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## Becoming a guide for pilgrims in a time of secularization

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### ABSTRACT

The goal of this case study is threefold: first, to introduce the concept of postmodern pilgrim, leveraging on two pilgrimage experiences in Switzerland; second, to propose a model (PEARL) for developing training modules for pilgrim guides; and finally, to make concrete pedagogical suggestions based on the proposed model, which point out the effective uses of ICT applications. The model is based on the concepts of informal learning and reflective practice, which are also illustrated in the paper. The PEARL model is designed as an open source to be further integrated and tested.

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reflective practice

## 1. Introduction

With the increased number of pilgrims taking part in pilgrimages all around the world, there is a need to develop training programs for pilgrim guides, which might introduce to the *secular tourist* the experience of becoming a *postmodern pilgrim*.

The pilgrimage phenomenon is constantly growing, but it is difficult to have precise statistics. Recently, the UNWTO (the World Tourism Organization) estimated that 'about 330 million tourists are visiting the most important world-renowned religious sites every year', a global industry estimated at around 18 billion dollars (Griffin & Raj 2017, viii). However, the statistics and the economical worth of the combined *religious, faith-based, spiritual tourism, pilgrimage* 'niche products' is difficult to know (Griffin & Raj 2017, ii). Regarding the Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage between France and Spain, a way of tracking part of this phenomenon, is referring to the number of pilgrims that every year arrive in Compostela and receive the so-called *Credentials*, issued by the Pilgrims Office in Santiago (Figure 1).

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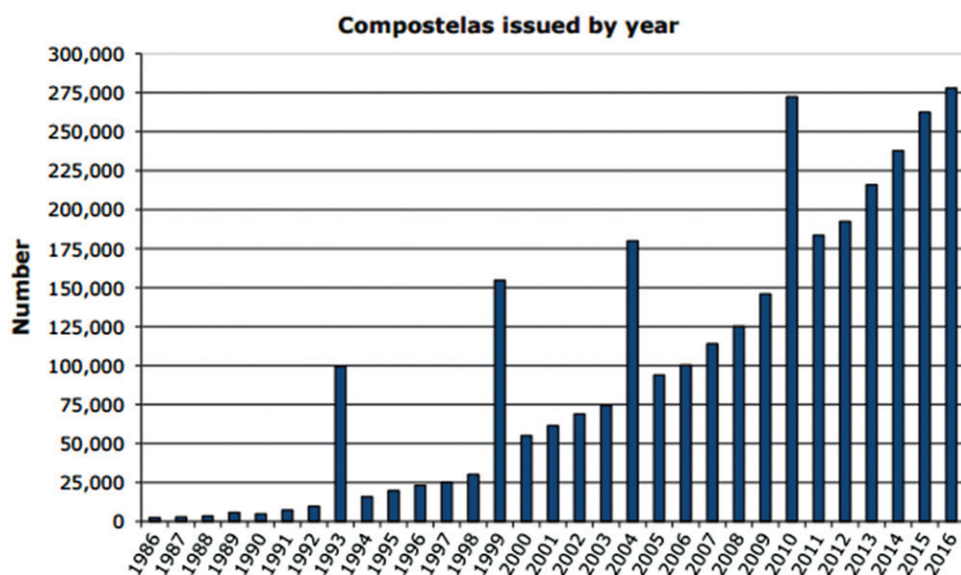


Figure 1. Pilgrims who received the Compostelas' Credentials from 1986 to 2016.

Source: <https://thecaminoprovides.com/2017/01/31/30-years-of-pilgrim-statistics>

## 2. Pilgrimage, tourism and ICT

### 2.1. Key definitions

*Pilgrim* comes from the Latin *peregrinus* and means foreigner, wanderer, exile, traveler. The word derived originally from the medieval phrase *agere per agros* (meaning *going through the fields*) that was used to describe people who crossed the territory outside the city (Digance 2006; Damari and Mansfeld 2016, 204). The English word *tourism* comes from the French word *tour*, which is used to refer to sport trips. *Tour*, then, comes from the French verb *tourner*, which originates from the Latin verb *tornare* that meant to turn and referred to the ancient activity of working with the lathe (Turismo 2000). The Latin *tornare* has added to the connotation of the French *tourner* – and thus, of the English *tourism* – the aspect of making a circular journey, usually for pleasure and returning to the starting point (Collins-Kreiner 2018; Smith 1992). According to Turner and Turner, (1978, 20) ‘a tourist is half a pilgrim, and a pilgrim is half a tourist’. After explaining the historical evolution of pilgrimage and travel, Smith (1992) defined the pilgrim as a religious traveller and the tourist as a vacationer.

