

International Conference on Research Paradigms Transformation in Social Sciences 2014

## The integrative-modular approach in design of modern educational standards in the tourism sector

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### Abstract

The design of continuing professional education programs is one of the general trends in modern higher education. It concerns too the education in tourism that aims to provide the tourism industry with good-qualified professionals. The authors define the key principles of CPE: student-focused learning strategies, ability to team work, links between basic and different courses, cross discipline approach, activation of previous knowledge, achievement of understanding borders, ability to formulate problem questions, independent information research, interaction. Problem Based Learning (PBL) is regarded as the main approach in CPE. This approach to the organization of educational process suggests finding solutions to practical lifelike problems that stimulates students to study the theoretical information. The integrative-modular and competence-based approaches are used to complete the tasks in the continuing professional education. Modules are complete units of knowledge and skills, and include all the necessary educational components. The training material within a module is organized as a structural and organizational unit. The authors define the basic integrative terms of a modular program such as "project-based", "innovative", "student-centered". This approach is used to provide the interaction between theoretical and action-oriented training in tourism, the integrity and the continuity of the educational process.

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Peer-review under responsibility of Tomsk Polytechnic University.

*Keywords:* Continuing professional education (CPE), problem based learning (PBL), the competence-based approach, integrative-modular approach, the integratives, cross-discipline integration.

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### 1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the developing economic sector that need good-qualified professionals. However one can notice the lack of well-qualified employees in the tourism industry. According to Dale and Robinson, employers in tourism sector often recruit non-tourism graduates who demonstrate the generic skills required for a vocation in tourism (Dale, C. & Robinson, N., 2001). Therefore, tourism employees should acquire the tourism professional competencies.

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Thus, the continuing professional education (CPE) programs are designed for employees in the tourism sector who are interested in improving their professional knowledge and practical skills that are required in the changing conditions of the dynamically developing tourism industry (Mikhaylova M. M., 2011; Shevchenko M. I., 2011). The role of CPE is to provide interaction and dissemination between industry, education and research.

So, employers would gain from being able to recruit graduates who have acquired a combination of generic and value-adding specialist skills (Dale, C. & Robinson, N., 2001).

## **2. The objectives and key principals of the continuing professional education**

The educational objectives of CPE programs are:

- involving employees from other economic sectors in the tourism industry;
- improving tourism professional competencies;
- acquiring new competencies and knowledge in the field of tourism management (Kolodii N. A., Rodionova E. V., Agranovich V. B., 2013).

The main objects of professional tourism activity are:

- tourism services consumers (individual or corporate clients);
- tourism product;
- tourism technologies;
- research in tourism;
- the intangible assets belonging to actors in tourist industry on the property rights or other legal basis;
- tourist accommodation establishments, food and beverage industry, attractions, tourism services, transportation and other tourism actors;
- information technologies.

The authors have studied the requirements of stakeholders to the maintenance of tourism professional competencies and have concluded that the system of the continuing professional education (CPE) has to be founded on the main provisions of competence based approach. This approach should provide a closer relationship between professionals and academics in tourism industry.

The key principles of CPE: student-focused learning strategies, ability to team work, links between basic and different courses, cross discipline approach, activation of previous knowledge, achievement of understanding borders, ability to formulate problem questions, independent information research, interaction. Competence based approach in CPE program requires to use the interactive learning strategies in educational process in combination with out-of-class work (dialogue based workshops, discussions, computer simulations, business and role-playing games, cases, psychological and other trainings). It aims to form and develop student's professional skills corresponding to the objectives of CPE programs. The training courses should provide meetings and master classes with representatives of Russian and foreign companies, of state and public organizations (Furmankov A.N., 2008). These meeting should take one third of the educational process.

## **3. Problem Based Learning (PBL) as an approach in CPE**

Problem Based Learning (PBL) can form a basis of approaches in CPE. This approach to the organization of educational process suggests finding solutions to practical lifelike problems that stimulates students to study the theoretical information. Problem-oriented approach to studying is more effective than traditional training because the knowledge received in the context of problems resolution more valuable than the knowledge which simply satisfy to structures of different disciplines.

Therefore, the objective of problem based learning is not the memorizing the information and grasping the underlying concepts, but the process of research what teaching material is necessary to study (determining the question to solve), and solution of the problem lifelike situation. Students can use the task text, decisions procedure (order of actions), and all necessary literature for "clearing" the problem situation and some unclear questions, etc. Students work in groups of 10-13 people. The lessons are watched by the teacher, however, he/she carries out special functions, other than functions of the lecturer. The method of problem based learning is founded on performance of certain types of tasks.

The task is starting point for classes in PBL method. The task contains the problem description. Tasks can be not only theoretical, but also practical (action oriented).

