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**DRAMATIZED DESTINATION PRESENTATIONS IN  
HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM EDUCATION**

Tatyana Chernysheva (a)\*  
\*Corresponding author

(a) Novosibirsk State Technical University, Novosibirsk, Russian Federation, tablack@mail.ru

**Abstract**

This article addresses the nature of skills in hospitality education, particularly in tourism. It is recognized that skills in services such as hospitality have emotional and aesthetic dimensions. Hence, the article is devoted to an actual theme of students with socially significant qualities developed for working in a collective project. This joint group project is provided in forms of dramatized destination presentations, which give students unique opportunities. First, such project work helps to obtain a lot of information about a tourist destination and to share it with an audience. Second, it develops such qualities as a sense of personal responsibility, acceptance of different opinions, cultivates communication and teamwork skills, compassion and perspective thinking. These skills and qualities are essential for the modern service workers. Students gain experience of organizing events and becoming actors in them. Thus, this article explores the role of experiential factors in preparing the personnel to equip for the hospitality industry. The methodology of the educative project is described in the article by stages. Collaborative participation of the students in the project provides thinking skills, working in the community skills, project modelling skills, and actor skills. The project gives an opportunity to learn a lot of new facts of destinations, as the students study the information about the country, city, agglomeration, etc. After that they define the most valuable facts about the chosen territory, and finally, they position the territory by means of dramatization of the fact, which appeared to be the base for the positioning procedure.

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## 1. Introduction

Unfortunately, not more than 5% of the existing tourist information centers in Russia provide high-quality services (e.g., centers in Primorsk, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Kaliningrad, Novgorod, Uglich); the rest should increase their own efficiency and expand the range of services offered to tourists. Largely, the quality of services depends on the educational and upbringing background of the staff.

This issue was discussed at a conference Russian Tourist Information Centers. The Quality of Customer Service held at the end of 2019 at Novosibirsk State Technical University. The conference was dedicated to the quality of tourist service in the tourist and information centers of Russia. Russia is a huge field for a service of this kind. For example, in European countries, where tourism brings quite a significant income, there are several hundred to 1.5 thousand tourist information centers; in neighbouring Latvia, there are about 120; in Russia, a huge country, almost the same as in Latvia. How can one develop inbound tourism in Russia if foreign tourists are used to the fact that information for them is accumulated in one center that owns a single information service? For them, the presence of such a center at the place of arrival is a kind of security criterion. Therefore, it is quite understandable that the majority of foreigners are still stereotyped about our country as drunk people lying on the roads; gray, ugly buildings everywhere; citizen walking in winter fur caps with earflaps; bears still roaming the streets of big cities. There is a lack of reliable and up-to-date information, which tourism information centers should produce and distribute through various channels.

## 2. Problem Statement

For that matter, one particularly mentioned at the conference the urgent need to train qualified personnel for Russian tourist information centers. Comprehensive need satisfaction at a high cultural level is impossible without establishing trustworthy conditions because the services quality depends on the relationship of the service provider with the client, and this requires a powerful educational background of the staff.

The role of services in the world economy has increased considerably. Today the tertiary sector provides the main part of the gross national product (GNP) in many countries. Such factors as the amount of internal and external service provision and exponential growth of service staff confirm it. Despite various crises, a population steadily moves from the satisfaction of the first order needs (physiological and safety) to the second order needs (social, self - improvement, spiritual needs). The quality of childhood education and worthy family leisure time has a special value in public consciousness (Asmolov & Guseltseva, 2019). Thus, it is possible to draw a conclusion about the developing rates of service sphere in the world economy in general. New types and forms of service activities are born due to the emergence of recent needs in different life spheres, including education, leisure, entertainment, tourism, and sports. University teachers who conduct Tourism and Service training courses have to predict the main directions of the development in service sphere. It allows students to form certain useful skills and qualities, which are evaluated in the hospitality industry.

Innovative activity in the industry is an ongoing process; therefore, the problem is whether the sphere of tourism, for example, education, is well prepared for these changes. Some enterprises and public

organizations become highly professional, whereas some of them are small and have limited resources for development and need to overcome barriers towards innovation. Evidently, possibilities to assist the tourism industry lie in education. Tourist organizations need highly qualified personnel. For example, the personnel of tourist information centers (visitor centers) is the hallmark of the cities and countries where they are situated. Thus, the workers of tourist information centers have to show abilities to communicate with people and solve their problems. They ought to know how, using the landmarks of destination, 'to build' a day of tourist so that he/she could see the most interesting natural and cultural phenomena and, thanks to it, get a particular impression. We live in an era of experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) and we ought to teach students tourist hospitality in order to project emotions and make impressions. They have to be engaged in designing the day of their clients. For this purpose, they should have knowledge of positive aspects of human life in general and be guided in what makes life experience satisfactory and full of sense. They have to correlate this knowledge to the needs of the concrete person who asks for the help just now. Only, in this case, it will be possible to achieve the goal of initiating positive emotions from the spent time in the client. For that, workers of hospitality industry should have personal traits and behaviour models that are typical for happy people in order to share this positive energy with the clients. In this regard, the importance of positive psychology skills for the future workers of the hospitality industry is obvious. The phenomenon of conscious optimism discovered by Seligman (Seligman, 2004) must be integrated into the consciousness of the future representatives of an economy of impressions by means of special workshops needed to develop the capacity to influence the way of thinking, and through it – the behaviour..

