
TOURISM STUDIES

B. STRAND RATIONALE AND PHILOSOPHY

Tourism is a series of human interactions. It is sometimes referred to as a system, sometimes as an activity and often as an industry. A worldwide phenomenon of global economic importance, tourism is the result of people's decisions to travel. Travellers who become tourists may have different purposes for moving between locations, including visiting family and friends, attending a business meeting and enjoying leisure activities. Learning and participating in tourism activities helps people to develop an appreciation for the world and its people. Travelling brings one culture in contact with another and allows individuals to appreciate the beauty in cultural diversity. It has been said that tourism is the industry of peace; tourism promotes understanding, acceptance and appreciation of others.

Tourism is one of Alberta's fastest growing industries. As the third largest industry in Alberta, tourism employs 100 000 people and generates \$2.5 billion in revenues. By the year 2000, tourism is expected to rise to one of the top revenue generators in the province. Almost 70 per cent of the province's tourism business comes from Albertans travelling within their own province.★

Tourism is a sustainable industry. It encompasses business, organizations, labour and government agencies that provide, totally or partly, the means of transportation, goods, services, accommodation and other facilities, programs and resources. Providing quality guest service and hospitality can mean the difference between success and failure in the tourism industry. Effective communication skills, anticipating and satisfying guest needs, and having a professional appearance and behaviour are basic skills students will need in whatever career path they choose. Tourism Studies, a strand in Career and Technology Studies, can provide relevant, practical situations for students to develop and demonstrate these important skills.

Tourism Studies helps students develop a broad awareness of the economic, social and environmental impact of tourism in the province of Alberta. Students will develop an understanding of the present and potential economic contributions of tourism in the context of their community, Alberta, Canada and the world. However, the impact of tourism can destroy the physical and cultural resources that are the heart of the industry. Community planning and development of tourism is a cooperative effort between private and public sectors and between individuals and organizations. Creative and responsible decisions made at the local level can

★ Arlene McGinn and Deanna Binder, *Meeting the Needs: Tourism in Secondary Schools: A Predevelopment Curriculum Research Report*, Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education, 1990.

translate into social, cultural and economic benefits for the entire community. As citizens, future employees and future business owners, students will benefit from a better understanding of the importance and implications of tourism development and activities.

Tourism Studies provides the opportunity for students to link concrete and psychomotor learning with abstract, cognitive levels of learning. By developing basic and career-specific knowledge, skills and attitudes, students will have the flexibility to adapt to a variety of situations. They will meet the challenges of their personal and work lives and will further educational goals with increased ability and confidence. Students will develop tourism knowledge, skills and attitudes in the context of self, family, society and the workplace.

Within the philosophy of Career and Technology Studies, *students* in Tourism Studies *will*:

- demonstrate an appreciation for Alberta's cultural and environmental heritage, and explain the importance of protecting and preserving them for future generations
 - explain the development of the tourism industry in Alberta and its impact on the province's present and future economic, social and environmental well-being
 - demonstrate pride in the local community and in Alberta by studying, promoting and participating in tourism activities
 - describe the importance of tourism activities for promoting greater understanding and respect for cultures and individual differences
 - exhibit the knowledge, skills and attitudes of quality guest service and hospitality, which are applicable to personal, community and career roles
- use organizational and resource management skills, applicable to personal and career roles, by planning and facilitating real or simulated tourism events in the school and community
 - demonstrate individual responsibility, self-management and self-esteem through a variety of practical, relevant learning activities
 - use creative thinking skills, including problem solving, decision making, idea generation, synthesis and ability to predict outcomes
 - access, interpret and evaluate tourism information, and communicate this information using a variety of methods
 - use interpersonal skills, including teamwork and leadership, through a wide range of group and class activities that have practical tourism industry application and more general social and citizenship value
 - demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the scope of occupations and career paths in the tourism industry, including small business and entrepreneurship, and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of industry standards.

STRAND ORGANIZATION

THEMES

Modules in Tourism Studies have been grouped into five themes, which represent sectors of the tourism industry:

- nature of the industry
- food
- accommodation
- travel
- attractions.

The Nature of the Industry theme provides students with essential background information about tourism. One module, Quality Guest Service, offers certification opportunities.

The Food theme contains modules related to the food and beverage sector of the tourism industry, essentially dealing with “front of the house” or service activities in food establishments.

The Accommodation theme contains modules related to the accommodation sector of the tourism industry, which ranges from five-star hotels to bed-and-breakfast and campground operations.

The Travel theme includes the retail travel sector, travel information services and tourism geography.

The Attractions theme encompasses natural attractions (e.g., mountains, lakes and parks), man-made attractions (festivals, museums and theme parks) and recreation areas.

CONCEPTS/LEVELS

As with other CTS curricula, the Tourism Studies curriculum is organized into three levels of learning: introductory, intermediate and advanced.

Each level of Tourism Studies has major concepts on which modules have been developed. The concepts developed at the introductory level are:

- the organizational structure of the tourism industry
- local and regional tourism attractions and ventures
- appreciation and preservation of the environment
- appreciation of cultural diversity
- quality guest service
- ensuring safety and security of the guest
- career opportunities.

The concepts developed at the intermediate level are:

- planning, organizing and facilitating tourism events
- managing resources
- developing research skills
- participating as a team member
- presentation and communication skills.

The concepts developed at the advanced level are:

- basic business and promotion in tourism
- designing service standards and strategies
- creating marketing and venture plans
- employment and business opportunities and entrepreneurship
- tourism development plans.

