LIFELONG LEARNING FOR TOURISM

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*Highlights

- advocates a lifelong approach to tourism education
- focuses on all levels of formal education and industry training
- presents framework for advancing tourism education within small Island States

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the provision of education and training for tourism in The Commonwealth of Dominica, a destination heavily tourism dependent. Significantly, it provides an original consideration of lifelong learning for tourism. It reports the perspectives of major stakeholders, who reveal that tourism is taught intermittently as one topic, among others, during formal schooling, followed by a strong instrumental focus in post-secondary education and training. Stakeholders interviewed in this study see this approach as inappropriate. They indicate that a lifelong spiralled approach with opportunities spanning all stages of both formal and informal education and training would be more suitable. The paper presents possible approaches to achieving this.

Keyword: lifelong, education, training, learning, spiral-curriculum

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Most research on tourism education and training focuses on higher education. This paper by contrast takes a lifelong perspective. It seeks to provide an understanding of the role, position, contribution and need for a broader lifelong approach to developing education for tourism in an island setting. The Commonwealth of Dominica, a tourism intensive state at a relatively early stage of tourism development, provides the setting for the study. Dominica has a strong demand for a skilled and professionally trained labour force, and its population also needs an awareness and critical understanding of tourism. Currently its education system for tourism, at all levels, is relatively under-developed. The key question both for Dominica and similar tourism-dependent states is what is the best approach for developing the education capacity in ways that will satisfy the interests of various stakeholders?

To answer this, the paper reports on a recent study which involved 65 in-depth interviews with stakeholders from all levels of formal education and training, and with industry and non-industry representatives, and relevant policy-makers and planners. The data which emerged reveal that for a destination like Dominica a lifelong approach to tourism education and training is appropriate. The paper argues that tourism should be introduced from early childhood education and developed in a spiral fashion to tertiary, adult and continuing education and industry training. In terms of structure, the paper provides the theoretical background to lifelong education and learning along with an overview of relevant tourism

issues, followed by details of the research context. The methods employed then lead into the research findings. The paper ends with an outline of key conclusions and a discussion of the limitations.

2.0 LIFELONG LEARNING

2.1 *Conceptual Issues*

Lifelong learning has its roots in lifelong education which has been part of the education debate since the 1960s. A key precept is that education is not limited to a specific number of years of exposure to institutional education, but rather should occur throughout life. Thus, lifelong education (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974; Dave, 1975) involves formal, non-formal and informal education and learning. In the 1990s the concept of lifelong learning gained prominence, and was promoted as a process of individual learning and development across the life-span (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 1996). This refers to institutional learning in addition to that which occurs in informal settings. Thus, lifelong learning brings to the fore the learner and their corresponding individual needs; the notion of self-directed learning; the range of environments in which learning may occur; and its long-term nature (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1996).

Marshall and Marrett (2008, p. 2) explain that life-long learning, “is linked to the concept of a knowledge-based economy, which engenders the need for learning to occur throughout a person’s lifetime” while Parnham (2001) suggests that it entails establishing a “learning society” (Antonacopoulou, 2000). According to McKenzie (1998) this is an important phenomenon since the complexities of modern societies, with knowledge and information intensive economies, demands the ability to anticipate and adapt to change.

Lifelong learning has now become an accepted and central organising concept in education and training (McKenzie, 1998), encompassing the elements of breadth, progression and continuity (Department For International Development – World Bank, 2009). Many authors hold that it is now a social prerogative (Leader, 2003) and a master concept (Tight, 1998; Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 2001) for achieving continuing employment and economic success (McKenzie, 1998; Brennan, Mills, Shah, Woodley, 2000; Parnham, 2001; Vargas, 2005; Marshall, Brandon, Thomas, Kanwar, & Lyngra, 2008). The precepts of lifelong learning can be readily adapted to tourism education. Here, as in the more general sense, two practical matters arise. First, attention must be given to the educational expectations of the providers, the learners and the local society. Second, consideration must be given to how these expectations can best be met in relation to the fundamental principles of education and

training at the various levels.

2.2 Core Education Issues

Rousseau (1962), Peters (1972), Tough (1981), Farrell, Kerry & Kerry (1988) and Allman (1982) all agree that education is lifelong. This philosophy has been a core principle of many education systems. Walford (2000) cites various seminal education developmental theories – learning theory, stages of mental development, language and the child’s development, reinforcement and behaviourism, spiral curriculum, taxonomy or domains of learning among others – which have underpinned the education process. Among key concerns have been to establish what comprises ‘age-appropriate’ education, and the stage of awareness necessary for experiences to which children are exposed. This is of particular concern for policy makers, planners and educators as various fields and disciplines compete for curriculum space. Likewise, the degree of continuity in education from early childhood and throughout adulthood (Brennan, Mills, Shah, & Woodley, 2000) is an element of prime focus.

Early childhood education is centred on achieving desirable and expected preparatory learning for entering into compulsory education. These include literacy and numeracy (Kwon, 2002), and the development of personal and social skills (Peters, 1966), based on the principles of intrinsic motivation theory (Montessori, 1912; Dewey, 1959) and on learning by doing (Isaacs, 1933) and through play (Hurst, 1997; Anning, 1997; Curtis, 1998).

