Pedagogy for sustainable tourism: reflections on the curriculum space of a master programme in Sweden

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Pedagogy for sustainable tourism: reflections on the curriculum space of a master programme in Sweden

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ABSTRACT
Tourism education has matured from vocational to more liberal education while current trends underline the importance of critical studies and the shift of curricula to more action-oriented forms of education and citizenship education. However, a gap can be noticed between theory and practice in the development of pedagogy for sustainable tourism. The research reported here draws from debates in tourism education, education for sustainability, critical studies, and education for citizenship to develop a conceptual framework for pedagogy for sustainable tourism. This framework is used to reflect on the curriculum space of a master programme in tourism in Sweden in an analytic autoethnographic approach. The analysis indicates that the master programme addresses several aspects of the reflective vocational and reflective liberal curriculum space. It would also benefit from the integration of more experiential, action-oriented learning to strengthen the communal understanding of civil action and education for citizenship. This research contributes to the conceptualisation of the curriculum space for sustainable tourism. Such efforts are considered especially important in acknowledging the complex, dynamic character of tourism higher education. The aim is to invite a dialogue about the reform and evolution of tourism education to meet the needs for a sustainable future.

Introduction
Tourism education followed the establishment of the “new” universities in the 1970s. These offer applied and practical vocational education in a number of subjects (Airey, 2015) as a response to an increasing demand for a trained workforce in an era of industrialisation and neo-liberalisation (Ayikoru et al., 2009). Tourism as an academic subject has since evolved from a field of pure vocational education and has reached maturity, as reflected in the number of tourism journals, the amount of research, academic conferences, methods used and reflexivity; not least, this is evident also in the debate within the scholarly community regarding the role of tourism education (Airey, 2015; Dredge et al., 2012; Tribe, 2002). However, to a large extent, tourism curricula remain vocational, aiming to enable students to pursue a career in the tourism industry (Caton, 2014; Fidgeon, 2010; Inui et al., 2006; Ring et al., 2008).
Tribe (2002) argues that this standpoint ignores the impact that industries like tourism may have on social development, culture and the environment, and focuses instead on employment, wealth generation and tourist satisfaction. For Tribe and others, this carries a significant burden for tourism education. Indeed, growing number of scholars similarly criticise the past – and current – model of tourism education for being one-dimensional and narrow-minded (Boluk et al., 2019; Dredge et al., 2012; Inui et al., 2006; Jamal et al., 2011; Ring et al., 2008; Tribe, 2002). These authors underline the need to teach tourism as a social and cultural phenomenon rather than merely a business-oriented one. Purely vocational curricula focusing on training the future tourism practitioner fall short of enabling their graduates to understand the complexity of tourism, develop their full potential and challenge dominant practices and ideologies (Caton, 2015; Ring et al., 2008). Airey (2015, p. 11) points to the future challenges for tourism education in asking “what subjects such as tourism can offer to a world that itself is undergoing massive change”.

The issue of sustainability underpins a series of questions about the role of education. What is the role of education in a world which changes rapidly, not only because of globalisation or technological developments, but also because of environmental and cultural challenges? What is the role of education for “generation Y”, who are hyper-connected, more globalised, and more environmentally conscious? What is the role of education in a world where the sharp differences between western cultures in the so-called developed world and the more traditional ones in the developing one are evident more than ever, in a world where information and knowledge are only a click away, in a world of increasing complexity and rapid changes? In this “age of supercomplexity”, it is not knowledge and skills that are of utmost importance but certain kinds of human qualities like “carefulness, thoughtfulness, humility, criticality, receptiveness, resilience, courage and stillness” (Barnett, 2012, p. 75). Tourism education faces these challenges along with all areas of education, but has certain qualities that make it particularly suited to addressing them successfully. For Airey et al. (2015, p. 158) the multi-disciplinarity of tourism makes it able “to provide the sort of educational experiences that will meet the challenges of a world of increasing complexity”.

The acknowledgement that tourism has socio-cultural and environmental dimensions as well as an economic one has to a large extent been facilitated by developments in tourism research that have led to the knowledge-based platform (Jafari, 2005). The knowledge-based platform emphasises the need to examine tourism in a holistic, inter-disciplinary perspective and reflects the acknowledgement of sustainable tourism as a means for much wider sustainable development, rather than being an end-goal in itself (Farsari, 2009). Nevertheless, sustainable tourism remains a contested, value-driven concept (Ruhanen et al., 2019). Aspects of degrowth of tourism (Fletcher et al., 2019; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019) as well as diversity and inclusivity (Higgins Desbiolles, 2020; Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018) have become central to debates around sustainable tourism. Some authors advocate understanding tourism as a complex system, where tourism is seen in an evolutionary process, that is, “as a transition, journey, or path, rather than an end point or an achievable goal” (Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2004, p. 275). In this approach, interactions within the system are essential (Farsari et al., 2011). Uncertainty and complexity hold a central
role in it and defining the problem becomes part of the problem. Education needs to address the complex, value-driven character of sustainable tourism (Hales & Jennings, 2017; Jamal et al., 2011; Ring et al., 2008).

This research builds on these reflections on the role of tourism education in an era of complexity and the mandate for sustainability. Tourism, in a sustainability context, may bring positive change, alleviate poverty, and value culture and the environment. Nevertheless, it can have adverse impacts, and that is why an ethical stance is needed on the part of tourism practitioners (Dredge et al., 2012). However, very little change can be seen in tourism education curricula over the decades that might reflect a greater concern with sustainability, beyond the introduction of a few specific modules, courses and programmes (Boyle et al., 2015a, 2015b; Busby, 2003; Deale et al., 2009; Flohr, 2001; Ring et al., 2008; Schweinsberg et al., 2013; Wilson & von der Heidt, 2013). Thus, a gap has arisen between theory and practice in the development of a pedagogy for sustainable tourism, and especially of a pedagogy that moves the presently narrow understandings of tourism education as having the sole purpose of producing future managers (Boyle et al., 2015a; Jamal et al., 2011; McGrath et al., 2021; Moscardo, 2015; Ring et al., 2008; Ruhanen & Bowles, 2020). While it is true that the topics of cultural diversity and responsibility are increasingly being incorporated in tourism higher education, to educate the citizens of the world, critical approaches to citizenship education are largely absent (Boluk et al., 2019). Moreover, very little is known about tourism education outside the English-speaking world. The studies that have done have looked, for example, at Latin American students’ perceptions of sustainability (Camargo & Gretzel, 2017), at students’ perceptions of TEFI values in the master programmes offered by three universities in Denmark, Slovenia and Spain (Liburd et al., 2018), at the concept of over-education in relation to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) and at tourism education and employability in France (Seraphin et al., 2021) but such studies remain few in number. Moreover, the research generally takes a whole-systems perspective in looking into tourism and tourism education’s role in cultivating not only managers but also responsible citizens. Nevertheless, it does help to build a link to education for citizenship.

This paper places the work of Tribe (2002) on the Philosophic Practitioner Education (PPE) at the centre and draws from contributions in the fields of tourism education, education for sustainability, education for citizenship, and critical pedagogy, acknowledging also the role of the social, political, economic and institutional environment as depicted in Figure 1 to develop an analytical framework regarding pedagogy for sustainable tourism depicted in Figure 2. This framework is used to reflect on a master programme in Sweden and to explore the expressions that pedagogy for sustainable tourism can take in specific contexts. The aim of the research is to analyse, understand and ultimately contribute to the development of tourism curricula and a pedagogy for sustainable tourism.
Figure 1. Theoretical framing of a pedagogy for sustainable tourism.

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<tr>
<th>Reflective Liberal for Sustainability</th>
<th>Liberal Action for Sustainability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Whole systems perspective</td>
<td>• Place dimension</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Trans-disciplinarity (beyond disciplinary silos)</td>
<td>• Community-based service learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Multi-disciplinarity (integrating courses form other subjects e.g. geography, history, political science, ecology etc)</td>
<td>• Work placements and projects within ethical groups and lobbying for pressure and political groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Examined life (others' values and understandings, hegemonic discourses)</td>
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<td>• Integrating multiple perspectives and seeing issues from divergent sides</td>
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<td>• Self-reflectivity of both students and teachers extending beyond the practice of tourism</td>
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<td>• Nuances of multi-cultural, policy and political and ethical literacy</td>
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<th>Reflective Vocational for Sustainability</th>
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<td>• Transferable skills as problem-solving and critical analysis and reflectivity, linking theory to practice</td>
<td>• Transferable skills to contribute to work effectiveness (writing skills, communication skills, computer literacy, self-standing work, ability to work in groups etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cross-disciplinarity</td>
<td>• Aspects of technical literacy (e.g., courses on sustainable tourism marketing and management)</td>
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<td>• Ecological literacy</td>
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<td>• Study visits and work placements which allow reflectivity</td>
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<td>• dynamic, evolutionary character of learning (self-reflectivity over own learning, life/continuous learning)</td>
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<td>• Actors/stakeholders advising (e.g. Industry Advisory Boards)</td>
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Figure 2. An Integrated conceptual framework for the curriculum space for pedagogy for sustainable tourism (adjusted from Tribe, 2002).