### 2.2. The pilgrimage–tourism nexus

According to several scholars in pilgrimage studies, such as Collins-Kreiner (2018, 2016, 2010a, 2010b), pilgrimage is one of the oldest and most basic population motility phenomena in the world. The study of circulation, as a religious phenomenon, and people’s mobility, is an interdisciplinary field of study, which has gained an intense scholarly attention during the last three decades (Eade and Sallnow 1991; Barber 1993; Badone and Roseman 2004; Timothy and Olson 2006; Margry 2008; Eade and Albera 2015).

According to Collins-Kreiner, the boundaries between pilgrimage and tourism ('the pilgrimage-tourism nexus') have become blurred in different religions. The 'old' paradigm with the assumption that religious elements lie at the core of pilgrimage is not accurate anymore. There is a shift to a postmodern approach. The blurred boundary shows that people are searching for new meanings. In this new context, pilgrimage must be defined in a more holistic manner; literature on pilgrimage, though, is still fragmented, lacking a comprehensive synthesis and conceptualization (Collins-Kreiner 2018; 2010b).

Collins-Kreiner uses the term *dedifferentiation*, meaning that the 'either-or' approach of theories is yielding to a 'both-and' approach. Researchers use terms such as *interpretations*, instead of *truth* or *falsehood*. The focus is on the subjective over the objective. 'Today, studying the meaning of pilgrimage transcends geography and sociology and involves an interpretative approach to seeking hitherto neglected alternative meanings'. (Collins-Kreiner 2010b, 450–451). In fact, to understand pilgrimage, researchers from various disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, history, religious studies, geography and most recently leisure and tourism, are confronted with the difficulty of distinguishing the boundaries of the different disciplines. The focus of the research is shifting toward the visitors' motivations, which range from mere curiosity to an intense search for meaning.

Recently, Damari and Mansfeld (2016) analyzed the pilgrim's identity, role and interplay within the pilgrimage environment from the postmodernism perspective. According to the authors, there are four stages: The first one is a traditional self-centered stage, where the pilgrim is separated from the environment. In the second stage, the modern pilgrim interacts with the environment through a one directional purpose, such as a religious purpose. Through the third stage, the postmodern pilgrim is letting the environment influence his/her experience with new meanings. Finally, in the fourth stage, there are multiple layers of meanings concerning the pilgrim's experience, identity and role, which entail hermeneutics (self-interpretation) of the experience. The missing link is the conceptualization of the pilgrimage experience as a holistic phenomenon. For Damari and Mansfeld, (2016, 213–214) the postmodern pilgrim 'is a product of the present day, which is characterized by cross-sectional and cross-directional socio-economic and cultural processes (...) created from a sort of socio-cultural and economic chaos (...) becoming predominately an individual trip. (...) their experiences stem from much closer encounters with fellow pilgrims and with host communities. Hence, the traditionally delineated borders of faith create a mosaic (religious syncretism) of pilgrimage tours often inspired by more than one faith'. The scholars summarized the concept as pilgrimage by dialogue with the Alter. This type of pilgrim embodies what the authors define as a borderline pilgrim, as 'one that looks for experiences, which may either foster or weaken his or her faith. The pilgrimage aims at raising more questions than answers'. (2016, 213). Pilgrims are confronted with more uncertainties and look for inclusive experiences, interacting with the local community, seeking to understand the sacred and profane representations of the inhabitants and not those of tour operators.

### **2.3. Postmodern pilgrims in the digital age**

The new mobility paradigm offers new conceptual frameworks for understanding the nature of pilgrimage phenomenon, where places are seen as dynamic, as places of

movement, with new meanings. The postmodern pilgrim is ‘mobile’ not only geographically but also as an active multimedia producer of experiences and testimonies, sharing contents and identities in digital environments, using information communication technologies (ICT).

