non-specific study tours, such as those that visit a foreign city with the purpose of studying its culture and politics, to study tours which deliver specific academic units as intensive short courses taught on location. University of Melbourne students, for example, can study units such as 'Venice and Cultures of Consumption' on-site in Venice as a four week study abroad subject.

Most of the travel options advertised by Australian universities are available for students and potential students of the university. However, travel opportunities are occasionally extended to interested members of the public. This can take the form of short field trips to places of historical or cultural significance. Archaeology departments in particular tend to offer some of their standard field work schools and workshops to non-students as short courses.



In addition to these for-credit and fee-paying learning experiences provided by universities domestically and abroad, a number of higher education institutions provide opportunities for enrolled students, alumni and interested members of the public to participate in for-credit or fee-paying study tours, by working in association with commercial tour companies. One university provides study tours for 'small groups of like-minded travellers whose quest is exploration rather than a rushed itinerary'. Hosted by adjunct staff of the university, members of the public can travel to destinations as diverse as Spain, Russia, Japan, Syria, and Hungary for a 'travel and learning experience far beyond the usual tourist trails'. Moreover, educational travel companies also liaise with individual academics to lead tour groups or provide content for handbooks and supporting materials. This project was specifically engaged with those educational tourism interactions that occur with industry bodies, and this is the focus of the analysis to follow. In these instances, marketing and practice of such programmes promote their learning and travel aspects in relationships of varied proportions.

7.3 Intentional, experiential, and structured learning are perceived by scholars, clients and companies as the defining features of educational tourism

Clarifying academic, provider and client understanding of what educational tourism is and can be was a fundamental starting point for the project, as well as a springboard to the team's other research questions. In the 1960s and 1970s, global education lobby organisations such as UNESCO and the OECD observed that education should be dispensed through a multiplicity of means; what was important was not the path that an individual had followed, but what learning had occurred as a consequence (Faure et al., 1973). The general increase in leisure time since the Second World War, plus the increase in disposable income and relative decrease in the cost of travel, has given many more people the opportunity to engage in "intellectual improvement" (Bodger, 1998, p. 28). With a widening of people's interests and appreciation of cultural values, many individuals have come to look upon vacations as a means of developing these interests (ibid). Tourism is, arguably, one of the few contemporary sites outside of the education industry where explicitly designated, non-vocational learning about other times, places, and peoples takes place (Werry, 2008).

The 1980s witnessed the appearance of new tourism designs that both recognised tourism's negative impacts and imagined a more positive role for tourism. These new designs include ecotourism, ethnic tourism, nature tourism and adventure travel (Zurick, 1992). The informal learning that occurs in these environments can often be translated back into a formal curriculum. Sesow and Wunder (1995) have explored how teachers have been able to use their travel experiences to enhance their students' learning. Much of the discussion has centred on theories of experiential learning, such as those expounded by Kolb (1984) and Mezirow (1990, 1991). Guy, Curtis and Crotts (1990) explored the factors influencing the rate and degree of environmental learning of first-time visitors to an international destination. The relative contributions of direct experience and direct and indirect sources of information were examined. Their empirical study concluded that the immersive experience of travel was the primary correlate of learning in terms of scope, accuracy, and detail. Similarly, Schmeink and Thurston (2007) found that travel experiences enhanced children's spatial cognition ability.

However the power imbalance inherent in many tourist/local interactions means that it usually falls to the traveller to choose who to interact with, where to go, and what to



consume (Ntarangwi, 2000). Consequently, the validity of what is learnt is always contestable. Yet there is evidence that learning and benefit can occur in both directions. For example, the almost accidental development of tourism in the Longsheng county of Guangxi, China, has resulted in the revival of previously vanishing aspects of local culture and the strengthening of community education programs for the local community (Yuanyuan, 2008).

Much of the analytical interest in educational tourism to date, particularly in the form of mature-age tours, has come from practitioners and the market. The most significant in-depth studies of the field stem from research commissioned by companies themselves about their client markets and their learning needs (see for example Elderhostel 2007a & 2007b), as well as influential intellectual investigations into their ontology conducted by company personnel (see for example Wood, 1987, 1992, 2001, 2008). Although it is a relatively under-researched scholarly field, establishing a theoretical framework for touristic learning could assist in the development of products that better fulfil both consumers' needs and providers' objectives and perhaps illuminate our understanding of forms of learning which are more incidental. Beyond this, a greater understanding of touristic learning may also provide new insight on why people travel at all (Mitchell, 1998).

Academic research into educational tourism, however, has been slow to emerge. A recent collection of scholarly papers in contemporary niche tourism does not include adult educational tourism (Novelli, 2005). This may be because it requires a synthesis of two areas of scholarship: education and tourism. Scholars are increasingly observing that education facilitates mobility, whilst learning has become an increasingly important part of the tourist experience. Using broad definitions, their work has allowed for the analysis of people not usually classified as tourists travelling to seek an educational experience. For example, Cooper and Latham (1988) consider schoolchildren visiting a museum to be potential educational tourists. Cushner (2004) considers the "travelling teacher" to be the master of experiential learning, by using his or her travelling experiences (as well as encouraging this intrepidity in her or his students) as the ideal way of acquiring multicultural skills. In fact, anyone combining travel with their normal duties (soldiers, diplomats, spies, journalists, politicians) could be said to be undertaking educational travel (Ritchie, 2003). Ritchie has argued that "the concept of travel for education and learning is a broad and complicated area, which explains why tourism academics and industry have to date largely ignored this field" (Ritchie, 2003, p. 9).

As such, definitional issues dog the field. Hecht, Starosielski and Dara-Abrams (2007) use the term "information-centric" tourism to describe a range of touristic experiences that are motivated by a desire or need to learn. This includes "alternative" tourism: a touristic activity that attempts to negate negative aspects whilst retaining the positive ones (Zurick, 1992); "heritage" or "cultural" tourism (Picard, 1990; Gelbman, 2009); "literary" tourism (Earl, 2008) or "eco-tourism" (Rassool & Witz, 1996). This project analysed provider literature and websites to assess the use and meanings of the term in current Australian practice. Surveys canvassed the perceptions of a broad range of potential clients and academics. Finally, our more detailed follow-up interviews directly posed the question of defining this term to educational tour directors and employees, and to the academics with whom they worked.

Educational tourism or travel

Educational tourism providers did not generally refer to their activities as tours and the participants as tourists. The preferred terminology included travel, travellers and



programs. The tourist-traveller dichotomy goes back at least to the end of the eighteenth century and first quarter of the nineteenth century, when travel both domestic and foreign gained popularity. Previously, the experience of travel by young aristocrats in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was described as “tour”, derived from the Grand Tour, and those who participated were called “tourists”. With the emergence of a broader section of the population able to participate in tourism, the nineteenth century saw vigorous debate on the subject of the true “Traveller” as opposed to the “Vulgar Tourist” (Buzard, 1993).

While the words “tourism” and “travel” are used by some scholars interchangeably, for others they are quite distinct. Russians use the same word (*tourist*) to describe both the broad and the narrow: a *tourist* can be either a traveller for pleasure, enlightenment or excitement, or simply anyone who travels, for a purpose, using their own physical powers (Koenker, 2003, p.658). Similarly, in his examination of sustainable tourism in Nepal, Zurick (1992) uses the terms “adventure travel” and “adventure tourism” interchangeably. Yet for Daniel Boorstin (as cited in Davis, 2007) tourists are a particular – and inferior – type of traveller, who have shifted their gaze from authentic travel to inauthentic tourism. Thomas (2009, p. 51) echoes Boorstin’s comments and places them in a more contemporary context:

Most of us aren't travellers at all – we're tourists, vulnerable to the process of commodification as the places we visit. A homogenous group of dopey beasts, who take cattle-class flights at 3am, organise stag nights in Prague, and demand egg and chips and a beer whose name we can easily pronounce on a sunny beach in Spain. The smaller the world gets, the more we seem to want it to be as much like home as possible.

Gorusch (2003) suggests that tourism often implies a controlled experience driven by a hidden agenda and uses by way of example the promotion of domestic tourism in post-war Russia to advance the Stalinist regime’s own xenophobic interpretation of world events. Others link definitions to the behaviour of the individual: whereas the act of taking a photograph is likely to signify a tourist (Garrod, 2008), that of writing is more often associated with travellers, perhaps due to it being more commonly linked to professional activities such as journalism (White, 2008). Consequently, the terms travel and tourism can be synonymous for some scholars and conflicting for others. This is in part a consequence of definitions being driven from both the demand side (consumer) and supply side (industry) of tourism (Ritchie, 2003). Whilst some definitions describe those with whom the industry wishes to engage, others reveal how individuals wish to perceive themselves. Researchers themselves often construct definitions of tourism in order to define their own, specific subject of enquiry (Ntarangwi, 2000).