The following types of tasks are used in PBL method:

- the problem task –it contains the problem description from the concrete sphere of manager activity of service organization. It is the most popular type of tasks;
- task for discussion – a type of discussion;
- the strategic task –it is required to develop a strategy for behavior in a certain situation;
- the task for studying – it contains the concrete instruction, what educational material has to be studied and how it has to be made;
- task for action performance – concrete instructions for meetings, interview, information search and so on;

As the problem situation can go beyond a traditional framework of one discipline, this approach can be easily realized in modular programs.

The use of the integrative-modular and competence-based approaches in CPE is caused by the requirements of integration processes in higher education around the world (Rodionova E. V., Kolodii N. A., Konyukhova T.V., 2013).

This approach has the following advantages:

- 1) interaction with potential employers concerning the definition of the requirements to knowledge, skills of employees;
- 2) in one module students develop their knowledge, skills when acquiring the concrete competence providing the performance of concrete employment function as distinguished from traditional approach supposing the study of a subject (module) without interrelation with other knowledge, abilities, skills;
- 3) students have opportunity to carry out their continuing professional education, learn to be responsible of their own training, and further – for their own professional growth and career;
- 4) theoretical and practical components of training are integrated: there are reconsideration of a place and a role, regulation and systematization of theoretical knowledge in the process of competences acquirement. It eventually leads to increasing the student motivation;
- 5) there is an opportunity to update or replace concrete modules when changing the professional requirements owing to changes in technologies and work organization, providing the quality of professional training at competitive level;
- 6) there is an opportunity to use the same modules in several training programs;
- 7) there is an opportunity to individualize the training for everyone proceeding depending on his/her knowledge level and abilities and the previous training programs by the combination of necessary modules;
- 8) quality control of the education results consists not only in an assessment of knowledge, but also in an assessment of trained competences.

#### **4. The integrative-modular approach in CPE**

The modules represent complete units of knowledge and skills and include all necessary training components: from the formulation of training objectives to final examinations and a student's assessment of module quality.

The program provides the fixed set of obligatory modules. Thematic cross-disciplinary approach consists in having a key subject in each module and all disciplines of the module and training models are subordinated to

this key subject. It sets the general direction of training in the module, defines the subject domain and the corresponding set of disciplines.

All disciplines in the module are interconnected and supplement each other, there is no "main" subject, but there is an integration of the subject domains necessary for the solution of specific practical objectives.

The integrative-modular approach demands to consider a training material within the module, not only as a unit directed on achievement of the objective but also as the structural and organized block cemented inside by cross-discipline integration. When structuring the training content, its main components and elements have to be integrated, cemented by framework and function links and are subordinated to the common didactic goal and methodical idea.

Such approach is realized by means of the following main components / components of educational process (integratives):

- "Project" integrative assumes interaction between the acquired theoretical knowledge and practical skills through the realization of a project-based method. This integrative has to be implemented by accomplishing the applied projects, by analyzing the efficiency of the developed applied projects and their approbation on experimental platforms.

- "Innovative" integrative is directed on the formation of innovative thinking of professionals in the tourism industry which is characterized by high dynamics and demands continuous search and implementation of innovations. This integrative has to be implemented by introducing the information about innovations in the subject domain in the contents of CPE programs;

- "Student focused" integrative assumes such organization of training which allows students to build gradually the individual career trajectory. This integrative assumes an individual organization of educational process, the use of the educational models aimed to develop a professional role behavior and self-presentation skills.

Introduction of integratives to educational process allows to provide a close connection of theoretical and practical components, to coordinate the personal and professional objectives and values, to provide coherence and systemacity of educational process.

The integrative-modular approach supposes justification of the leading idea of a personal formation of future employees in educational process:

- the pedagogical community assume in process of cross-discipline integration the objectives of professional and personal formation of future employees in the tourism industry in unity of essential characteristics: the professional, the intellectual and the researcher with integrating function of a pedagogical position;

- the design of system of subject learning is carried out in the process of intra subject integration on the basis of interrelation with other disciplines;

- the collaboration between students and teachers accepting a dialogue position at the solution of complex professional problems of training, development and education is accomplished in the process of interpersonal integration;

- the formation of professional and personal readiness for professional activity in the tourism sphere is carry out in the process of intra personal integration. The developed criteria of readiness give the opportunity to estimate its level in the following concrete abilities: methodological, theoretic-methodical, organizational and communicative and reflexive.

## 5. Conclusion

Thuswise, the methodological basis of the design of modern educational programs is competence-based and integrative-modular approaches. The use of basic rules of competence-based approach allows to provide the interaction between theoretical and action-oriented training in tourism, the integrity and the continuity of the educational process. The authors offered to build the structure and the content of educational programs according to the professional and cultural competences of professional personnel in tourism. These competences by means of decomposition on knowledge, skills form the content of all modules and disciplines in CPE programs. The

authors showed the efficiency of the integrative-modular and competence-based as means of structuring the training content. This approach considers a training material within the module not only as a unit directed to achieve the educational objective, but also as a structural and organizational unit cemented inside by cross-discipline integration.

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