De Ascaniis and Cantoni (2016) published a Research Manifesto titled ‘Pilgrims in the Digital Age’ (Figure 2) that was signed by several scholars in the considered fields, in which they discussed the relationship of religion, tourism and learning, and the role ICTs might play; such relation was represented as a cyclical and reciprocal loop of influences. Religion, which can also be reframed as the search for meaning through spirituality, is a driver for pilgrimage and religious tourism activities, which have on their turn an impact on religion and spirituality. This dimension promotes and fosters new learning and training needs, such as new training and learning opportunities. The manifesto provides a conceptual base for the PEARL pilgrims guides’ pedagogical training model proposed in this article.

### 3. Background

The growing number of people, who engage themselves in pilgrimage experiences, creates a demand for pilgrim guides. However, the kind of learning and training experience needed is not defined. The model presented in this paper aims at providing guidance to elaborate training programs for pilgrim guides. It is based on the personal experience of the author, who was a guide herself in the Swiss National Pilgrim Day in 2017 and collected insights from several pilgrim guides who took part to the event; the model was also inspired by the pilgrimage activities of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Zürich. Both of these experiences are outlined below.

#### 3.1. The Swiss National Pilgrimage Day 2017

The first Swiss National Pilgrimage Day dedicated to St. James was held on 20 of May 2017. Figure 3 represents the logo of the event. The author of this paper took an active part in its organization. The *Dachverband Jakobsweg Schweiz*, which is the Swiss umbrella organization of the eleven Swiss Jakobsweg Associations, organized a one-day pilgrimage event, following St. James Trail’s roots in Switzerland, with the

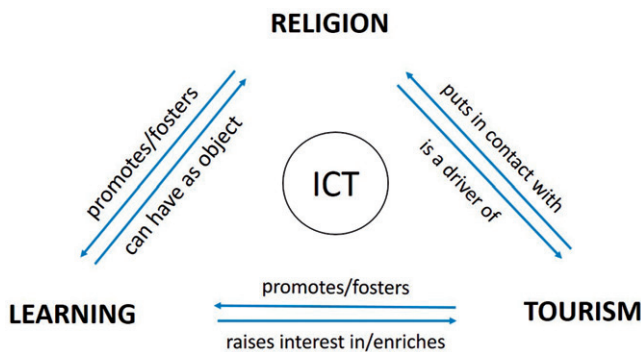
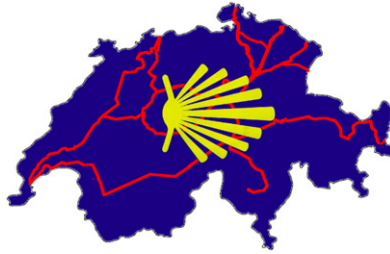


Figure 2. Relationships between tourism, religion, learning and ICTs. (source: De Ascaniis and Cantoni 2016, 28).



**Figure 3.** Logo of the Swiss National Pilgrimage Day, event that took place on the 20th of May 2017.

title ‘Immer der Muschel nach – am einem Tag auf dem Jakobsweg durch die ganze Schweiz’ (trad. ‘Following the scallop – In one day across Switzerland through the St. James Trails’). More than 600 people took part in this unique event.

To promote the event and to give it a wide coverage in the media, a booklet flyer was prepared, which highlighted the 46 trails available to walk and gave the contact information of the respective guides. From Basel to Geneva, from Rapperswil to Einsiedeln or from St. Gallen to Ticino, both experienced and inexperienced pilgrims walked in a common spirit, led by 46 selected guides. These 46 guides structured the walk, but also the spiritual experience, with the moments of reflection, walking silently, singing songs, praying, reading texts, engaging in conversations and other types of group activities. Almost half of them (25) were trained as pilgrim guides (see next section). The other half were experienced wanderers, who gained pilgrimage guide preparation through a half-day training, organized by the *Dachverband Jakobsweg Schweiz* and by an association called *jakobsweg.ch*.

*Following the scallop – In one day across Switzerland along the St. James Trails*

The guideline booklet was prepared by Schaar (2017), the current pilgrim minister of the Reformiertes Pilgerzentrum of the Evangelical Reformed Church in the Canton of Zürich. It consisted of a collection of twelve theses to foster interreligious dialogue and of various spiritual activities for pilgrims.