At primary education, emphasis is on the child’s ‘disposition to learning’ (Resnick, 1987; Katz, 1995 cited in Pascal & Bertram, 1999; Richards, 1999). Hence, issues around the spiral (Bruner, 1960; Ellis & Stuen, 1998) versus the integrated curriculum, learning by objectives and Tyler’s (1949) product approach versus the process approach (Stenhouse, 1975; Cooper, Shepherd & Westlake, 1994) and a learner-centred focus (Ellis, 2004) are all pivotal; so too are concepts of the core, common or national curriculum, pedagogy, range, structure, appropriateness and continuity (Richards, 1999).

Secondary education by contrast is highly subject based with specialisation encouraged from age fourteen (Beck and Earl, 2000). This allows for provision of additional options to students, typically introducing science subjects for those deemed to possess higher level capabilities while prevocational options are provided for the less academic.

The spiral curriculum developed by Bruner (1960), is especially important to this paper for its usefulness in building on students’ learning from one stage to the next. Likewise, the Tyler rationale (1949) which sets out a four part structure for delivering and evaluating instruction (setting objectives, providing experiences, organising experiences and evaluating effectiveness), is another key educational concept framing the arguments here as is the

national curriculum, which as Richards (1999) points out provides concepts of breadth, balance and coherence of importance to educators.

At the level of tertiary and higher education, critical thinking, the search for truth, research, discovery, character formation, a degree of academic freedom, knowledge advancement, and the preservation of society and its intellectual culture are fundamental (Barnett 1990). Similarly, the right balance between vocational and liberal education (Lewis, 2005); producing graduates of a high reflexive capacity (Barnett 1997) acquiring employability attributes, self-presentational ability and continuing learning dexterity are crucial (Harvey, 2001). Additionally, Holder (2001) and Poon (2001) believe that education at this level should contribute to producing industry leaders and managers. Moreover, Fallows and Steven (2000) contend that higher education must now prepare graduates with the necessary expertise to operate professionally within the environment of the 'learning age' or 'learning society'.

By contrast, adult and continuing education is grounded on the fundamental ideas of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Knowles, 1970; Warnken and Young, 1991; Collins, 2004) and self-directed learning (O'Brien, 2004). Access, skill development, renewal and re-orientation are important hallmarks at this stage. And andragogy which favours the utilisation of problem-centred techniques is also advocated (Iverson, 2001). Moreover, Fretwell and Wheeler (2000) claim that this level of education enrolls more individuals than formal schooling and higher education combined, and is therefore a major force in human capital development.

2.3 *Lifelong Tourism Education*

As an academic area, there seems to be little recognition of the significance or impact of a lifelong approach to tourism education. Whilst Cooper, Shepherd and Westlake (1994) mention Skager and Dave's (1977) work on 'Curriculum Evaluation for Lifelong Education' they fail to develop the idea as a meaningful philosophy. Charles (1997) makes the point that in the Caribbean, tourism is taught at all levels however, he simply highlights the programme offerings without much critical analysis or discussion. Indeed, nearly all discussion of tourism education and training seems to have been confined to higher education with scant regard to earlier levels or to lifelong learning, even though as Airey (2005) notes, tourism has been taught as a subject at lower levels in the United Kingdom from the 1990s.

One of the tensions that underlie all levels of education in tourism is the extent to which education takes an instrumental stance, in providing preparation for employment, as opposed to developing an informed citizenry. In its simplest form this breaks down into a distinction

between education and training. In many ways, most levels of education for tourism contain elements of both although the balance comes in for frequent criticism. What remains important at each level is that an effective tourism education programme must be relevant to its context (Smith & Cooper, 2000) giving careful consideration to the existing social, cultural and economic setting (Jenkins & Shipman, 1976; Lewis, 2005).

Tourism education must also deal with knowledge that is of significance both to the learner and to the society in which they operate (Hegarty, 1990). However, due to its multidisciplinary nature, the body of knowledge about tourism can be vast, encompassing a wide range of possible knowledge, skills and attitudes (Tribe, 2000) and allowing for different educational paths depending on how a particular curriculum is framed (Tribe, 2002). This in turn has prompted a lengthy debate about the need for a core curriculum (Airey & Johnson, 1999). Accordingly, the challenges for lifelong learning in tourism include the articulation of curriculum principles appropriate for different levels, ensuring the development of learning at each level, forging connections between levels and the provision of open access to learning, all leading to continuous learning and ultimately contributing to the advancement of the learner and the learned about (tourism) and the development of an informed society with vocational and critical skills.

3.0 THE CONTEXT

3.1 Dominica and its tourism

Dominica is a Caribbean island of 754 square kilometres with a population of approximately 67,000 (Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nation Secretariat, 2008). As a tourist destination the island offers rainforests, waterfalls, rivers, sulphur springs and spas, adventurous terrain, marine dive sites, and rich culture (Hudepohl, 2008); what Carter (2002) describes as a dazzling natural product.