Theoretical background

Tourism education and the philosophic practitioner

Seminal in the discussion around the evolution of tourism education from a purely vocational field to incorporate the reflectivity and liberal education (Airey, 2015; Dredge et al., 2012; Inui et al., 2006) has been Tribe’s PPE. The philosophic practitioner is the ideal
graduate of tourism studies, who is able to combine action with reflection and the merits of liberal education with those of vocational education. Philosphic tourism practitioners are part of the world and of the tourism industry, and they are equipped not just with knowledge but also with reflectivity and an ability to view tourism in its wider context. That reflectivity is not limited by their vocational education and disciplinary boundaries, but is practical and transformed into action, which, again, is not limited to the business of tourism but is applied to the world and society much more widely. The goal is to improve not only business practice but also the wider world (Tribe, 2002, p. 340). So, rather than educating only “mindful or critical managers” (Moscardo, 1997), PPE produces practitioners who are able to contribute to the future of tourism as an industry within its wider social, economic and environmental context. This should be enhanced by an ethical stance on not only daily professional practice but also civil practice. For Tribe, ethical competence is one of the ingredients of PPE. Accordingly, critical to the development of relevant curricula for sustainable tourism will be work placements in “ethical pressure groups”, for example, alongside the study of the politics of tourism, responsible tourism, problem solving and flexible thinking, multidisciplinarity and the integration of modules from social science disciplines (e.g., geography, anthropology, sociology, and economics of tourism) to broaden the narrow business focus that is often the scope of tourism education.

Several scholars have discussed Tribe’s PPE. Prominent have been Dredge et al. (2012), who used PPE as the basis to conceptualise the social construction of the curriculum space. For those authors, instead of firmly positioning the philosophical practitioner in the intersection between reflectivity and action, that positioning is dynamic and may change over the course of one’s professional (or student) life. Dredge et al. questioned also the single expert perspective in PPE. They argue that practitioners tend to attribute different meanings to concepts and tools than scholars do, and therefore multiple stakeholder understandings of what constitutes the philosophic practitioner should be incorporated into the model. In that respect, academics, industry, managers and students need to be stakeholders involved in the construction of tourist curricula if they are to meet local needs and conditions. In that respect, Dredge et al. add a more pragmatic view on PPE, explicitly integrating the social, political and economic context in which tourism and education operate. At the same time, Dredge et al., continue, curricula for the philosophic practitioner should account for the external and internal forces that limit or expand the curricular space, and acknowledge the dynamic nature of learning. The reconceptualisation of PPE by Dredge et al. reflects the evolution not only of tourism studies but also that of sustainable tourism discourses. Sustainable tourism is a complex issue not only because of the interconnections between environmental, economic and sociocultural values, but also because of the acknowledgement of the uncertain, dynamic and evolving world we are living in. In that respect, adaptability has a vital role, which should be reflected in our understanding of education. These developments in tourism education, and the concept of sustainable tourism in particular, are evident in a new approach in tourism education, pedagogy for sustainable tourism (PST) as part of education for sustainability (EfS).
**Sustainable tourism pedagogy and the sustainability practitioner**

In spite of the proliferating research on sustainable tourism and the spread of the term within academia, its incorporation in tourism education has been limited (Busby, 2003; Cotterell et al., 2017; Ring et al., 2008; Schweinsberg et al., 2013). Quite often, the incorporation of sustainability issues in tourism education is part of a corporatist, weak approach to sustainability, and it has been introduced as a limited number of specific courses, rather than a whole-curriculum approach being taken (Boyle et al., 2015a; Moscardo, 2015). For Jamal et al. (2011) these efforts lack a strong conceptualisation and so fail to link theory to practice. They, therefore, proposed their **Sustainability Practitioner** based on the Philosophic Practitioner. As with PPE and its reconceptualisation by Dredge et al., Sustainable Tourism Pedagogy (STP) and the Sustainability Practitioner, is guided by *praxis* and *phronesis*. Praxis reflects the social change aimed at and enabled by a critical reflexive stance involving difficult ethical choices, while phronesis reflects the practical wisdom enabled in a collaborative community service-learning approach and democratic participation. STP needs to be practical and action oriented in addressing real-world environmental and social issues rather than only theoretical ones. The critical analysis of case studies and the reflective academic questioning, although good, are not enough for Jamal et al. (p. 136), who argue that self-reflectivity should move “towards tackling the urgent issues and challenges of sustainability in relation to travel and tourism”. They continue that the type of learning that involves only textbooks and case studies in the classroom, while useful, encourages a scientific-technical approach to addressing sustainability issues and so is not as useful in conveying the less tangible aspects such as subjective rationalities, competing interests, and the personal and professional qualities of stakeholders. Jamal et al. continue that STP needs to integrate praxis and phronesis in the Aristotelean perspective of the *good life*.

This perspective is central in liberal education across the globe. Such education seeks to free the mind and prepare students to make ethical judgements and decisions and thus contribute to society (Boyle et al., 2015a; Caton, 2015; Dredge et al., 2012; Tribe, 2002). For Dredge et al. (2012, p. 2157), the good life represents the blending of liberal and vocational education, and can be manifested in challenging students to reflect on “ethical position and values” of themselves and others, and apply it in the actual world and in their involvement within the community. This would allow students to see tourism in a holistic perspective rather than only its business side (Tribe, 2002) and would enable tourism practitioners to critically reflect on “contested ideologies” and on their own and other people’s values (Dredge et al., 2012, p. 2156). However, as Jamal et al. argue, although praxis, does imply ethical stances, and students need to be able to make hard ethical decisions in the context of the Anthropocene, this should be linked to social action and phronesis than only reflective classroom exercises. For Jamal et al. (p. 137), “good virtues and good habits can be developed through experience in everyday life” and Aristotelean phronesis can be developed in “participatory experience and engagement in community and civic life”, forming part of collaborative learning. Collaborative learning is achieved through participatory experience in everyday life and engagement in the social world and in the *polis* (civic life).
**Education for sustainability and Critical pedagogy**

This action orientation of STP has its roots in Education for Sustainability (EfS) as well as in Critical Pedagogy (CP). EfS has a strong focus on an agenda for action; for example, students should not only learn about the environment but, rather, should also take environmental action (Boyle et al., 2015a; Ruhanen & Bowles, 2020). Scholars have been critical about the gap between the theory and the practice of sustainability and point to the need for transformative, experiential and action-oriented learning ( Cotterell et al., 2017; Jamal et al., 2011; Moscardo, 2015). A series of closely related terms have been used in this context, such as “transformative education”, “experiential learning” (Boluk & Carnicelli, 2015, p. 2019; Boyle et al., 2015b; Carnicelli & Boluk, 2017; Fullagar & Wilson, 2012), “critical pedagogy” and “critically reflective practice” (Belhassen & Caton, 2011; Crossley & Anita, 2017; Wilson, 2015). EfS is seen as incorporating aspects of transformative, experiential learning and critical pedagogy. For Moscardo (2015), the broad aims and principles guiding critical pedagogy and EfS are closely aligned, and she sees critical pedagogy and transformative, experiential learning as the appropriate framework for EfS.

Thus, EfS is essentially transformative education which incorporates sustainability values. It aims to promote capacity-building skills such as critical thinking, reflectivity, value-based learning and real-world problem solving (Boyle et al., 2015b; Moscardo, 2015). Currently, global environmental problems, such as climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic, are having profound impacts not only on tourism but also on the way we view and deliver tourism education. COVID-19 is challenging access to education around the world, but there is a wide gap between the privileged western world, with amenities and resources to switch to online education, and the less-privileged developing world, which lacks infrastructure and resources to do so. This exacerbates the inequality in access to education. A number of scholars say we need to use the pandemic as a transformative moment to re-evaluate our scholarship and education (Gretzel et al., 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019; Ioannides & Gyimothy, 2020). That is, education should focus more on values, which are not merely understood as ethics; instead, education should start questioning our values in relation to growth, development, globalisation, international tourism or climate change (Edelheim, 2020, p. 6). Now more than ever, we are challenged to redefine our values and our education. A value-based education is a proposition from the Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI), which has developed around five core values: stewardship, ethics, knowledge, mutuality, and professionalism. TEFI emerged from concerns about the shortcomings of tourism education in preparing graduates for meaningful and purposeful action for sustainability, not only as tourism professionals but also as citizens of the world (Liburd, 2015). Following this more hopeful educational approach, TEFI argues that addressing global challenges is an imperative for tourism education and aims to put values into tourism leaders’ decision making (Sheldon et al., 2011).