These twelve theses state that: (1) the modern pilgrim has in common with the medieval pilgrim the search for some sort of inner healing; (2) the healing is considered in the context of a plural–religious–spiritual–open context; (3) today’s pilgrim is in search of his or her own development of identity; (4) today’s pilgrim is in search of meaning/s; (5) to engage in a pilgrimage means to engage in an inner therapy; (6) to make a pilgrimage is a ritual of tensions between walking and stopping, between flow and rest; (7) pilgrimage means to live one’s own values; (8) pilgrimage means being part of ‘the Church in movement’; (9) pilgrimage is an ecumenical phenomenon; (10) to be a pilgrim means to give and to get hospitality; (11) pilgrimage entails connection and connecting and (12) pilgrimage is a sort of special tourism, which combines nature and people (Schaar 2017).

The booklet helped to structure the pilgrimage experience, proposed spiritual activities, songs, texts, key questions, which helped to start intense conversations between the pilgrims and their guides.

After the Swiss National Pilgrimage Day, feedback from almost all the guides (41 out of 46) were received through a short comment via email, about how they

perceived the event, what were the reactions of the pilgrims and what happened during the day. Everyone appreciated the experience, with an almost 100% positive response about wanting to take part again in a similar national event soon. Guides' feedback mostly concerned the following aspects:

- personal spiritual dimension and the meaning of pilgrimage (e. g. pilgrimage as an experience of 'filling oneself with energy', pilgrimage as an 'enriching experience for the body and the soul', 'feeling gratitude and happiness');
- atmosphere and relation with other participants (e. g. 'being welcomed by church ministers', 'drinking a glass of friendship wine with a very diverse group of people', 'having interesting conversation', singing together, overcoming language barriers);
- surroundings and stops during the walk (e. g. 'learning about historical aspects of the local areas', 'enjoying the landscape and the surrounding nature').

Additionally, participants were asked how they got to know about the event. Unfortunately, not all the guides could gather this information from the participants, but those who did allow us to state that 32% were informed about the event through printed media, especially the local weekly church printed media; 28% through the dedicated flyer booklet that was distributed in churches; 24% through the affiliation to a church or through the local municipality, 9% through Internet and Facebook and around 7% through the radio. Also, the pilgrim guides promoted the event, using their own networks.

### **3.2. Pilgrim guide training in Switzerland**

Twenty-five out of 46 pilgrim guides received a formal training. For approximately 10 years, the Evangelical Reformed Church of the Swiss Canton of Zürich ([www.zhref.ch/angebote/pilgern](http://www.zhref.ch/angebote/pilgern)) has been offering training with three modules within a one-year timeframe, to become a pilgrim guide. This training is called 'Ausbildung zur Pilgerbegleiterin/zum Pilgerbegleiter EJW – Europäische Jakobswege – Transnationaler Lehrgang in drei Modulen auf Züricher Jakobswegen'. This initiative has been embraced by Germany, Switzerland and France. During the last decade, a total of 140 new pilgrim guides received their certificate from the Reformiertes Pilgerzentrum of Zürich. Approximately half of them (70) are actively organizing different types of pilgrimage experiences in Switzerland (one day, a couple of days or a couple of weeks) and in some European countries such as Germany, Austria, Lichtenstein, Denmark, Spain and additionally in Israel and Palestine.

Because of the well-known Swiss tradition of *Wanderung* (walking), a pilgrimage version of *wandern* (walking) is a natural shift. Swiss people love to wander and to be able to transform this passion into a structured activity is what is needed to become a certified pilgrim guide. Currently (i.e. in 2018), a total of 24 people, coming from the German-speaking areas of Switzerland, Germany and Liechtenstein, are being trained. The course involves three modules, structured in the following way: The first module provides a theoretical and theological background of what it means

to be a pilgrim, and what are the characteristics of a European St. James pilgrimage. The first module focuses also on spirituality, which helps to define a pilgrimage experience, with its own symbols and rituals. A section is dedicated to reflections about group dynamics and to practical aspects of organizing a pilgrimage with a group. The training has a hands-on-oriented approach, and an important part is dedicated to the concrete aspects of how to design your own pilgrimage-offer. The participants are divided into groups of four and they have to apply what they learnt to a short pilgrimage experience.