It is notable that a significant number of both academics and educational tour company practitioners displayed some aversion to use of the word “tourism”. Feifer (1985, p. 2), succinctly observes that “no-one wants to be called a tourist”. Generally within the travel provider literature terms such as “travel,” “journey” or “adventure” were preferred – seemingly as a broader, more intellectual and less explicitly commercial definition of their practices. One brochure used a quote from a participant: “The program contained a good mix of information and activities meaning that I felt like a traveller rather than a tourist.” In particular, in defining the identity of a typical company client, tour provider literature highlighted the distinction between travel (what they do) and tourism (what something else unspecified – perhaps mass tourism – does). This was achieved by the choice of adjectives used to describe tour



principles and clients, by implication indicating what it was not (i.e. tourism). Thus, there was the perception that something was wrong with being a tourist.

The description of tours emphasised the provision of more detailed information and cultural engagement than was possible in “mass tourism”. Clients should therefore have the desire to have “greater involvement in another culture, than merely observing it from a coach window”, and were “those who want more out of travel than simply a catalogue of places.” Features included “extended stays” to “get to know the places you visit”. Mass tourism was portrayed either as the absent other against which comparisons were made, or through phrases which critiqued other modes of touristic engagement:

spend your time actually looking at the things you've travelled to see, rather than straining to listen to a local tour guide. Through the background talks you'll also build up a coherent understanding of the country you're visiting, not just a fragmented set of facts.

Educational tourism, these brochures claimed, was for “those who want to move beyond mass tourism” or “beyond the worn tourist trails.” The experience that these tours provided was perceived to be “unique and privileged” and might sometimes involve “some unusual sectors” as well as “all the classic travel experiences”.

This notion of a deeper and intentional effort to form a richer understanding of a place or culture echoed the survey responses. One marketing manager explained: “while we offer similar ... destinations, we tend to offer a more comprehensive approach to the history and the sense of place”. An employee in one educational tour company described his company's niche learning approach in the following terms:

it gives tourists an opportunity to step outside the regular old box of a tourism experience and gives them an insight into educational aspects and certainly would ... develop knowledge and satisfaction of visiting a destination instead of just seeing the elementary sights and sounds.

Moreover, the organised tour structure could itself be advantageous, as a content developer at one company identified: “we offer very good value for money because the experience that people are paying for is something quite unique, and something they most certainly couldn't achieve on their own.”

For the following phases of the research, we elected to keep the term “educational tourism” in order to make the direct connection to the format of the educational experience we were most commonly analysing in this study – both in the sense that it concerns the organised tour, and to reflect the fact that these are commercial operations.

Our interviews with academic scholars and educational tour company representatives suggested diverse views both within and between these groups about the meaning of this term and its coverage of ‘paid-for’ tourism practices in Australia. Indeed, within the interview context, directors of companies referred more commonly to intellectualised notions of travel as mind-broadening, eschewing the explicit commercial dimensions of their company practice. Moreover, one director of a not-for-profit company had consciously rejected the terminology of “a tour” for the following rationale: “we run programs, educational programs, basically, instead of tours. It's to differentiate a little bit what we do from what the commercial world



does". The use of participant feedback statements as above, which also frequently distinguished between travel and tourism, served to reinforce a difference in these modes of practice.

When asked the same question, some scholars perceived the use of the term "tourism" to be problematic or conceptually incompatible with education. In the survey, several respondents – all academic – provided negative definitions of educational tourism, centring on either the quality of the learning experience or a belief that tourism itself was negative:

Travel can be educational, but tourism per se is not educational (male academic aged 35-50).

Sounds a bit sus. The exploitation by the tourist industry of people's better instincts toward the planet (female academic aged 50-65).

A marketing ploy (male academic aged 18-35).

When asked about their engagement with educational tourism, some scholars explained their disinterest in terms of perceived exploitation of the tourist mode:

The idea of "tourism" has negative connotations for me; it signifies to me a type of intrusion. I realise that some places rely upon tourism economically, but I feel suspicious about claims made about the type of learning that can occur as a tourist (female academic aged 35-50).

Because I don't think mediated encounters with living people or places that are pre-defined as "other" will conduce to those peoples' or places' welfare (female academic aged 18-35).

This perception has been noted in scholarly literature. Werry (2008, p. 14), for example, refers to the "paradox of tourism":

The more cultural capital the travel consumer wields and accrues (through tourism), and the deeper her belief in travel's potential to inform and transform, the more deep-seated her prejudice against tourism as a "bad cultural object" is likely to be. For such consumers, tourism is a byword for superficiality, inauthenticity, willful ignorance, political irresponsibility, exploitation, and cultural prostitution.

In interviews, while one academic linked educational tourism to the tradition of the Grand Tour, a number of other academic responses saw tourism as a limited or limiting term. As one male academic and tour leader argued: "by using the word tourism, you're limiting yourself to one part of the phenomenon. If you use the word[s] "educational travel", you would be widening that." As another explained:

there is also, almost a contradiction in terms: educational tourism, isn't there? Because tourism often necessitates a sort of blinkered view of the world, what I call cocooned existence we've all seen tourist buses with people who seek to stay within their comfort zone You're in a bus, you're in a nice hotel, you don't have to learn the language.

Yet the same academic concluded his response by reconciling the possibilities of learning within a commodified genre:



I think educational tourism, if it's to be packaged as a commodity, is tourism with a particular focus and the focus is to engage with aspects of the place where you are touring. In other words, it's beyond looking.

Educational tourism and learning

Provider literature identified learning or enquiry as a key differentiating point of its niche in the tourism market: from the passive “audience interested in travelling to learn”, to the more dynamic “enquiring minds” which focus on “stimulating ... the active, inquisitive traveller”. Companies’ advertising material promoted the notion of an in-depth engagement with other cultures through the opportunities they provide to gain contextualised knowledge as well as a deeper (often longer) appreciation of particular sites. One company proposed a quote that summarised its target audience identity: “I want to have time to absorb the environment and to learn something about what I’m seeing.”

Similarly, learning was unmistakably the dominant outcome defined by the survey respondents who returned 609 responses to the question “What does the term ‘educational tourism’ mean to you?” The responses ranged from the succinct to the expansive:

A holiday with a strong learning component (male academic aged 50-65).

Travelling so as to learn more about a place, culture, activity, period of history, rather than just have fun or relax. It can be guided by people &/or books &/or lectures etc., before, during & after the actual travel. It is primarily for personal pleasure rather than formal education, though that could be a component in some tours. Ideally it demonstrates great respect for the people who live in the place & their environment eg by them owning the tour company, being specialist guides etc. It involves a relationship, not just looking at people (Client, social worker, aged 50-65).

The concept of learning appeared in more than 83% of the definitions. For example:

Travel with an educational focus (female academic aged 35-50).

Travelling with the aim of learning rather than just having fun alone (male academic aged 50-65).

Seventeen definitions identified all tourism, indeed travel in general, as being educational:

I guess that all tourism has something of an educational dimension to it (female academic aged 18-35).

Visiting other 'places' either physically or virtually where you will encounter 'different' perspectives, experiences, cultures, countries and projects for the purposes of learning and reflection (female academic aged 50-65).



The definitions expressed three key ideas about the form of learning in educational tourism:

1. It is intentional: e.g. "Taking a trip specifically to broaden my horizons or enhance my knowledge" (male client, aged 18-35); "Travel with a purpose; an enriched travel experience that provides food for your brain" (female client, aged 56-65);
2. It is experiential: e.g. use of word/phrases such as included "immersion", "hands-on", "vivid" and "evidence", "engaging with ideas in their original context" and "being exposed to [a country's] politics, society and economy"; and
3. It is structured: e.g. "It is the combination of travel with a structured educational program" (male academic, aged 50-65); "Going overseas to learn something in a structured way" (female client, aged 35-50).

These three elements were also highlighted in definitions provided in interviews. One director saw his company's focus as "[enhancing] travel experience through learning for fun." Academics defined the provision of an explicit structure to pursue learning as the significant feature of educational tourism. One academic tour leader expressed it as: "Tourism, or travel which is structured, has a theme to pursue and requires some background knowledge of the sites being visited and some attempt to analyse on the spot." Another highlighted

the desire to acquire information about that place and that information can be on, you know, I think anything to do with architectural history, art, it can be broader history. It can be to do with laying out of gardens, it can be cookery, it can be all sorts of things. It's the sense of information.

