

KRISTĪNE BĒRZIŅA*, ILZE MEDNE**

Methods Used in Undergraduate Study Programmes for Tourism and Sustainability at the University of Latvia

Abstract. Globalisation in education sector, intense competition between universities in Latvia, increase in requirements of applied teaching from private companies, growing exactingness from students – it all makes base to improve University curricula using different active teaching techniques for better knowledge capture. In the case study of University of Latvia tourism study programme authors included practice of active teaching method application used to improve student understanding and competences including research, surveys, observations, shadowing, monitoring and register of the tourist tracks, expert interviews and industry seminars, discussions and interviews with industry stakeholders, field trips, different tourism sector enterprise and organisation visits inspections, colloquiums, research result presentations in seminars and conferences, knowledge enhancing for sustainability, best practices and systems used by other countries. Many of active learning methods are as additional activities for students not included in the compulsory part of studies, therefore it is needed to establish an additional separate entity for tourism and sustainability activities for applied teaching and research at university – Tourism and Sustainability Research Laboratory. Separate research entity gives possibility to involve interested students from different study programmes and cooperation with other faculties.

Keywords: tourism, tourism education, sustainability, quantitative research methods, qualitative research methods

1. Introduction

Over the decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. An ever-increasing number of destinations worldwide have opened up to, and in-

* University of Latvia, e-mail: kristine.berzina@lu.lv, phone: 371 670 347 18.

** University of Latvia, e-mail: ilze.medne@lu.lv, phone: 371 670 347 18.

vested in tourism, turning it into a key driver of socio-economic progress through the creation of jobs and enterprises, export revenues, and infrastructure development. One in 11 jobs worldwide is directly and indirectly generated by the tourism industry, one job in tourism generates 1.5 jobs elsewhere [UNWTO 2015].

Tourism involves a wide range of different activities, types of establishments, employment contracts and working arrangements. It provides working people with income and working experience and therefore contributes to their social inclusion and personal development. Tourism is a people's sector in all its aspects and dimensions [UNWTO & ILO 2014].

The tourism trends of the 21st century show that a new tourism demand needs changes in the working methods and new working methods need changes in the education and training programs.

2. Needs for new approaches to the tourism education: from passive to active learning

Recently created international tourism educator, community, non-governmental organization and industry actor network Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) indicates that during the last years, it has become increasingly obvious that tourism education needs serious rethinking. Surging growth in tourism arrivals and receipts, going strong since the middle of the twentieth century, spurred a proliferation of tourism programs in higher education to meet the demands of the burgeoning industry. As more complex understandings about tourism began to emerge, however, it became clear that equating the industrialization and growth of tourism with social and economic progress was far too simplistic – indeed, increases in visitation and receipts do not always reap positive benefits. Simultaneously, rapid socio-cultural and economic changes are afoot, which are rendering the future increasingly uncertain. The jobs of today are markedly different from those of yesterday, and it seems certain that those of tomorrow will be different still. Students entering the tourism sector, with its high levels of volatility and rapid globalization, are going to need different skills and understandings in order to achieve meaningful and successful professional lives.

During the twentieth century, tourism education was largely focused on developing business acumen and service skills, with little consideration being given to the ethical and moral foundations students would need to navigate the professional world and become socially and environmentally responsible leaders there.

This values-based approach to tourism education strives to broaden and deepen tourism education – to evolve beyond the narrow, instrumental, short-

term focus of days past, to incorporate humanist values, and impart the skills and knowledge necessary for making mindful decisions. TEFI engages students, industry, and communities in life-shaping learning experiences and reflection that contributes to the moral development of tourism practitioners.

TEFI's values are based on five overlapping dimensions:

- stewardship: exercising an ethic of care by upholding principles associated with sustainability, responsibility, and service to the community,
- knowledge: developing critical thinking, innovation, creativity, and networking, and appreciating different sources and types of knowledge about tourism,
- professionalism: aspiring to the highest standards of professional practice underpinned by leadership, practicality, services, relevance, timeliness, reflexivity, teamwork, and partnerships,
- ethics: engaging in good action and decision-making, underpinned by honesty, fairness, transparency, and authentic dialogue,
- mutual respect: embracing a humanistic approach to tourism, including a respect for diversity, inclusion, equity, humility, and collaboration [Dredge & Schott, Daniele, Caton, Edelheim & Munar 2015].