The second module is a pilgrimage of several kilometers with all the groups, between Schaffhausen and Winterthur, reaching the monastery of Kappel, near Zürich. During one and a half days, all the six groups can use the time to practice how to design and how to conduct a pilgrimage experience. The groups then compare and contrast their own work with each other's experiences and give constructive feedback. Another important part of the second module is dedicated to the so-called church pedagogy, that is, how to experience a church visit with pedagogical hands-on activities. In the meantime, from module two to module three, each participant has to select and design an own pilgrimage project, do the on-site reconnaissance, design a series of the so-called inputs, which are spiritual activities to do with the group (such as beginning with a collective start and closing with a collective end; contextualizing the experience with material and immaterial metaphors; walking in silence for a certain time and stages; devoting time to spiritual moments; enjoying nature; singing together; reading texts), stay at least one night in a monastery or in a pilgrims' hostel, design a flyer with a budget, write the project and present it during the third module. In fact, the third and last module is dedicated to all the newly trained guides' projects, with an external commission giving feedback on all the 24 projects.

The training has some prescriptive elements, such as taking active part to the three modules; for one's own project choosing a pilgrim path with at least a one night stay in a monastery or a pilgrim hostel; making and documenting the reconnaissance; designing the spiritual input on the chosen path; designing a flyer of one's own project; calculating the budget and writing a project plan of the project with spiritual input and delivering it within the given deadline. But the training is also an *informal learning* experience, because the future guide chooses elements from the training, according to his/her own personal experiences and sensibilities, ideas and background, and crafting his or her own pilgrimage project.

#### **4. PEARL: a model to train pilgrim guides**

The Swiss pilgrimage event of 20 May 2017, and the training experience of the Reformed Church in Zürich inspired the author to elaborate the PEARL pedagogical model. The model relies on two main conceptual bases that are (a) the conceptual framework of informal learning on the workplace by Jeong et al. (2018), adapted for pilgrim guide training; and (b) the reflective practices designed by Reilly (2017). They are briefly presented in the following sections.

## 4.1 Conceptual base

### 4.1.1. Informal learning

Over the last three decades, informal learning in the workplace has been recognized as the driving force of competitiveness and corporate performance for the human resource development (HRD). According to Cross (2007), in the knowledge economy, informal learning is embedded in at least 80 percent of everyday work activities, varying from collaborating with colleagues, gaining practical knowledge and changing one's own point of view. The informal learning process is highly dependent on the context. In fact, according to Marsick (2009), informal learning happens spontaneously, is self-directed, is intentional and is field-based, and it is not institutionalized. The nature of informal learning is multidimensional, because of the nature of it is complex, involving cognitive, metacognitive and motivational dimensions, embedded in a sociocultural context. It consists in a dialectic process of action and reflection, from activities such as individual learning, interpersonal learning and collaborative learning. Researchers such as van Woerkom, Nijhof, and Nieuwenhuis (2002) highlighted the importance of critical reflective behaviors at work for effective informal learning outcomes.

Because of the impact of informal learning on formal activities, Jeong et al. (2018) worked on a comprehensive literature review focusing only on empirical studies about conceptualization and measurement of informal learning, identifying an agenda for future research and practice, and measuring informal learning outcomes (Wang and Spitzer 2005; Froehlich, Beusaert, and Segers 2017).

Jeong et al. (2018) developed a conceptual framework to track the informal learning behaviors along three dimensions: intentionality, developmental relatedness and learning competence (see Figure 4). *Intentionality* means that informal learning occurs spontaneously and deliberately. *Developmental relatedness* refers to the interactions between the learner alone and the learners within a group; in fact, it is divided

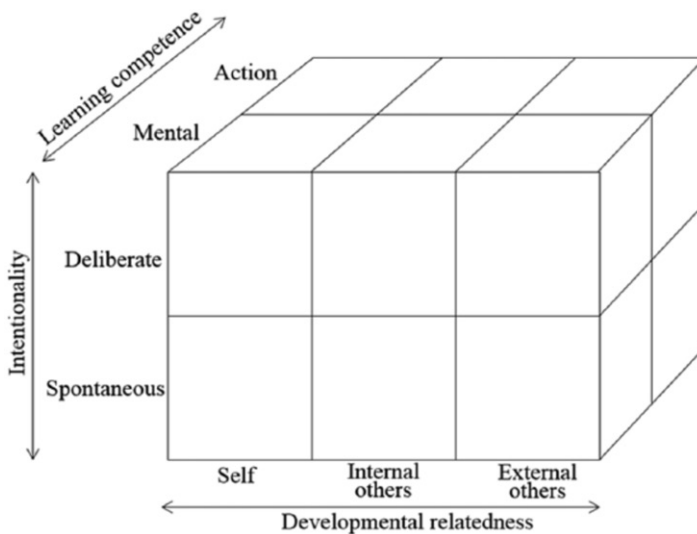


Figure 4. The conceptual framework of workplace informal learning by Jeong et al (2018, 142).

into individual learning (learning alone), learning together (one-way interactions) and learning from others (two-way interactions). *Learning competence* considers two different learning cycles: *the action*, which implies experimenting new ideas, interacting with others, setting learning goals and learning by doing; and *the mental*, which means assessing learning needs, monitoring the learning process and engaging in critical thinking and reflectivity practices.

