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# Photo Essays for Experiential Learning: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Place in Tourism Education

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## **Photo Essays for Experiential Learning: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Place in Tourism Education**

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As tourism educators, what might we do to “reflexively work within, across and against the grain of normalized thinking to engage those who are yet to think more critically about, or explore new ways of understanding the complex global and local challenges facing tourism and hospitality communities?” (Fullagar & Wilson, 2012, pp. 1–2). What teaching approaches and learning activities encourage tourism students to adopt a reflexive identity or to begin enacting more caring relations within their tourism worlds? How can these be framed pedagogically? The tourism education literature contains several instructive resources for thinking through such issues of pedagogy and practice. Discursive space has expanded in the last decade from teaching regimes focused on industry training to more diverse curricula involving liberal arts.

This paper seeks to complement and contribute to such foundations by reporting a photo essay assignment and related activities used to enhance experiential learning among graduate and undergraduate tourism students, and which was framed within a critical pedagogy of place. Following Greenwood (formerly Gruenewald, 2003), this pedagogy seeks both “decolonization” and “re-inhabitation” through engagement with the different and overlapping dimensions of place-based education and critical pedagogy. The paper begins with relevant background on tourism photography and pedagogy. A detailed overview of the photo essay and experiential education process is then presented. In the discussion, learning outcomes derived from student work reveal how the photo essay learning process oriented students to the role they can and do play in activating ecologically embedded social change, or, what might also be described as responsible, caring, and reflexive tourism place-making.

### **References**

Fullagar, S., & Wilson, E. (2012). Critical pedagogies: A reflexive approach to knowledge creation in tourism and hospitality studies. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 19(1), 1-6.