One experienced female academic leader offered: "education tourism is for those people who want to take it seriously, who want to learn from it, rather than those who just want to come along for a holiday." Statements such as these emphasised the intent required by clients to learn on such tours as an important definitional feature of educational tours.

However, a marketing manager of an educational tourism company highlighted one of the challenges of marketing this form of tourism as learning: "From the client's perspective you have to be careful how you approach educational tourism because some people think that they're not smart enough." Indeed, experienced tour leaders recognised that clients wanted different types and quantities of information, as one male academic leader observed: "they all want to learn ... but there's a certain amount that they want to learn." Another reflected: "I don't know how serious some of these people are, they like to think that they are interested in educational tours, they're interested to a degree." Others emphasised the importance of the traveller identity that participation in such a tour might convey for clients. One academic tour leader surveyed for this study considered that:

people [who] go on an educational tour want to see themselves differently from normal tourists. In fact they may not be that different, you're still travelling on buses, you're still staying in quite fancy hotels and so on. It's not that different from all the other tourists but they want to see themselves as there for a different purpose. And they, I think, have a genuine interest in engagement with the local culture.

Educational tours and personal development



For most survey respondents, educational tourism suggested the idea of an intentional, structured, *in situ* learning experience. Overwhelmingly, both academic and client respondents' definitions pointed to the need for a conscious or deliberate learning component as part of this form of travel. So how was learning described in company literature? As seen above, explicit references to provision of an educational component, in-depth information, cultural contact, and mental stimulation were central to the marketing strategies of educational tour organisations. Several companies indicated that their tours could be claimed as professional development or used for academic credit, however the generally accessible educational tours are typically designed for the satisfaction of individuals rather than to meet professional or scholarly requirements.

“Experience”, “explore”, “discover” were the key descriptors of the educational experience within company literature. “Learning” was not commonly used and was often replaced by less directed (and less quantifiable) verbs such as “enquiring”.

In general, the learning described was implicitly about personal development rather than testable information. Companies emphasised that no specific academic qualifications were necessary to participate in a tour – rather a willingness to explore another culture in detail. Attitude rather than qualifications was thus a key requirement for clients. The degree of knowledge attainment was up to the individual, with phrases such as “broadening your knowledge” conveying a sense that learning was measurable only at the level of each participant. Educational tours contributed to a participant’s personal and intellectual lifelong learning. Because of the individual nature of the learning, and the need to avoid quantifiable knowledge outcomes that could not be guaranteed for each participant, there was in general no attempt to provide specific learning outcomes for an individual tour.

The humanistic perspective of lifelong learning contends that learning throughout life, and via varied fora, is a means by which individuals develop personally and socially (Strain, 1998). Lifelong learning, travel and personal development are linked by the acknowledgement that the experientially-based, informal learning that can occur in touristic events can be beneficial in these terms. At the level of the individual tourist, the primary goals of a leisure trip are likely to be experiential (Botterill & Crompton, 1996). Lifelong learning via tourism is becoming increasingly important to many individuals:

But it is not only older people who are going on tours and overseas holidays—it is people of all ages who travel abroad for holidays and not all just seek the sun and the sand, many do go to places of historical and cultural interest and seek to understand more of this cultural heritage. But it is not only a matter of understanding but preserving this heritage that is important and as concern for the planet grows, so this role becomes more important. Tour guides and guides to sites of such interest and importance are playing a significant liberal adult educational role. (Editorial, International Journal of Lifelong Education, 2008, p.359)

Events experienced whilst on a leisure trip can not only cause individuals to change their perceptions about the country being visited, but also the way in which they view their own country (Pearce, 1982).

Some forms of tourism place a specific emphasis on lifelong learning as a focus of their activities. Moscardo (1996) explores the idea of the “mindful” tourist and argues that their experiences with heritage tourism allow them a greater understanding of



the wider environment. Thacheen and Lauzon (2006, p. 407) refer to learning tours as “organized conversations” in which an individual’s experiences can change his [sic] life as well as those around him. Elderhostel, an American tourism provider to the over 55’s (“baby boomers”), has conducted research on learning habits of the over-55 age group (Elderhostel, 2007). The research concluded that “a sustained commitment to learning” was seen as a way of achieving successful aging by the baby boomers. Furthermore, the learning combined “blending intellectual stimulation, social engagement, physical activity, and creative expression” (Elderhostel 2007, pp. 24-25). Participation in an educational tour meets at least the first three of the four criteria of lifelong learning for some seniors.

Australian tour company personnel interviewed for this project saw explicit learning objectives as off-putting to clientele who might be of different educational levels and experience. They were also perceived to be hallmarks of degree or university study. With educational tours, company personnel insisted, learning must be progressed in an enjoyable way. The director of one educational tour company described the learning that they provide as “what we’re about is continuing education, lifelong learning. So it’s about learning for fun without examinations attached.” Another tour designer articulated that for her company:

We do think of them as educational experiences because they do come away from it having learnt something and having very special experiences that I think helped aid their learning and ... the sort of experiences that we provide really enhance their whole travel experience.

7.4 Educational tourism providers indicate that:

- **Participation by academics is highly valued;**
- **Participation by academics can occur in a variety of ways, not just by leading tours; and**
- **Cutting-edge knowledge content created by academics creates a marketable educational tour product.**

Explicit academic connections matter to educational tour company marketing. Provider literature, such as tour programs and brochures, make clear the academic qualifications of their personnel. The previous teaching appointments of employees at secondary and tertiary level, from directors and office staff to tour leaders, were typically provided in website and brochure literature. Previous tours led by the staff members were commonly noted as a form of recognition of prior experience in this domain. The use of tertiary scholars as leaders was frequently noted in addition to other forms of expertise (although how this would be identified was unspecified): “led by academics or experts in the focus of the tour.” Companies defined their tourism therefore as one engaged with academic or other expertise.

Importantly, one marketing manager in an educational tourism company saw the involvement of academics and experts as crucial in the distinction of their company from other tourism providers: “we believe educational tourism is having group leaders that know more about the place and can put it into a sense of its era and the perspective of where it’s come from.” One experienced male tour leader reflected that it was the careful structure, unique locations, as well as the expertise of the leader expertise that attracted clients: “because you have worked there for 35 years and also because you are a professional.” He reflected on feedback from tour participants that indicated:



they want to be informed by someone that they think they trust knows the material. And I think that's the reason they look at them and say okay, this person's worked there that long, they lecture at this university so we can rely upon what they say.

A well-qualified tour leader was clearly an important part of educational tour marketing. Travel company literature emphasised the care and consideration of tour groups in “sourcing” an appropriately trained program leader. But what does qualified and trained mean in this context?

Content expertise or knowledge was the most commonly discussed feature of tour leaders. They were “informed”, “experts”, and “specialists” with “extensive knowledge”. As noted above, the academic qualifications of tour leaders were frequently highlighted in company literature and their academic titles commonly used. Leaders’ current or present positions within higher education institutions were noted, as well as other work roles relevant to the tour content.

Interviews with educational tour personnel were consistent in their agreement that the involvement of knowledge experts was a key feature of their ethos and marketing edge. Equally, where tour leaders were mentioned by survey respondents in their definitions of educational tourism, they were most commonly described as being an “expert”:

The opportunity to learn more about areas and places through visits accompanied by expert guides.

Male clients, young and old, tended to focus slightly more on “accurate knowledge” or “local knowledge and formal education” in tour leaders. However some female clients also sought someone who could “say ‘I don't know’ when appropriate” or “someone who admits when he/she does not know something.”

Academic qualifications were widely considered to signal knowledge expertise (although not exclusively). Experiential knowledge of a location was also highly valued. A manager at one educational tour company defined a good leader as having

an expertise either in a particular country they are going to, they will know the local language, they can speak the local language, they've had either study of that particular country or lived in that country so it's not just someone who is a tour expert as such. They're someone with far higher qualifications.

The director of one educational tour company did connect expertise to academic recognition:

Our tour leader for our tours has to be an expert in his or her field so they must bring with them an educational standard of some level. ... they have to be an expert in that field, recognised expert, not a self-proclaimed expert.

