

Landscape Tourism, Expression of Meaning of Place Understanding

Seyed Amir Mansoori

Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Tehran, Iran

Nazar Research Center, Tehran, Iran

Seyedamir.mansouri@gmail.com

Abstract

Place is major element of tourism activity, and therefore most tourism programs are based on that criterion. One of the main goals of tourism planning and management is assisting tourists in order to achieve deep understanding of a destination. In this regard, the way in which *Place* is being studied and interpreted plays a crucial role in realizing the goal of tourism. *Landscape Science*, as an objective-subjective phenomenon, introduces new ways to interpret place and landscape based on which tourists receive information about place and also enter a *Holistic World* described by landscape literature. This paper reviews education and training methods and investigates tourism as a knowledge system that is able to discover the latent meaning of the place. Adopting the *landscape tourism* approach is therefore a prerequisite for the perception of the meaning of places.

Keywords: landscape tourism, spiritual tourism, place and landscape, tourism and learning, exploratory education

Problem Statement

Since ancient times to the present, the teaching and learning of science, the arts and the humanities have taken various styles in the history of pedagogy. Teaching is a means of conveying experiences, understanding, as well as the result of any exploration to others. It involves teachers, students as well as schools. What are the best methods for conveyance of experiences and knowledge? Do they have any substitutes? Is there any relationship between the methods of teaching and the knowledge content which is exchanged? How is environment perceived as the main issue in activities related to tourism, architecture and landscape? If space is different from place, then how is it understood? What is the essence of space and place, and what method is more efficient for understanding it as a subjective – objective phenomenon? Studies of experts of educational sciences to discover new teaching solutions with new and comprehensive interpretations have considerable results. Bazargan (2014) has outlined the effective components in teaching – learning process and emphasized on changing the teaching methods.

Syllogistic science

In traditional Iran, professional training relied on methods of apprenticeship, in which the apprentice followed his master's path. In this method of teaching, the behavioral and emotional bonds between apprentices and masters became very strong and this had a very positive effect on the learning process. Also in this method, the master was funder of school and the apprentice disseminated the same school.

Scientific education at religious schools was carried out through the oratorical method. The master taught in the circle of students and conveyed the content utilizing language and gesturing skills. It must be noted that in Shiite religious schools, students discuss the lessons after studying them, which gives a special value to the discovery and understanding of the unknowns of the lessons.

In modern education system which was developed in modern Europe and was distributed all over the world, teaching relies on the teachers' narrations. The structure of this passive learning method has remained fixed over centuries and the only transformation in the system has involved the way in

which the teachers /lecturers present the lessons and more recently supported by teaching aid tools. The nature of the science being exchanged in this method is a syllogistic affair that tries to represent recorded experiences independently. Objects considered as the subject of this science are abstract elements that their characteristics are described by the science.

Holistic knowledge

In history of teaching, in addition to the experimental sciences there is other knowledge which is different in nature. A holistic look at universe is the most important one according to which the entire universe is considered as one entity in which its parts are totally connected. The explanation of the relation between phenomena is described as intellectual and its understanding is described as scientific mystical (obtainable). Teaching of this group of knowledge is carried out through reliance on ascetics and inspiration. Masters offer a general picture of the concept and the students begin a continuous practice and explorations some truths based on their purity and capacity.

Question or answer?

In both syllogistic and holistic methods of teaching, the exchange of knowledge is based on 'answer'. The Master has an 'answer' on his mind which he conveys to the student, although he may do this through asking a question. In this method, students have a passive role and the only initiation imagined for them is learning. This teaching is based on conveyance of answer even if this may cause its deepening. Development of teaching methods with promotion of knowledge has created the world pedagogy. It means deepening and conceptualization of teaching, which in connection with deductive leads to utilizing technology for accessing the context while trying to get its results (Gotieh & Tardif, 2015). Any type of exploration and discovery and alteration in finding occurs after teaching and is based on the students' experience and deliberation and is not related to the teaching method.

Exploratory teaching

Human civilization is the result of creativity and the attempts of many of those who have anonymously discovered new and unique solutions.