### **3. Research Questions**

**3.1.** Taking into account the identified problems in the service sector what educational technology can form the necessary skills for future representatives of the industry;

**3.2.** How to develop students in dimensions such as generic, aesthetic, emotional and civic ones.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The main goal of this work is to create educational technology Dramatized destination presentations that helps in practice to develop a caring attitude of the future service provider to representatives of other cultures, the ability to determine their needs, improvisation and positive attitude to the world as a whole. The students spoke in favour of the practice-oriented education - they need clear algorithms for organizing real procedures aimed at meeting the clients' needs, algorithms that can be applied tomorrow. Excessive theorization does not bring anything but harm to students: classifications that cannot be used in work, long philosophical insights not connected with the conclusions that have no specific technologies as the consequence. This all is an information ballast. The idea is that all subjects, including Anthropology, History, Speech Communications, World culture and art, Ecology, should be oriented to the majors of the university. This means that professors of these disciplines should sometimes focus on methods of interacting with people and solving their problems in studying abstract and far from the practice principles (Chernysheva, 2020).

Educational technology Dramatized destination presentations is to develop the qualities required by students in routine and crisis situations while working at tourist enterprises. The most typical, weak points of business activities were thoroughly studied which each enterprise has. The prevention of their occurrence was recognized as the best way to improve the efficiency of companies in the tourism industry. Education with the use of innovative technologies provides the most reliable prevention of almost all the problems.

## 5. Research Methods

Work in services such as hospitality has been characterized as 'low skills' in the academic literature (Picard & Wood, 1997; Shaw & Williams, 1994). The stereotype is put forward as a problem in the context of hospitality in the work of a number of researchers (Baum, 1995, 1996, 2002, 2005, 2006; Nickson & Warhurst, 2001) on the basis that this represents both a technical and Western-centric perception of work and skills. These challenges are developed in analyses that consider skills in hospitality to include a wide-ranging of the so-called 'generic skills' (Raybould & Wilkins, 2006) (communication, problem solving, languages) within hospitality work (Baum, 2006) as well as both emotional (Hochschild, 1983) and aesthetic (Nickson et al., 2003; Warhurst et al., 2000) dimensions as features within the bundling of hospitality skills. This complex skill model is recognized as a requirement for effective work in the services sector worldwide. Emotional demands mean that employees have to be in positive, joyful and playful mood constantly (Ritzer, 2004). This case is argued by Poon (1993) who notes that new employees in hospitality must be trained to be loyal, flexible, tolerant, amiable, and responsible. Burns's (1997) emphasis on emotional demands as an additional dimension of hospitality skills has been developed in the work of Seymour (2000). Her work introduces the concept of emotional work within the services economy. Employees are required to manage their emotions, while the effective delivery of emotional labour demands emotional intelligence defined by Goleman (1998) as 'the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships' (p. 39). Mayer and Salovey (1997) interpret this capacity as a measure of the degree to which individuals vary in their ability to perceive, understand and regulate their own emotions and those of others, and in their ability to integrate these with their own thoughts and actions. As a result, 'individuals with higher than average emotional intelligence display strong self-awareness and high levels of interpersonal skills. They are more empathic, adoptable, able to cope with pressure... than low scorers' (Bardzil & Slaski, 2003, p. 101).

One can add to the requirements of emotional labour and emotional intelligence in hospitality the skills of what Warhurst et al. (2000) and Nickson et al. (2003) describe as aesthetic labour – the skills required to look, sound and behave in a manner that is compatible with the requirements of the job and with customers' expectations. In many cases, aesthetic labour makes staff demonstrate the ability to respond to fashion and trend imperatives in the customer marketplace in a way that is exclusive of many groups and cultures within society. Thus, service staff in some hospitality contexts (luxury hotels, style bars, and nightclubs) must be able to carry on substantial conversations with their guests or clients about different spheres of life, for example, art (Nickson et al., 2002). In order to achieve all necessary skills mentioned above, we use the method of the so-called 'dramatization'. The works of famous Russian dramatists, stage managers and pedagogues as Vodovozov (1879), Bunakov (1909), and Makarenko (1977) contain the idea

