

Introduction

Why should the last ten years be the focus of this look back over ‘critical incidents’ in Tourism’s development in Higher Education (HE), when many of the key incidents which shaped Tourism in HE probably took place in the 10 years prior to this? There has, in fact, been much documentation about the late 1980s/early 1990s (for example the NLG guidelines) focusing on growth and expansion, overprovision and the nature of, and need for, a common core curriculum. This indeed was a critical phase in Tourism’s ‘life’ in HE. However, in December 2003 the Association of Tourism in Higher Education (ATHE) (formerly the National Liaison Group for Higher Education in Tourism (NLG)) celebrated 10 years of existence and it is timely, therefore, to review some of the incidents that have shaped education for Tourism in HE in the UK. It is very easy as hard-working individuals to be consumed by the day-to-day challenges in HE institutions. These challenges may include balancing our teaching, research and administrative responsibilities, and the pressing issues of recruitment, widening participation, institutional audits and bidding for funding. However, it is worth taking a step back and looking at Tourism, and to ponder on how it has stood up to the test of ten years of external reviews and assessments developed by a strong academic community.

The commitment of the Tourism Academic Community

This paper seeks to mark the ‘coming of age’ of Tourism, set against the backdrop of continual change within HE. In October 1993, the NLG was created, in response to government’s decision to disband the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA), to a report by Victor Middleton on Tourism degrees in 1993 and the need for an overarching body that could oversee the rapid increase in numbers of Tourism degree programmes. Ten years on, by December 2003 the Tourism Academic Community has witnessed a number of welcome, and perhaps not so welcome changes in Higher Education generally, and more specifically, in the Tourism subject area. These changes have tested the resolve of the academic community at times, faced with an increasing amount of pressure to defend our very existence and value as a subject community.

Tourism has developed against a backdrop of continual change. The unification of HE and the desire of successive governments to see the purpose of a unified system more explicitly serving the needs of society and industry has left a situation where competition between institutions for student enrolments and research funding can be fierce. Tourism has been no exception to this. Many of these issues, and those more specific to Tourism alone, are tracked in the 11 Guidelines published by the NLG and now ATHE.

In the face of change, there were a number of options that the subject community could have taken. Trowler’s model of academic responses to change (see Figure 1 below) offers four approaches, which indicate that contented academics take on board change and probably work around it to make sure they ‘swim’ and ‘cope’ (Trowler, 1997). On the whole, however challenged we have felt in recent years, as a community we have swum strongly against the tide of changes and for the most part, have ‘coped’ both as a subject community and as contented individuals at institutional level.

Figure. 1 Academic responses to change (Trowler, 1997:306)

	<u>Accept status quo</u>	<u>Work around or change policy</u>
<u>Content</u>	swimming	reconstruction
<u>Discontent</u>	sinking	using coping strategies

House and Watson (1995) have stressed the importance of a clear understanding of the role that communication and consultation can play in the successful management and delivery of a given subject against a backdrop of continual change within the working environment:

“People being managed through periods of significant change, especially when the implications are on the face of things distressing and in that sense at least not chosen, appreciate and are more likely to respond positively to clear information on what is happening and why. They are also more likely to accept changes if they understand them and respect the motives of those driving the changes. Equally they have a right to expect consultation, rather than just communication, in areas where their own experience and expertise can be seen as potentially making a positive difference” (p19).

In the last few years the Tourism subject community has indeed been consulted on a number of occasions, perhaps the most memorable was “Subject Benchmarking”. Who could forget Wheeler’s infamous ‘Bench with Marks’ at the NLG’s Annual Conference at Luton in 1999? More recently ATHE has been consulted regarding the RAE 2001 and the Roberts Review of 2003. We might not always feel that ‘consultation’ has resulted in us making a positive difference when key policy making is taking place in HE, but the NLG, and now ATHE, has always taken up these opportunities to make the views of the subject community heard and this we feel is a critical role for ATHE to play.