Understanding obtained from discovery of truth is far more profound and effective than the one obtained from inspiration. How can the process of discovery be institutionalized and be utilized as a method for teaching? This might be possible through changing the teaching strategy from ‘answer – orientation’ to ‘question – orientation’. If the process of teaching does not begin with the definite interpretations of the lecturer about the lesson subject, a chance is given to the students to consider different options to answer his questions. This not only provides the chance for discovery and provision of ‘a new answer to an old question’ but also can result in a more profound understanding, if not a great innovation.

Objective – subjective categories

In addition to objective or subjective phenomena in Dekart’s bipolar world, modern man has described the phenomena which have double attributes; objective – subjective phenomena. These are elements that absolutely cannot be placed in any of the two object subjective – subjective groups. Home is the historical and conceptualized concept of building identity. It is a building in which a man has lived and has produced a concept called home through all memories resulting from residing in it, with the parts of the building. Mother is a woman who has raised a child; before the birth of the child and its historical upbringing in her lap, the concept of mother was equal to in identity called woman. Homeland, city, home, neighborhood and cultural heritage are among types of place and landscape of ‘objective – subjective’ phenomena. Understanding these phenomena is not possible by understanding one part of them.

Exploratory teaching, the best way of place understanding

Understanding of objective – subjective phenomenon depends on repetition of an experience that has made the phenomenon. In categories related to place, understanding of space is made possible with simultaneous presence and study of geography and history. Finding the secret of place concept as an objective – subjective phenomenon is carried out only through understanding it as a whole and repetition of the path which ends up in its production. Separate description of place or history describes two independent

components; while the existence of place is one entire identity, which is equal to none of its two dimensions (Mehrabi Golzar, 2010). It is the result of their combination, which creates the novel phenomenon. Understanding of this as entire identity is not possible through description of its parts.

City is a landscape; but we cannot understand the concept of city through reducing it to merely streets and buildings. The method of understanding the city as a landscape is the concurrent presence in the space of city with knowledge of its historical and social story and understanding the relation between symbols (physique of the city) and their meanings. Therefore, among natural behavior of humans, travelling and tourism is a special way which other kinds of teaching cannot cover the hidden knowledge of it. Tourism involves moving in places and sharing experiences with others that can have a significant role in creation and production of objective – subjective concepts. In exploratory teaching, travelling is a dynamic school in which a lecturer guides the students to study, interpret and discover the built and natural environments. The most important purpose of travelling as a ground for exploratory teaching may be developing the ability to ask questions (Atashinbar, 2010), the students' insights which puts a question mark on every phenomenon and space and tries to discover their relation in shaping the landscape. Therefore, the biggest achievement of travelling is development of the mind and the ability of students to interpret phenomena, and having a landscape oriented view towards the environment. In this path, preliminary knowledge of tourists plays an important role getting the result (Mansouri, 2010).

Review of an experience

Landscape research travels in the Nazar research center has been planned and carried out since 1996 with this motto: first purpose of this travel is group life practice and its second purpose is research and knowledge production. The manager of this organization attempts to compile a method of exploratory teaching, based on its experiences. Members of the travelling group are preferably chosen from students and graduates of MA and PhD of art and related fields of study so that while having a common language, with a similar level of historical and subjective knowledge, they are exposed to each other's information, thereby increasing the possibility of discovery and interpretation (Ghazanfari, 2010). Numerous articles which have been published in

scientific journals from research travels and exploratory tourism of Nazar research center, or theses of MA and PHD have been inspired from the preliminary articles of travels, show the success and efficiency of this method that is not only the profound understanding of objective – subjective phenomena like city and architecture but also shows their efficiency in re-reading the culture and civilization of nations, and the production of beneficial science. Experience of eight trips abroad and dozens of national travels for examination of different methods to edit the exploratory teaching method has resulted in formation of plan structure consisting of three main steps: Preparation of the researcher; development of the question; and, the production of knowledge. These three steps include the activities of before, during and after travel, respectively.

First step: preparation of researcher

Before the travel starts, organized studies regarding different backgrounds of history, geography, art, civilization, culture, politics and sociology of the destination is performed. All travel members in research group review their own special subject regarding the place of travel and then present the result of their study to the group.