In addition to the leader, tour companies provided a suite of other knowledge experts such as “local guides”, “local lecturers” or “on-site experts”, who were responsible for “enhancing” the tour experience. Tour literature suggested that these personnel were “authoritative”, typically because they either provided scholarly knowledge or



possessed unique professional expertise. This gave participants a particular, in-depth or unusual insight into the locality because of the guide's access to off-limit or off-the-beaten-track sites, or the perspective of a well-informed local on the tour's theme. One leader saw the inclusion of local experts as an important way in which educational tourism could foster local communities and knowledge development:

when it actually comes to walking around and looking at things, whether it's inside an art gallery or whether it's on site, whatever it might be, ... the main interpretation automatically is left to the local person. It's part of their employment, it's obviously a very good thing for them to develop those skills and they bring, I would have to be honest, not just more detailed knowledge of their local political and social context, they also may visit a site a hundred times and I may have only visited it four times and so they may know more recent excavation, more interpretative history. And it's their right to talk about their country of course. But what I will do, will be to add some comments of what we're looking at, with their permission of course and we try and do it in a very friendly way.

Leaders drew distinctions between their role and that of local experts in terms of the material and contexts they provided:

The local guy, if we have one travelling with us, might talk about social, gender, political issues of the current day which are things which he or she would know in more detail than I would. Then I might talk a bit about the sites that we're visiting and their cultural impact. So I will try and do that every couple of days on the bus. ... Certainly the interpretation of that that I can bring, and hopefully it's appreciated, is by putting these things in a much wider cultural, political, historical context which you know which is, I would imagine, beneficial for people to enjoy hearing in that sort of way.

Academic scholars are also commonly involved in educational tourism as authors of handbook materials. Prior information (such as handouts, books, other educational aids) was highly valued by clients. Female clients showed a significantly stronger preference for preparing their learning. Survey participants were also asked to consider what types of educational aids they would find useful for learning on an educational tour, and the point at which they would be most useful (i.e. before, during or after the tour). Almost unanimously, maps were considered to be the most valuable educational aid, consistently ranking highly at all stages of the educational travel experience. Handbooks were almost as highly valued as maps pre and during tours. One leader reflected on how his group used their textual resources on tour:

if we're walking around we have these available to us, people can jot notes down in that sort of way or above all when we meet in the evening we've got this shared resource to actually work with. So these take the place fairly obviously of visuals, overheads, things like that which we would use in the teaching classroom setting. So it does enable people to, I think, have a fairly good and comprehensive aide memoir for what's going on, a bit of resource which can actually be used in the field, in the hotel to enhance their knowledge.

A manager at one educational tour company described the documentation prepared by their company:



The preparatory material is quite a large document which can be anything up to sort of 33 pages, and gives details on where they're going to be going to, it gives them the history of the places they're going to, and it gives them more detail on the places that they're going to visit ... we also offer a reading and reference list and that's given to them as soon as they deposit on a program so that they can begin to read about the program ... We encourage them in their welcome letter to go the library, use the resources at the library.

Participant feedback was often used in company marketing to highlight the quality of materials provided to clients:

I have just received ... preparatory material, and wish to convey my pleasure at receiving such a beautifully presented package, full of clear, detailed and fascinating material. This package would have to rank as one of the best ever. Superb!

Within such materials, a participant might find more identifiable "Objectives of the Program", although these were noticeably broader and measured against one's own personal starting point in comparison to most university units:

At the conclusion of our program ... we will have developed: "a greater understanding" "an appreciation", "a sense of wonder", "a greater knowledge".

Apart from introductory information and details about the sites to be visited, such course handbooks often included a suggested reading list that might contain novels as well as scholarly textbooks. High quality, carefully designed materials allow learning to continue from the educational tourism experience beyond the time of the tour itself.

7.5 Evidence from academic scholars indicates that participation in educational tourism:

- **changes the way they think about their work;**
- **enhances their communication and teaching skills in and beyond the classroom; and**
- **enhances their research both directly and indirectly by securing funds, accessing unique or important sites, and engaging with a learning community.**

Many academics indicated that they had already been involved in educational tourism. More than a quarter (26.8%) had participated as either a guest lecturer or a tour leader. A sizeable proportion had also presented information sessions or authored educational tourism materials. Other forms of educational tourism experiences listed by scholars included:

- Program coordinator;
- Lecturer in a course with tourism-related material;
- Giving adult extension or community courses on travel-related topics;
- Lecturing on study (credit) tours; and
- As a participant themselves.



The overwhelming majority found the experience valuable and would participate again in some teaching aspect – only 13 academics who had previously participated said they would not do so in the future. As one male academic explained: “Satisfaction for me as a teacher was very high. One could see the process so clearly work and so too the palpable delight of many students, the common ‘aha experience’.”

Academic engagement as knowledge experts was perceived to add value to educational tours, not just by companies and their clients but also by scholars. One male academic reflected:

I think you could say therefore there’s an onus upon us to put that back ... into the community. But I think there’s a lot of people in the community who are really interested in this so it’s not like oh well, we have to do this. I think there are people out there, lots of people, who are interested in all sorts of things ... I think it’s enjoyable.

To do so, excellent communication skills and delivery techniques were considered critical aspects of a tour leader’s teaching competencies by all survey groups:

Good at communication i.e. also in eye contact and rapport with people. They don’t sound like they are bored and have said the thing a 1000 times, but genuinely interested in what they do, teach (female client, aged 35-50).

This passion to communicate knowledge defined the excellent tour leader, as the director of one educational tour company observed:

somebody who is deeply involved, intimately involved with the country or the theme of a particular tour, who can share that enthusiasm with others but who also has an empathy for travellers who may not be experienced.

As an academic explained, “many of those skills will overlap with the skills required of a good teacher, and the essence of good teaching is a combination of knowledge, ability to communicate, and passion.” These qualities marked those who were “the best in their field.” An employee of one company commented:

the knowledge of their subject, their confidence in their subject... they have to be able to impart the knowledge to their clients in a way that people are going to appreciate while they’re away.

One male academic reflected: “For teaching I would say because it broadens your communication skills.” Others spoke of their “passion” for their subject and “love” for the places they visited with tour groups; indeed one scholar considered that leaders were often showing tour participants “their favourite places.”

To cater for the range of skills required in tour leaders, some companies had created a division between an organiser/manager role and the accompanying expert. This is in addition to the on-site guides who might also be provided. As one designer put it:

the tour manager is really somebody who assists with the tour arrangements. The tour leader is responsible for the educational and the social aspects of the tour really. ... What we’ve done is divided the expectation and the needs of tour members.



However, it is notable that the social aspects of group cohesion and dynamics (if not practical arrangements) were seen as the role of the intellectual expert. One academic leader described his input as the leader on a photography tour in the following terms: “I was there as a kind of creative mentor, I suppose, that is the term that I like to use. And that worked very well.”

Leaders were commonly defined as flexible thinkers. When asked to consider how they delivered content on tours, leaders’ responses consistently highlighted the key characteristic as adaptability:

we are flexible in that we will ask people on the group that we take at the moment, what are you interested in? What would you like us to talk about? We have got a series of topics that we think you should get information on, but if you have particular components, let us know.

Leaders spoke of the need to be sensitive to the different ways and environment in which learning occurred:

the experience of good teaching is to be mindful of what people are bringing to the classroom and to make sure that in the discourse we have some are not being alienated by only talking to others.

The importance of observing the variety of learning styles and levels in a tour group was noted by one female academic leader: “several of them will be taking notes. And with some of them they will also come up to you later and ask for clarification of certain of the points that you’ve made.” The opportunity to pose questions with the leader was highlighted by many leaders as a common feature of participant learning. One brochure, for example, quoted a participant: “I found the lectures on culture & history excellent & informative. Good to have opportunities to ask questions.” This suggests that beyond the formal delivery of lectures, an important aspect of client learning takes place in informal settings. These may be places where the participants feel comfortable and supported, unafraid to ask questions, to verify their learning or to reflect upon the sites visited and their meanings.

In addition to the challenge of clients’ differing levels of subject familiarity, learning styles, and abilities, catering to different degrees of interest in learning was a critical feature for most leaders. One described his method for responding to different learning styles and degrees of prior knowledge thus:

while we do start up with a generalised kind of thing, you know that not everyone will perhaps want to walk down that path of more detailed or more specific knowledge that’s what those before departure or before evening meal sessions are for ... equally of course as a tour leader you’re available for discussions whenever people want. ... what I will do is walk on the bus and talk and then sit with people.

Another described his approach as follows:

I prepare comprehensive notes for myself which I take and then you really play it by ear ... If they’re particularly interested sometimes we will have a meeting in the evening. If they initialise it. I don’t organise that. If they say, “We’d like to learn more about this.” I say, “Okay let’s get together after dinner.”



As these examples suggest, tour leaders' skills include not just knowledge expertise but also critical social skills in detecting levels of engagement and responding appropriately to them. Academics noted that teaching on tour exposed them to a 'less controlled' environment where they had to react and adapt to client needs, and that these experiences pushed them out of their comfort zone in what could be positive ways. "Learning to them (and me) was experienced as more immediate, more real, more challenging," reflected one male scholar.