Concentration on natural attributes for tourism, as part of its economic and socio-cultural development, dates from the 1970s (Cater & Lowman, 1994; Weaver, 1998). However, the development of tourism is always contestable and along with most of the islands of the Caribbean, Dominica has experienced tensions and reversals in its attempt to forge a strategy and direction for its tourist sector. Notably, it has struggled to strike a balance between, on the one hand, mass tourism and the rapid growth of Caribbean cruise ship tourism and, on the other hand, the nature-based/eco-tourism model that dominated the early 1990s (Weaver 1991). Given its resources it is perhaps not a surprise (Boo, 1990; Whelan, 1991) that the

1 island has adopted a sustainable eco-tourism strategy but at the same time, due to its limited
2 scale and resource endowment, it has not thought fit to turn its back on other tourism-related
3 opportunities. As an illustration of this mixed strategy Dominica became the first country in
4 the world to receive in 2004 benchmark destination status from Green Globe 21. Yet at the
5 same time, following the terrorist attacks in New York in 2001, it has experienced an increase
6 in mass cruise passenger arrivals. In summary Dominica combines mass tourism, with nature
7 and adventure tourism, festival and cultural tourism and dive tourism. But two significant
8 development questions always remain. What kind of tourism should be promoted and for
9 whose benefit?

10 The tourism industry itself in Dominica consists mainly of small enterprises. For example,
11 in 2007, the largest hotels had 71, 35 and 31 rooms respectively. Generally, most tourist
12 accommodation is locally owned and managed; many in the eco-lodge category. Additional
13 major developments have been started through a European Union funded Eco-tourism
14 Development Programme and a two year US\$39.6 million Tourism Sector Development
15 Programme. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2011), travel and tourism
16 is expected to contribute 9,000 jobs representing 22.9% of total employment between 2011
17 and 2021.

18 The island's government has acknowledged that if the tourism sector is to be sustainable,
19 the country will have to establish institutional capacity to manage the fragile resource base
20 (de Romily & de Romily, 1995). For this Dominica has accepted that it cannot fully realise
21 its potential or effectively continue to compete for regional and worldwide tourism without
22 an educated workforce and high calibre human resources. Consequently, tourism education
23 and training are now viewed as primary elements in the future success of the local tourism
24 industry. Against this background there are notable tensions between instrumental needs and
25 the development of an informed and even critical workforce. A number of authors (Caton
26 and Belhassen, 2011; Morgan, Pritchard and Ateljevic, 2001; and Tribe, 2002, 2008) have
27 pointed to the need for a broader role in tourism education that is designed not only for
28 employment but also to create a broad awareness and critical understanding of tourism. For
29 example in Tribe's (2002) model tourism education should "intervene in the simple, yet
30 potentially dangerous cycle of reproduction of the world "as is" where students learn passive
31 adaptation to the world that exists ... It [should] contribute to the task of tourism world-
32 making" (pp. 354-355).

3.2 Education and Training in Dominica

1 *Formal Schooling:* The education system in Dominica is overseen by the Ministry of
2 Education, governed by the 1997 Education Act and is structured into four levels: early
3 childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary (Andrew, 2000). The Act makes statutory
4 provision for the Ministry of Education to establish a national curriculum. The Curriculum
5 Unit (2006, p.6) in the National Curriculum Framework for Dominica indicates that:
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9 Cognisance is paid to Dominica's current and future economic development,
10 as well as [providing] ... support to a burgeoning tourist sector.
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13 The national prioritisation of tourism, and the provision of education and training as a
14 vehicle of economic development both point to the importance of a critical analysis of
15 Dominica's policy, national plans and overall approach to tourism education and training.
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17 *Post-Secondary Education:* Tertiary education is largely centred on The Dominica State
18 College which first offered an associate degree in Tourism and Hospitality Studies in 2004.
19 Further, the Ministry of Community Development and Culture, through its Adult Education
20 Division, concentrates its efforts on helping adults to improve their skills to become self-
21 reliant and independent.
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24 *Training in Dominica:* Training is limited to government departments and private sector
25 organisations. These mainly provide opportunities and support to industry employees and
26 small businesses owners. Additionally, the Discover Dominica Authority and the Dominica
27 Hotel and Tourism Association and subsidiary associations conduct sporadic training for their
28 members.
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38 4.0 STUDY METHOD 39

40 The aim of this interpretive research was to explore education and training for tourism in
41 Dominica with a view to understanding the possible role of lifelong learning. The study
42 sought to answer the main research question of whether it is possible to formulate a planning
43 approach for tourism education and training in the context of a tourism-dependent Small
44 Island Developing State which could adequately satisfy the needs of all the various
45 stakeholders. A stratified purposeful sample (Patton, 1990) of 65 respondents, categorised
46 into three main sectors - education, tourism, and other public and private sector - were
47 selected to achieve diversity in terms of status, position or office held, sector representation,
48 background knowledge and experience. Specifically the sample included tourism insiders as
49 well as non-industry personnel who potentially would be critics, for example, individuals
50 from the media, banking, farming and fishing as well as environmentalists, immigration and
51 port officers, politicians and a playwright.
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The semi-structured interviews (Warren, 2002) sought to find out what educational objectives should be attained; what experiences should be provided; what educational experiences should be organised and how attainment should be evaluated (Tyler, 1949)? A pre-test was conducted; then three rounds of interviews were implemented over a six month period. This allowed for testing and advancing emerging concepts and themes by utilisation of initial data in subsequent interviews. Each interview was anonymised and labelled. The researcher ensured that data saturation was reached and that the length of stay in the field allowed for data verification with the respondents and relevant documents such as the national tourism policy and key consultancy reports.