At the end of 2003 we find ourselves in good spirits faced with a number of ‘critical incidents’. The picture to be painted here of Tourism education is not one viewed through rose tinted glasses; it is an honest one which recognises key achievements and memorable high points. These critical incidents have been broadly divided into two categories, those which can be called the ‘system-wide’ incidents, i.e. change and development within HE which have filtered through to our subject community, and then ‘new vocational subject’ factors which are specific to subjects like Tourism, over many of which we as a community have had a reasonable degree of control. This reflection back over the last ten years draws on two key sources; the author’s PhD research into lecturer perspectives (see Stuart, 2002) and ‘participant observation’ during her own experiences as a Tourism lecturer in HE, which is also a ten-year story from 1993-2003. Also involvement with ATHE in last four years has allowed contact with what is going on in the broader HE environment to be maintained and allowed for engagement in debate over how this is affecting the subject.

‘Coping’ in the face of system-wide pressures on Tourism

The ‘story’ will commence with a very brief overview of what Airey (1997) called the ‘turbulence and the unease’ surrounding Tourism’s development.

Table 1 National Framework for Tourism in Higher Education

Turbulence (1980s - early 1990s)	Unease (mid to late 1990s)
Conservative government support of post compulsory Tourism education in response to economic need	Overprovision of courses: more graduates entering the market than the industry can support
Growth/proliferation of courses	Lack of relevance of new courses to the industry
Post abandonment of CNAAB (1992) institutions have total control over development of new courses	Lack of data relating to number of Tourism courses and students
	Need for a common core curriculum
	Issues relating to quality of courses in franchised institutions

Source: Airey, A (1997) Exploring the links between industry and education. Conference paper given at the ATTT/Tourism Education Exchange Conference, 5th February 1997 University of Westminster.

He used this simple yet effective table to indicate the key issues dominating Tourism in HE back in 1997 at an ATTT conference at University of Westminster. The ‘unease’ described here is something some members of the academic community remember quite clearly, but it is doubtful that there are many who really sat up and knew what we could do about these issues.

If we were to extend the table and add a late 1990s to early 2000s we would probably want to add quality assurance and enhancement as at least one of the critical incidents that have in fact driven much of our activities, reactions and thoughts in the last 5 years.

The system wide factors commence with the issue of ‘Volume versus value’ of a Higher Education in Tourism, which covers both the overprovision and the quality issue. We all know that growth in Tourism Studies degree courses and students between 1992 and 1997 outstripped any other subject in HE in the UK at that time (See Airey and Johnson, 1998) and the resulting plethora of calls of ‘overprovision’, and ‘jumping on the bandwagon’ were louder than the more desperate calls for more suitably qualified Tourism lecturers to teach them. This ‘explosion’ (the word most often used to describe this phase) was mirrored at the Further Education (FE) level where the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) was being launched, relaunched, scrapped, revitalised and generally reshaped until it looked much like its arguably more robust predecessor, the BTEC National Diploma still, when delivered at ‘best practice’ the most useful and rigorous vocational FE qualification.

Whilst Tourism degrees were being launched across the country in the mid 1990s, a rather worrying trend was developing regarding the numbers of students applying for, and being accepted onto these degrees. Table 2 reminds us of the situation we face today as competition for undergraduate students continues to increase- between 1995 and 2000 the number of students applying to Tourism programmes dropped by a third, whereas the number of acceptances increased by over 30%.

Table 2 Total numbers of applications and acceptances for subject P7 ‘Tourism’ in the UCAS process and the ratio of applications to acceptance.

