Aalborg Universitet

Teaching Tourism Change Agents

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Published in:
Innovative Practice in Higher Education

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Publication date:
2017

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Link to publication from Aalborg University

Citation for published version (APA):
Stilling Blichfeldt, B., Kvistgaard, H.-P., & Hird, J. (2017). Teaching Tourism Change Agents. *Innovative Practice in Higher Education*, *3*(1), 48-64 . Article 1. http://journals.staffs.ac.uk/index.php/ipihe/article/view/107/215

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Teaching Tourism Change Agents

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Abstract

This article discusses knowledge, competencies and skills Master's students should obtain during their academic studies and particularly, the differences between teaching about a topic and teaching to do. This is exemplified by experiential learning theory and the case of a change management course that is part of a Tourism Master's program, where a major challenge is not only to teach students about change and change agents, but to teach them how change feels and how to become change agents. The change management course contains an experiment inspired by experiential teaching literature and methods. The experiment seeks to make students not only hear/learn about change agency and management, but to make them feel change, hereby enabling them to develop the skills and competencies necessary for them to take on the role as change agents and thus enable them to play key roles in implementing change in tourism in the future.

Keywords

Tourism, change management, experiment, impact, innovation

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Introduction

Bird (2011, p. 3) reminds us that "the affective is always present within higher education" – even though higher education tends to emphasize knowledge, cognition and rationality. Based on one of the authors' class-room innovations that seeks to make students *feel*, rather than only think about, or rationalize, change, this article presents and discusses the teachers' reflective accounts of this innovative practice, including reflections on students' feedback and perceptions of the innovative practice, thereby hopefully inspiring others to let more affective elements become an integral and more natural part of what goes on in the classroom.

The three authors teach at the tourism Master's program at Aalborg University in Denmark. Ties between tourism, entrepreneurship and innovation are strong and tourism is often seen as a force that drives innovation and change. For example, Kanter (1983) argues that adaptive and change-related competencies are decisive for the implementation of innovative ideas. Also, Hall & Williams (2008:4) write that "tourism is not only the passive recipient of innovations originating from elsewhere in the economy, but it is also a powerful driver of innovations" and both the quantity and quality of research publications dedicated to tourism as a driver of change are noteworthy. Consequently, innovation is a key component in driving tourism on both the supply and the demand side. Unfortunately, very little research is dedicated to the issue of how to teach tourism students to work with change and change management and thereby teaching students of tourism to actually be innovative. This is a problem as universities are often portrayed as significant generators of education and research in tourism (Ren et al., 2013; Prats et al., 2008) and thus, people with a university degree in tourism should be able to facilitate innovation and change within the tourism industry. However, not much research addresses how universities could, or should, ensure that graduates are truly able to take on the role of change agents (Grieves, 2010) within, for example, the tourism industry.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss and exemplify how experiential learning practices can be used actively to teach (tourism) students about change, change agency and change management. Experiential learning is applied in order to try to learn students not only *about* change agency and management, but to develop the skills and competencies that are necessary in order to take on the role as change agents that can play a key role in implementing change (Grieves, 2010). Although the case presented is from a tourism program, the experiential learning practices introduced will hopefully also be relevant for other Master's programs where students

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need to understand and develop competencies and skills relating to innovation, change and change management.

Literature review

Tourism is a recipient of change and also a cause of change and when new tourism products are launched they have an impact on someone in a tourism destination, e.g. the local population, tourism actors and/or tourists. As a result, change management in a tourism context cannot be taught without taking into account that change happens to someone. Consequently, a tourism change agent cannot be detached from his/her own feelings, as such detachment will render him/her unable to understand both change and resistance to change (Grieves, 2010; Mills, Dye and Mills, 2009; Kotter, 1996). Based on these fundamental ideas, this paper examines how Master's programs can include experiential learning practices in courses that should teach students to become change agents, who are in contact with their own feelings and have first-hand experiences with their own feelings and potential resistance to change. As such, change and resistance to change are not seen as 'bad', the important issue is for students to understand change, resistance to change and the reasons behind such resistance; an understanding that cannot be reached by only learning *about* change and change management.