A format advocated by Tesch (1990) in combination with QSR NVivo7 software was utilised for the management and analysis of the voluminous data set (Bazeley, 2007). This involved: (1) gaining an overview; making notes, colour coding of key ideas and highlighting unusual or useful quotes (see Merriam, 1988); (2) deeper level probing of three sample interviews; (3) clustering of topics; (4) development of tree nodes (folders used to file text related to a specific code); (5) coding and recoding within Nvivo 7; (6) continuous consultation with the raw scripts; (7) generation of a provisional analytic scheme; (8) comparison of scheme between and among interview rounds; (9) critical and cross analysis and (10) development of a set of key categories with various sub themes.

5.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 *A Lifelong Approach*

Evidence from the informants suggested that tourism education within formal education and training in Dominica is minimal and not optimally planned. Most of the respondents found this situation unacceptable as the majority of students exit formal schooling to enter the world of work before and without pursuing higher education. In the words of one educator the planners of tourism education and training: “need to just approach it [tourism] all over, from the womb to the tomb”. Adopting a lifelong perspective was widely supported. Within this context, tourism concepts could develop progressively throughout the education system at a level suitable to the students’ stage of learning and degree of readiness.

Further, at the level of higher education, the respondents suggested that planning for tourism education and training from a lifelong perspective demands much more than just addressing the instrumental needs of the local industry. Rather the approach should address the interests of the individual learner, the prevailing education system and that of the broader society.

Thus, the respondents held strong opinions about the approach they conceived as vital but emphasised that:

... before we decide on what kind of education and training we need ... we need to decide and unequivocally agree on what is [the specifics of] this tourism product that we are educating people to manage.

To an extent, the apparent lack of a national concerted effort and plan for tourism education and training led some of the respondents to question the clarity of national focus on tourism; the level of purposeful development of high quality human resources; and the existing gap in developing an informed and critical citizenry. To address this dilemma, an educator suggested,

... you have to think in terms of continuity ... What are your long term plans or aims? What should tourism development look like in Dominica in 2020? What should it look like in 2030? ... And [so] the HR element is important.

The specific approach and content advocated are summarised in tables 1 and 2 which provide the framework for the subsequent discussion. Table 1, which is based on the four key curriculum questions posed by Tyler in 1949, sets out the approaches by educational level.

***insert table 1

Table 2 then sets out the associated possible curriculum content for each level. These were compiled from the existing curriculum practice and from the respondents' knowledge of best practice elsewhere which could be benchmarked locally.

***insert table 2

5.2 Early Childhood

One of the questions often raised in this research was when should tourism education begin? Many of the respondents agreed that students' interests in the field of tourism should be stimulated and sensitised from a very young age. A majority of the respondents supported the idea that 'any concept' presented in a simple form could be introduced in early childhood but cautioned that ideas should remain very basic. One educator suggested, early childhood

1 students should develop pride of country; learn the national symbols and flora and fauna,
2 with criticality stimulated through concepts of preservation of resources.

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4 In addition, early childhood educators explained that students are usually eager to learn and
5 are very receptive to new ideas. Nonetheless, the respondents cautioned that educational
6 experiences must be stimulating and child-centred with an appropriate level of content for the
7 students' stage of learning development. Questioned directly on the matter of students' level
8 of readiness for exposure to tourism education, an educator reflected:
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11 Any subject matter, including tourism education can be taught at early
12 childhood education level; it depends on how you do it ... their young
13 minds are impressionable... I think the earlier we start the better it
14 is going to be for us [as a country].
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20 One of the educators explained, that for 'pre-schoolers', much of the students' exposure to
21 tourism, should be through visits to sites of tourism interest. Moreover, the educators
22 emphasised that students were already quite knowledgeable about tourism concepts from
23 informal learning in the home and wider community - a central element of the lifelong
24 approach.
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29 One key concern according to one educator was the lack of a "smooth continuity [from early
30 childhood] into the upper levels [of the education system]", geared at giving tourism the same
31 attention in the curriculum as given to other disciplines/subjects. However, as clarified by
32 another educator at the policy level, the government was at that time engaged in efforts aimed
33 at improving the national approach to early childhood education. The positive spin off to this
34 development, as envisaged by the respondents, was standardisation of early childhood
35 education and establishment of a stronger link to primary education.
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42 *5.3 Primary Level*