Year	Application Totals	Acceptance Totals	Ratio of applications to acceptances
1995	18,115	1,666	10.9:1
1996	14,293	1,924	7.4:1
1997	14,739	2,300	6.4:1
1998	14,789	2,350	6.3:1
1999	13,249	2,363	5.6:1
2000	12,922	2,388	5.4:1
2001*	13,099	2,716	4.8:1
2002*	14,073	3,109	4.5:1

* New subject classification: N8 ‘Tourism, Travel and Transport’

Source: www.ucas.co.uk/figures/archive/applications

If institutions are accepting an increasing number of students onto Tourism degree programmes from an increasingly narrow pool of applicants, we could conclude that entry standards are falling rapidly (whilst Clearing in August becomes an increasingly crucial time for institutions), in order that institutions meet their subject targets. It should, however, be noted, that the fall in ratio of applications to offers is also an inevitable function of an increase in the number of providers of Tourism in HE. In the last two years we have seen applications rising for the first time since 1995, but this could be a result of UCAS's new method of classifying/grouping subjects, i.e. P7 'Tourism' has been replaced by N8 Tourism, Travel and Transport.

Again we do not need to revisit the whole issue of just how many institutions were offering Tourism in the 1990s boom, (see Guideline Number 7) but suffice to say that in 2003-04 there were 56 higher education institutions offering undergraduate Tourism programmes. We should remember that undergraduate students are our bread and butter: there is a tendency to focus on the issue of research, the RAE and how that has affected our morale, but we should not forget that for the majority of the Tourism academic community, whether or not we have students to teach, is actually the most important feature of our day-to-day lives. Having dealt with the 'volume' issue, we now need to look at value from the point of view of the student and employer, and value from the government's perspective, in other words, quality!

Benchmarking

If anything was going to focus the minds of the Tourism academic community, at least in the consultation stages of Subject Benchmarking in 2000, it was the perhaps then misguided perception that we were going to be 'told what to teach'. As a result, the NLG's annual conference held at Luton in December 1999 was the best attended to date, and such attendance levels have not been achieved since, even with Subject Review the year after Benchmarking and the 2001 RAE.

This does give a clear indication that the issue of benchmarks and curriculum design is something that really mattered to our subject community and it also has resulted in another of the successful Guideline series, No 9, in which Botterill and Tribe (2000) described

the arrival of a 'Tourism Curriculum' via benchmarks as a 'landmark occasion'. They considered 3 issues (1) how has the curriculum developed without the 'officialdom' of benchmarks; (2) what has been developed and (3) the likely impacts of benchmarking once developed. So have some of weaknesses that might have resulted from introducing benchmarks when curricula are already up and running highlighted in Guideline No 9 come to fruition?

- Departments trying to 'teach benchmarks' as definitive curriculum statements rather than as true guidelines /minimum curriculum coverage. Through vehicles such as NLG, it was made clear that the benchmarks should be viewed as broad statements of what a student should be able to do, rather than courses they should study.
- Restriction/closure of certain aspects of curriculum, which do not 'fit', therefore limiting spontaneity /creativity /differentness/curbing of curriculum dynamism as the tourism degree is homogenised. There is no evidence to support the view that we are no longer being creative and innovative in designing new/exciting courses, because of benchmarks. The Tourism academic community is dynamic by definition, and from research undertaken in the latter part of 1990s and early 2000s (Stuart, 2002), one of the key distinguishing features of our community is one that thrives on offering something 'different' from the norm. Most of us would not be in it if that was not the case. Knowledge is still growing and being developed within Tourism thanks to this ethos, mainly due to the fact that the benchmarks were written to allow academics to work within them, rather than to be a slave to them.

Where do we stand today vis a vis benchmarks and how do they affect our profession? Most contact with them is experienced when validating or revalidating Tourism programmes in terms of mapping course aims, objectives and learning outcomes which shows that we are aware of them and we work to encompass them in our often much wider ranging curricula.

What the benchmarking exercise really served to do was to confirm that we were operating programmes that broadly already had a minimum core curriculum (the key focus of NLG debate in its early

years) because we took the consultation seriously and we had an element of control over what the benchmarks would include. However, we still felt we were being squeezed to standardize. We know now that benchmarks have not hindered our practice of developing new programmes, rather they have set down what we would reasonably expect a graduate of Tourism to be able to know, so at least they can regard themselves as comparable to another Tourism graduate in an increasingly competitive graduate job market.

