The Use of Place-Based Education and Arts-Based Methodologies for Teaching in Higher Education

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Abstract

This presentation describes two case studies of a teaching/learning experiment undertaken with students at the University of Lapland during an elective wildlife tourism management course called *Wildlife Tourism Management: Reflections on Culture, Nature, and Wildlife*. Furthermore, a case study was also conducted at Hólar University in the course called, *Tourism*, for the NoFri master's program. The courses were an experiment for me, as an educator, to try to facilitate the co-construction of knowledge using illustrative documents that outline the processes of how we come to know. Later, these illustrations were used to enable a dialogue on how these understandings may have an impact on wildlife and tourism management. I considered the courses as a learning experiment because I wanted to understand the practical usage of arts-based methodologies and place-based pedagogies, and to discover together how culture and language effects the decisions that we make as tourism managers and how we can better learn from each other.

The decision to develop both courses using a mixture of place-based education and arts-based methodologies for teaching in higher education was based on the desire, as an educator, to help students become better prepared in their practice. I hoped that, by mixing these elements for teaching and learning that I was able to create an example of how creativity and different ways of learning opens the possibility of looking at the world from other angles. The focus of both courses was on the meaning-making, identity-forming, and sense-making emerging from the practices carried out from our understandings of nature, wildlife, culture, and tourism. Tourism should be seen within a global society (Fennell & Cooper, 2020), acknowledging the variability of cultural and historical contexts of sense-making and

knowing (Stevens et al., 2019). Therefore, the purpose for developing these courses was to develop a model of co-learning with students to see how culture and language effects the decisions that we make while discovering how we can learn from each other.

Arts-based methodology was used to facilitate practical reflection to connect the relationship between knowledge and action (Van Manen, 1995) using reflexive journals (Bassot, 2016) and Diagrams of Practice (Warden, 2015). Specifically, Diagrams of Practice (DOP) was used to clarify the processes involved in exploring the space between knowing and not knowing using illustrations and creative writing (Aquino, 2022). For example, Kolb (1984) explains that new knowledge is created from experiences through the process of reflection and analysis. DOP, therefore, was used as a tool to help create new knowledge by capturing what we know using arts-based methodologies. The courses focused on the philosophical constructs of our understanding of nature, wildlife, and culture to highlight how these are fundamentally affects the approaches and actions used for wildlife and tourism management.

Case Study One

The course *Wildlife Tourism Management: Reflections on Culture, Nature, and Wildlife* at the University of Lapland discussed some environmental philosophies that underpin wildlife tourism management and used reflection and illustration to understand our own ways of knowing and how we come to know—within a cultural context—and how these impact the understanding of nature and wildlife. The purpose of the class was to create a space where students and teachers could explore the space between the knowing and 'not knowing' (Boluk, Muldoon, & Johnson, 2019; Done, Knowler, Murphy, Rea, & Galec, 2011; Speedy, 2005) and to bridge these gaps in understanding of their own philosophical views of wildlife tourism management. The class was conducted over three days in face-to-face learning.

Case Study Two

The course *Tourism* at the Hólar University discussed some environmental, sustainable, and cultural philosophies that underpin tourism and wildlife management. Similarly, to case study one, it used reflection and illustration to understand our own ways of knowing and how we come to know. However, this case study was conducted over six weeks and the students and I had more time in reflecting further of each subject addressed during the course.

Conclusion

This presentation represents a work in progress of my own investigation and reflection on further developing arts-based methodologies for teaching and learning in higher education. It provides an exploration of the use of arts-based methodologies for reflection and learning in the classroom and outlines the activities in the courses with a discussion on future possibilities for working in this way.

References

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