A classroom like no other

Being "on-site" was seen for many to provide distinct pedagogical insights, both for clients and for academic scholars as well. The delivery required and the value of being in place was articulated by one academic tour leader: "there is a different dynamic and you can draw on that shared experience without having to spell it out". Another observed that it was unlike classroom lectures because of the immediacy of the content:

depending on what we've seen that day, they may be more focused perhaps on what they've just seen. For instance ... you know what XYZ looked like, you've just been down it, therefore you can visualise it. So there's a difference.

A number highlighted overlap between their work in the institution and beyond. One academic observed that "A lot of what I do is taken straight out of what I do in lectures [within the institution]. And then a lot goes back in to the lectures afterwards." The variety of the teaching environments on a tour was a feature that attracted some leaders, as one academic explained: "[it's] always intriguing, trying to teach in different places, in different contexts, in different ways. I think teaching in universities is ... well, it's the same, rather repetitive."

The influence that being in place has on the production of new knowledge cannot be underestimated, according to tour leaders. As one academic observed:

the impact of it – there in person – stays in your memory very much better. You can see it in context, explain better how something got there, which really can't happen on a page in a book.

A female tour leader reflected:

you take them to the monuments, then you go around the monuments with them, they can actually see it They've got it in all it's glory so to speak and they can walk about. The significance of the "real" over visuals, as well as the ability to move through the spaces, to be active in them, not just passive.

One academic explained:

doing it in situ, absolutely there are things that you can teach only when you are there. It's partly indescribable, just the sense of place ... that you can't convey in the classroom. There's also an intensity to the teaching.

Experiential learning, being in the moment, could be for many a powerful tool. As one female scholar emphasized:

By strategically integrating the affective and cognitive domains with multisensory, high intensity experiences, nothing we do on a campus can



equal or come close to achieving the impacts and/or success of experiential education and immersing students in such rich learning environments.

Academics noted that educational tourism had the advantage of offering serendipitous learning moments: the tour group experiencing events that were unforeseen and which a good tour leader could turn to their advantage.

Moreover, because teaching on tour is less linear than classroom teaching, new ways of delivering ideas are required. The relative flexibility in designing a syllabus free from university course structures and assessment requirements enable some scholars to explore new materials and experiment with more interdisciplinary programmes that they could in classroom units. As one female academic leader explained:

the joy of cultural tourism is the absence of a curriculum or examinations which leaves the lecturer free to be creative, to think about their subject in new ways, and explore possibilities generated by the landscape they are themselves engaging with alongside their group.

Academics considered that teaching on tour required an ability to synthesize large amounts of information, across varied disciplines, in ways that were not comparable to delivery of unit content in the tertiary classroom. As one remarked:

The other huge advantage of cultural tourism for a scholar is the way in which it demands recognition of the 'big picture' as well as detailed and insightful commentary of a more specialised nature.

Equally, clients valued tour leaders who were able to “synthesize a great deal of learning and communicate it in a way, which conveys a great deal of insight into the subject matter, while remaining clearly understandable.” Several academics stressed the ways in which educational tourism had enhanced their ability to create narrative, or to “tell a story”. By delivering on tours, academics considered that tour leaders were able to develop more discursive learning styles.

The educational tour learning community

In addition to the distinct delivery techniques and content required to lecture *in situ*, academics emphasized how the quality of educational tours encouraged them to think anew about their teaching, and also their research. Many participants on tour are tertiary educated. Indeed some academic respondents to the survey noted their own involvement as clients on educational tours. Almost two-thirds of respondents (65%) to the client survey held a university degree. Almost one-in-four (24%) had completed postgraduate coursework studies and a further 13% held a higher degree by research (i.e. Masters or PhD). Men were more likely to have completed a university degree than women (76.4% compared to 59.7%). However, the disparity occurs at the postgraduate level, as almost identical percentages had completed an undergraduate degree (29.2% women, 28.5% men). Moreover, participants on educational tours become involved in the first instance because they are keen to have a learning experience; hence they are often thirsty for new knowledge. One male scholar, experienced in tour leading, reflected on the distinction between insights gained on tours with mature learners and his undergraduate classroom teaching experiences:

I think from my point of view that the more people you talk to about this you get lots of different perspectives from them and you learn. I think we



learn from talking to them because we can go into a student classroom here, particularly if it's first or second level, you don't get any feedback.

Another observed that “On cultural tours you can tap into a unusually wide range of experience: art historians, lawyers, engineers ..., and most of all people who have seen, done and thought a lot.”

The idea of creating a tour learning community is suggested through phrasing such as “sharing experiences with like-minded travellers”, which is commonly found in provider literature. A learning community can be defined as a group of people who share some values and beliefs, and are actively engaged in learning together from each other. Learning communities include concepts of membership (“belonging”), shared experiences and emotional connections. Much of the work on learning communities has focussed on alternative teaching strategies for students, or professionals (Carpenter, Dublin & Harper, 2005; Hayes, 2007; Egan & Jaye, 2009). Three assumptions underlie the support for learning communities: that they will (a) create a group that will work together; (b) increase intellectual interaction; and (c) enhance learning (Huerta, 2004). More recently, the rise of the internet has seen the emergence of “virtual” learning communities (Teo et. al., 2003). Whilst research has been conducted on learning communities that use tourism to further their goals (Guevara, 1996), educational tourism itself as a learning community appears to have been somewhat overlooked. In survey responses for this project, leaders and clients both identified the group experience as a valuable learning resource and rated group learning/travel experiences higher than individual experiences. A tour leader for one educational tour company described the advantages of the group-learning environment: “that person is sharing all their excitement and enthusiasm and knowledge for what they're looking at. They're also sharing that experience with like-minded enquirers.” One male academic who ran tours for independent groups of travellers, friends and companies explained his motivation:

I enjoy the interaction with other people and it's really good when you have a group of people who share the same interests. You can sit around the hotel at drinks times and discuss what we've seen.

Others utilised such informal times to promote reflection, much like a tutorial or workshop. One academic tour leader articulated his technique:

everybody on that tour is going to have a different story, from just from the day's journey. And so over dinner at night I'd go round the table. I mean, I'd still run a constructed sort of workshop, if you like. ... And then that becomes quite interesting because we've all seen the same things and yet they've all had different experiences of the same things. That's what leads to the creative discourse.

A tour leader for one company used these sessions as an opportunity to extend learning and cater to those of different learning interests and levels:

what I will do every second morning or every second evening is get our guide and say, “whoever wants to join me for half an hour straight after breakfast or half an hour before dinner will come and we'll talk through the progress of what we've doing.” We'll talk through what we've seen, where we've been and where we're going, and that will enable me to cater to a more advanced interest if that's the requirement.



In such contexts, the leader acts as a facilitator of client learning, using the relationships built over the length of the tour. Academics, as well as clients, have found the sense of learning together an enriching feature of their work in this domain. One female academic leader explained:

I enjoy meeting the people and I certainly enjoy imparting the knowledge that I have to those people. And some of them are extremely interested, they will come up with questions, no doubt about it, so I enjoy that aspect of it ... on the whole I enjoy it, I thoroughly enjoy it, I enjoy meeting them, being with them.

the varied background of group members themselves and the life experiences they bring to bear on their understanding of the country they are visiting often generate thought-provoking questions which open new vistas to lecturers themselves.

Academics generally considered that educational tourism enhanced a teacher's experiences with active-learning and participatory-learning styles.

Beyond touring

As well as participating as tour leaders, the project research has highlighted a range of other opportunities for academic input. Many do not require scholars to travel on, or lead, tours. Organising travel itineraries; identifying seminal historical moments, architectural features, geographic regions; writing travel literature; speaking at information sessions are also all educational tourism opportunities for engagement with the expertise of the academy. One academic interviewed remarked that:

It also gave me the opportunity to develop my philosophy of learning in place by getting to know a specific itinerary well, and discussing it continually with my tour guide and tour leader colleagues.