43 Currently, tourism education at the primary level was deemed as minimal. A majority of
44 the respondents were not pleased with this approach. As one educator bemoaned, "it is part of
45 ... Social Studies but then, I don't think the teachers ever even reach ... that topic where they
46 really teach it [tourism] ...?" Therefore, an educator argued, tourism education at the primary
47 level needed a clear structure. Furthermore, due to the economic significance of the industry,
48 the primary stage was viewed as an opportune time to create students' awareness. In fact,
49 one educator pointed out that such effort should not be *ad hoc* or abstract, but rather a
50 purposeful and uncluttered tourism curriculum. But more importantly, a key principle
51 shared by educators is that tourism education at the primary level should set the foundation
52 for student's later learning, career orientation and discernment. Nevertheless, a foremost
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1 concern of education policy-makers was that of students specialising too early. The idea and
2 importance of producing students who were well-grounded in the basics of education
3 (reading, writing and arithmetic) was central to this. The principles of age-appropriateness
4 and level of readiness were also critical. Therefore, educators cautioned that what was
5 needed was “a programme that will catch the attention of our young people; [and] something
6 that is relevant to them”. Within this it is noticeable that both for this and for the secondary
7 level the approaches and content were not overtly vocational or instrumental (see tables 1 and
8 2).

9 What is striking is that, the education policy-makers overwhelmingly supported the idea that
10 tourism was best placed as part of the social studies curriculum at this level. By contrast the
11 tourism industry stakeholders advocated a determined effort at having a more structured
12 tourism programme from, ‘what is tourism’, career awareness, cultural heritage to social
13 skills, linked from one grade level to the next (spiralised approach), ensuring continuity
14 throughout the entire education system.

15 The educators contended that the spiral approach of the national curriculum allowed for
16 such continuous learning. According to them, generally throughout the student’s educational
17 life cycle in Dominica, as elsewhere, ‘knowledge’ and key learning concepts begin at a basic
18 level then ideas become more complex and critical spiralling from one educational level to
19 the next. But, in terms of tourism, the education respondents lamented that the existing
20 linkages between the different levels were weak with no smooth continuity of learning.
21 Nevertheless, for the most part, the infusion of tourism concepts into the general curriculum
22 was the widely favoured approach at the primary level.

23 *5.4 Secondary Level*

24 The respondents considered that in Dominica, tourism education at the secondary level was
25 not addressing the needs of the local industry or the wider society. In terms of the tourism
26 industry, for some respondents this meant development of entrepreneurial skills. Hence, one
27 educator bemoaned, “... we need a programme that allows children to understand that
28 tourism ... can be something that is lucrative and teach them how to go about setting up their
29 business in tourism”. Respondents also questioned the efficiency of the current programmes
30 to develop the skills, qualities and abilities in students for the world of work. This was a
31 matter of much concern to the respondents, as a key objective of education in Dominica is to
32 develop entrepreneurial capacity and skills (Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica,
33 Corporate Plan Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs, Sports and Human Resource
34 Development 2006/2007, p. 4). Thus, at secondary level, vocational preparation, inclusive of
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1 tourism, especially with the start of universal secondary education, was conceived as essential
2 in providing students with a wider range of options, as well as addressing entry level human
3 resource training needs. This is of particular importance, as in Dominica most students exit
4 formal schooling at the secondary level to enter the world of work.
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7 In view of this, the respondents considered that though tourism was mainly taught as part of
8 the Social Studies Caribbean Examination Council syllabus, there was need for
9 standardisation of the secondary tourism programme among the various schools. From this
10 stand point, the respondents recommended the following measures as alternative options:
11 first, introducing tourism as a subject in all schools, at least from the third year; second,
12 offering a certificate in tourism studies by pursuing a set of modules as part of other subjects;
13 and third, introducing project writing as a means of integrating tourism into the general
14 school curriculum.
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17 In fact, many industry stakeholders felt that tourism should be taught as a distinct subject at
18 the upper levels of secondary education. This was because they believed that at that
19 particular stage students should have the option to pursue tourism as a full course relevant to
20 the local context. In this regard, the respondents held that secondary tourism education
21 should cover, introduction to tourism and hospitality, environmental protection, career
22 awareness, entrepreneurship, cultural tourism and health tourism among other options.
23 Further, the respondents held that specialisation would encourage a greater degree of interest
24 in tourism studies at the post-secondary level. One educator thought that such an approach
25 would encourage students' selection of further tourism studies as a first choice, rather than an
26 option available to low achievers.
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28 *5.5 Tertiary Level, Adult and Continuing Education*

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30 One educator in reflecting on the objective of tertiary education remarked, "...at the college
31 level, I think we need to take it [tourism education and training] a step further; one of the
32 things that is needed in Dominica is leadership in tourism. ... we need to train persons to
33 manage tourism products and enterprises". The implication made here was that the students'
34 abilities should be developed above and beyond vocational and technical skills sets. As
35 Barnett (1990) suggests, issues of knowledge advancement, critical praxis, preservation of the
36 society, its resources and intellectual culture were of significance here.
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39 One related concern was that the curriculum utilised at the Dominica State College was a
40 generic Caribbean Tourism Organisation programme. For one private sector respondent, this
41 was not the best strategy for Dominica as, "our education system doesn't begin with us ...it's
42 an externally conditioned education, its whole tenor is from outside". Conversely some
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1 public sector respondents believed that with globalisation and the introduction of the Single
2 Market Economy in the Caribbean region, preparation of graduates to compete for jobs both
3 regionally and internationally is imperative. This also raises the debate of regional
4 standardisation versus local context, which allows for easy transfer of knowledge and skills in
5 the wider market place. Consequently, respondents suggested a range of programme offerings
6 from Eco-tourism Development, Environmental Studies, Sustainable Development, Botany,
7 Event Management, Business Management to Languages and Tourism Research which
8 offered graduates both relevance and marketability. Surprisingly, much of the ideology
9 framing these arguments, even at this level, further revealed an instrumental approach to
10 tourism education.