Educational experts Martin and Woodside asks, what are useful learning methods to for tourism and hospitality professionals to experience about new theories and practices in their fields. The answer is that a good cognitive-only teaching method for managers does not exist. The ineffectiveness of telling-pedagogical learning is not a new discovery. Cognitive learning just does not work for adults. Adults' life experiences are the foundation and motivation for ongoing learning. Tough (1982) conservatively estimates 80% of learning is accomplished through self-help, or among groups of peers. Since only 20% of adult learning is a cognitive process delivered pedagogically, a different education paradigm is needed [Martin & Woodside 2009].

Educational researchers [Knowles, Holton & Swanson 2013; Revans 2011; Cambourne 1993] have called for learning that transcends traditional passive forms and transitions to more active and authentic styles. Passive form of learning refers to a basic level of learning where information is reflexively transferred from teachers to learners, requires only nominal participation from learners, and emphasizes the conceptual understanding of facts and theories.

Sue S. Wingfield and Gregory S. Black [2005] characterise the passive form of learning with the following expressions: Lecture style; Minimal student input through discussion or experiential exercises; Emphasizes conceptual knowledge by focusing on facts and theory. Norbert Michel, John J. Cater and Otmar Varela [2009] characterise this form of learning as follows: Traditional lecture approach; Provides teachers a convenient and expeditious means of instruction; Introduction of basic principles to a large number of students.

Active learning differs from passive in that it requires students to participate in their own learning. One type of active learning is situated learning in which information and skills are taught in a setting that reflects their value in real life [Collins 1988]. Jan Herrington and Ron Oliver [2000] characterise the situated learning as follows: Greater levels of student involvement and participation in learning activities; Teach theories and concepts in a way that shows real-world application, Allan Collins [1988]: Learning theory in an environment that reflects how that theory is useful in a real-world situation.

The other form of active learning – authentic learning involves “learning that focuses on educational activities related to real-world problems and issues” and “also creates environments that involve learning in contexts that are as genuine as possible, providing learners with multiple perspectives, making students more responsible for their learning” [Deale 2007].

3. Up-to-date learning method use in tourism education processes in the University of Latvia

The modern methods present the following characteristics – they develop the pupils’ and the students’ personality representing the formative side of the education; they are focused on the students’ learning activity; they are focused on action, on learning by discovering; are flexible, encourage the students to learn through by cooperation and have the capacity for self-evaluation, the evaluation is a formative one; they stimulate the intrinsic motivation; the relationship teacher-student is a democratic one based on respect and collaboration [Sirbu, Tonea, Iancu, Pet & Popa 2015].

Without naming all the possible teaching methods, it is possible to give the very pointed citation of Confucius for active teaching methods: “I hear and I forget. I see and I believe. I do and I understand”. This do approach is what we try to use in study programmes. The list of modern teaching methods under the doing or participating section is long, sometimes comprising even 150 methods, including – discussions, problem solving, cooperative group work, project tasks, case studies, field trips, inspection tours, role plays, research applied, surveys, observations, shadowing, expert interviews, industry seminars, colloquiums, all that can be applied for knowledge enhancing for sustainability [Jacobsen, Dupuis & Kauchak 2009; Yakovleva & Yakovlev 2014].

The heterogeneous nature of tourism industry has influence on tourism education thus creating additional need for tourism education institutions to cooperate with different stakeholders and thus requiring application of wide range of ac-

tivities using different knowledge applied teaching methods. Tourism education institution cooperation with tourism industry public sector organisations give possibility for students to apply in lectures gained research and planning skills. At the same time cooperation with tourism industry private companies give possibility for the enhancement of the students' particular marketing and management practice understanding. Cooperation with other academic sector institutions simplifies the participation in common projects in order to attract local and international guest lecturers.