A significant facet of academic engagement with educational tourism occurs off-tour, writing preparatory materials and designing tours. Tourist information has been shown to have an important influence on travellers' choice of vacation destinations (Molina & Esteban (2006). Despite the advent of new technologies such as the internet, great quantities of money are still being assigned to the publication of more traditional texts, such as guidebooks (*ibid*). There has been much scholarly research on the role of such publications in the decision-making process of potential travellers (for example: Capella & Greco, 1987; Beerli & Martin, 2004). Robinson and Anderson (2002) explore the ways in which authors and their books can influence people's choice of destination and how they perceive them. However, research is scant concerning the role guidebooks play in education. Werry (2008, p. 18) does however refer to travel literature as a "de-facto teacher" of tourism's knowledges and ways of knowing. Botterill and Crompton (1996) have noted that the tourist "vacates" their normal space and creates an understanding of the new, and so holidaying space is an area where intermediaries such as tour guides and travel writers can be important in enabling the traveller. This research is mirrored in our project's findings. Responses investigating educational aids highlighted the fact that the educational tourism experience was not confined to the actual travel component, but extended to encompass learning opportunities on either side of the tour. There were significant opportunities for scholarly interactions in off-site educational tour opportunities.

A number of academic scholars interviewed had been asked to compose the content for tour handbooks. One academic described his motivation for writing such texts:



I thought it would be interesting, to see if I could I came to the realisation not only that I could do it, but that it was quite interesting to write for a general audience.

Asked what is involved in pitching to this audience, one academic responded: “I think you do have a duty to be interesting and to write reasonably clearly.” How this has impacted academics’ other scholarly writing was also explored. As one male academic put it:

I found it quite interesting. It made realise that this was something that I could do and that it’s quite enjoyable doing it The point is: everything you do is a dialogue with an audience that is either there, or is a potential audience. And so many times the dialogue comes back to you unexpectedly, without you planning or even knowing it. You don’t know who you’re writing for, you never know who you’re writing for. And I find that extraordinarily interesting, that you can get something out of the blue So you’re always learning new stuff out of the blue. And of course it feeds into your teaching.

A tour leader for one educational tour company described the materials he prepared for participants of his tours as:

Good solid introductions to daily visits that we’re doing in that way. Extensive bibliography which everyone gets of course a month or so before. But I think perhaps more importantly and as a very important teaching aid what all these books contain are maps which can be used as historical discussions points Or they might include individual plans of buildings.

How such material is used was highly variable, as one male academic leader observed from his experience:

the people that come on these tours don’t want to go overseas for three weeks and study in the way that we would think it. They don’t really want to do much reading in the evening A few of them will prepare themselves, the majority will not.

One academic felt that

there’s a strong risk that the guidebook (in all its forms) will predetermine and prescribe what the traveller experiences, and will reinforce a dominant account of what’s being toured. I do think the guidebook and its variants should be read, but they should be read critically, not as prescriptions.

Another academic took a different (and unusual) approach to providing literature for the clients to use on tour, however:

At the beginning we took the decision that the city was the text, and the handbook just accompanied that ... but the internet has changed everything. There’s just so much more that they can access now, wherever they are.



Interestingly, the web appeared to play little part in post-tour reflection according to respondents, although at least one academic interviewed had extended the educational experience both before and beyond the on-site engagement with his group: “on my website I keep the reports from the tours and I’ve given detailed notes beforehand and I keep them on the site as well, so I think it makes a huge difference.” Another academic felt that regular updates from the providers of the tour could help to “keep the experience alive for the people on tour.”

Rethinking research

Academics considered that participation as teachers in educational tourism could result in new ways of thinking about their subject to take back to the classroom, as well as providing new resources (such as notes, data, photos, and so on). A female academic leader commented:

It’s not only looking at the monuments yet again, seeing perhaps new monuments. That would help, but no, interaction with the people on the tour would enhance my understanding of my research.

Another scholar reflected on the intellectual dynamics of the diverse knowledge of the tour leaders: “Having three of us – tour guide, tour leader and tour lecturer – meant we could bat ideas backwards and forwards, supplement each other and sometimes even disagree with each other.” A number of academic scholars highlighted overlap between their work in the higher educational sector and for educational tourism. One academic observed that “a lot goes back in to the lectures afterwards.” The interdisciplinary and narrative nature of the content delivery required on tour also promoted insights for scholars’ research. “In weaving space and time together to give a holistic picture, I have often gained new insights into historical patterns ... making it easier to contextualise more specialised research,” observed one female scholar. Academics considered that educational tourism could stimulate new ways of thinking about their research or that “the teaching helped me consolidate this line of research and defend it.”

Participation in educational tourism therefore assisted scholars’ understanding of their research. Other academics considered that educational tourism could be valuable in linking scholars to new networks and collaborators. More than one academic explained their involvement in this domain in terms of advancing their own research agenda through the opportunity to explore new or unique destinations, or to revisit sites of interest. Academics were able to advance their own learning and research through tour locations: the company “can gain access – because of their contacts and reputation – to sites that you wouldn’t be able to see yourself.” Another academic reflected that “they’ve given me access to opportunities I never would have had”. Academic tour leaders could also exploit opportunities to stay on site pre or post tour to conduct their own research activities. As one academic said, “after all, an archaeological site is a modern artefact created by an uneasy alliance of academic research questions, the needs of the tourist industry, and nineteenth century treasure hunting.” Involvement with a tour company had enabled some scholars to develop their research interests with the funds the company provided. One academic indicated that the company had donated funds to his team’s ongoing excavation. One company involved in this study is in fact a not-for-profit organisation, comprised of 25 member universities and colleges, part of whose income is allocated to support university-based research programs.



7.6 Educational tourism clients indicate that:

- **They like to research their trip in advance;**
- **Sophisticated educational materials are important for this preparation;**
- **Group learning is preferred over independent learning;**
- **Meaningful contact with the local communities is a highly valued aspect of educational tours; and**
- **They perceive and desire educational tourism to be an ethically and environmentally sustainable form of tourism.**

As we have seen above, academic scholars produce a range of materials and literature for educational tours. Prior information such as handouts, books, and other educational aids, is highly valued by clients. Female participants rated the importance of preparing their learning more highly. Some academics placed a high value on the need for preparation as a key component of the structure learning experience inherent in educational tourism:

Educational tourism is not an incidental element of a touristic experience but is rather programmatic: that is it is structured learning in which the learning is the purpose of travel rather than a possible outcome. This means that the travel is supported in some way. In many cases, this may be a formal activity, but some formal 'teaching' arrangement is not a pre-condition of educational tourism. Rather, educational tourism involves a degree of preparation for the experience in order to develop tourism into learning. Many learning opportunities during tourism go unnoticed because the tourist does not know what it is s/he is experiencing or could be experiencing in a particular locality (Male academic, aged 35-50).

Furthermore, respondents were asked to consider what types of educational aids they would find useful for learning on an educational tour, and the point at which they would be most useful (i.e. before, during or after the tour).

Not surprisingly, learning aids rated most highly during the on-tour phase, rather than before or afterwards. What is perhaps a bit of a surprise is how much the aids 'retain' their educational value, even after the tour has concluded. Almost unanimously, maps were considered to be the most valuable educational aid, consistently ranking highly at all stages of the educational travel experience. Handbooks were almost as highly valued as maps pre and during tour, though they did not retain the same value post tour, as maps do. Novels were rated by participants as a useful learning tool at all stages of the educational tourism experience. Post-tour, novels were particularly appreciated by women.

These responses concerning educational aids highlight the fact that the educational tourism experience is not confined to the actual travel component, but extends to encompass learning opportunities either side of the tour.

As previously noted, the tour group as a learning community in itself is also a learning aid and one which remains potentially under-valued by both the tourism industry and higher education sector. The researchers investigated the concept of the learning community through the surveys. Statements about the learning community were designed to establish what kind of learning communities were valued by tour participants. For clients, group learning and travel experience were valued more than private experiences. For the participants, women were more



inclined to view learning as a private endeavour. However, they found equal enjoyment in sharing their experiences with the group as the males. This suggests that, whilst women are happy to interact with the group while travelling, they do not appear to perceive learning as the responsibility of anyone beyond themselves.

Interestingly, in their definitions of educational tourism, several respondents made specific reference to the need to travel with 'like-minded' people. In surveys, they identified preferences for travelling with family and/or friends, suggesting that people travelling with 'intent' or 'an intention' to learn find a learning community with pre-existing emotional support desirable. However, clients were also keen to include the tour leader as part of the learning community. They emphasized leaders' abilities to see other points of view and to treat "the tour as an interesting experience for themselves as well."

The notion of the like-minded community extended beyond a shared commitment to learn, and also encompassed a range of shared ethical values. Clients desired qualities in a tour leader such as "Sensitivity to others – both on the tour and locals in the areas visited," and

Interpersonal relationship qualities, an understanding of diversity, ... [an] ability to connect with the local environment and people and show you the other side of the place you are visiting and introduce you to the people that you wouldn't meet.