Such a transformative, experiential learning for sustainability should be developed around projects and real-world problems, with a focus on local community issues and collaborative learning. In this context, Moscardo (2015, p. 7) suggests the use of “case studies, field-trips and experiments, role plays, simulations, debates, reflexive accounts and action research projects”. She continues that out-of-classroom learning and informal
learning are important. Service-learning is gaining wide acceptance as a tool for transformative education. It disrupts the traditional classroom learning format and prepares students to become good citizens (Carnicelli & Boluk, 2017). Community service-learning is incorporated into EfS to promote collaborative learning, as it helps students to understand and critically analyse complex world phenomena (Jamal et al., 2011). It encourages interaction and communication among stakeholders, community, students and educators in reciprocal learning. The challenging of the traditional roles of learner/educator, together with a critical reflection on the whole process and experience, fosters learning as a transformational rather than a static process (Carnicelli & Boluk, 2017). Experiential learning, together with action outside the classroom, often takes place through internships and work placements (Boluk & Carnicelli, 2015). Fidgeon (2010) has set out the role and multiple benefits of out-of-classroom learning and work-based learning such as placements or personal tutors/mentors; nevertheless, such learning still needs to be linked to reflective practice (Boluk & Carnicelli, 2015).

The traditional dichotomy between educator and learner as well as the traditional linear classroom learning, have been critiqued within critical pedagogy (Crossley & Anita, 2017). For Boyle et al. (2015b), transformative learning is an integral part of critical pedagogy for sustainability and incorporates reflectivity on values and action-taking. Students should be encouraged to bring to the classroom their own lived experiences and reflectivity but then to “question their values, beliefs and assumptions” (Boyle et al., abstract) and set the connection between theory and practice (Wilson, 2015). Furthermore, Wilson argues that, as part of their reflexive practice, teachers should reflect on their own values and experiences, that is, to “practice what we preach”, a view shared by Moscardo (2015). The nature of education, including tourism education, is increasingly changing, and the student body is becoming increasingly international and culturally diverse. Both trends challenge teachers to reflect on their own experiences and their own culturally and ideologically bounded understanding, and break through the traditional learner-teacher divide (Crossley & Anita, 2017). Taking this argument further, Crossley advocates the emancipating, post-structuralist role of critical reflexivity as the best pedagogic approach within the criticality spectrum. That approach does not maintain the binary, socially constructed positions of oppressed versus elites, but rather questions educators’ own positionality, ideologies and epistemologies, in an ever-changing, fluid classroom reality, and makes students active agents of their learning. For Crossley, critical thinking, critical pedagogy and critical reflectivity are progressive pedagogic approaches along a continuum with uncertainty and critical reflexivity on the edge. Thus, although the first two introduce students gradually to criticality, it is the critical reflexivity which allows them to unveil unconscious barriers to both development and learning, and to be active selves in the learning process.

The need to question single authoritative viewpoints and integrate multiple perspectives has been a central issue in tourism education debates, as discussed above (see e.g., Dredge et al., 2012). EfS emphasises a whole-system perspective in tourism education, in which all aspects and all key stakeholders are considered (Moscardo, 2015). According to Moscardo, they are all stakeholders in EfS and thus it is important that all of them are involved as both learners and educators. This is very relevant to critical pedagogy, which emphasises the need to challenge hegemonies and to question dominant discourses, and instead to examine issues from other people’s perspectives (Crossley & Anita, 2017;
Wilson, 2015). Students should be able to reflect on whose discourses are included in the development of tourism, integrate indigenous viewpoints, understand issues from other people’s points of view, and challenge dominant hegemonies. This view is inherent also in Tribe’s philosophic practitioner within the liberal reflective part of the quadrant, which “should encourage awareness of hidden ideology and Power” (Tribe, 2015, p. 26).

Caton (2014) explained how the humanities, philosophy and Socratic reasoning entail a deconstruction and questioning of dominant assumptions and the status quo while encouraging self-reflectivity on one’s own values driving actions, and how arts enable imagination as a means to cope with uncertainty and complexity. Critical pedagogy and critical reflective practice invite not just the different sides of an issue to be seen but also an understanding and a challenging of dominant hegemonies, discourses of power and human-centric values in socio-ecological systems (Belhassen & Caton, 2011; Boyle et al., 2015b; Higgins Desbiolles, 2020; Jamal et al., 2011; Wilson, 2015; Young et al., 2017); and, again, there is a call to take action. Thus, although the integration of humanities fosters liberal reflection on the part of the ideal tourism graduate, as illustrated by Tribe, critical pedagogy emphasises the importance of liberal action, of taking meaningful action within the community and of challenging the dominant hegemonies.

Education for citizenship (EfC) and pedagogy for critical citizenship

Action-oriented education to meet the challenges of modern liberal higher education and the increasing emphasis on collaborative learning and community service have flourished in other pedagogical debates and especially within Education for Citizenship (EfC). EfC has been considered to promote the cultivation of democratic values within the citizens of tomorrow (Englund, 2002). For Nussbaum (2002, p. 292) citizens have to take decisions and act in a “complex interlocking world” with racial, ethnic, and religious plurality. At the same time, they need to understand the ecological, social, and economic environment that they operate in, in constant interaction with the big, globalised world dominated by neo-liberalism. In this world, understanding the role of the humanities is necessary, Nussbaum argues. Tourism graduates are also citizens of this world and need to navigate in this complex, globalised world. They need to take action to make the world a better place. For example, racial inequalities and the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement on societies and political agendas can become part of tourism education, as should problematic issues such as with tourism enclaves and the legacies of colonialism. The politics of climate change are not for destinations alone. Its impacts are not spread equally, and it is typically the less privileged (often indigenous peoples) who are hit more severely. Several tourism scholars refer to Nusbaum’s work and the role of liberal education in EfC (Caton, 2014; Dredge et al., 2012; Inui et al., 2006; Tribe, 2002). Indeed, the role of the humanities in broadening students’ perspectives and freeing their minds has been central in liberal education and in critical approaches to education for sustainability (Belhassen & Caton, 2011), as illustrated earlier in this paper.

Education to free the mind and educate responsible citizens in a holistic, liberal understanding of education draws from Socratic thinking and the notion of examined life, which calls for examining and understanding other people’s lives. Such an approach, which in critical pedagogy is seen as advancing social justice and a good society (Caton, 2015), is a prerequisite for adding EfC to the curriculum (Nussbaum, 2002). Indeed, a close
examination of the prerequisites to *cultivate humanity* in the modern complex interlocking world, illustrated by Nussbaum, reveals certain similarities with critical pedagogy: the critical examination which rejects any authoritative perspectives; the understanding of the multiple realities and multiple perspectives rather than an authoritative dominant one to cultivate a world citizenship; different understandings and different solutions for different places; and ultimately the **narrative imagination**, i.e. the ability to use one’s imagination to understand someone else’s perspective, that is, to see the world through other people’s eyes. EfC is, according to Moscardo (2015), one of the ways to reinforce and put into action sustainability values within education. Carnicelli and Boluk (2017) similarly acknowledge the role of critical pedagogy in cultivating democratic citizenship.

Recent developments in EfC have advocated a shift towards more action-oriented forms of citizenship education. For (Crawford, 2010), EfC has failed to deliver what it had promised, that is, active citizens for social transformation, and thus she argued for a shift in paradigm to embrace critical pedagogy in order to deliver what is termed “pedagogy for critical citizenship”. For Crawford, making society a better place to live and the controversies in it – such as injustice, inequalities and divergent values and views – are inherent in active EfC. This makes CP particularly relevant to advance EfC to a more action-oriented and effective pedagogic approach for social transformation. For Crawford, if EfC is to become something more than an intellectual exercise, praxis combining action with reflectivity is needed. Indeed, CP is gaining ground in redirecting EfC to be more transformative and experiential. Community-based learning as service learning is increasingly apprehended as central to meaningful and active citizenship education and to preparing students to undertake a “good citizen” role (Annette, 2008; Carnicelli & Boluk, 2017). For Annette (p. 82), service learning adheres to both the action aspects and the reflective aspects of EfS, facilitating the development both of skills and of reflective understanding for civic virtue. Annette (2008) does, though, draw attention to the difference between volunteering and community involvement. Rather than just doing “good” actions, students should engage in “political” actions. In this distinction, it is the service-learning component and the reflexive component of learning which transform the learner and the learning experience. Critical reflectivity should be coupled with community service to provide for collaborative service learning.