In 1999 and 2004, Russell and Faulkner published two articles on tourism development. By looking at entrepreneurship and innovation through two cases, they tried to explain why some places change and develop and other places do not. One interesting point is that they identified two overarching mind-sets: *Chaos Makers* and *Regulators*. Chaos makers are individualistic, flexible, innovative, experimental, intuitive, risk-taking and work within discontinuity, whereas regulators are risk-aversive, rational, controlling, planning, rigid, consensus seeking, and work within continuity (Russell & Faulkner, 1999). If Russell and Faulkner's (1999, 2004) findings generalize across touristic places, higher tourism education should emphasize both of these mind-sets and should prepare the students for careers in tourism that both entail chaos making and regulation. Often, higher education and educational programs are criticized for being specialized "in the supply of a vocationally skilled workforce rather than developing innovative solutions" (Ren et. al., 2013, 2). Students are products of their cultural and educational environment and they are "conditioned over time to react in certain ways to given situations" (Chapman, McPhee and Proudman, 1995:244) and this means that students being taught to be

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rational, controlling, planning, managing and relying on vocational skills will have difficulties in change situations where flexibility as well as innovative, experimental and intuitive skills are needed. However, experiential learning practices can help universities to be(come) relevant for students as they facilitate not only knowledge and understanding about topics such as change, but also help providing students with the competencies and skills necessary to actually make changes when they make the transition into the workforce.

Argyris (1991) discusses the difficulties that arise when trying to teach 'smart people how to learn'. It can be quite difficult to teach smart people to work with change as they seem to be 'tightly locked-in' (Russell & Faulkner 2004:559) as 1) they learn as they have always learned and have been taught to learn and 2) they rarely ask questions about their own learning skills. Referring to Lewin's three level model of Force Field Analysis, Grieves (2010) argues that 'smart' students have difficulties changing their attitudes, habits, values etc. and 'unfreezing' the present-stage so that they can actually learn to change and thereby 'refreeze' new levels of understanding. In his words, they may understand the model, but they have difficulties in transforming the model to something that they can relate to; something that has a direct impact on their own lives. Mills, Dye and Mills (2009:9) argue that "it is not so much the scale of the change that is important but the extent to which its impact is felt". Furthermore, it relates to the affective element being critical when teaching and learning about change. Change is more than anything something that someone *feels* as it is more than a rational, logic process that can be controlled, managed and implemented.

Lewis and Williams (1994:5) define experiential learning as learning from experience or learning by doing and argue that "experiential education first immerses learners in an experience and then encourages reflection about the experience to develop new skills, new attitudes, or new ways of thinking". As such, experiential learning is about applying knowledge to experience and to reflective practices leading to the development of not only new ways of *thinking,* but also to new ways of *feeling.* This means that outcomes of experiential learning processes are varied and often unpredictable as "learners play a critical role in assessing their own learning" (Wurdinger, 2005:69). In regard to teaching students not only about change, but to enable them to be chaos makers and understand their own feelings about (and potential resistance to) change, experiential learning practices seem to have much to offer as experiential learners are in control of their own voice, meaning that they can identify the role of feelings and emotions in their learning and are able to reflect on how they acquire new knowledge (Moon, 2004). Both experiential and problem-

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based learning emphasize learning practices that are situated outside traditional classroom lectures. However, small-scale experiential learning taking place within the classroom is an under-investigated dimension that can also help students learn to understand the roles feelings and emotions play in their learning. Although classroom-based experiential learning can take many different forms it is imperative that the set-up allows for both primary experiences (i.e. the experiential experiences themselves) and secondary experiences (i.e. reflections on the primary experiences).

Chapman, McPhee and Proudman (1995) point to experiential learning activities having to be personally relevant to students; allowing students to make connections between their learning and the world; allowing students to reflect on their own learning and gain insight into themselves and their interactions with the world; creating emotional investment by students being fully immersed in the experience; learning outside their comfort zones and re-examining values. Especially the re-examination of values is imperative as it is only when working in a space that is seen as safe for self-exploration that "students can begin to analyze and even alter their own values" (p. 243). However, in order for students to engage in the reflections and re-examination of own values that are imperative for learning, the classroom must qualify as a safe environment and the teacher (or instructor) must support the students not only during the primary experience, but also while they engage in secondary experiences and reflect on their primary experiences (Moon, 2004).