The point which is special for learning in travel, and which the method of class teaching is deprived of, it is the courage and willingness which is provoked in the travelling student for participation in the program and provision of teaching purposes. Here, the student, through new experiences, is separate and distanced from his/her previous mentality and thoughts. Through this method and most effective element for learning, which is the motivation and willingness of student, is provided in the path of the program.

In parallel with preliminary studies and external knowledge of the subject, also the organization of the group for entering a common life experience starts. Grouping the fellow travellers and the division of tasks between them, joint meetings and experimental travels, in addition to necessary skills for group life, produces courage and an overview of what has to be obtained during travel. Proposing questions for the generation of knowledge, even though simple and preliminary ones, will provide a strong spirit of critical treatment of the environment for the students (Shokoohi, 2013). An organized strategy in guiding the group causes the fellow travelers

to have more self confidence in understanding the destination as a landscape. It is because for interpretation of phenomena understanding of people of destination is a very important criteria, and abstains from being merely dependent on scientific data. As a result the traveler through being attentive about the angle of view in the city of destination conceptually reread the meaning that the city has for citizens as a landscape. In this step, each one of the fellow travelers who is a researcher of a specific subject specifies his/her subject of study and interest based on the conditions of the destination environment. Visiting and understanding of historical, geographical, social, economic, cultural, religious and political context of the destination creates a brain storm which provides the ground for shaping the subjects compatible with the mentality of each of the researchers.

Second step: development of the question

Intelligent preparation and guidance of minds of group members for question and discovery is the main task of the program which is done by the main lecturer of group in different ways. Also two short – time and long – time programs are considered for question and discovery:

First, short perceptions: from the first day of arrival in the destination, each of the fellow travelers has to provide a short note about his/her perceptions during a specified time. For research, this is the task of explanations of master and his asking questions in different places and also the accurate look of the researcher in asking questions and discussing with friends in a small group or putting it forward in the problem solving group (Ale Hashemi, 2012). Second, programmed discoveries: each one of the fellow travelers asks different questions about a subject in which he/she gradually becomes accurate. During the travel, while pondering on the question, the traveler records his/her discoveries and interpretations from the research subject and discusses his findings with the group members in different times, sharing his/her discoveries. Also, in specified times the traveler presents his/her findings to the group and records the feedback of others. At the end of travel each of the members arrives at a specified and considerable theory regarding his/her chosen subject.

Therefore, theorizing for this research has been achieved through gradual and operational process, and considering its reliance on preliminary studies

and smoothening in the process of exploratory tourism, has a considerable suitability and stability.

Third step: knowledge production

After returning from travel, researchers face a support of findings scattered around a single subject, their role of which in the process of analysis and research is active. While a traditional researcher who searches through library texts has a passive role and selects among interpretations and written findings, a traveler returning from an exploratory travel is an active researcher who looks at the phenomenon of destination from his own point of view. The following up of writing articles and travel findings in programs after that prepares the ground for production of knowledge with a real concept.

Conclusion

In traditional methods of teaching – the purpose is conveying ideas and knowledge from master to student, although the level of this knowledge has transformed through history from knowledge of realities to conceptual knowledge, knowledge of methods to meet cognitive knowledge (Center of Quality Assessment of Tehran University, 2013), but always in the process of knowledge making, the student has a passive role and the teacher has the active role. In the method of exploratory teaching, questioning is very essential part of the process. Researcher is after discovery and asks questions for this purpose. The process of answering the question results in discovery of truth and production of beneficial science. Modern man, who under teachings and findings of the world of modern West reached a syllogistic and bipolar (Cartesian) view of the phenomenon, has experientially learned that an important group of world phenomena around us are outside the mentioned categorization. City, neighborhood, cultural heritage and living environment are examples that their understanding, in addition to objectivity of environment, depends on perception of the person from them. Landscape is like an objective – subjective phenomenon, the understanding of which is possible through an exploratory tourism. Tourism as a knowledge system through utilization of the repetition of place experience and an organized description of destination can help the travelers with the understanding of the true faces of landscape.

If the experience of exploratory teaching is organized and programmed based on hidden capacities in tourism, it will be known as the system of knowledge through which the production of science is possible. Experience of the current landscape tourism and its achievements is a successful example for programming and development of exploratory tourism in the development process of cultural tourism.

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