University of Latvia Tourism and hotel management undergraduate study programme has been going through the stages of development since 1994. Demands of the students who seek for competitive advantage in their work and demands of the industry force to apply different modern teaching methods or even look for possibility to reorganise the whole programme. In the case study of University of Latvia tourism study programme authors included practice of research

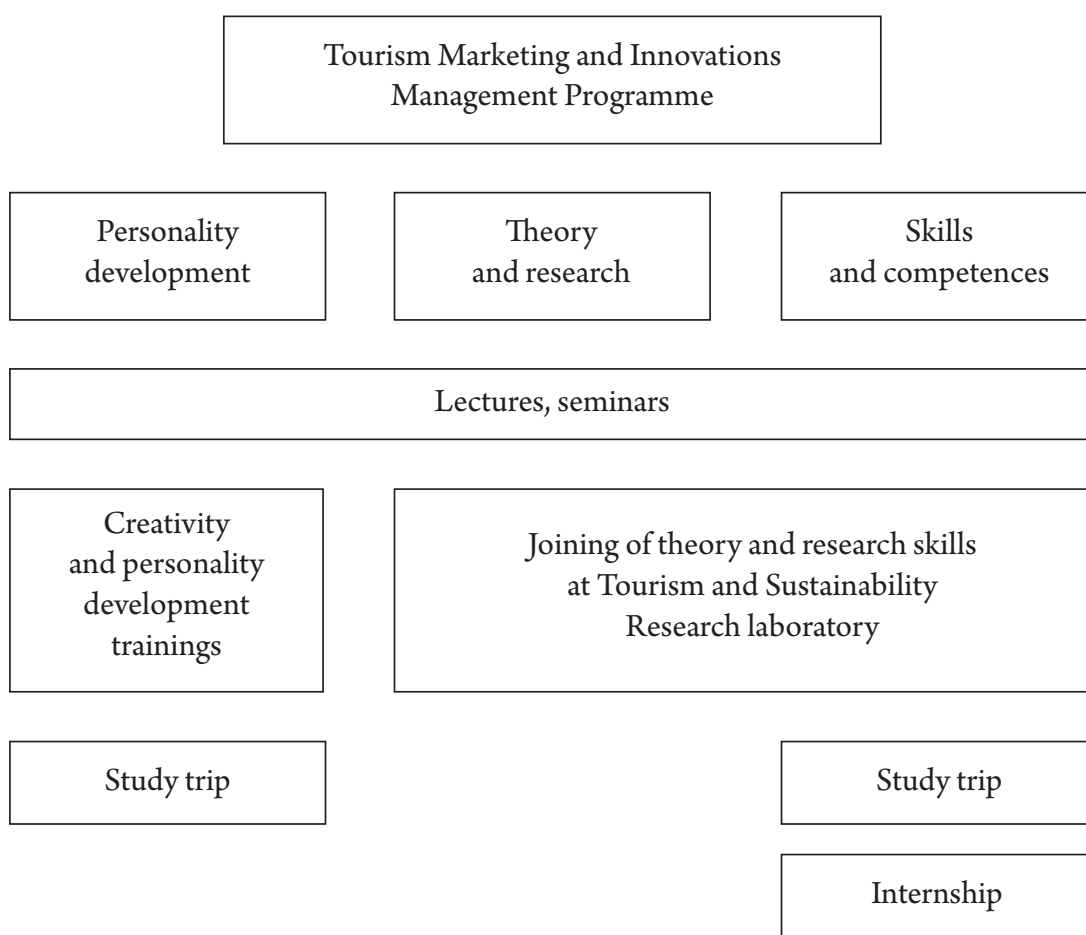


Figure 1. The Architecture of Tourism and innovations management programme at University of Latvia

Source: own elaboration.

methods application used to improve student understanding and competences. (Fig. 1).

University of Latvia in the tourism education offers the possibility to apply extensively different quantitative and qualitative research methods. Survey conduction is practice that is carried out in different study courses for all that mainly in marketing course. Students are involved in research plan development, questionnaire development, data collection, data input as well as data analyses. Surveys of local inhabitants to study their attitudes towards international tourists analysing local inhabitant attitudes as part of the destination management as well as destination sustainability aspect can be mentioned as the appropriate examples. This type of research activity can be carried out both for local students as well as for international exchange students.

Another example of utilisation of survey is questionnaires of international tourists conducted in Latvia or in priority target markets. By surveys abroad the students, in addition to quantitative research application skills, gain the cross-cultural interaction experience (Photo 1).