Subject Review

Just as the academics were beginning to come to terms with benchmarks and everything that they believed at the time they would mean for our subject community, they were also starting to grapple with the concept of Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) or latterly Subject Review. Between 2000 and 2002 nearly all centres experienced the four day visit by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) peer reviewers, mostly fellow tourism academics from other institutions, which really only represented the very tip of the iceberg when it comes to the whole subject review preparation process. Calling Subject Review or Benchmarking ‘incidents’ does in fact underplay the amount of time which was dedicated to these very long processes. Very much a document driven review (and this has implications for the Tourism curriculum and what we are really teaching) those five key fields were etched on our brains for months to come and remain there today. “Quality Management and Enhancement” (QME) was perhaps the one to cause the most consternation, or so many of us thought in the early hours, when trying to make head or tail of our cohort monitoring data. Just how did Tourism fair in this prolonged process, and what has it meant for our academic community since? How many times in that period of review did tourism lecturers actually have that discussion about how many points we scored out of 24, and about the fact that ‘the university systems lost us the points, not us’.

If we look at the QAA’s Subject Overview Report for Hospitality, Leisure, Recreation, Sport and Tourism, these statements found in the summary typify the nature and quality of Tourism in HE:

- The subjects are relatively young
- 61 Higher Education Institutions fared better (in grades awarded) than the 48 Further Education Institutions
- Highest average grades achieved in “Student Support and Guidance” and “Learning Resources”
- Lowest average grades achieved in “Teaching and Assessment” and “Quality Management and Enhancement”
- Curricula are multidisciplinary, flexible and coherent with impressive links to industry and the professions
- Strong external influences evident in curriculum design and content
- A general need highlighted to strengthen staff research and scholarly activity in support of the subjects-in support of research-teaching link and knowledge transfer
- Strong local recruitment profile emerging
- Assessment approaches/methods praised, but some weaknesses in learning outcomes, marking and written feedback
- Demand for programmes remains buoyant
- Quality of teaching seen to be high
- Excellent rapport noted between students and staff
- Strong “Learning Resources”–grade 4 for 88% of institutions
- Well-developed institutional quality systems were in place, but not always applied consistently at subject level.

For most, Subject Review was regarded, rightly or wrongly, as a necessary evil that took up a huge amount of time in the planning stages (up to a year before the visit). The effects were far reaching at institutional and departmental level as every member of staff, academic and support, had a role to play in the planning and execution of the visit. Many colleagues felt a sense of anti-climax once visits were over, and were not convinced that their institution took the necessary steps to offer staff an opportunity to review the result.

Were there benefits from the Subject Review exercise for our subject? Given the evidence in the overview report, many of the conclusions drawn are well-known factors to us. Did the process help us in any way in terms of how the curriculum may be developed and managed in the future? This is a subject that is revisited later.

Now of course we are all looking forward to Institutional Audit and 'the lighter touch'. For those of us who have already seen the new Institutional Audit Handbook, all 36 pages of it, we maintain a scepticism about the lightness of the touch. But this is a challenge for our subject community to consider perhaps, in the not so distant future.

Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)

