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Rethinking Tourism Education: Indigenisation of Curriculum

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Title: Rethinking Tourism Education: Indigenisation of Curriculum

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Abstract:

The critical and hopeful turn in tourism studies research is mirrored in the educational space. As critiques of tourism curricula as being overly vocational become increasingly commonplace (Caton, 2014; Young & Maguire, 2017), calls for a rethinking of tourism education has emerged, including acknowledgment of the need to incorporate non-western ways of knowing into the tourism knowledge system (Tribe & Libburd, 2016). The concept of Indigenisation provides a critical lens in this endeavour, with its emphasis on the incorporation of Indigenous-related content, perspectives, and knowledges into tertiary curricula. As such, Indigenised tourism curricula develops the cultural competencies of students, including their commitment to social justice and equity in relation to race and ethnicity (Young & Maguire, 2016, 2017). Moreover, the Indigenisation of tourism curricula has considerable potential to provide further impetus to ‘take critical tourism studies into our classrooms’ (Ateljevic, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2007), providing one concrete pathway for addressing the challenge of embedding a more critically engaged and hopeful tourism studies into the classroom.

Indigenised tourism curricula can challenge us to think more critically about the world. Indeed, given the global prevalence of Indigenous tourism, curricula that embeds Indigenous ways of knowing is significant for understanding of various issues implicit in the development of Indigenous tourism, including the representation and interpretation of Indigenous people and their cultures. Central to any shift towards decolonising tourism education through Indigenisation is the need for educators to be critically reflexive through questioning basic assumptions, discourses, and practices that inform and dominate contemporary, tertiary management education (Young, Sibson, & Maguire, forthcoming). Critically reflexive tourism educators can do much at the course level to enhance learning opportunities and outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by enhancing goals of empowerment, distributive justice, and social inclusion (Rojek, 2005), by incorporating non-Western knowledges into the curriculum through Indigenisation.

For the Critical Tourism Studies 2017 conference, I will run a workshop contributing to the theme of Rethinking Tourism Education. The goal of the workshop is to engage with colleagues who are moving away from the delivery of narrowly focused managerial and professional tourism programs, to developing curricula underpinned by notions of equity, social justice, and change. The workshop aims to build participants’ understanding of the value and importance of Indigenisation, and their capacity to engage with Indigenisation in their teaching practice. The workshop will commence with a brief presentation on the framework for Indigenising curriculum and a case study on how to ‘Indigenise’ a course. I will then facilitate smaller group discussions on the following key areas: (a) How can tourism academics build cultural competency? (b) Why is Indigenisation important in the development of culturally competent curricula? (c) What obstacles might tourism academics encounter in efforts to Indigenise their teaching practice? A final wrap up session will involve participants discussing their individual approaches for incorporating Indigenous content, perspectives, and knowledges into tourism courses. Collaboration between colleagues in the workshop will promote broader

efforts to Indigenise tourism curricula by bringing together a Community of Practice. An outcome of the workshop will be recommendations on the ways by which criticality and reflexive teaching and learning practice can be more effectively integrated into twenty-first century tourism education.

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