11 Nevertheless, of particular interest to some education respondents was the need for applied
12 research, “both for advancing the body of knowledge on Dominican tourism and for
13 providing direction to practice”. For as one private sector respondent argued,

14 “if we’re talking about nature island ... it’s important that you have
15 everything leading to that ... then the training and education has to be
16 linked to selling that concept”.

17 Moreover, developing critical reasoning and analytic skills necessary for accessing various
18 initiatives such as cruise tourism, the whaling issue, exploitation of geo-thermal among other
19 interests to “see which ones... fits into the whole policy or whether all of them can coexist”
20 ... as well as to guide allocation of resources and the focus of the industry is essential;
21 “because sometimes you have to take decisions between one and the other [and] what’s going
22 to guide you is what is the main thrust, or what you figure [is best in the] long-term”

23 This concern highlights the current lack of programmes that provide a more liberal tourism
24 education. This could be a direct consequence of the existing gap in higher education
25 programmes which offered a strong critical orientation. Therefore, it may be assumed that
26 the principles of curriculum choice, balance and relevance, as well as knowledge
27 development (for its own sake) all pose critical challenges in the context of a small
28 developing destination; particularly for an immature tourism destination which appears to
29 focus largely on instrumental education and training needs. Notwithstanding this, ‘knowledge
30 development’ clearly emerged among the approaches to the curriculum (table 2) at this level.

31 In relation to adult education, according to one educator, in the industry,

32 We already have people who are over school age, who are stakeholders in the
33 industry; ... persons who are already employed in the industry and will need

refresher courses; and will need continuous education so that we can sustain the industry.

Largely, adult education in Dominica tends to be offered on a needs basis. Within the formal education setting the programmes respond to the needs for professional development and of the tourism sub sectors, providing opportunities in general tourism and hospitality management. Non-formal education is focused on self and community development. Such initiatives the respondents held should be learner-directed and geared towards the specific interest of the relevant individual or group(s); the most relevant offerings among others, in small business management and customer service. As explained by an adult educator, programmes offered should also include elements of literacy, numeracy, and communication skills, in addition to tourism-related entrepreneurial skill development. Furthermore she continued,

At adult education, we are dealing with the people in the community,... [their] ...needs and what [they] request; ... and we're teaching people skills not just in tourism but to enable them, [and] to help them make a better life for themselves.

For one respondent from the tourism sector, also of special significance for Dominica, in terms of advancement of the tourism industry, was broad public education, much of which was recommended through awareness programmes utilising various media. According to another respondent from the education sector,

I always say you can have a whole set of training programmes; if the people's mentality is not ready for it, then you are going to have difficulties! So we need to try to get a change of mind-set among our people, where tourism is concerned.

This sort of informal education seemed very important to the respondents who gave significance to moral, cultural, sustainable values. Additionally, the idea that 'tourism was everybody's business' was another concept in Dominica that gave credence to general public education, alongside the more formal programmes.

Overall the respondents seemed agreed that thorough planning at the national level from a lifelong perspective, would help create co-ordination and effective continuity throughout the entire education system, thus establishing more relevant and effective programme(s).

However, as advocated by Caton and Belhassen (2011) there was also a strong case for the introduction of more critical pedagogy.

5.6 Industry Training

In terms of training the education respondents generally believed there was great need and urgency for improvement of the supply and quality of programmes. Tourism training was

often described as inappropriately scheduled, poorly organised and implemented with poor delivery methods. As such, training initiatives were mostly described by the respondents as *ad hoc* and unsustainable. Moreover a key constraint cited was the dearth of professionally trained trainers and the lack of necessary infrastructure. As one educator claimed, institutions suffer from limited human resource capacity and this deficiency impacts negatively on the quality of local training. Thus, from a national level it is important to have “a more coordinated [training] approach ... if we are really serious about tourism”. This would involve, at the pre-training phase, ensuring that the goals of the industry, the institutions and the tourism policy-makers are all positively aligned. Often, respondents complained that training programmes were irrelevant or inappropriate to their practical needs. For example, one industry respondent reported, “I think the underlying flaw therefore has been in the absence of clarity about [the] product”. Thus, the importance of training of trainers to deliver the necessary curriculum content was emphasised by respondents.