of the theatre being involved in teaching practice. All these authors consider the theatre as the means of the youth education. However, theatrical pedagogies as a sphere of pedagogical knowledge have been officially registered in the 1970's. Basically, theatrical pedagogies have been considered as pedagogical instruments enrichment with the help of theatrical tools (Azarov, 2015; Bukatov, 2013). Theatrical methods used in 1970-2000 were the subject of research; nevertheless, these works do not contain any terms to designate theatrical methods. Scientific acknowledgment of the term 'dramatization' at the end of the XX century allowed for considering this subject in the theatrical technology context (Bukatov, 2013; Ershova & Bukatov, 1998; Rudenko, 2016). These are socio-playing interactive methods that must be accommodated to every studied subject. The methods are very useful because they contain the technic of action and interaction (reciprocal action) for the participants of the educative process. The dramatization technology is used to develop concrete skills; for example, working skills in service haven't been the subject of research yet.

## **6. Findings**

### **6.1. Civic engagement in hospitality and tourism education**

By means of large-scale student projects, the education system engages young people in active and informed participation in helping clients of city information centers or during bus excursions, as well as other participants of the city, regional, and national activities, who constantly ask different questions. It provides them with knowledge and participation skills to empower them as citizens (Shavyrina et al., 2018). The core objective of creative tasks, integrated into education curriculum is for hospitality students to develop into careful and socially responsible men and women, experienced in the practices of human relationships. It becomes possible, to my mind, only by bringing in tourism educational programs of new courses, which are supposed to develop civic habits and abilities. Within the area of knowledge, the emphasis is on civic participation, human rights, including in the service activities. International human rights treaties are also considered. The curriculum ought to be focused on the development of skills to manage information and to debate, lead or to be part of a group, and, what is extremely important, resolve conflicts. Likewise, the curriculum must provide the developing attitudes supportive of such values as the personal responsibility, acceptance of different points of view, social integration of students of different economic layers, peaceful coexistence, and value of human life appreciation. Civic-directed service education develops thinking skills, communication skills, working in the community skills, which are very important for perspective service employees. The more the students take the initiative of the creative activity, the better practice they receive, which increases the level of their qualification. Thus, hospitality students, tourism especially, should take part in volunteer journeys. The impact of volunteerism on participants has gained considerable interest by researchers. The benefit reported by participants includes raised consciousness, increased interest in activism and increased prosocial values, compassion and perspective taking (Bailey & Russell, 2012). Henderson and Presley (2003) contend that international volunteering may be a method of cultivating mutual understanding and building social networks across cultures. The volunteers report higher levels of the annual civic engagement, civic attitude, openness, compassion, cognitive drive, and reflectivity (Gorbuleva, 2018). All these qualities are necessary for

hospitality students who considerably ought to have inclinations of the volunteer as to help qualitatively people to solve their problems counting only on material remuneration is impossible. Work in service assumes understanding and love to people. The methodology of Dramatized territories presentations helps to create at students the necessary for the volunteer qualities, which are, first of all, unselfishness, skill to communicate and responsiveness. The methodology learns to observe a balance between own needs of the person and needs of other people, what is demanded by volunteerism in the highest measure. It goes along with the concept of 'critical tourism'. According to scholars, critical tourism and hospitality studies must be based on critical theory. They are concerned with those whose interests are served by different ideologies, the focus being on emancipation and social justice in tourism and hospitality. They consider tourism and hospitality as a force for social and political change. Erica Wilson calls tourism 'a force for the promotion of human dignity, human rights and justice in practice' (Wilson et al., 2012, p. 3). One current area of critical tourism scholars debate is related to the concept of 'hopeful tourism' (Pritchard, 2011) which is described as a 'values-led humanist approach based on partnership, reciprocity and ethics, which aims for co-created learning and which recognizes the power of sacred and indigenous knowledge and passionate scholarship' (Pritchard, 2011, p. 249). So, new tourism aims demand newly qualified specialists.

It is obviously important to emphasize the value of approach in consideration of the hospitality skills when they are classified according to emotional, aesthetic and generic dimensions. I find it possible to add civic dimension: workers of hospitality, and the tourist sphere, in particular, should perceive any person despite his/her national identity, religious views, age and sexual orientation as a citizen of the world to whom they are glad to help in any case. Development of future hospitality workers in such direction will promote the ideology of humanity in the world community, which finally will be capable to resist the aggression from where it proceeded. Hospitality and tourism, in particular, are really vital in keeping world peace. The offered methodology of the dramatized destination presentations allows developing skills and qualities connected with all four dimensions – emotional, aesthetic, generic and civic. This complex skills model should be taken into account while elaborating educational programs for students in their future productive work in the service sector. We can characterize described abilities as 'high skills' which form a set of attributes necessary for further elaborating hospitality skills bundle into an experience economy context in order to reflect the impact of experiential and cultural exposure on the delivery of the skills that are expected of employees in international hospitality.