It is fair to say that research and the RAE has taken up a considerable amount of ATHE's time over the last few years, not least due to concerns for our subject's 'treatment'. The volume of research taking place within Tourism has increased significantly over the last ten years, seen in the number of Tourism journal titles and PhD completions. This should be a time for optimism, but the RAE exercises of 1996 and 2001 have impacted on Tourism primarily on the issue of 'visibility' and 'credibility'. Both the NLG and ATHE voiced their concerns, on behalf of the Tourism academic community, about the apparent 'invisibility' of Tourism research because of the way in which Tourism found its way into 7 different Units of Assessment (UoA) in 2001. In November of 2002 last year ATHE responded to the Joint Funding Body's Review of Research Assessment. In addition to this Botterill and Haven (2002) carried out an extensive review of the 'visibility' of Tourism in the 2001 RAE, resulting in Guideline number 11 and concluded that the fact that 354 outputs were submitted by 146 staff across 7 Units of Assessment accentuated the 'invisibility' of tourism; this lack of visibility reflects the relatively low status of tourism as a subject but as Botterill and Haven (2002) note, is in opposition to the key role which tourism has to play in the economy. In ATHE's response to the Joint Funding Bodies' Review of Research Assessment it highlighted concerns also about the appropriateness of the Tourism 'experts' on the review panels.

Reducing allocations of funding to Tourism through any RAE or its equivalent in future are likely. We see ourselves in this relatively 'hostile environment' for research in Tourism, despite the undoubted commitment and will to carry out and publish research by the Tourism academic community itself. Only a single UoA for Tourism would increase the visibility of the subject and thus, its perceived status, but

this is an unlikely development. However, if we as a subject community do not continue to debate the issue of the subjects' visibility and campaign for its status as a single UoA, then it is more likely than not that visibility will fade even further behind Business Studies, Sports Studies etc. The government's White Paper did not offer our subject community any particular hope either, and again, ATHE responded to its key concerns about research within the paper.

At the NLGs joint conference with CHME in December 2000, John Rogers, RAE Manager at QAA stated that the RAE is "responsive to emerging and new disciplines and where combinations of disciplines are judged to have given rise to a new discipline which has reached maturity, then consideration should be given to creating a new unit of assessment". Tourism does not see itself as a discipline in its own right, nor does it feel the need to strive for disciplinary status. However, if that is what it would take for it to be awarded its own UoA, then we might need to reconsider our thoughts on this.

Most tourism academics will have a personal and an institutional view on our ability and even willingness to engage in Research (with capital 'R') when there is sometimes so little return. What we have not perhaps all considered are the implications more broadly for Tourism in the broader sense if the subject continues to be subsumed under other, recognised 'disciplines'. Whatever the tensions have been in the last few years, there is no doubt that the nature of our subject community is to remain committed to continuing with research.

New Vocational 'incidents' and their impact upon Tourism

If we revisit Trowler's model indicating the various responses that academics might have to change, our community, despite the system-wide incidents, is a relatively contented one, taking on board change and probably working around it to make sure it 'swims' and 'copes'. There certainly is a sense that we are not 'sinking' by any means, as the majority of tourism academics find a considerable sense of satisfaction in their work, whether it is through teaching subjects about which we are passionate, through research and/or consultancy or a combination of all of these.

Individuals' involvement in and commitment to Tourism

However much movement there is within the Tourism academic community (and we have been concerned to see not just individuals fleeing our shores, but whole academic teams, in search of a better quality of teaching and research life), the last ten years or so have been characterised by the existence of tourism academics who have been committed to both teaching on a wide range of courses at the same time and where possible, to ensuring that their teaching is fed by research activity where appropriate. Although this trend might not be unique to the delivery of Tourism, it would appear that it has become the norm for lecturers to teach, in many cases, four or five courses simultaneously, even if some courses were linked only indirectly to what they would regard as their specialist subjects. There has also been a tendency for most lecturers to teach subjects/courses which are outside what they perceive to be their specialisms in addition to their specialist courses, it is also likely that first year 'introductory' courses have been taught without the influence of research findings, which according to Smeby (1998) is a common occurrence where lecturers have been required to teach across different levels, undergraduate and postgraduate.