The conceptual framework describes the core components of informal learning as a tool with 12 possible combinations of activities, useful for designing didactical activities within an informal learning context. This conceptual framework can enrich theories of learning, such as experiential learning, community of practice, social-cognitive theory and self-directed learning, balancing different informal learning behaviors.

#### **4.1.2. Reflexivity and reflective practices**

The importance of reflective practices has been established for decades (Dewey 1938; Schön 1983; Richardson 2005/2006). Hedberg (2008, 2) stated that ‘when we reflect, we give the learning a space to be processed, understood, and more likely integrated into further thoughts and actions’.

The pivotal work of Kolb (1984, 2007) is drawn on *the experiential learning theory* and of Argyris and Schön (1978) on *the double loop learning theory*, which identified how interactions between individuals and the organizational environment are essential, Reilly (2017) suggests that to foster reflective thinking, reflective practices need to have the objectives of a) connecting concepts with practical experiences; b) reflecting on these experiences to analyze what happened, why and the potential for change and c) developing self-awareness in recognizing the learners’ place in the experience.

Embedding reflective practices in an informal learning setting is vital, because when actions are framed by reflectivity, learners’ underlying beliefs and assumptions can be newly interpreted, thus gaining new perspectives. This means that reflectivity promotes in learners the awareness of their perceived gaps in their own learning progress, as well as in the social interactions’ tasks. Reflectivity offers the possibility to look back and to analyze one’s own experiences. It is a process that supports learning and enhances critical thinking skills. Taking into account the multilevel nature of the informal learning conceptual framework (individual, group, organization), we use it in the context of training pilgrimage guides, considered as active agents, in a way that will impact their experience learning to guide pilgrimages and therefore impact the experience of future postmodern pilgrims. We encourage the use of reflective practice assignments, such as the ones developed by Reilly (2017), which we will describe in the next sections.

#### **4.2. The elements of the PEARL model**

Inspired by the famous scallop shell of the Camino de Santiago tradition, we gave to the model we are proposing a graphical representation, as shown in [Figure 5](#). The (see also Graham and Murray 1997) PEARL model brings together various social science disciplines, which we define as layers; P stays for Pilgrims in search for meaning; E is the second letter in the first word of the phrase hEro’s journey; A refers to

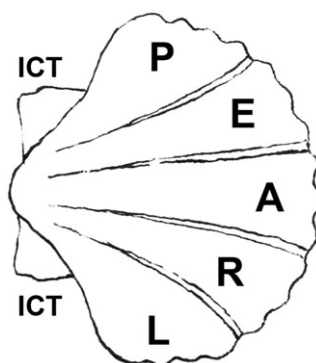


Figure 5. The PEARL pedagogical model.

Authenticity of attitude; R denotes the letters in the seRious storytelling and also refers to Reflective practice; finally, L is the Learning model. PEARL is the hidden pearl within every pilgrim in his/her own path of searching.

The PEARL model can be used for teaching and training purposes; therefore, each layer will be enriched by three instructional suggestions, and by one concrete reflective practice in combination with the potential benefit of the ICT. It is structured into four *layers*: The first one is dedicated to the pivotal work of Frankl (1946, 2006) and the search for meaning, which has recently been brought under the scientific lens by researchers in psychology. The second layer considers the reinterpretation of Campbell's concept of the hero's journey (1949). The third layer deals with the reinterpretation of Cohen's tourist guide as an *authentic pathfinder and mentor*, in combination with the concept of *madrigh* (1979, 1985, 2002). The fourth and last layer is dedicated to the *storytelling* functions that are reinterpreted in the framework of the so-called *serious storytelling* (Lugmayr et al. 2017). We suggest that the combination of the four layers of the PEARL model constitutes a pedagogical framework that can inspire pilgrim guides in their activity; the concrete suggestions and proposed reflective practices emanating from each layer, then, might support them in encouraging secular tourists to initiate a long-lasting, intense, memorable and meaningful experience as postmodern pilgrims. In the following sections, each layer of the model is presented, discussing first the inspirational concepts and then providing practical suggestions to elaborate training modules for pilgrimage guides and to make an effective use of ICTs.