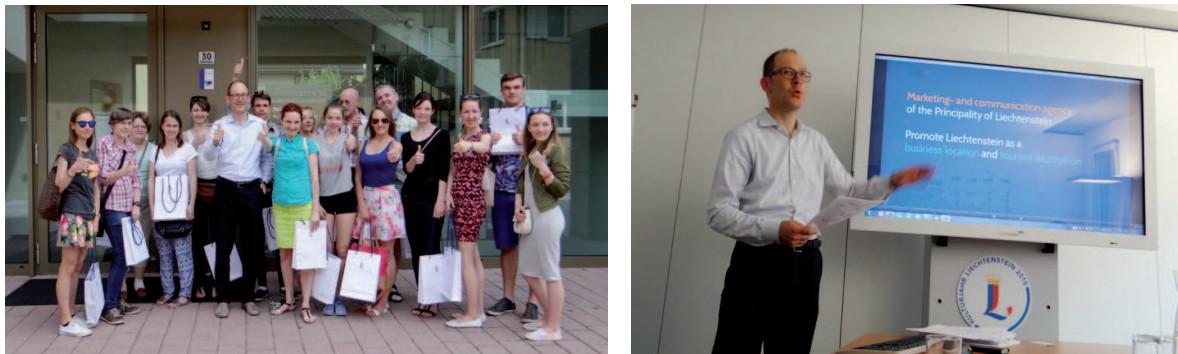


Photo 1. University of Latvia student field trip (Germany, Liechtenstein, 2015)

As example for qualitative research method application can be mentioned observations conducted by students, for instance cruise tourist shadowing, monitoring and register the tourist tracks from Riga port area to the downtown. Shadowing enables to observe international tourist behaviour, make notice of their time spent in the city, analyse the most visited places, look for the goods and services used during these few hours out of cruise ship; and gather data on shadowed tourism spending (Photo 2).

Based on the shadowing research in the cruise report, students and teachers developed suggestions for better infrastructure and information sign usage.

Scientific base for qualitative and quantities research method combination can give additional understanding, still observations and shadowing are underestimated methods [Perlow 1998; 1999; Bonazzi 1998; McDonald 2005]. Observation and shadowing combination with in-depth interviews and surveys give

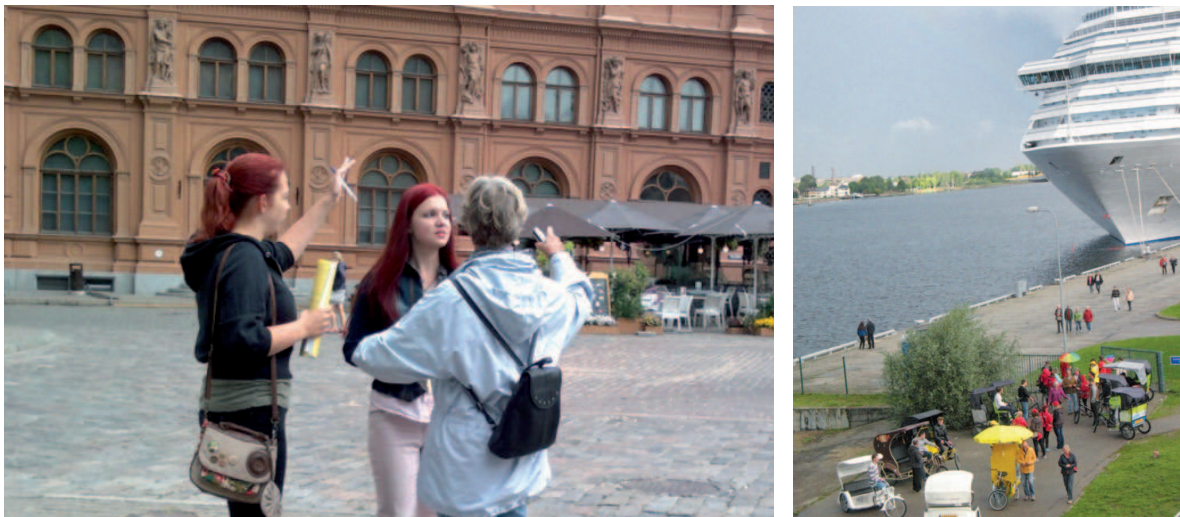


Photo 2. University of Latvia student shadowing and interviewing of cruise passengers (Riga, 2014)

a wider perspective in problem analysis [Polite, McClure & Rollie 1997; Bonazzi 1998; Perlow 1998; 1999].

Additionally to the University lecturers, students have possibility to hear lecturers from other international tourism education institutions and industry seminars. Good practice for high quality expert attraction is applications for financial support from several tourism education institutions of Latvia and this way competition is transformed into cooperation. Students from different Universities have possibility for cooperative learning during these guest lectures and seminars.