The challenges expressed in the case of Dominica’s tourism education and training programmes are not unique to an immature tourism destination with limited resources. However, as suggested by many respondents, proper planning, greater stakeholder involvement, and a holistic and widespread focus could facilitate a more efficient approach to human resource development for the tourism industry and a more informed citizenry.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 *The Approach*

The contribution of this paper lies partly in the consideration of the process of planning for tourism education and training for heavily-dependent tourism states with an absence of graduate or postgraduate tourism education. As earlier stated much of the current literature concentrates on tourism higher education. This study however has particular relevance to tourism-dependent small island states. In focusing on the Caribbean it helps to counter the overemphasis in the literature on the developed and Western world. At the same time it embraces both formal and informal education and also extends into tourism training. In brief it represents a different perspective to tourism education and training.

The other main contribution lies in its exploration of the lifelong approach to tourism education and training which one of the education respondents neatly described as from the “womb to the tomb”. Over time the learner interfaces with both formal and informal education and training in Dominica. As the learner progresses through the various levels of education and training, the opportunities offered and gained by interactions with various

education and tourism institutions contribute to lifelong tourism learning experiences.

However, as this study shows, the approach to such tourism lifelong learning is very *ad hoc*, notably with exposure to education and training being relatively restricted in coverage and scope with a heavy concentration at the upper level of post-secondary education and industry training. The paper therefore suggests that tourism concepts developed through a spiralled curriculum from the ‘womb to the tomb’ would serve to facilitate continuity and sustainability; two key principles of primary importance to lifelong learning. The key curriculum implications of this are summarised in Table 1 and examples provided in Table 2.

For a Small Island Developing State, the formal school system and its various levels of learning, plus the post-secondary education period takes on special meaning for national development. Thus, a lifelong approach is proposed as pivotal to any national tourism education and training plan. In Dominica and other small islands, where there is a great void in higher education programmes in tourism education and training, and where the majority of students exit formal schooling into industry employment at the end of secondary education, this is critical. Key issues include enhancing the supply of trained trainers, the development of infrastructure, and an improved balance between the instrumental and critical elements of the curriculum.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

This investigation has a number of limitations. First it is acknowledged that as a native of Dominica, the lead researcher is an insider. As in all such situations it is recognised that there are almost inevitable consequences for the research design and presentation including the framing of the questions, the data analysis, the selection of the voices presented and the general research debate. In many ways the interactive nature of the interview process added to this potential for bias. Mitigation lies primarily in awareness. Secondly, the sample of respondents themselves, many of whom had direct interest in tourism education and training, introduced a further possibility for bias although attempts were made to mitigate this by including respondents from outside the field including journalists, farmers, social critics and commentators. The nature of the research, based on a single case, with no opportunity for a longitudinal approach or for a comparative study are all also recognised as weaknesses which can only be corrected by future studies.

6.3 Implications for Tourism Education and Training

The empirical data of this research supports several key concepts in the theoretical debate on tourism education and training. As explained by Lewis (2005), the study supports the view that the tourism education and training curriculum should be framed within its context. As

such, the study supports the idea of a clearly articulated and policy-driven approach to tourism education and training. The study also adds to the discussion about whether tourism as a subject of study has reached maturity and no longer suffers from a weak image. The results suggest that in Dominica, much of the earlier concerns about the lack of a core body of knowledge or a distinct theoretical underpinning still exist.

As previously mentioned, earlier studies in the area of Caribbean tourism education and training have generally focussed on higher education. By contrast this study focuses on tourism education at various levels of formal schooling. The findings support the basic concerns of age-appropriate content for students' level of readiness. But, it also raises issues for discussion on the introduction of tourism as a distinct subject in the school's curriculum and at what level of schooling. More significantly, the research suggests the need for debate on the development of a lifelong approach to tourism education and training, which could be advanced in a spiralled fashion throughout the various stages and levels of learning while simultaneously addressing the need for a more critical citizenry along the lifelong axis.

Hence, this study has implications for the theoretical debate about tourism education and training, as well as practices within the context of Small Island Developing States.

Accordingly, the main concepts about national tourism education and training from an island perspective which emerge from this investigation could be further investigated ultimately to provide guidance to national policy practitioners as well as academics. Future research could involve empirical verification and furtherance of this approach and its underpinning concepts. Thus, this comprehensive and 'womb to tomb' critical analysis of tourism education and training in the Commonwealth of Dominica is of contextual significance for the island and has the potential for practical usefulness for other Small Island Developing States and added value to the broader tourism education debates.

Above all the article raises some critical challenges for relevant education. Students in Dominica and other Small Island Developing States can exit the education systems with a detailed knowledge of trigonometry and, Shakespeare but in reality it is tourism that will be more central to their lives. There is therefore a need for a fuller, richer and more considered and comprehensive education and training in this sphere.