For Annette (2008) community service learning and active citizenship can be viewed from a communitarian perspective of citizenship, which emphasises the communal rather than the individualistic part of civic education. Following the march of neo-liberalism in the 1980s and ’90s and its emphasis on individualism, a need for more communal approaches has been gradually articulated (Crawford, 2010). The influence of neo-liberalism has been evident in educational curricula worldwide, for instance, in the emphasis schools and universities place on the preparation of a trained workforce (Hyslop-Margison & Thayer, 2009), a shift also noticed by tourism scholars, as discussed elsewhere in this paper. What EfC brings in the conceptualisation of a pedagogy for sustainable tourism thus is the communal aspect of civic education.

Boluk et al. (2019) have acknowledged the relation of a critical citizenship education to critical pedagogy for sustainability in tourism higher education. They argue that citizenship education will help to shift the emphasis from individual well-being and self-interest to seeing the wider picture for a larger group and committing oneself to this communal well-being. For Boluk et al., engaging in
a “circle of criticality” involving engagement with critical topics, critical dialogue, critical reflection, critical positionality and critical praxis is the way to bring citizenship education into the classroom. This is the basis for their pedagogical framework for the cultivation of the Critical Tourism Citizen (CTZ). For those authors, tourism graduates are not just tourism professionals but, rather, active citizens. Thus, the role of higher education, including tourism higher education, is to cultivate responsible citizens who can meaningfully engage in the community and public dialogue, and not just professionally. TEFi similarly aims to enhance curricula such that global citizenship for a better and more just world is central to them (Sheldon et al., 2011).

An integrated conceptual framework

The discussion above summarised the evolution of pedagogical approaches and highlighted the points of convergence as well as the aspects of particular importance in each approach. In this section, the aim is to elaborate an integrated conceptual framework for the curriculum space for sustainable tourism. What the review of the literature above illustrated is a turn to critical pedagogy in both EFS and EfC. This turn is firmly connected to a shift from an individualistic pedagogy to a communitarian understanding of it. The mandate to balance reflectivity and action and a transformational learning, however, can be traced back to Tribe’s PPE. Tribe explicitly acknowledged the need to take action instead of only philosophising and understanding the world in different ways. For Tribe (p. 341), the dialectic relationship between liberal-vocational ends and reflective-action stances can be depicted as a two continuum axes “placed alongside one another to form a matrix” forming four quadrants on which tourism curricula can be placed based on the ends and stances. In that matrix, discourses found in other pedagogic contexts can be integrated. Therefore, this research borrows from the Tribe’s PPE framework by elaborating on and operationalising specific aspects from the above approaches and integrating them within a pedagogy for sustainable tourism as presented earlier on the theoretical background and graphically presented also in Figure 1. The aim is to contribute to understanding and the conceptualisation of the curriculum space for sustainable tourism. The framework is discussed below and graphically presented in Figure 2.

Vocational action for sustainability

In the vocational action of PPE the aim is to provide graduates with transferable skills such that they can become effective professionals (Tribe, 2002). Writing skills, communication skills, computer literacy, the ability to work independently but also in groups and other transferable skills are often discussed in tourism education (Fidgeon, 2010; Ring, Dickinger, & Wöber, 2009) and can be found in the “vocational action for sustainability” part of the curriculum space. Aspects of the “technical literacy” for sustainable tourism can also form part of this part of the curriculum space, such as courses and ground knowledge regarding marketing and management, as discussed by Jamal et al. (2011).
Vocational reflection for Sustainability

The reflective vocational quadrant of PPE emphasises “reflection, evaluation, and modification of tourism skills and knowledge” (Tribe, 2002, p. 343). Similarly, in a sustainability context, it encourages students and practitioners to reflect on their vocational action and provide a dialectic examination of theory and practice. Transferable skills in problem-solving and critical analysis and reflectivity could find their place in this part of the curriculum. Analytical literacy, as discussed by Jamal et al. (2011), would also fit here. Study visits and work placements which allow reflectivity over the practice (both during and after) could belong to this part of the curriculum space. This reflective vocational side of the curriculum invites cross-disciplinarity, as discussed by several authors (Moscardo, 2015; Schweinsberg et al., 2013), as well as ecological literacy, as discussed by Jamal et al. (2011). That is, a cross-disciplinary understanding of tourism issues is required, because these issues are complex. Reflective vocational also allows for the dynamic, evolutionary character of learning, as discussed by Dredge et al. (2012) and Moscardo (2015), where students have the opportunity to reflect on their own learning or reflect on their own practice and experiences within tourism and, possibly, change their trajectory accordingly. Lifelong learning regarding tourism would be also found in this part of the curriculum. Multiple stakeholder perspectives should be integrated here in the curriculum, as discussed by Dredge et al. (2012) and Moscardo (2015), for example, in the form of industry advisory boards and consultations with stakeholders and industry regarding the content of the curriculum; projects or assignments will then also belong in this reflective vocational part of the curriculum space. Nevertheless, other aspects of multiple interpretations adhering to critical reflectivity can instead be found in the reflective liberal part of the curriculum space (rather than this reflective vocational part).

Although some aspects of critical analysis and reflectivity can find their place in the reflective vocational part of the curriculum space, critical reflectivity is better placed in the reflective liberal part. Critical analysis is indeed very useful to be able to relate knowledge to different epistemological approaches and be able to analyse, question and contribute to these debates. Equally important for a reflective vocational curriculum is that students and graduates are able to reflect on their own experiences and practices, use theory to understand them and advance them, and formulate a knowledgeable understanding of tourism business and operation. Nevertheless, when this is taken further, to develop skills to question the very sources of knowledge, to unveil the power and ideological discourses behind the world and tourism destinations, this belongs in the reflective liberal part of the curriculum space. Self-reflectivity regarding one’s own values, ideologies, structures but also exposure to others’ understanding, being able to see the world through other eyes, and place these discourses in an ethical and socio-political context, that is a reflective liberal approach. The reflective liberal part emphasises aims to enable students to set the critical agenda for tourism, and to act not only as practitioners but also as citizens.

As becomes apparent from the discussion below, nuances of different capabilities arise in different parts of the conceptual framework, depending on their place on the criticality spectrum. This indicates the flexible, fluid character of the conceptualisation of the curriculum space developed here, where the emphasis on different stances or ends determines their place in the curriculum space for sustainable tourism. This is also in accordance with Boluk et al. (2019), who discussed how different strategies of critical
pedagogy can advance different aspects of engagement with reflectivity and critical discourses and move students along the spectrum of weak to strong approaches to sustainability.

**Liberal reflection for Sustainability**

In the reflective liberal quadrant, the aim is to understand the wider complex world within which tourism operates; it “... encourage students to find their own voices and develop critical agendas” for this overall world picture (Tribe, 2002, p. 344). The emphasis thus, in this part of the curriculum space for sustainability, is to encourage students to develop their own ideas about the world, cultivate the good life and become citizens with reference to values and ethics rather than only reflective practitioners. Of paramount importance here is to encourage students to reflect on the world and sustainability issues, and their own role and responsibility. Tourism’s role in the wider picture and the world are part of this discussion, including issues of a utopian world of becoming (Tribe, 2002). The whole-system perspective advocated by Moscardo (2015) and Cotterell et al. (2017) is very relevant to a critical approach for EfS. Learning for sustainable development should be embedded throughout the whole tourism curriculum rather than being taught as a separate subject (Huckle, 2008). Rather than operating in strict disciplinary silos, EfS mandates an interdisciplinary or even trans-disciplinary approach to address the complex issues of sustainability. Multidisciplinarity is discussed by several scholars (Dredge et al., 2012; Inui et al., 2006; Jamal et al., 2011; Moscardo, 2015; Tribe, 2002) and the integration of subjects such as philosophy or geography enables this part of the curriculum space. The reflective liberal part of the curriculum, with courses from other subjects and disciplines, can indeed cultivate the narrative imagination, as argued by Nussbaum, and the virtues of the good, examined life. Modules such as philosophy or ethics cultivate the examination of alternative views and trajectories in life and in business, of both the realistic and the utopian space of sustainability. The integration of multiple perspectives (Boyle et al., 2015b; Caton, 2014; Jamal et al., 2011; Moscardo, 2015; Wilson, 2015) can indeed be exercised within the reflective liberal curriculum space. Self-reflectivity on the part of both the teachers and the students regarding their own values, extending beyond tourism practice, can also be found here. Very importantly, critical reflection and discourses of power can be exercised with liberal reflection. Both those aspects have been highlighted by Boluk et al. (2019) in their framework for CTC. Aspects of ecological literacy could also be included here, in terms, for example, of inter-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary courses and assignments regarding the environmental consequences of tourism, or a discussion of complex socio-ecological systems and tourism in the Anthropocene, which require more than multi-, cross- or inter-disciplinarity but, rather, a trans-disciplinary approach. Nuances of multi-cultural, policy and political, as well as ethical literacy illustrated by Jamal et al. (2011) can be found here (but also within the “liberal action” curriculum space, as discussed below), especially when they develop a critique around them. Nuances regarding the dynamic evolutionary character of learning, although discussed earlier in the reflective vocational part of the curriculum, can be also placed here when, for example, they involve reflectivity on other people’s values and understandings. This again indicates the flexible, fluid character of the curriculum space.
Liberal action for sustainability