The industry process understanding is boosted by expert interviews and industry seminars, discussions. Different tourism sector enterprise and organisation visits inspections, colloquiums, research result presentations in seminars and conferences, knowledge enhancing for sustainability, best practices and systems used by other countries are used in tourism subjects.

Mentioned practices enhance skills trained: research planning, research management, data collection and analysis, presentation, team building, cooperation, communication with different people, cultural interaction, orientation in unknown environment, international event organisation.

All the wide range of applied active teaching methods creates need for separate frame – institution to have it as umbrella for all the activities conducted at the same time being a new online platform for further research development. In case of the University of Latvia this umbrella institution was the Tourism and Sustainability Research Laboratory for student and teacher cooperative learning-applied teaching approach. Separate research entity gives possibility to involve interested students from different study programmes and other faculties.

4. Tourism and sustainability research laboratory

The Tourism and Sustainability Research Laboratory (Fig. 2) was established in 2014 at the Scientific Institute of Economics and Management by the Faculty of Economics and Management.

The vision of the Laboratory: an important tourism and sustainability research centre in Latvia and the Baltic Sea region with international involvement and visibility.



Figure 2. Tourism and Sustainability Research Laboratory Logo

Source: own elaboration.

The mission of the Laboratory:

- do scientifically valid and economically significant research in the field of tourism and sustainability,
- improve the research skills of students of the Faculty of Economics and Management, enable the students to improve their knowledge in the field of tourism and sustainability,
- create an interdisciplinary research platform for the academic staff,
- provide Latvian and Baltic based tourism organisations and organisations of other economic fields and enterprises with scientifically valid research that provides innovative solutions for current issues,
- provide contribution for the international scientific environment.

The objectives of the Laboratory:

- do scientific and applied research for solving tourism and sustainability related problems,
- collaborate with interested parties in doing research in the field of tourism and sustainability,
- involve students and academic staff in the research process using an interdisciplinary and systematically approach,

- organise events (lectures, seminars, conferences) for improving the knowledge and research skills of students and tourism professionals,
- organise events for improving the knowledge and research skills of students and the workers of the economic sector in the field of sustainability,
- monitor the current events in the field of tourism and other economic sectors and international research. Present the results to the interested parties,
- participate in informing the society and other interested parties about the current research events and results,
- actively share research results in the international scientific environment (participation in conferences, scientific publications).

More than 70 students of the Faculty of Economics and Management have already been involved in several research projects: “Consumer Behaviour of Foreign Tourists in Riga – 2014,” “Cruise Tourism Study in Riga” and “Latvia as Tourism Destination Brand Awareness and Equity in Germany as High Priority Target Market.” Students were involved in conducting respondent’s interviews, shadowing and data pre-treatment.

5. Conclusion

A wide range of active teaching methods and research skill enhancing tools are used for the study programmes of the University of Latvia, still many of these activities are additional activities for the students. Therefore it is necessary to establish an additional structure for tourism and sustainability research at university. The Tourism and Sustainability Research Laboratory was established at the Scientific Institute of Economics and Management by the Faculty of Economics and Management of University of Latvia. The vision of the Laboratory: an important tourism and sustainability research centre in Latvia and the Baltic region with international involvement and visibility that will allow go further in applied teaching method putting in practice.

References

- Bonazzi G., 1998, Between Shock Absorption and Continuous Improvement: Supervisors and Technicians in a Fiat “Integrated Factory,” *Work Employment and Society*, 12(2): 219-243.
- Cambourne B., 1993, *The whole story: Natural learning and the acquisition of literacy in the classroom*, Jefferson City, MO: Scholastic.
- Collins A., 1988, *Cognitive apprenticeship and instructional technology (Technical Report No. 6899)*, Cambridge, MA: BBN Laboratories Inc.