Despite the perceived constraints surrounding the delivery of programmes (the 'system-wide' influences) tourism academics accept without a great deal of opposition the fact that they are required to teach across a range of courses and levels and some may even enjoy the variety that such a situation implies. In addition, they are keen to see their research influence teaching as quickly after completion, and as often as possible, a fact which has to be regarded as a significant achievement bearing in mind the importance of the time dimension in the changing nature of the relationship between research and teaching as clarified by Brew (1999). She emphasised the need for a significant amount of time to elapse before the impact of research can be felt in the context of teaching. As a young and growing subject the influence of Tourism research has been almost immediate.

Research has indicated that there has been a tendency for many tourism academics to prioritise actual teaching and course development over programme planning meetings- this is a reflection of Tourism lecturers' concern for the content of their teaching,

although it could be argued that quality and appropriateness of content can only be maintained if discussions are held between programme teams. This reticence to get involved in programme planning could reflect a perception that individual lecturers have little influence in course planning, or it may be that they find the process boring and irrelevant. Let's face it; the bureaucratic aspects of programme planning and validation events are not things that have attracted staff into the profession. Furthermore, their experience to date, has suggested that they will be able to continue 'doing their own thing' concerning teaching Tourism, no matter what is stated in various documentation- thus the concept of a two-faced curriculum, as evidenced in the author's PhD research (Stuart, 2002).

This is arguably one of the most significant developments regarding the Tourism curriculum as it reveals a curriculum which has 'two faces', that which is present in documentation and promotional material, and that which is actually being delivered by the Tourism academic community. While research in the late 1990s on which this draws (Stuart, 2002) could not claim to be representative of all Schools and Departments offering Tourism, it can be taken as an indication as to what might have been occurring in other institutions. Add to this the fact that Institutional Audits will place little or no emphasis on what is going on in lecture theatres or seminar rooms, then our real curriculum may never see the light of day. On a final note, lecturers might not get too involved in curriculum development and planning as they may feel that the curriculum is sufficiently developed already.

However, the trend that has emerged for lecturers to concentrate their efforts on course rather than programme development, could have implications for the subject's wider development as a cohesive curriculum, particularly if tensions emerge between those lecturers who do get involved in programme development and those who effectively choose to ignore it. The future of the curriculum will be a critical issue for us to address in the next few years as the 'curriculum' is now being delivered from GCSE level right through to postgraduate level; ten years ago this was not the case.

One more time - disciplinary status and respectability

The second 'new vocational subject' characteristic that has had a significant impact upon Tourism in the last ten years has been the continuing saga of Tourism's identity or 'status' in the broader context of what constitutes something worthy of study and research in higher education. For more than ten years the debates amongst our colleagues around the world about 'disciplinary status' have not so much raged, as rumbled, and occasionally erupting as the now well rehearsed arguments for and against striving for disciplinary status are reconsidered. Tourism has probably had a harder time than some other subjects in the past regarding this debate, for example Sociology and Business Studies, because of the overt/explicit link to a named industry or profession. There is no doubt that the recurring debate about status has influenced the nature of Tourism, in terms of what we research, what we teach (avoidance of overtly vocational/non-academic courses) and the extent to which tourism academics find themselves 'on the defensive'. There is plenty of the evidence that we as an academic community can present 'in defence' of Tourism's respectability and seriousness as an academic subject, (number of journals, PhD completions, research activity), but equally we do need to be wary of striving for disciplinary status, when it would be better and wiser to accentuate Tourism's respectability and status because it is not a discipline, but a subject which has the breadth and power to draw from other established disciplines in a multidisciplinary manner. Tourism's attractiveness from a research and a teaching perspective is its ability to capitalise on so many disciplines. It is perhaps this characteristic, however, that has been its downfall from an RAE point of view.

So we do tend to be very defensive about our Tourism, to the extent that we find ourselves defending our 'own patches of intellectual ground' (Becher, 1994:24) in our attempts to ensure some level of influence over who is recruited from outside of Tourism to deliver courses which contribute towards Tourism degree programmes. Concerns about contextualisation have become commonplace at HE level. We now need to consider what is happening at school and FE level with Tourism. Just who is teaching it? Are teachers comfortable teaching a subject for which they might not be appropriately qualified?