Given that university students (or, as discussed in the next section, at least the ones enrolled in the program that is the case setting for this piece of research) are predominantly taught and trained to be regulators (i.e. to be rational, controlling, planning and managing thinkers), this research addresses students' attitudes towards being put in a situation where flexible, innovative, experimental, intuitive and risk-taking skills and competencies are needed. Furthermore, the research discusses how classroom experiential learning practices help students 'unfreeze' their understanding of change as something to be implemented and managed. In doing so, the research addresses the following questions:

(1) What are the varied outcomes for the students subjected to the experiment?
(2) Can students identify the roles that feelings and emotions play in their learning?
(3) Does the experiment give students insight into themselves and does it make them analyze, potentially alter, their own values?
(4) Does the experiment allow students to learn outside their comfort zone while still making the classroom a 'safe environment'?
(5) Does the set-up facilitate both primary experience (i.e. the experiential

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experience itself) and secondary experiences (i.e. reflections on the primary experiences)?

Backgroumd and case description

This section contains a description of the Master's program, the course/module and the specific in-class experiment that we use to exemplify and discuss how change and change management might be included in university curricula, modules, courses and teaching practices.

Aalborg University is firmly rooted in the PBL (problem based learning) tradition, which the university has used since its start in 1974. PBL is predominantly used when students do larger independent projects (equivalent to 10 to 30 ECTS) and to a lesser extent used directly as part of e.g. 5 ECTS courses that students do before doing the larger projects. However, as courses should also be anchored in PBL practices, this research addresses inclusion of experiential learning in the part of programs dedicated to more traditional courses. This paper focuses on one module of Aalborg University's Master's program in tourism; a change management course. The course is about managing for change (Page, 2007) and the curriculum explicates that content and learning outcomes of the course are grounded in the 'Dublin descriptors' that define learning as comprised of knowledge/understanding, competencies and skills. As for *knowledge* and *understanding,* students should acquire and demonstrate this in regard to different theoretical perspectives on change agency and change management and in regard to different forms of internal and external communication during change processes. Furthermore, students should acquire and demonstrate *skills* in selecting, describing and applying conceptual and methodological tools for analysis of change and producing focused analyses of initiatives relating to change management. Finally, students should acquire and demonstrate *competencies* in outlining options for change management through an understanding of specific cases and problems as well as in discussing and reflecting on change management on a scientific level.

As pointed to by the curriculum and application of the Dublin descriptors herein, the course description is rooted in an academic rationality, according to which learning outcomes are assessed on the basis of measurable competencies, skills and knowledge/understanding. As a result, change is defined as something that can be taught and learned through traditional lectures with or without student feedback. Nevertheless, the course is also based on the rationality that change has an affective side and is about feelings; it is about understanding one's own feelings in order to

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fully comprehend how a planned or unplanned change might affect a person or group of persons (be it chaos makers or regulators). Therefore, a critical question is how to teach change so that students both meet theoretical/academic requirements *and* are prepared for 'real-life' changes that await them when they join the tourism sector and are expected to be creative and innovative. Therefore, the course should also enable students to understand the roles emotions and feelings play, their own values and facilitate secondary experiences in the form of reflections on own learning.

The purpose of the article is to account for students' enactments of and reactions to an experiment that is an integral part of the change management course and which centers around the students' feelings towards and experiences in a situation, in which traditional teaching is substituted by a radically different, unexpected and unfamiliar situation. In practice, the experiment entails the teacher entering the room for a session (the fourth out of eight sessions) that the students *think* is going to be a rather traditional lecture – just as the three preceding lectures. Five minutes into the session, the teacher gets a message (or call) on his phone and then tells the students that, due to a special situation (a strike or other believable reasons), he cannot teach the class. However, due to rules and regulations he has to stay in the room and then he sits down in a corner of the room and does nothing (or starts checking his emails), leaving it up to the students to take action (or not).

Methodology

The study is based on observations of how students handle the unexpected situation (where a teacher does not take control of the learning situation) as well as the students' accounts of their perceptions of, and reflections on, the experiment (including the debriefing, during which the experiment's theoretical underpinnings were discussed in class). Furthermore, both quantitative and qualitative research was done with the students after completion of the course.