Whilst there were some perceptions among both clients and scholars that tourism could be exploitative of local communities, there was also from many other participants and academic leaders the idea that educational tourism could be a form of tourism whose mission was to be sustainable and ethical. In terms of the content of tours, clients suggested facets beyond discrete disciplinary knowledge for a more social understanding of other cultures:

Interacting with people on a day to day level to see how the average person lives (female client, 35-50).

Being able to learn about the history of an area and being able to participate in activities of daily life for the local inhabitants (female client, 45-55).

meeting people who live in other places (female client, 50-65).

I am particularly interested in understanding how people are currently living in that location – I like to see beyond the veneer of hotels and tourist trails and spend time relating to the people of that location (if possible) and understanding the subtleties of their lifestyle (female client, 50-65).

Educational tourism, to me, means visiting places and observing how and where the inhabitants live, what they eat and their local customs. It means seeing things you don't see at home. Learning things you don't learn at home. It also means talking to people and trying to understand what they think about issues and what they think about us (female client, 65-75).

Sustainability measures and strategies of the locality, Welfare of people in the locality, Anything forward looking to the future (female client, 50-65).



These were elements that many academics also wanted from educational tourism, providing learning through interaction with local communities:

Forming bonds with people in other cultures, not merely being a tourist but actually interacting as a friend, teacher, student, lover, being part of social circle or an educational one (female academic, 35-50).

Authentic interaction with locals; rural environments (the village not just the natural world (female academic, 35-50).

Direct interaction with 'ordinary' people in the designated areas (male academic, 50-65).

Many academics felt that educational tourism could offer positive benefits to travellers and local communities:

possibly something akin to trips one can go on where part of the trip involves participation in an ecological or environmental study (e.g. counting turtles), or others where one can assist in a community project in a poor area (e.g. help to build a school) – but the focus instead is on education/learning for the traveller? (male academic, 35-50)

It encompasses travel activities (work-related or otherwise) that are used by individuals to educate themselves about the country that they are visiting or others about the country from which they have come from. It is not just the traveller who will benefit from the encounters and experiences during the travel but the people who come in contact with the traveller. In other words, the benefits are reciprocal (female academic, 35-50).

Clients offered definitions of educational tourism such as

offering the tourist a guided tour in which emphasis is placed not just on the beauty and wonder of the environment but also on its fragility and how we might protect it. This would involve learning about wider issues such as excessive population growth, depletion of resources and study of cultures ranging from relatively benign to outright destructive (male client, over 75).

giving something back to the communities of the countries that we visit. Socially and environmentally responsible travel (female client, 35-50).

Ideally it demonstrates great respect for the people who live in the place & their environment eg by them owning the tour company, being specialist guides etc. It involves a relationship. Not just looking at people (client, 50-65).

Educational tourism provides an opportunity for individuals – both scholars and clients – to immerse themselves in context-specific experiences that allow opportunities to examine ethical and moral issues, particularly those arising from interactions with people from different countries, religions, cultures and socio-economic groups. Educational tour participants of all kinds are primarily motivated by a desire to encounter cultures and be ethical in the resulting interactions.



8. Challenges and Responses

Improving communication between scholars and the tourism sector requires us to explore the emerging possibilities of scholarly interaction with Australian educational tourism companies, as well as to understand the challenges for academics to engage with teaching and learning in this domain. Some academics indicated they would not be interested in participating in educational tourism; including 13 who had previous experience. Broadly speaking, the reasons concerned a series of perceptions about educational tourism that fell into the following categories:

8.1 Teaching through educational tourism is not perceived to be complementary to academic research and teaching activities

it takes a lot of time away from other areas that lead to promotion – like research (female academic aged 35-50).

educational tourism time is non-research time (female academic aged 50-65).

The pressure to perform within universities according to strictly defined “outputs” is perceived to be incompatible with involvement in this kind of activity. Increasingly, universities are implementing funding formulas that create internal “performance economies” (Marginson, 2000, p. 100). However, individuals are assessed not only on publications, conference presentations and so on, but more and more upon on their ability to attract research income and to show knowledge transfer. As some academics noted above, involvement with tour companies increased their research income as well as their opportunity to access resources and sites. Access to major competitive grant funding, such as the Australian Research Council or the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, involves providing dissemination strategies of research findings beyond the academy in many instances. In some cases, grant funding is dependent upon engaging an industry partner beyond the university. Experience of communicating to audiences beyond the academy can increase knowledge of research, as well as the ability to disseminate findings in an accessible way, to a much broader audience.

For other academics, it was not perceived to be a requirement or responsibility of their profession.

I travel and learn for my own satisfaction and research – don't want to take a bunch of tourists with me (female academic aged 50-65).

Doesn't really interest me. When I travel, I like to travel for fun and forget about my work (male academic aged 35-50).

Waste of my time (male academic aged 50-65).

Interviews with academics who had participated as tour leaders typically conveyed a passion to communicate their research because of the importance they perceived it to have to a broad community. However some noted initial uneasiness at the idea revealing a “private knowledge” to other audiences:

the first time I did it I actually disliked it, because I felt I was giving up something that was secret and personal and private to me. And I've



found that that's common; people have very mixed feelings – in a way it's an invasion of your private space as an academic.

Continued communication of the possibilities that teaching opportunities within educational tourism can provide for academic scholars on a variety of dissemination formats must be pursued.

8.2 Teaching in educational tourism is physically and intellectually exhausting.

Because I have been on just such a trip and have seen how hard the tour leader has to work. It is like running a residential school 24/7 for three weeks. I would do it if it were only about Academic work (female academic aged 50-65).

Because I believe it involves a lot more responsibility for resolving hidden problems – e.g. making sure the social dynamics of a group of tourists are positive and harmonious. I am not prepared to be a lecturer for small groups who may need some hand-holding in foreign places they are unfamiliar with (male academic aged 50-65).

Certainly, the social side of tour leading can be exhausting, as leaders indicated. One academic laughed:

What don't I enjoy about it? Having breakfast at, say, 6:30 in the morning and someone coming up and saying I know you're having breakfast but ... And then they have question after question after question ... it can be exhausting. Some people recognise that and that's fine, others don't recognise that.

Another male academic reflected:

getting back to the intensity: that's something I did and enjoyed when I was younger but now ... well, I just get more tired so I don't know ... so I think teaching for me like that might be a bit more difficult for me now.

Educational tour providers should be encouraged to distinguish between leader and manager roles to allow leaders to engage more fully in the intellectual life of the tour learning community.

Dissemination documents must emphasise that there are many ways in which teaching participation in educational tourism may occur, only one of which in by physically leading a tour.

Finally, given the time constraints placed on the modern Australian academic, dissemination documents must emphasise that teaching through educational tours may be an opportunity to bring research and teaching goals into a stronger relationship.



8.3 The institutional structure of Australian universities does not enable teaching in educational tourism

There has been a degree of institutional resistance to the idea of educational tourism as a form of teaching 'beyond the Academy'. By institutional resistance it is meant that the scholars surveyed and interviewed have provided consistent feedback that academic teaching beyond the institutional classroom are indirectly discouraged; mainly through the implementation of teaching and research workload models that require staff to focus on classroom learning and teaching activities.

Research for this project suggests that teaching beyond the classroom in ways such as through educational tourism is inconsistently recognised (if at all) by institutions, as a consultancy, service, research or teaching activity.

Dissemination documents must emphasise why universities should find increased involvement of their staff in educational tourism attractive at an institutional level, for instance, that educational tourism:

- ***could play a significant role in attracting new student groups, alumni and cross-institutional enrolments between universities;***
- ***offers opportunities to diversify the student body, through interactions with members of the general public and enrolled students participating on the same program;***
- ***provides universities a receptive and engaged site for knowledge transfer, and interaction with commercial enterprises for whom high quality humanities knowledge is a key commercial asset; and***
- ***is a form of lifelong learning, allowing universities to honour their social and ethical commitment to fostering learning whether and however it may be obtained.***



References

- Beerli, A., & Martin, J. (2004) Factors Influencing Destination Image. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31, 657–681.
- Bodger, D. (1998). Leisure, Learning, and Travel. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 69 (4), 28.
- Botterill, T. (2001). The Epistemology of a set of Tourism Studies. *Leisure Studies*, 20, 199–214.
- Botterill, T. & Crompton, J. (1996). Two case studies exploring the Nature of the Tourist's Experience. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 28 (1), 57–82.
- Buzard, J. (1993). *The Beaten Track. European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to "Culture", 1800-1918*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Capella, L., & Greco, A. (1987) Information Sources of Elderly for Vacation Decisions. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 14, 148–151.
- Carpenter, J., Dublin, T. & Harper, P. (2005). Bridging Learning Communities: A Summer Workshop for Social Studies Teachers. *The History Teacher*, 38 (3), 361–369.
- Cooper, C. & Latham, J. (1988). English Educational Tourism. *Tourism Management*, 9 (4), 331–334.
- Cushner, K. (2004). *Beyond Tourism: A Practical Guide to Meaningful Educational Travel*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Education.
- Davis, E. (2007). Building Bali Hai: Tourism and the (re)creation of place in Tahiti. *Tourism*, 55 (1), 9–22.
- D.G.H. (1902). Review: guide books. *The Geographical Journal*, 19 (3), 366–368.
- Earl, B. (2008). Literary Tourism: Constructions of Value, Celebrity and Distinction. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 11 (4), 401–417.
- Editorial (2008). The New Adult Educators. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 27 (4), 359–360.
- Elderhostel (2007). *What Will Baby Boomers Want From Educational Travel?* Research report retrieved 3 February 2009 from www.elderhostel.org.
- Elderhostel (2007). *Mental Stimulation and Lifelong Learning Activities in the 55+ Population*. Research report retrieved 3 February 2009 from www.elderhostel.org.