The liberal action part furthers the understanding and the critique of the world and translates it into action. For Tribe, liberal action is a transformative action, and it differentiates the philosophic practitioner from the reflective practitioner described by Schöns (as cited in Tribe, 2002). As opposed to vocational action, there are no limits to liberal action: it is “unconstrained” to improve the world and thus it can be both within and outside the workplace (Tribe, 2002). Community-based service learning contributes to this part of the curriculum space. Arguments about the place dimension of a critical pedagogy for sustainability (Moscarlo, 2015) and the need to take students outside the classroom in an experiential, transformative approach in learning (Boluk & Carnicelli, 2015; Carnicelli & Boluk, 2017) can be found here. Work placements and projects within ethical groups and lobbying by pressure and political groups (Tribe, 2002) or projects with indigenous or minority communities (Higgins Desbiolles, 2020; Jamal et al., 2011; Wilson, 2015; Young et al., 2017) can be considered as liberal action. Liberal action can extend outside the realms of tourism practice to ethical groups, for example, to support the development of responsible citizens, as illustrated in EfC (Annette, 2008; Boluk et al., 2019; Crawford, 2010).

Methodology

This research is inspired by autoethnography (Anderson, 2006; Ellis et al., 2011). Autoethnography uses personal experience to generate knowledge on the topic under investigation (McCarville, 2007). More precisely, analytic autoethnography identifies the researcher as both a member of the academic world and as a member of the topic or the group under investigation; in this dual identity, the researcher applies an analytic research agenda with the aim of contributing to theoretical understanding of wider social issues (Anderson, 2006). Analytic reflexivity, Anderson continues, as a key feature of analytic autoethnography, implies that the data is part of the researcher’s personal experience and understanding; researchers both influence and are influenced by the representation they are discussing.

In the research approach followed here, the researcher is part of the study. Instead of eliminating personal understandings and striving for objectivity, this research builds on the subjective experience of the researcher as a teacher in the programme and as the coordinator of the examined programme. The author is also active in a collegial network of tourism education institutes in Sweden. The researcher’s experience from her own courses, from discussions with other teachers in the programme, from discussions with the students, from reviewing course and programme evaluations is integrated. This reflexive research process was complemented by an analysis of the overall programme syllabus as well as course syllabi to understand the formal, institutionalised framework and its influence on the curriculum space. Course handbooks, which further illustrate the interpretation and the translation of the courses into teaching practice and the learning process, were also examined. This contributes to a dialogue with informants beyond researcher’s self, as discussed by Anderson (2006).

This analytical and reflexive research method developed in parallel with a literature review in an inductive, iterative approach. The result of this process is the present article, which aims to start a dialogue between tourism educators, between educators and their
institutions, between educators and the tourism industry, or even between educators and the wider community (Fullagar & Wilson, 2012). This research does not aim to provide objective, generalised knowledge but, rather, systematically analyses the personal experience of this author and its relation to the broader pedagogical context to provide “a spiraling refinement, elaboration, extension, and revision of theoretical understanding” (Anderson, 2006, p. 388). It is a process of self-reflection and meaning-making and expanding understanding from own experience to relate to broader academic discourses and contribute to pedagogy for sustainable tourism.

This research looks at the curriculum space, meaning that both what is taught and what is not taught are considered here (Tribe, 2015). Tribe argues that curriculum space is an “imaginative space”, a space that entails the possibilities (both what is accrued and what is missed) in the curriculum and the different educational journeys one may embark on. It represents “a template against which any particular framing of the curriculum can be evaluated” (Tribe, 2015, p. 21). This approach allows both accrued and missed opportunities to be discussed and thus invites further dialogue around the programme, the different experiences of it, as well as its possibilities. It also invites a dialogue around pedagogy for sustainable tourism and the different framings it can take. In that approach, the broader context in which tourism education takes place and which affects the curriculum space (Dredge et al., 2012) as well as “situatedness” (Witsel & Boyle, 2017) become important. Such an approach helps to identify the context that influences tourism education as well as one’s own understanding of the curriculum space.

The research context

Tourism higher education in Sweden

Before examining a master programme in Sweden, it is worth briefly reviewing how tourism higher education evolved in Sweden. This not only serves to set the context for the analysis which follows but is also in line with arguments from Dredge et al. (2012) about understanding the social construction of curricula. The development of Swedish universities in the 19th century was strongly influenced by international developments in higher education and the integration of science and systematic observation, as well as by concerns regarding higher education as bildning (the German concept of Bildung), where the aim is to educate individuals rather than only prepare graduates for employment (Elbe & Olsmans, 2020; SOU, 2015). Modern higher education in Sweden has undergone three major reforms: the one in 1977 emphasised uniformity in operation and accessibility; the one in 1993 enforced several of the mandates of 1977 with the Higher Education Act 1992:1434 and Higher Education Ordinance 1993:100; and the one in 2007 followed the Bologna process and clarified the goals set in the 1993 reform (L. Kim, 2004). The reform of 1993 removed the strict central control of higher education and gave educational institutions more autonomy. Instead of regulating the content of each programme, it emphasised goals to be achieved at each level of higher education. The 1993 reform also made a clear distinction between vocational and general degrees (SOU, 2015). Vocational degrees in Sweden are part of the Higher Vocational Education (Yrkeshögskolan). That is a form of post-secondary education with both a theoretical but also a practical orientation, which is planned and delivered in close collaboration with employers and industry
representatives. The programmes have thus a strong emphasis on workplace training and practical skills and competences identified by industry (https://www.yrkeshogskolan.se/om-yrkeshogskolan). Several hospitality vocational degrees and programmes are offered, such as for hotel managers and events coordinators. On the other hand, undergraduate, postgraduate and university diplomas are defined as general degrees. Although general degrees can still be linked to certain professions and careers, they concern broader education and personal development of the individual, and are not necessarily linked to a specific profession.

Nevertheless, preparation to enter the workforce is among the goals of higher education in universities and university colleges. However, this should not be narrowly defined and should involve the development of generic skills and knowledge, and personal development, to address uncertainty over the needs of the future (professional) world (SOU, 2015). The reform of 1993 recognised, as the basis for higher education, “knowledge and skills . . . ability for independent and critical assessment, ability to independently solve problems and ability to follow the development of knowledge” (SOU, 2015, p. 55). Knowledge, skills, education and personal development are all interwoven in a holistic understanding not only of education but also of the individual who is able to critically assess the complex reality of their era. These considerations were reflected in the 1992 Higher Education Act, which set, among others, the goals for undergraduate (grundnivå) and postgraduate (avancerad nivå) education.

The last big reform, of 2007, also known as the Bologna reform, was largely influenced by the European integration and standardisation process. The Bologna process brought to the fore employability and the need to link higher education to the labour market (Fagrell et al., 2020). Following strong criticism in Sweden, the liberal character remained and although the connection to professional capabilities is clearly articulated within the goals of both undergraduate and graduate education, the emphasis on critical analysis skills remains. These requirements and goals, resulting from all three major reforms, are included in the formulation of any higher education programme syllabus in Sweden.

Although tourism education in Sweden started as vocational education, as in many other parts of the world, the reforms of higher education inevitably influenced tourism education as well. The aim of these reforms was to have a single education system in terms of administration procedures but also more equity regarding prestige and elitist differences. For L. Kim (2004), this did not entirely succeed. Tourism higher education in Sweden is not offered by the “old” universities but rather by the newer university colleges, some of which gained full university status, with state research funding and doctoral education. Nevertheless, tourism is still a field contested by the traditional universities. Where tourism education is found in the old universities, as well as in some of the newer universities, it is often “covered” by subjects relevant to innovation, sustainability, or geography. That is, tourism education in Sweden was often established within geography and human geography departments, and much less so within business administration, as is common in other parts of the world. Nevertheless, recent trends indicate that has begun to be established as a subject in its own right (Müller, 2010). For instance, over the last ten years a collegial network of all institutions offering higher education in tourism has been established; it meets annually to discuss programmes and challenges. All higher education in Sweden, including tourism education, is public, with no tuition fees for
European Union students at any level. Although both the “old” universities and the university colleges are self-regulated and autonomous to a great extent, they are state financed and thus the central government holds a role in the regulations affecting them.