In practice, 54 students from 14 different countries were subjected to the experiment between 2012 and 2015. The students were in their twenties or early thirties – most of them around 25 years old and 43 were female. Both during debriefing and after the course was completed, they were asked a series of both quantitative and qualitative questions about the experiment and in the findings section we account for key themes that emerged across the 54 students. The debriefing that took place immediately after the experiment was completed was rather unstructured and flexible, whereas the survey completed later was more

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structured – including both theoretically grounded closed questions and open-ended questions allowing students to qualitatively account for their feelings, emotions and reactions. In the questionnaire, students were both asked about their initial affective response to the exercise and about their revised reaction after the debriefing. There were 10 possible responses that were inspired by Kübler-Ross' five stages of dealing with personal crisis (in Grieves, 2010): Denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. The Kübler-Ross model was used as a frame as change is "...perceived as emotional rather than simply a failure of people to recognize rational economic man embodied in the view of dysfunctional employees" (Grieves, 2010:367). Kübler-Ross' stage 'depression' was changed to 'frustration', as the word depression was deemed too strong a word for a classroom experiment. Five more positive categories were added based on conversations with students after a pilot test of the experiment and the questionnaire (see figure 1). Students could therefore tick-off the following answers:

2. Your initial dominating reaction to the exercise. Please tick off only one reaction.

En-gaged	Angry	Bar-gaining	Panic	Accep-tance	Shock	Frustra tion	Sur-prise	Glad	Denial

Figure 1: Dominating reaction

Apart from the question inspired by Kübler-Ross' work, students were asked about their preferred teaching style and whether they would recommend that the experiment was conducted in future. All closed questions were accompanied by open-ended questions asking students to elaborate on their answers and most students added qualitative comments to their answers of the closed questions. The experiment took place in a classroom at Aalborg University. A few students suggested that the experiment should be moved outside the university classroom to make it more realistic. Nonetheless, most students experienced the situation as a surprise/change; probably because the experiment takes place in the middle of the course period where the students are relaxed and comfortable with what (they think) they know is going to happen during a lesson; i.e. that the teacher comes in, says hello, goes on with setting up the iPad/computer, and then starts teaching and introducing themes and issues before asking students to be active - 'business as usual', so to speak. However, something else than the 'safe' and comfortable 'business as usual' happens; something unexpected that students are not prepared for and that demands their attention and mental flexibility.

The survey was anonymous and it was made very clear to the students that the survey, as well as their comments during debriefing, had no bearing on the

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assessment/grading of their course work and that the survey would be used both for research purposes and as a tool to refine/improve the experiment. In regard to these issues it should be mentioned that the students were adults and that the study was done in a national context allowing for research uses of data collected this way.

Findings

In general, students' initial responses during de-briefing showed that the experiment was perceived as unexpected, or, in the words of two of the students:

"We were totally not prepared for it, so I would say it was a shocking and good experience for us."(Student, 2012)

"I never expected a teacher to come to class and not teach and staying in the room sitting back in the corner! I guess I should be more open and ready for change, any change. I shouldn't just be surprised, shocked and freeze, but just go along with it and try to find solutions and what I can do with that change." (Student, 2013)

Grieves (2010:395) argues that the term change agent is "occasionally used loosely to describe stimulus for change; more often to refer to an individual given a key role in implementing change". However, during the experiment, students are not asked to take any action or to take responsibility of the situation, but are left in a situation where a person normally taking charge is doing nothing. Although students are not asked to 'do anything', some students do take action and the experiment shows that students take on different roles when subjected to the unexpected situation: Some students take on the role as change agents, whereas others take on more passive roles. Furthermore, when discussing the experiment with students afterwards, students expressed a wide range of feelings towards the unexpected situation (including anger, panic, happiness, surprise etc.) and pointed to the fact that the experiment made them far better understand both how they themselves react to change, which mechanisms are at work in a change situation and how other people react in such situations. As it can be seen from Figure 1, most students were initially engaged, glad, surprised and accepted the new situation. However, a significant number of students were frustrated, some started to bargain and some werein denial. Finally, a few students were in some sort of shock about the whole situation and voiced their feelings of shock as follows:

"So I got frustrated and a bit irritated, because I did not know what to do, and it was unexpected." (Student, 2013)

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"I reacted in this way [shock] *because it was something new and different for me. I can turn this reaction into a strength and use it as tool to develop my personal skills." (Student, 2012)*