However, it is possible that the trend for Tourism lecturers to pursue and gain higher degrees and PhDs in Tourism, may purely be a reflection of departmental or institutional pressure to ‘get qualified’ for quality assessment purposes; alternatively it may also be for purely selfish motives to develop a career and gain promotion (and leave the country), or to counter feelings associated with the subject’s low status. How many lecturers pursue higher degrees in Tourism purely because they are interested in their subject?

In accordance with Becher’s work of 1994 Tourism might be more appropriately labelled a ‘subdisciplinary specialism’ than a discipline in its own right, and this has been reflected the views of the Tourism academic community who remain for the most part, opposed to the idea of a Tourism ‘discipline’.

The last ten years have seen mixed reactions from the Tourism academic community to genuine and consistent involvement with the tourism industry in terms of programme design, delivery and research needs. The author’s research (Stuart, 2002) certainly pointed to a view that although the academic community has always recognised the value of industry involvement in the planning, design and delivery of the Tourism curriculum, logistical barriers and a fear that ‘industry links’ pose a threat to the perceived academic respectability of Tourism have kept that involvement to a minimum. If the latter perception is to change then perhaps the nature of the links between the industry and the academic community may need to be addressed. This could mean forging more long-term links between institutions and tourism organisations that are mutually beneficial. This would imply more than just a seat on a validation panel or the occasional student for work experience. In the last two years the Department of Sport Science, Tourism and Leisure at Canterbury Christ Church University College has tried to take this on board in developing the Kent Tourism Academy with Kent County Council, a formalisation of links between HEIs and FEIs delivering Tourism in East Kent and the region’s key tourism employers, in the interest of improving the range and quality of tourism training and education.

Conclusions

Tourism is still a young subject experiencing continual change with regard to its purpose and nature in HE, yet in spite of this youth, the extent to which research has been feeding teaching is extensive, a feature of the subject's development which could signify the beginnings of a growing respect for subject. A key implication of its youth is the continuing saga of gaining respect and 'status' for a subject. It may be that the respectability and status will come as soon as the Tourism academic community itself becomes more content with, and confident in, its subject and methods of delivery, rather than focusing on a rather negative stance of 'we deserve more respect'. Academics seeking to see subjects develop in HE might need to recognise the reality of time scales. Subjects do not necessarily become 'accepted' by the wider academic community overnight, due to the fact that there are a number of influential factors which cannot be controlled by the academic community concerned.

The development of Tourism Studies can be progressed through the creation of new programmes and through the revalidation and updating of existing provision. In the case of Tourism in HE, the reticence some of lecturers to become involved in these processes as a committed 'community' could be regarded as a lost opportunity to 'take control' of their subject. To prioritise teaching and research as key factors contributing to a subject's development is laudable. However, this approach does reflect the lack of strategic view and therefore naivety, on the part of some members of that academic community, with regard to the way in which the curriculum could be managed and the programmes as a whole focused or re-focused to reflect student and industry needs and the research interests of the teaching team.

Despite the fact that Tourism is now developing its own concepts and theories (albeit drawing from a number of disciplines) and could be described as entering a phase of consolidation, there is a sense that greater commitment as an academic community working together towards shared goals for the subject's future could have accelerated the development process. The system-wide critical incidents that have influenced the development of Tourism as a subject in HE, have to an extent, actually been controlled by our subject community, e.g. benchmarks. However, the RAE is one external incident (or two

incidents) that our community could not influence, other than to react to the most recent Exercise and hope that ATHE's views are borne in mind prior to the next Exercise. It is possible to speculate that an academic community that works closely together and is willing to put aside personal agenda on occasions, might be more effective in taking control of its subject's development. Will the Tourism academic community be willing and able to do this, or will we as individuals become so consumed with institutional agendas and pressures, that we are unable to take a step back and look at Tourism more broadly and its future?

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