

The Role of Continuing Professional Education in Interpretive Guiding in South Africa

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Abstract : The demands and expectations of twenty-first century tourists have changed, and they continue to have an impact on tour guiding in cultural and natural tourist attractions. The traditional communicative role of the tour guide as a mere presenter is not sufficient anymore; instead, there are expectations from the tourists of guides who provide effective interpretive guiding. It is always questionable if tour guides in South Africa are equipped with the skills for effective interpretation, yet limited research has been conducted to investigate the continuing professional education of tour guides in South Africa. Instead, much attention has been given to aspects of registration and certification of tour guides in South Africa. Concerns have been raised about tour guiding and have led to the development of a strategy by the Department of Tourism to professionalise tourists guiding that includes training. However, the necessity for tourism training in tour guiding in South Africa was raised as early as in the 1980s, the paper argues that there is a further need to emphasise continuing professional education in interpretive guiding in South Africa. In this study, continuing education and training are considered to involve the upgrading of the skills and knowledge of interpretation of those who are already working as tour guides at the cultural and natural attractions. The study is guided by the empowerment theory. The aim of this paper is to present issues of effective interpretive guiding and continuing professional education in interpretive guiding in South Africa. This study is based on the literature survey of secondary sources such as academic journal articles, government documents, and reports and books. The conclusions indicate that there is a need for training in interpretive delivery techniques in South Africa. The need for interpretive training in interpretive delivery techniques is attributed by the call to allow people to use indigenous knowledge, rather than formal education as a basis for becoming a field guide as well as affording the previously disadvantaged individuals to access training opportunities as tourist guides.

Keywords : continuing education, interpretive delivery skills, interpretive guiding, tour guide

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