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Table 1: Approaches to a Lifelong Curriculum

Education Level	CORE	CURRICULUM	CONCERNS	
	Setting Objectives	Providing Experiences	Organising Experiences	Evaluating Effectiveness
Early Childhood	Tourism sensitisation Basic awareness	Child-centred learning	Learning through play Learning by doing Visit to tourism sites	Informal
Primary	Tourism awareness Importance and value	Gradual shift from teacher-dominated to learner-centred	Integrated approach Infusion method Concepts spiralled throughout the grade levels	School-based National assessment
Secondary	Career awareness Key tourism concepts	Pedagogical Vocational approach	Distinct subject Specialisation from form three Certificate in tourism studies Project writing	School-based Caribbean examination Council (school leaving examinations)
Tertiary	Sustainable development Formal career preparation Professional development Knowledge development Theory building Critical reasoning and analysis Applied research	Student-centred learning Course-directed Career-specific	Distinct programme or course of studies Balancing standardisation versus Context	Formal certification
Adult & Continuing	Professional development Continuous learning Learner-directed Cultural, moral and sustainable Values	Consideration of literacy and numeracy Andragogical Sustainability development Entrepreneurship	Community training Informal programmes Skill development	Professional certification Informal certification
Industry Training	Career specialisation Sector specific skills	Professional training Career development	On-the-job training / off-the -job Short term training Seminars Workshops	Formal certification Informal certification

Source: Compiled from core questions from Tyler (1949) and responses on relevant curriculum approaches for each educational level

Table 2: Possible Curriculum Content by Level

Level	Content	
Early Childhood	• Pride of Country;	• Know Your Island: viewing of slides, programmes on tourism in Dominica,
	• National Symbols: national flower; national flag; national bird; coat of arms;	• Field Trips: visits springs, waterfalls, tours
	• The Role of Tourism;	• Preservation of Resources;
	• Civics;	
Primary	• What is Tourism?	• Environmental Protection
	• What is a Tourist?	• Careers
	• Economic Value of Tourism	• Civics
	• The Role Tourism in National Development	• Creole Language
Secondary	• The Role Citizens in Tourism Development	• Cultural Heritage
		• Arts & Drama
		• Social Skills
Tertiary	• Introduction to Tourism and Hospitality	• Cultural Tourism
	• Tourism Systems	• Nature Tourism
	• Tourism Economics	• Adventure Tourism
	• Environmental Protection	• Health Tourism
	• Customer Service	• Community Tourism
	• Know Your Country	• Language Skills
	• Social Skills	• Conservation
	• Civics	• Entrepreneurship
	• Events Management	• Research
	• Eco-tourism	• Botany
	• Environmental Studies	• Archaeology
	• Tourism Development	• Languages
	• Community Tourism	• Marketing
	• Sustainable Tourism	• Business Management
	• Tourism Management	
	• Culinary Arts	• Organic Agriculture
	• Front Desk	• Landscaping
	• Reservation Agent	• Arts & Craft
	• Dive Tourism	• Pastry Making
Adult Education & Training	• Nature Tourism	• Taxi Operating
	• Adventure Tourism (soft)	• Dive Masters
	• Community Tourism	• Flight Attendant
	• Tourism Guide Training	• Small Business Management
	• Entrepreneurial Training	• Customer Service

Source: Compiled from respondents' experience and relevant best practice

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	Setting Objectives	Providing Experiences	Organising Experiences	Evaluating Effectiveness
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Tertiary	Sustainable development Formal career preparation Professional development Knowledge development Theory building Critical reasoning and analysis Applied research	Student-centred learning Course-directed Career-specific	Distinct programme or course of studies Balancing standardisation versus Context	Formal certification
Adult & Continuing	Professional development Continuous learning Learner-directed Cultural, moral and sustainable Values	Consideration of literacy and numeracy Andragogical Sustainability development Entrepreneurship	Community training Informal programmes Skill development	Professional certification Informal certification
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Source: Compiled from core questions from Tyler (1949) and responses on relevant curriculum approaches for each educational level

Table 2: Possible Curriculum Content by Level

Level	Content	
Early Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pride of Country; • National Symbols: national flower; national flag; national bird; coat of arms; • The Role of Tourism; • Civics; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know Your Island: viewing of slides, programmes on tourism in Dominica, • Field Trips: visits springs, waterfalls, tours • Preservation of Resources;
Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Tourism? • What is a Tourist? • Economic Value of Tourism • The Role Tourism in National Development • The Role Citizens in Tourism Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Protection • Careers • Civics • Creole Language • Cultural Heritage • Arts & Drama • Social Skills
Secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Tourism and Hospitality • Tourism Systems • Tourism Economics • Environmental Protection • Customer Service • Know Your Country • Social Skills • Civics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Tourism • Nature Tourism • Adventure Tourism • Health Tourism • Community Tourism • Language Skills • Conservation • Entrepreneurship
Tertiary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events Management • Eco-tourism • Environmental Studies • Tourism Development • Community Tourism • Sustainable Tourism • Tourism Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Botany • Archaeology • Languages • Marketing • Business Management
Adult Education & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culinary Arts • Front Desk • Reservation Agent • Dive Tourism • Nature Tourism • Adventure Tourism (soft) • Community Tourism • Tourism Guide Training • Entrepreneurial Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic Agriculture • Landscaping • Arts & Craft • Pastry Making • Taxi Operating • Dive Masters • Flight Attendant • Small Business Management • Customer Service

Source: Compiled from respondents' experience and relevant best practice