## **6.2. Student project in learning experience**

For qualities revealing, students are put in different experimental conditions and proposed to solve definite tasks. It turned out that it was possible to form complicated psychological processes and to investigate their structures deeply. This approach is named forming experiment. Also, we use projective methods: we estimate personal human peculiarities through productive activities of people. Among playing methods the socio-drama is relevant.

Forty students of the training course 'Tourism' received a task to split into groups of 5-7 people. Each group chose the country (or country region, city, or other destination), which culture was more interesting for them, then found as much information about this country as possible, systematized this information, and designated phenomena associated with the destination and, therefore, representing its

hallmark. On the consultation, which was appointed for different groups in different times, the newfound information on the chosen countries was announced. In each group, the data was stated by blocks, and each student drew a conclusion as to which facts were more important for him/her. After that, students received a task to gather all the data and make the decision as to what artifacts associated with the country were to be dramatized during a presentation. Then the teacher appointed the next consultation during which the students talked about their choice (2-4 artifacts). It is important that these artifacts could be connected among themselves by the original plot and coordinated with the general plan of the statement, and, above all, could transfer a certain idea of a given territory. Afterwards, the students had to reflect on the scenic genres with the help of which they could provide the chosen up-to-day information about the destination and create a performance – its presentation. Students chose the means, which to a great extent corresponded to the idea they wanted to embody. A contest on the best scenario, the frame, uniting presentations of all groups, was conducted. On a competition, several options of a general plot were given by the students through open voting. They were supposed to choose the one that made the greatest impression on them. Then the work on the text of this scenario began. A group of 3-4 students was created – these were usually students whose option of the ‘frame scenario’ won. This group received scenarios of all other groups by e-mail and interweaved them into the general outline, registering all means of interaction of these groups with the main character on the performance course. According to the fairy general plot, the main character (the hero) travelled through the chosen region with the help of a magical object, such as the crook, Russian cudgel, or Golden fish, and solved his/her personal problems: sought and found the hidden treasure, helped the relatives, destroyed his own stereotypes. He entered the realities of different destinations, where the locals showed him the peculiarities of their territories. When the character met with the citizens, a brief presentation of the destination took place: the citizens invited the hero to visit the landmark that served as a visit card of the place and to reconstruct, for example, the event that happened there many years ago. During this ‘fairy travel’, the character experienced different adventures that revealed socio-meaningful features of the number of national characters. One presentation of destination was shown by a small group, which consisted of 5-7 students. Different groups of students showed 9-12 destination presentations during one performance.

During staging the students communicate intensively, acquiring useful skills of mass-spectacular actions organizing, studying the elements of production business and acting in practice. Unique creative atmosphere unites all participants who realize the project – they are mutually responsible. If a student doesn’t execute an assignment, the common undertaking suffers just as the lack of one element destroys all the mosaic. Working meetings on an occasion of the action organization have the expressed educational character: ideas exchange enriches all participants. When the text of the general scenario is ready, the schedule of the rehearsals of the small groups together with the main character/characters is defined. The main character and the group that creates general scenario invite each small group to a rehearsal where the statement of its stage setting occurs by joint efforts. Options of suits, musical and video maintenance are discussed in parallel. The managers who are responsible for light and sound are determined. A competition on the best idea of the performance name is held, its identity is considered, and afterward, it appears on posters and leaflets. The PR responsible is designated. The rehearsal of all groups is appointed and takes place in the big hall of the university. Elected manager of the scene reminds participants of each group of

the time of their part, helps hand out necessary requisite, to bring and take out the scenery. The group, distributing invitation cards and welcoming guests at an entrance is appointed.

## 7. Conclusion

The author's method of planning, organizing and conducting of dramatized presentation of territory landmarks is supposed to develop necessary skills which will be useful for future tourism employees. In the implemented projects the objects of presentations were continents, countries, former Soviet Union Republics, ethnic territories, and Russian cities. According to the method, the original fairy plot was created by the lecturer and students, together. Staging is directed to a wide range of competences forming the ability to design the spectacular action on the appointed subject and the declared criteria, promoting realization of a certain purpose; the ability to organize the process of preparation of the action, taking into account the smallest details; ability to inform and gather the audience and, at last, ability to meet its requirements due to fascinating and informative action. By means of the technology, students not only discover cultures of different countries in a playful and joyful way but also as representatives of these countries or cities during the show, they develop empathy and tolerance needed to the tourist industry personnel. Tourist information centers staff should possess artistic skills, as the creative story about sights of the city or the specific place lightens the mood of tourists and helps to deliver a particular impression.

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