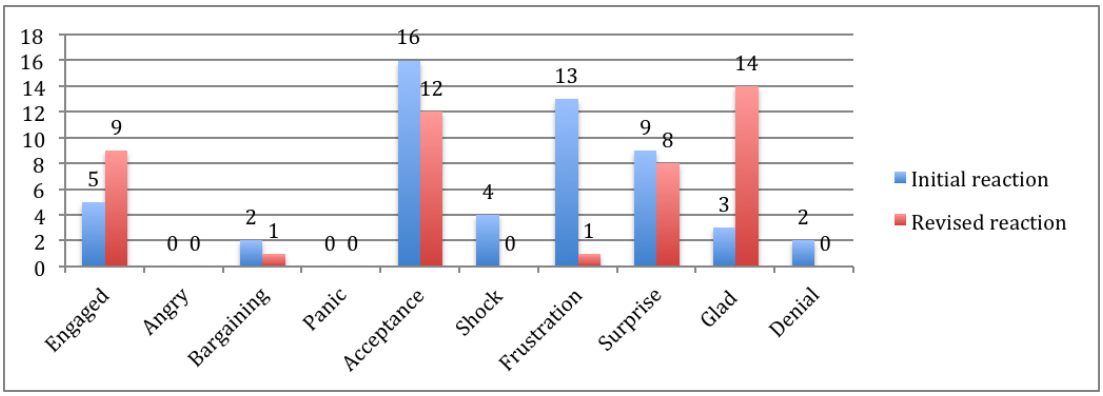

Figure 2: Spread of student answers on initial and revised reaction.

Figure 2 shows both the students' initial and revised reactions after the teacher debriefed them about the experiment and the whole situation was discussed. The frustrated students changed their positions to engaged, acceptance, surprise and glad and there is a clear connection between initial frustration and subsequently being 'glad' in the answers and only a few students were still bargaining or frustrated.

Another interesting aspect is that some students take charge of the class and start doing 'something' although this has taken different forms over the four years where the experiment has been done. In two cases, some of the students reacted by taking action and taking over teaching responsibilities. In one of these cases, the students started to discuss different topics related to the course materials and readings as two students took turns and orchestrated the teaching and the other students accepted this change of authority. In the other of these two cases, where students took action, the students hesitated for a long time until four students got up and took charge by showing video clips about change. At the de-briefing, the teacher asked the group why they took action and they replied that they felt that 'someone' had to do 'something'. The fact that these four students took charge, made two other students angry and frustrated as 'nobody had given the four students this kind of authority', or, as they voiced this:

"I was angry and frustrated, because I felt, that I needed do act – to do something! But I didn't… Instead I waited for someone else to take action! In some way I felt a

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responsibility to do something, but at the same time I didn't know what to do. " (Student, 2013)

"I was annoyed […] However after a few minutes I tried to accept it. I reacted this way, because I know, that I don't react to change very well. I know that I need to be better at accepting change and I will try to remember this exercise and think about change in a more positive way." (Student, 2012)

In the two cases where students did not take over teaching responsibilities, the teacher stayed passively in the corner waiting for something to happen, but nothing happened. Therefore, after around twenty minutes, the teacher decided that an intervention was needed and this intervention meant taking back authority and establishing a new situation that could facilitate discussions of the whole experiment. As a result, in these two cases the debriefing followed immediately after the period of 'nothingness' whereas in the first two cases debriefing took place after the students had taken charge of teaching for around an hour.

Although the students' experiences of the experiment differed substantially, almost all students felt they had learned something about change and how they react to change. As an example, two students opined:

"I have experienced big changes before in my life and have previously sought out situations that would create a feeling of tension, so for me this was exciting and I definitely embraced the exercise." (Student, 2014)

"Many people are lost when something is not going according to the "normal" path. But tourism works with all kinds of people and things never go as planned. Therefore, it is good to experience such situations already before you start to work and to learn how to cope with it. It prepares you for the reality outside the university". (Student, 2013)

Another (Asian) student referred to her cultural background and how she was brought up to accept everything a teacher told her; arguing that she now realised that her cultural background was the reason why she did not do anything, but waited for others to do something. She furthermore argued that:

"When I realized, at the end, that this was an experiment, I regret a little bit that I haven't been proactive toward the situation. I have learned from this experiment. (Student, 2015)

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Across the survey, discussions during debriefing and responses in the classroom during the experiment, it is interesting that none of the students drew in the knowledge and understanding of change, change agency and change management they had acquired during the first three lessons in order to comprehend and understand the experiential situation. On the contrary, it seemed like they had forgotten all about theory while they were subjected to the experiment. The students did not relate the unexpected situation to the theories they had read and discussed during the first three classes. This points not only to teachers having to pay more attention to students having problems relating theories on change, change agency and change management to an actual change situation, but also to the fundamental gap between learning *about* change and learning *by doing* and *experiencing* change. In our case, theory 'staid theory' and was not applied to the situation at hand and it was only when the teacher introduced 'the missing link' between theory and the experiment that students started to make the connection. This it rather problematic as students who cannot make the connection between theory and the class-room experiment, might have even more difficulties actually applying and using their knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies in relation to change years later, when they experience change in different 'real life' situations after they have graduated and work in the tourism sector. Nevertheless, the students that were able to make the connection between theory and the experiment also pointed to how the experiment would be of value after they graduate, or as one student opined:

"I think my reaction was surprise rather than panic, frustration or shock since I am used to a changing environment and quick adaptation to situations. This lecture gave a good practical insight into how differently people may perceive situations when they are not prepared for certain changes: A very positive way of bringing the theoretical 'change' into practice!"(Student, 2012)

A question on preferred teaching styles was included to see whether there was a connection between students' reactions to the experiment and their preferred teaching style. As it can be seen in Figure 3, students could tick-off five teaching styles going from standard lectures with no or little student feedback to experiential teaching. As Aalborg University is firmly rooted in the PBL-tradition and the whole university infrastructure is set up around project work and formal and informal meetings between students and teachers/supervisors, it is not surprising that most students prefer teaching styles with feedback and group work. What is more surprising is that many students stated that they prefer experiential teaching practices and some students state that they find traditional standard lectures with no or little student feedback both boring and counter-productive.

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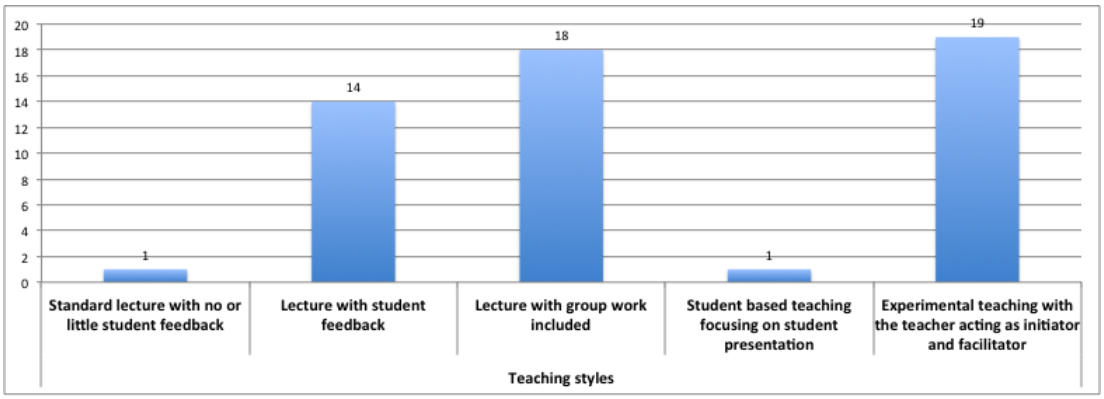

Figure 3: Teaching styles preferred by the students.

There was, however, no positive relationship between students' reactions to the experiment and their preferred teaching styles. Some students that appreciated the experiment preferred lectures with group work whereas others preferred more experiential teaching. Nevertheless, most students profoundly disliked standard lectures with little/no feedback, exemplified by the following comment:

"I'm completely sick of standard lectures where the material is being stuffed in our heads without any feedback while experiential teaching provokes thinking and actually using the brain to cope with a new situation." (Student, 2014)

The students were also asked if they felt that the experiment should be repeated in the future as part of the tourism change management course. Even though "only" 19 of 54 students prefer experiential teaching, 49 of the 54 students recommend that the experiment should be continued in future. The fact that the overwhelming majority of students recommended that the experiment should be an integral part of the course in future while most of them prefer other types of teaching than experiential learning especially relates to two issues. First, it seems that students are not sure what experiential learning is or how close it is to the fundamental principles guiding PBL (which they knew more about). Secondly, the conversations with the students as well as the survey show that many students would not like the entire course to be designed around experiential learning, but preferred that the course both contained a certain amount of 'lecturing' and some 'smaller' experiential elements such as the experiment discussed here.

Discussion and Conclusion

The first two research questions were: *What are the outcomes for the students subjected to the experiment?* and *Can students identify the roles that feelings and*

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emotions play in their learning? In regard to these questions, both the qualitative comments and figure 2 show that students' outcomes were as varied as predicted by Wurdinger (2005) and covered everything from frustration and shock to being 'engaged' or 'glad'. However, it also shows a decrease in variation and a tendency towards reactions becoming more positive after debriefing (i.e. frustrated students changing their positions to engaged, acceptance, surprise and glad). The fact that students did not voice any problems with having to account for both their initial and revised affective reactions furthermore points towards students being able to identify the roles emotions and feelings played during and after the experiment. It does, however, also point to the criticality of proper debriefing after students have been subjected to experiential learning practices as 13/4/2 of the 54 students would have been left with a feeling of frustration/shock/denial, had debriefing not taken place.