The master programme examined

The master programme analysed in this paper is a one-year (10-month) master programme of 60 ECTS offered by a regional university college (högskolan) in Sweden. It started in 2008 and it is an international programme, which is to say English is the language of instruction and it attracts students from around the world (though the majority from Europe). Its international character is strengthened by the admission of exchange students for the autumn semester. The focus of the programme is on the macro scale of destination development rather than business operations. The programme comprises four modules (“sustainable destination development”, “management and interpretation of natural and cultural heritage”, “event tourism” and “place and destination marketing”) in the autumn term and two research-related modules (“research methods” and “thesis research project”) in the spring term.

The aim of the programme is to enable students to discover their own learning process and critically reflect on the developmental options of a destination, with a focus on sustainability. Graduates of the programme should be able to critically observe social and economic processes at destinations, propose and assess developmental strategies, reflect on their own positionality and critically reflect on contested issues and processes. Overall, the programme aims to prepare graduates who are aware of the complexity of destinations, for instance, their cultural and social diversity. Graduates may work within tourism as destination managers or in other fields as consultants to assist development and planning.

Analysis

In this section, the master programme is analysed using a self-reflexivity method in an autoethnographic approach. It uses the conceptual framework developed earlier in this paper to understand and make sense of the curriculum space of the master programme. Findings and discussion are presented following a presentation of the overall framework.

The vocational action part of the curriculum space

The development of transferable skills is incorporated into the curriculum of the master programme. The development of oral and writing skills is explicitly mentioned in the syllabi of several courses and all the courses include oral presentations, discussions in the form of seminars, and written assignments. Although the development of communication skills is indeed integrated in the programme, communication with different groups is not a strong element. Although it is explicitly stated in the programme syllabus, as directed by the Higher Education Ordinance (1993: 100), that at the end of their studies graduates should be able to “demonstrated the ability in speech and writing to report clearly and discuss his or her conclusions and the knowledge and arguments on which they are based in dialogue with different audiences”, this is rather under-represented in the programme.
Communication is emphasised within an academic context (academic writing, oral presentations, collegial peer feedback), that is, the aim is to enhance skills in communicating academic knowledge, which, although very useful in certain careers and environments, underrepresents other audiences (e.g., native groups) and other types of communication (e.g., video, performances). In a world of increasing complexity and connectivity, there is a need to integrate multiple voices into the curriculum space for sustainability. This is especially relevant in working with minority, ethnic and underprivileged groups (Jamal et al., 2011; Moscardo, 2015; Young et al., 2017), who often cannot relate to academic or professional jargon.

There is only one traditional written exam in this master programme. All the other assessments are based on written assignments (both individual and group), active participation in discussions in seminars, presentations and peer-feedback. Wilson (2015) comments on the detrimental role of traditional examination in reflectivity about sustainability and this is reflected in the design of the master programme.

The ability to work in groups is another transferable skill integrated into the curriculum of the master programme. It is explicitly mentioned in the syllabus of only one of the courses but it is also an integral part of several other courses and perceived as contributing to the learning experience. Indeed, group work is considered essential in formulating the capability to work in teams and in enhancing understanding and communication skills. Group assignments are most often given a pass/fail status rather than, say, an A-F grading, to emphasise the importance of participation and engagement rather than individual performance in the group. Nevertheless, group work is an important learning method when it comes to engaging into critical dialogue. When combined with the introduction of critical topics, graduates can understand and appreciate other people’s divergent perspectives and develop their own perspective accordingly (Boluk et al., 2019), as discussed more in the reflective part of the curriculum space.

Technical literacy is also found in vocational action quadrant. The core modules of the master programme are seen to contribute to technical literacy, as discussed by Jamal et al. (2011). Courses such as Sustainable Destination Development, Destination Marketing, Management and Interpretation of Natural and Cultural Heritage, and Event Tourism address planning, marketing and management issues in a sustainability context and contribute to the knowledge-base necessary in any tourism education for sustainability. Nevertheless, it is a master program of 60 credits so cannot include a wide base of technical courses, as these are assumed to have been covered at undergraduate level.

Transferable skills and technical literacy have often been related to the vocational side of the curriculum to strengthen the employability of tourism graduates in other industries. Airey and Johnson (1999) found that transferable skills were among the top ten objectives for tourism courses offered in the UK. For Fidgeon (2010), it is not a matter whether transferable skills are necessary in tourism education but rather how to integrate them into the curriculum.

**The reflective vocational part of the curriculum space**

Other transferable skills such as analytical skills, critical analysis skills and reflectivity are also part of the programme. The ability “to critically assess the prerequisits and consequences of different strategies for sustainable tourism destination development” and
“to critically observe social processes and issues . . . in a tourism studies perspective” are among the learning objectives as stated in the programme syllabus. Critical analysis is articulated in the learning outcomes stipulated for specific courses in relation to critical literature reviews or management and planning techniques as exemplified in case studies and literature. Critical analysis and the ability to connect theory to practice are required of students throughout the learning process in the master programme. Students are encouraged to read the literature critically, to reflect on their own experiences and use their readings to expand their understanding as well as to reflect on several case studies. For example, in all four core modules in the autumn semester, students have to write essays reflecting on case studies, backed up by the wider literature. Critical analysis and reflectivity are also encouraged in peer feedback, where students read and discuss the work of their peers. Analytical capabilities also relate to data analysis as part of a research methods course. For Ring et al. (2009), transferable skills like critical analysis and problem solving are essential in addressing the complexity of a constantly changing world and preparing students for their professional role in it. These skills are very much in alignment with EfS’s mandate to solve problems at the local level while being adaptive to meet local needs and conditions (Boyle et al., 2015a).

Problem solving is also an integral part of all one-year master programmes in Sweden; according to the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100), students should “demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge and analyse, assess and deal with complex phenomena, issues and situations even with limited information”. Students are taught to work and engage in a complex world, to adjust to uncertainty and limited information, and to be able to solve the issues of tomorrow. Besides theoretical exercises, students in the tourism master programme are required to “identify key issues and problems and propose solutions regarding the development and evaluation of events” as part of their Event Tourism course. On that course, students undertake tasks related to real-world cases. These assignments follow a study visit and students must deliver projects for the strategic development of events to increase tourism in the destinations visited. In fact, study visits are incorporated in all the core course modules during the autumn semester. At the end of that semester students undertake a two-day study trip to regional tourism destinations where they meet business leaders and staff at destination management organisations. Following that study trip, students work on tasks in groups. These tasks, some of which are formulated with destination stakeholders, require critical analysis of information and enable students to link theory with practice and integrate knowledge from all four core modules taught earlier in the term. Nevertheless, this is not a compulsory element of the course; moreover, the dissemination of students’ work to the companies and destinations visited is not always strong. More work needs to be done by the university to establish continuous dialogue and feedback between the programme (i.e. students’ work) and the stakeholders. For H. J. Kim and Jeong (2018), field trips, community learning projects and internships are not only some of the most popular experiential learning methods but also have great potential.

Learning through work experience, such as practicum and internships, is usually not incorporated in Swedish postgraduate education (Fidgeon, 2010), and the master programme is no exception. Nevertheless, students are offered the opportunity to benefit from the Erasmus+ programme as recent graduates and to pursue a subsidised work placement in another EU country. Many students do take that opportunity. Furthermore,
students and alumni are regularly updated on vacancies related to internships and work placements. However, there is no follow-up to invite any reflection on that experience and stimulate reflective learning (Fidgeon, 2010) as would be the case in EfS.

The dynamic, evolutionary character of learning is also an aspect of this part of the curriculum space. The ability of students “to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for their ongoing learning” is one of the objectives for all one-year master programmes in Sweden. This takes into account personal development along with the time dimension and self-evaluation. These qualities are essential for EfS, where the ability to adapt to uncertainty and complexity are promoted, rather than fixed knowledge and all-encompassing solutions. Students on the tourism programme have the opportunity to reflect on their own learning on several occasions. In the management and Interpretation of Natural and Cultural Heritage course, for example, they write log and blog entries regarding their reflection their readings and on critical issues regarding the topic discussed. After seminars, during which students have the opportunity to discuss each other’s perspectives and are exposed to other world views, they write new blog entries. This allows students to gradually develop their own understanding and to make this evolution and development more tangible. Similarly, on the Sustainable Destination Development course, students work on a case-study paper which they discuss during a seminar. After the seminar, students can revise their paper and it is the revised version that they are graded on. The aim is to underline the continuous nature of learning and the appreciation of reflectivity, revision and evolution. On the Research Methods course, students are required, as part of an assignment on in-depth interviews, to reflect on their learning throughout the different stages of the exercise and on how their understanding of the method has changed before taking the next step. For Dredge et al. (p. 2159), students should be encouraged to reflect “upon how they undertook the evaluation in terms of their own skills and knowledge deficits”; this might involve “improving the process through research and design, repeating the task, and then critically analysing and articulating the process they went through”. Such student tasks capture action and reflection and their dynamic intersection. In that respect, self-reflectivity over one’s own learning, or even peer feedback and evaluation to foster the ability to increase understanding and knowledge, become critical in pedagogy for sustainability. Continuous learning is necessary to adapt to a highly complex and changing world and curricula should prepare students to that end (Ring et al., 2009).