- Egan, T. & Jaye, C. (2009). Communities of Clinical Practice: The Social Organization of Clinical Learning. *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine*, 13 (1), 107–125.
- Faure, E., Herrera, F., Kaddoura, A., Lopes, H., Petrovsky, A., Rahnema, M. (1972). *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow*. London, UNESCO.
- Feifer, M. (1985). *Tourism in History: From Imperial Rome to the Present*. New York: Stein and Day, Inc.
- Garrod, B. (2008). Understanding the Relationship between Tourism Destination Imagery and Tourist Photography. *Journal of Travel Research*, 47, 346–358.
- Gelbman, A. (2009). Heritage and Cultural Tourism: The Present and Future of the Past. *Tourism Geographies*, 11 (1), 127–129.
- Goldsworthy, J. (2008). Research Grant Mania. *Australian Universities Review*, 50 (2), 17–24.
- Gorusch, A. (2003). "There's No Place like Home": Soviet Tourism in Late Stalinism. *Slavic Review*, 62 (4), 760–785.
- Guevara, J. (1996) Learning through participatory action research for community ecotourism planning. *Convergence*, 29 (3), 24
- Guy, B., Curtis, W. & Crotts, J. (1990). Environmental Learning of First Time Travelers. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 17 (3), 419–431.
- Hayes, T. (2007). 'A Part of the Continent' ... Professional Identity, Professional Learning Communities. *English in Australia*, 42 (2), 59–63.
- Hecht, B., Starosielski, N. & Dara-Abrams, D. (2007). *Generating Educational Tourism Narratives from Wikipedia*. Paper presented at the Fall symposia of the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI).
- Huerta, J. (2004). Do Learning Communities Make a Difference? *Political Science and Politics*, 37 (2), 291–296.
- Kalinowski, K.M & Weiler, B. (1992). *Educational Travel*, New York, Wiley.
- Koenker, D. (2003). Travel to Play: On Russian Tourism, Travel, and Leisure. *Slavic Review*, 62 (4), 657–665.
- Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Machin, A. (2000). *Tourism as Education: Components for a Management System*. Huddersfield, University of Huddersfield.
- Machin, A. (2001). *Retracing The Steps: Tourism as Education*. Joensuu, Finland, ATLAS / FUNTS.



- Marginson, S. (2007). University Mission and Identity for a Post Post-public Era. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 26 (1), 117–131.
- Mason, P. (1998). The Global Classroom. *Tourism Management*, 19 (3), 297–299.
- Mezirow, J. (1990). *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: a guide to transformative and emancipatory learning*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Mitchell, R. (1998). Learning through Play and Pleasure Travel: Using Play Literature to enhance Research into Touristic Learning. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1 (2), 176–188.
- Molina, A. & Esteban, A. (2006). Tourism Brochures: Usefulness and Image. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33 (4), 1036–1056.
- Moscardo, G. (1996). Mindful Visitors: Heritage and Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23 (2), 376–397.
- Nelson, C., Botterill, D. & Williams A. (2000). The Beach as a Leisure Resource: Measuring User Perceptions of Beach Debris Pollution. *World Leisure and Recreation*, 42, 37–43.
- Novelli, M. (ed.) (2005). *Niche Tourism: Contemporary Issues, Trends and Cases*. Oxford, Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Ntarangwi, M. (2000). Education, Tourism, or Just a Visit to the Wild? *African Issues*, 28 (1/2), 54–60.
- O'Leary, J. (2005). Thoughts on Building Academic Staff Careers and a Successful Department. *Journal of Tourism Studies*, 16 (2), 14–20.
- Pearce, P. (1982). *The Social Psychology of Tourist Behaviour*. Oxford, Pergamon Press.
- Pearce, P. (2005). Professing Tourism: Tourism Academics as Educators, Researchers and Change Leaders. *The Journal of Tourism Studies*. 16 (2), 21–33.
- Pesman, R. (2003). Playing with identity. *Meanjin*, 62 (4), 168–177.
- Pickard, M. (1990). "Cultural Tourism" in Bali: Cultural Performances as Tourist Attraction. *Indonesia*, 49, 37–74.
- Rassool, C. & Witz, L. (1996). South Africa: A World in One Country. Moments in International Tourist Encounters with Wildlife, the Primitive and the Modern (Afrique du Sud: le monde en un pays. Instants de rencontres du touriste international avec le monde sauvage, le primitif et la modernité). *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 36, 335–371.
- Ritchie, B. (2003). *Aspects of Tourism, Managing Educational Tourism*. Buffalo, Channel View Publications.



- Robinson, M. & Anderson, H. (eds) (2002). *Literature and Tourism: Reading and Writing Tourism Texts*. London, Continuum.
- Rotenburg, R. (1986). Pseudonymous Travel Accounts as Texts: A Case from Nineteenth Century Vienna, *Ethnohistory*, 33 (2), 149–158.
- Schmeink, D. & Thurston, A. (2007). The Influence of Travel Experiences and Exposure to Cartographic Media on the Ability of Ten-year-old Children to Draw Cognitive Maps of the World. *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 123 (1), 1–15.
- Sesow, F. & Wunder, S. (1995). Using a Teacher's Travel Experience to enhance Students' Learning. *Social Studies*, 86 (3), 141–142.
- Strain, M. (1998). Towards an Economy of Lifelong Learning: Reconceptualising Relations between Learning and Life. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 46 (3), 264–277.
- Stronza, A. (2001). Anthropology of Tourism: Forging New Ground for Ecotourism and Other Alternatives. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30, 261–283.
- Teo, H., Chan, H., Wei, K. & Zhang, Z. (2003). Evaluating Information Accessibility and Community Adaptivity Features for sustaining Virtual Learning Communities. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 59, 671–697.
- Thacheen, P. & Lauzon, A. (2007). Walking a New Path of Life: Learning Tours, 'agro-forestry' and the Transformation of the Village of Bann Na Isarn, Thailand. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 25 (4), 407–431.
- Thomas, P. (2009). The Trouble with Travel. *Geographical*, 81 (2), 50–52.
- Watson, L. (2003). *Lifelong Learning in Australia*. Canberra, Department of Education, Science and Training.
- Werry, M. (2008). Pedagogy of/as/and Tourism: Or, Shameful Lessons. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 30 (1), 14–42.
- West, R. (1998). *Learning for Life: Final Report of the Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy*. Canberra, J. S. McMillan Printing Group.
- White, R. (2008). Australian Journalists, Travel Writing and China: James Hingston, the 'Vagabond' and G. E. Morrison. *Journal of Australian Studies*, 32 (2) 237–250.
- Wood, C. (1987). *Cultural Tourism: Notes and Guidelines on the Preparation of Tour Itineraries*. Melbourne, Cultural Tourism Association of Victoria.
- Wood, C. (1992). *Frameworks for Travellers*. Melbourne, Australians Studying Abroad.
- Wood, C. (2001). Educational Tourism. In Douglas, N. Douglas & R. Derrett (eds), *Special Interest Tourism: Context and Cases*. Brisbane, John Wiley, 188–211.



Wood, C. (2008). Educational Tourism: Cultural Landscapes. In Kent, B.; Pesman, R. & Troup, C. (eds) *Australians in Italy: Contemporary Lives and Impressions*. Clayton, Monash University ePress, 19.1-19.11.

Yuanyuan, L. (2008). National Tourism and Community Education. *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology*, 40 (3), 72–87.

Zurick, D. (1992). Adventure Travel and Sustainable Tourism in the Peripheral Economy of Nepal. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 82 (4), 608–628.