As for the fourth research question (i.e. *Does the experiment allow students to learn outside their comfort zone while still making the classroom a 'safe environment'?*), the answer is a bit mixed as many students, at the outset, were definitively feeling outside their comfort zone while the experiment was conducted and felt that the classroom was not a safe environment, where they knew what was going to happen. In their articles from 1999 and 2004 Russell and Faulkner concluded that more successful destinations have a higher number of *chaos makers* than *regulators*. They furthermore convincingly make the case that *chaos makers* are necessary in order for a place to develop and prosper in terms of tourism. The experiment shows that within our four groups of students, there is a group of students that initially responds positively to the experiment. They leave their comfort zones and develop new mindsets concerning the affective element of change and these students might be the future *chaos makers* in tourism, or at least, they are likely to react to change with being engaged or with acceptance. On the other hand, a group of students seems to remain within their comfort zones and are frustrated while they wait for "normal" teaching to begin again. Although it is definitively unfair – taking the students' age and level of experience into account – to label around half the students *regulators*, the experiment does raise the fundamental issue whether courses on issues such as change management prepare students to become the chaos makers that industries such as tourism need. This also relates to the issue that students had severe difficulties relating the experiment to the theories on change and change management that were discussed during the first three classes as theories that students cannot apply to a classroom experiment might be even more difficult to apply to the complex changes they will have to deal with after their graduation when they work with change management in practice.

In regard to the third (i.e. *Does the experiment give students insight into themselves*

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and does it make them analyze, potentially alter, their own values?) and fifth research questions (i.e. *Does the set-up facilitate both primary experience and secondary/reflective experiences?)*, the answer is that the experiment did facilitate both types of experiences and had some effect on students' values. The basic argument for doing the experiment in the first place was that teaching and learning about change processes must be based on hands-on change agent experiences as a change agent cannot 'perform', let alone 'manage', change if he/she has no prior experiences with the emotional effects a change process can have on people. This line of thought goes back to Mills, Dye and Mills' (2009) *sense-making* framework and their argument that organizational change has more to do with 'a sense of situation' than with concrete facts.

The experiment aims to teach students how to work towards becoming change agents that are aware of their own and other people's feelings when working with change situations, competences that are indeed necessary when developing tourism around the world. Although one experiment conducted during a course on change management at the Master's level will definitively not enable students to become change agents and cannot dramatically change the personal skills and traits of the students so that they can become change agents or chaos makers, it does seem that such an experiment can make students better understand the affective dimensions of change. The change management course at Aalborg University, through the mix of lectures with student feedback, group work, student presentations and, not least, experiential teaching elements, does seem to plant a seed that might grow and blossom when the students start to work in real life tourism development situations. Some of the students might even use some of their newfound skills concerning change in order to understand and respect peoples' reactions towards new products, processes, policies etc. Such understanding and respect can bring forward change much faster and smoother than the traditional linear, logical, rational management approaches that are also part of the change management curriculum, or as one student wrote:

"It was an eye-opener on how you react to change (even just a little change) in an unexpected situation, getting out of your 'comfort zone'. It makes you reflect on your way of reacting and reflect on your feelings combined with it." (Student, 2013)

The experiment was originally designed as a response to the need in tourism for change agents and for skilled people who actually know what they are dealing with when working with tourism development as such development has significant consequences - economically, environmentally and socio-culturally. The four groups of students participating in the experiment from 2012 to 2015 have, through their

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ISSN: 2044-3315

reactions, reflections and comments, contributed with new knowledge that can bring about new ways of teaching issues such as change and change management. The students' reactions, reflections and comments have made the teachers involved reflect intensively on what change really 'is', how it can be taught in a classroom setting and what consequences change management teaching can have on the final recipients of the students, namely the tourism industry. The learning process goes both ways, from the teachers to the students and back and luckily, students generally seemed to have a learning experience during the experiment, or as one student argued:

"It was a learning experience that I wouldn't be without." (Student, 2013)

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ISSN: 2044-3315