A “multiple stakeholder” approach is also desirable in a pedagogy for sustainable tourism. For Dredge et al. (2012) this involves the active involvement of stakeholders, other than academics, in the development of the curriculum. The master programme examined here has an Industry Advisory Board whose membership includes tourism stakeholders from both the private and the public sector. The Board meets twice a year and fosters the links between tourism education and tourism stakeholders. Nevertheless, most of the Board’s advice on the curriculum has related to the undergraduate programme. Since students on the master programme come to Sweden from all over the world for only 10 months, and many have limited (if any) Swedish language skills, tourism stakeholders often felt that the master programme was not of direct interest to them. Nevertheless, with efforts to internationalise tourism in the region, this is slowly shifting. Advisory processes with stakeholders are perceived to enhance professional relevance and quality of education, and consequently employability of graduates (Fagrell et al.,...
However, as emphasised throughout this paper, education should also take a wider worldview. Moscardo (2015) has pointed to the need in education for sustainable tourism to involve multiple stakeholders as both learners and educators. Although guest lectures by tourism stakeholders are part of the master programme and students meet tourism organisations and businesses on their study visits, the more dynamic, transformative component discussed by scholars is lacking.

The reflective liberal part of the curriculum space

The objectives set by the Higher Education Ordinance for one-year master programmes include students having “demonstrated insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used” (here and below emphasis added). Although aligned with a reflective liberal education, this nevertheless reflects an individualistic understanding of the role of graduates as professionals and citizens. It emphasises the individual responsibility in taking an ethical role in the society, in contrast to the communal understanding conveyed by a critical pedagogy for citizenship (Annette, 2008; Crawford, 2010). The Higher Education Ordinance also stipulates that students should be able to “make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues”. These statements reflect a disciplinary understanding of education. Tribe (1997) described trans-disciplinarity as an epistemological approach which integrates knowledge, methods and tools from diverse disciplines with an emphasis on problem-solving and context-specific knowledge production. A trans-disciplinary understanding of education is not part of the master programme. Neither is multi-disciplinarity in the sense of integrating courses from other disciplines. In that respect, courses related to philosophy or values and ethics are often seen as contributing to tourism pedagogy (Caton, 2014). However, this is a 10-month master programme where some basic disciplinary knowledge from first-cycle studies is expected.

Although lacking the integration of courses from disciplines such as philosophy and literature, values and ethics, discussion of these issues is integrated in different modules. In the course Sustainable Destination Development, tourism is discussed as one among other developmental options. Rather than providing students with an operational definition of sustainable tourism for the purpose of the course, students are presented with several, and the different values and stances in each of them are discussed. Students are encouraged to challenge their assumptions about bad and good tourism and examine instead specific socio-economic contexts and discourses regarding values. Furthermore, students are encouraged to reflect on their own values and understandings as well as those of others. The aim is to highlight the existence of diverse realities and viewpoints, and the need for students to develop their own understanding based on knowledge and ethical discourses. Similarly, students are invited to examine cases studies from diverse perspectives (those of tourists, managers, locals) in order to understand the complexity of sustainable tourism and the multiplicity of approaches. Moreover, a diversity of approaches and understandings is generally ensured, because in most classes the students do much of the work in groups and they come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. By inviting the students to present and explain their understanding, they are further challenged to question their own assumptions and reflect on the standpoints
diverse stakeholders might have regarding sustainable tourism. A similar approach is discussed by Wilson (2015), who reflects on her teaching and reports that she encourages students to challenge assumptions of “bad mass tourism” and “good eco-tourism” and instead reflect on the validity of these assumptions in specific social and economic contexts and cases.

Divergent cultural understandings and embedded discourses of power as well as self-reflectivity are further explored and discussed on the course Management and Interpretation of Natural and Cultural Heritage. As stated in the course handbook, students are encouraged to explore and “understand the possibility of alternative world-views” and reflect on why and how knowledge and understanding (including their own) can be bounded and partial because of factors such as one’s gender and social or ethnic identity. Students are encouraged “to deconstruct and understand the underlying (and often overlooked) power dimensions represented by heritage through often conflicting narratives of nature and culture”. Again, the diverse cultural backgrounds of the students enhance this learning experience as they bring their different understandings to the classroom and discussions. The role of ideologies is highlighted. Students are invited to “critically assess different interpretations of heritage and relate these to ideological perspectives”. During discussions in the seminars, students are encouraged to reflect critically on their own assumptions and values, and to challenge their understanding and the knowledge sources they use. They are required to write a journal regarding their experience of a study visit to a cultural heritage attraction in which they are asked “To reflect on one’s own values, relate knowledge to one’s own experiences, to reflect on one’s own learning”. Besides linking theory to practice, this task aims to promote self-reflectivity. Unlike blogs, which can be seen by other students, this submission is private; the aim is to encourage students to question, challenge and expose themselves to a more transformative experiential learning. Self-reflexive practice, constantly questioning one’s own views and assumptions, enables transformation in education (Arnold et al., 2012). Bringing students’ own experiences to the classroom helps them “question their values, beliefs, and assumptions” and facilitates learning as a transformative experience (Boyle et al., 2015b, abstract). This multicultural understanding is coherent also with the call from Jamal et al. (2011) for multicultural literacy in pedagogy for sustainable tourism. This is related to the development of an understanding of gender, power, cultural and ethnic discourses that influence the development of sustainable tourism. Such reflexive practice enables critical positionality, as discussed by Boluk and Carnicelli (2019, p. 875), which “brings awareness on privilege, position and power” and helps students move from weak to strong approaches to sustainability.

Awareness of one’s own culturally bounded norms, values and understanding is, according to Witsel and Boyle (2017), an important dimension, not only for students but also in teachers’ practices, that creates a reference for understating in multicultural educational environments, a frame embracing diverse views of the world. As part of the course on Sustainable Destination Development, students are asked to write a self-reflection on their understanding of sustainable tourism. Following this, the teacher also posts a self-reflection on sustainable tourism and the evolution of her understanding of sustainability. For Wilson (2015), “teaching what you are preaching” through teachers’ open self-reflectivity is part of transformative learning. Enabling critical positionality facilitates the understanding of both the teacher’s and the learner’s biases, norms and
assumptions, and can thus enable transformation of one’s worldviews (Boluk et al., 2019). Crossley and Anita (2017) is critical of the “generic critical teachers” who do not themselves engage in reflecting on their own positionality and its influence on their understanding of the world, or of sustainability in tourism. For Crossley, the presence of multicultural international groups of students challenges teachers to reflect themselves on the role of culturally embedded understandings. This, for Crossley, is a transformative experience for the teachers themselves, who can then invite students and other teachers to reverse the traditional and authoritative roles of learner and teacher. Indeed, this has been very much the experience of this writer, who has gradually put more emphasis on the discussions by students at the core of the learning process. Seminars, group work, and interactive lectures are the cornerstone of all courses in this programme. Most importantly, this is evident also as a transformative learning experience for this author herself and the evolution of her understanding of pedagogy as well as sustainable tourism.

As a nuance of the time dimension in learning, students on the Event Tourism and the Management and Interpretation of Natural and Cultural Heritage courses are encouraged to challenge their own understanding by deep consideration of the alternative viewpoints and alternative realities of their peers and by searching and reading the literature (and thus evolve their learning). Encouragement is given not just to incorporate and reflect on alternative understandings but to look for sources and literature and engage with the ideas discussed. In this way, they evolve and enhance their learning. Knowledge is socially constructed and pedagogy for sustainable tourism needs to critically question its sources and one’s own understanding of them, based on gender, ideologies, and cultural and ethnic background (Crossley & Anita, 2017; Wilson, 2015).