- Deale C.S., 2007, An example of collaboration on an authentic learning project in heritage tourism: The case of the Scots-Irish in North Carolina, *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, vol. 7(4): 55-69.
- Dredge D., Schott Ch., Daniele R., Caton K., Edelheim J., Munar A.M., 2015, The tourism education futures initiative, *Anatolia – An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, vol. 26(2): 340-346.
- Herrington J., Oliver R., 2000, An instructional design framework for authentic learning environments, *Educational Technology Research and Development*, vol. 48(3): 23-48.
- Jacobsen D.A., Dupuis V.L., Kauchak D., 2009, *Methods for Teaching: Promoting Student Learning in K-12 Classrooms, 8/E*, London: Pearson.
- Knowles M.S., Holton E.F., Swanson R.A., 2012, *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development*, New York, NY: Elsevier.
- Martin D., Woodside A.G., 2009, Moving beyond pedagogy to andragogy: Experimental learning exercises for tourism/hospitality executive training, *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, vol. 3(4): 283-286.
- McDonald S., 2005, Studying actions in context: A qualitative shadowing method for organizational research, *Qualitative Research*, 5(4): 455-473.
- Michel N., Cater J.J., Varela O., 2009, Active versus passive teaching styles: An empirical study of student learning outcomes, *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, vol. 20(4): 397-418.
- Perlow L.A., 1998, Boundary Control: The Social Ordering of Work and Family Time in a High-tech Corporation, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43(2): 328-357.
- Perlow L.A., 1999, The Time Famine: Toward a Sociology of Work Time, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(1): 57-81.
- Polite V.C., McClure R., Rollie D.L., 1997, The Emerging Reflective Urban Principal – The Role of Shadowing Encounters, *Urban Education*, 31(5): 466-489.
- Revans R., 2011, *ABC of action learning*, Burlington, VT: Gower Publishing Co.
- Sirbu C.C., Tonea E., Iancu T., Pet E., Popa N.D., 2015, Aspects Concerning the Usage of Modern Methods for Teaching – Learning – Evaluation in Universities Original, Research Article, *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 182: 550-554.
- UNWTO, 2015, *Tourism Highlights. 2015 Edition*, Madrid.
- Wingfield S.S., Black G.S., 2005, Active versus passive course designs: The impact on student outcomes, *Journal of Education for Business*, vol. 81(2): 119-123.
- UNWTO & ILO, 2014, *Measuring Employment in the Tourism Industries – Guide with Best Practices*, Madrid.
- Yakovleva N.O., Yakovlev E.V., 2014, Interactive teaching methods in contemporary higher education, *Pacific Science Review*, vol. 16(2): 75-80.

Metody wykorzystywane w nauczaniu na studiach pierwszego stopnia na kierunku turystyka i trwały rozwój na Uniwersytecie Łotewskim

Streszczenie. Globalizacja w sektorze oświaty, intensywna konkurencja pomiędzy łotewskimi uczelniami wyższymi, wzrost oczekiwań co do praktyczności kształcenia ze strony prywatnych przedsiębiorstw oraz wymagania samych studentów – to podstawy doskonalenia programów studiów wyższych i szerszego wykorzystania aktywnych technik przekazywania wiedzy. W przypadku studiów na kierunku turystyka oferowanych przez Uniwersytet Łotewski autorzy programu zastosowali praktyczne, aktywizujące metody nauczania służące wzbogaceniu wiedzy i kompetencji studentów, takie jak: badania naukowe, ankiety, obserwacja, work shadowing, monitorowanie i ewidencja szlaków turystycznych, wywiady eksperckie, seminaria branżowe, dyskusje i wywiady z przedstawicielami branży, wycieczki w teren, wizyty studyjne w firmach i organizacjach sektora turystycznego, kolokwia, prezentacja wyników badań na seminariach i konferencjach, poszerzanie wiedzy na temat trwałego wzrostu oraz poznawanie dobrych praktyk i rozwiązań stosowanych w innych krajach. Wymienione działania wzmocniają szkolone umiejętności: planowanie badań, zarządzanie badaniami, zbieranie i analiza danych, prezentacja, budowanie zespołu, współpraca, komunikacja interpersonalna, interakcja kulturowa, orientacja w obcym otoczeniu czy organizacja międzynarodowych imprez. Wiele spośród aktywnych metod nauczania stanowi komponenty opcjonalne i nie należy do obowiązkowej części programu studiów, toteż do obsługi takich form kształcenia i uprawiania nauki w ramach studiów na kierunku turystyka i trwały rozwój konieczne było ustanowienie Laboratorium Naukowego Turystyki i Trwałego Rozwoju. Taka odrębna jednostka umożliwia zaangażowanie zainteresowanych studentów różnych kierunków i sprawną współpracę międzywydziałową.

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka, edukacja turystyczna, trwały rozwój, ilościowe metody badawcze, jakościowe metody badawcze