

# Wander Wait Wonder

## Anthropological Participant Observation in Hospitality Education

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### Introduction

Hospitality education must teach undergraduates to “think outside of existing practices and paradigms” (Airey & Tribe, 2000, p. 290). It must offer opportunities to develop and strengthen qualities such as critical thinking, self-reflection, ethical stance, inquiry capability—qualities that go beyond knowledge and skills that mainly contribute to vocational action and reflection (Airey & Tribe 2000; Lashley 2018; Lugosi et al., 2009; Oskam et al., 2017; Tribe, 2002). Integration of qualitative social sciences inquiry methodologies provide such opportunities (Lashley, 2018; Lugosi, 2009; Lugosi et al., 2009; Morrison & O’Gorman, 2008)

This poster presents a project in which anthropological participant observation was integrated in a regular 3rd year 20-weeks bachelor thesis preparatory research course and traineeship in an 4\* on campus (commercial) hotel.

### Participant Observation

The project was inspired by Tim Ingolds (2018) thoughts on anthropological participant observation and his claim that *anthropology = education*: “Observation is a way of participating attentively, and for reason a way of learning. ... We do so in order that we may grow in wisdom and maturity, in our powers of observation, reason, and critical thinking, in the hope and expectation that we can bring these answers to bear on whatever problems we may tackle in the future.” (Ingold, 2018, p. 23 )

### Project initiation

1. As response to a positivist hospitality management research default in education guided by ‘tyranny of relevance’ for business improvement only.
2. To elaborate on plea to integrate ethnography in hospitality education to enable development of reflective practitioner (Lashley, 2018; Lugosi, 2009).
3. To explore transformational learning through attentiveness and conscious responsiveness during traineeship (Ingold, 2018).
4. To explore possibility for development of student practitioner inquiry capability (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009).

### Method

Table: Overview activities in weeks

APO topic, principles part 1 wk 1 - 4 Preparation field work: decide APO Workshops/lectures/ consultation	Weaving APO & traineeship Week 5 - 10 Writing Field notes & reflection on research and learning Consultation Proposal submission	Project part 2 week 11 - 20 Field notes analysis, theme identification & story writing, writing theoretical framework; Workshops, lectures, consultation Oral defence in sub-groups Paper submission.
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- 3 semesters with 75 students
- Students randomly placed with supervisor by scheduling office.
- Recorded & transcribed conversations, defence; students’ field notes and 17 reports; researcher field notes
- Narrative analysis

### Findings

#### Experience of Liminality: Unlearning before learning

*All in all, I was happy with the chance, which was given to us to try this new method of doing research. In the beginning, I was a little bit suspicious because I was used to another way of doing research [quantitative]. But with the guidelines that are given to us and the feedback from our supervisor, I am satisfied with the outcomes so far. (L)*

#### Thinking through making: Daily operations in the commercial hotel interfered with learning

*During practice, I experienced it was quite hard to combine doing research with a role as being a manager. This was mainly because I was quite involved in the practical activities and my main priority was to maintain a clear overview of the department. ... Overall, during the five weeks in practice, I learnt how to combine my role both as a researcher and manager and how to make useful field notes. ... (D)*

#### Value for professional development: Insight in own functioning

*I think especially in the first week [doing PO] I was sometimes really shocked how I fell into habits and stereotyping which I honestly did not thought I would. I realized that even though I am already really open-minded and support feminism and especially women at work, I still realised a few times that my leading styles changed depending on gender. ... It made me question myself what kind of manager or even leader I want to be when working with other people. (C)*

#### Obliged attentiveness creates awareness of the human and non-human environment, responsibility and response-ability

*Dwelling on a situation in practice and observe what was going on really gave me an opportunity to see what is going on at the work floor. While observing I see, hear, feel more details, which I would never have regarded without taking time to observe. After 3 weeks, I for the first time noticed the wall colours in the Canteen – I started focusing on details. I learned that by observing, I started to see more than I would do normally at work – when you do not see, you do not know. (M)*

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