The liberal action part of the curriculum space

Students on the master programme are brought out of the classroom to meet tourism stakeholders and are assigned to work on certain tasks formulated by the stakeholders themselves. Although this does represent some kind of service learning, the question remains, what are the ends and the stances driving these activities? Community-based, collaborative learning should be a joint and synergetic learning, in which both parties develop new knowledge and skills (Daniels and Walker, as cited in Jamal et al., 2011). For Jamal et al., it should integrate the Aristotelian praxis and phronesis and lead to engagement in civic life. That would entail an integrated learning process involving democratic procedures and participation rather than only the acquisition and application of knowledge. Action in service learning should be in dialogue with values and involve social justice and citizenship (Boyle et al., 2015b); it should involve students actively in the wider community (Carnicelli & Boluk, 2017). It is essentially a transformative action to change the world and engage students in meaningful and active citizenship. This will require a different approach in organising and delivering the learning experience than that currently taken in the master programme. Although student evaluations of the programme at its end do describe a transformative learning experience, this is not necessarily in the direction of “liberal action” in the sense of social justice and action taking within the community. For Boluk et al. (2019), however, critical praxis, although it does include experiential and community learning, best practices and case studies, can also enhance praxis later in life. They argue that a just, equitable and responsible view of the world can
facilitate exploration of alternative paths for sustainability and change. Nevertheless, experiential learning remains an important requirement in this part of the curriculum space.

Conclusions

This article has covered a broad literature review integrating discourses from tourism pedagogy, education for sustainability, critical pedagogy, and education for citizenship to develop a conceptual framework for a pedagogy for sustainable tourism – and, indeed, for a pedagogy for sustainability more widely. These approaches were operationalised here as an integrated framework based on Tribe’s philosophic practitioner education (Tribe, 2002). This framework was then used to reflect on a master programme in Sweden and understand its curriculum space.

The analysis showed that the master programme occupies different parts of the curriculum space, with a stronger emphasis on the reflective part of the spectrum (reflective vocational and reflective liberal) integrating some liberal ends. The “liberal action” part of the curriculum space is the least well represented in the programme. A limited number of vocational ends are also apparent. More specifically, the programme does deliver a variety of transferable skills, such as communication and problem-solving skills, critical analysis, and self-reflectivity. These cover the more vocational ends of the curriculum as well the reflective stances, such as skills related to reflectivity and liberal education moving along the criticality spectrum as discussed by Crossley and Anita (2017). Technical and ecological literacy, dynamic learning and values discourses are also part of the programme. The analysis highlighted also the different nuances several of these capabilities can take, indicating a fluid curriculum space based on their interpretation and the implementation.

The master programme, although it has increasingly come to occupy parts of the reflective vocational and reflective liberal curriculum space, would benefit from greater integration of a more experiential component, one occupying to the liberal action part of the curriculum space. Although the study visits add to the experiential component, that should move towards more transformative learning. Curriculum as well as extra-curriculum activities, and the mobilisation of students in formal and informal action-taking groups, will be important in that direction. Theoretical learning, although important, is not sufficient in a pedagogy for sustainability (Carnicelli & Boluk, 2017; Jamal et al., 2011). Liberal action in this framework is not merely community service, with students undertaking projects within a destination. It should have also a strong ethical component, which involves moving from individualistic to communal understandings of critical action for citizenship (Annette, 2008; Crawford, 2010). The aim of a pedagogy for sustainability (including sustainable tourism) should be to educate students in a transformative learning approach such that they can become not only capable professionals but also active citizens, ready to take responsibility for meaningful, ethical action to change the world for a sustainable future. Curricula inspired by critical approaches to Efc can contribute in that direction.

The master programme is influenced by the broader context of higher education in Sweden. Tourism second-cycle (master) programmes in Sweden are academic and research-oriented rather than professional degrees (Milinchuk, 2017). This follows the
requirements of the Higher Education Ordinance 1993:100 that education should have a strong link to research. Accordingly, the programme examined here is research based. Transferable skills, although apparent, are related to critical analysis and reflectivity rather than specific vocational skills and vocational literacy. Higher education in Sweden has remained in a more reflective liberal space that promotes critical analysis skills and individual abilities (SOU, 2015) and this is reflected in the master programme. What is needed perhaps is to move towards liberal action and incorporate social learning and community service in more transformational approaches to education, as discussed above. Such approaches can strengthen the communal rather than the individualistic understanding of civil action and education for citizenship. In spite the influence from liberal education, aspects of Bildung and the incorporation of subjects from the humanities – arts, literature, philosophy – are still quite limited in Swedish higher education (Elbe & Olsmats, 2020). This is the case also in the master programme. Nevertheless, it is a 10-month second-cycle programme rather than a 3-year undergraduate degree. Although elements from the humanities and ethics are important in a pedagogy for sustainability (Boyle et al., 2015a; Caton, 2014) these can be incorporated in other courses or become part of the extra-curricular activities offered at the university.

This research has contributed to pedagogy for sustainable tourism with the analysis and understanding of a programme outside the English-speaking world in a social constructivist approach. Very importantly, it has contributed with the elaboration of an analytical framework that allows the examination and understanding of the curriculum space in any programme and its positioning regarding pedagogy for sustainable tourism. The framework may be particularly useful not only for educators in the tourism field, but also, more widely, for those who are interested in advancing pedagogy for sustainability and in relating that to wider pedagogical discourses. It can be used to analyse, make sense and invite discussions around curricula for sustainability, moving away from an individualistic, operational understanding of tourism education to one that places tourism as a component of a complex world.

In this approach, pedagogy for sustainable tourism aims at educating citizens rather than only practitioners. Several scholars have been critical of the narrow focus of some curricula on the vocational nature of tourism education (Airey & Johnson, 1999). Ring et al. (2009) have also been critical about a strong vocationalism which emphasises technical parts of the curriculum and thus fails to prepare students for a highly complex and changing world and for lifelong learning. Fidgeon (2010), however, has been critical both of vocationalist approaches which over-emphasise employability and of more academic approaches that are insufficiently grounded in reality and society’s needs. Rather than seeking a balance between reflection and action or liberal and vocational education, this research aims to underline the dynamic nature of education for sustainability and offer a framework for reflection and action.

The aim of the framework and the analysis here is not to evaluate and place curricula into specific quadrants. It is, instead, about drawing from the understanding that this conceptualisation offers to identify the curriculum space for a pedagogy for sustainability. The aim is to illustrate how this framework can be used to understand the curriculum space a tourism master programme occupies in terms of its pedagogy for sustainability. It is argued here that the tourism curriculum is a fluid space constantly changing in response to internal and external forces, a view shared also by Dredge et al. (2012). Not
least, its interpretation and implementation are influenced by educators’ own values, ontologies and epistemologies (Witsel & Boyle, 2017). Rather than firmly defining the ideal point of balance between liberal and vocational ends, or reflective and action means, this paper elaborates on the qualities of tourism pedagogy for sustainability and invites a reflective practice on the part of tourism educators themselves. Tourism educators should constantly reflect on and evolve their own and others’ pedagogical discourses, as well as their practice (of education). Knowledge is progressing and evolving and the conceptualisation of pedagogy for sustainability is based on that premise. The framework discussed here is open to new interpretations and is itself fluid and dynamic, and should be constantly redefined. It invites discussion, reflection and interpretation. The aim is to constantly revise and evolve tourism education to meet future needs.

The aim of the research is to elaborate on an integrated conceptual framework to understand the curriculum space for sustainable tourism. It builds on and integrates previous frameworks and pedagogical discourses. Education for citizenship as pedagogy for critical citizenship becomes part of the discussion and the development of the framework. The extended literature review presented here suggested a turn to critical pedagogy, which signifies a shift from individualistic perspectives on the world and the role of tourism graduates to communitarian understandings of it. Although current developments in the field of critical tourism pedagogy suggest an increasing need to incorporate literacy in cultural diversity, responsibility and sustainability, their integration with education for citizenship is lacking (Boluk et al., 2019). This research contributes to filling this gap and integrates pedagogy for critical citizenship in the framework.

In reviewing and reflecting on the master programme, this research has looked at programme and course syllabi and has employed an autoethnographic approach of the researcher as an educator and the programme coordinator. Nevertheless, it remains a single teacher’s perspective and understanding of the curriculum space. The integration of more perspectives in a dialogical manner would contribute to the development of the framework. In addition to teachers’ perspectives, students’ perspectives are very important too. Although course and programme evaluations from students have been considered in this self-reflectivity (as part of the author’s experience as a teacher in the programme), one should more comprehensively incorporate student perspectives. Future research could look at course evaluations or use methods such as critical incident questionnaires to better incorporate students’ perspectives (Boluk et al., 2019). This research has contributed to the understanding and the conceptualisation of the curriculum space for sustainable tourism. Such efforts are considered especially important in acknowledging the complex, dynamic character of tourism higher education (Dredge et al., 2012).

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