#### 4.2.1. First layer: postmodern pilgrims in search for meaning

Traditional pilgrims, as well as those whom we call here *postmodern pilgrims*, are in the process of searching for meaning. In his crucial text, 'Man's search for meaning', Frankl (1946, 2006, 2010) distilled pearls of wisdom from his dramatic experience as a survivor of four Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War and explained how to embrace life with its positive and negative facets. It is up to us as humans how we want to live, because 'everything can be taken to a man, but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way'. (Frankl 1946, 2006, 66) The attitude chosen by Frankl (1946, 2006, 67,68) is resilience toward suffering and pain that life might

bring with it. 'Here lies the chance for a man ... because man's inner strength may raise him above his outward fate ... with the chance of achieving something through his own suffering'.

Pilgrims' motives are similar (Collins-Kreiner, 2018). Often very difficult external situations might provide an opportunity to grow beyond oneself, turning a difficulty into an inner triumph, without losing faith in the future. Frankl (2006, 101) shaped the so-called *logotherapy*, the therapy of meaning. *Logos* means in fact *meaning* in Greek. Through the process of finding a purpose and a meaning to life, humans as meaning's seekers can experience the so-called *existential frustration*. It refers to the existence-pursuing goal to find concrete meanings in personal experience, which he defined as *the will to meaning*. Existential frustrations result in neuroses, which emerge from existential problems. Logotherapy offers the opportunity to assist people in finding meaning(s) in life, making them aware of the hidden logos of their own existence, through an analytical process. The search for meaning implies *an inner tension*, which is indispensable for the preservation of mental health. 'He/She who has *a why to live for* can bear with almost anyhow'. (Frankl 1946, 2006, 104–105). Meaning remains the core of human experience, representing a deep and holistic human phenomenon.

Frankl referred to the *self-transcendence of human existence* as the ultimate goal. The more one forgets oneself by giving oneself to a cause to serve or to love another person, the more human he/she actualizes him/herself. *Self-actualization* is only possible as the side effect of *self-transcendence* and can be attained in three ways: 1. by creating a work or doing a deed; 2. by experiencing something or encountering someone and 3. by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering. For Frankl, humans can self-determine themselves, because every human has the freedom to change at any instant.

This framework is sustained by the work of several contemporary scholars, such as Wong (2010, 2012, 2014, 2017), who emphasizes the importance of a scientific understanding of Frankl's *logotherapy* and *meaning* through scientific research. Meaning's researchers are looking for a scientific common ground, developing taxonomies of meaning, identifying its constituents, such as purpose, understanding, relational context, a comprehensive working definition of the construct of meaning in life, the measurements of meaning, understanding the content as well as the context of meaning in life, through measures with internal validity, and finally taking into account the importance of qualitative, as well as quantitative measures for the advancement of the scientific knowledge of meaning (Steger et al. 2006; Schnell 2014; Schlegel and Joshua 2016).

The key research question remains: 'What do I do to make my life worthwhile and significant?' People still struggle with this question, knowing that meaningful activities are connected 'with deeper life satisfaction and suffering is more bearable if they can find a good reason for it' (Wong 2017, 5).

Self-transcendence can also be lived and defined by spirituality and framed through the experience of a pilgrimage. Meaning has to do with how we live and what we do with our own life. If we lose the meaning of life, a postmodern pilgrimage experience might inspire us to regain new perspectives, lose our smaller self and find our transcendent higher self (see Leontiev, 2016).

### Suggestions for training pilgrimage guides

We suggest organizing an open source platform, such as a Moodle platform, through which all instructional contents can be uploaded, organized for and enriched by the guides themselves. Here our suggestions:

1. Let the guides read passages of Frankl's theoretical framework and reflect, using the reflective assignment below, on how logotherapy and the self-transcendence framework can be adapted for the pilgrims in search of meaning.
2. Let the guides reflect on their own motives, why they want to become pilgrim guides and why and how this choice can enhance interactions with the different types of postmodern pilgrims they will encounter.
3. Let the guides choose between a collection of profiles of historical pilgrims who walked and wrote about their pilgrimage experiences. This collection of texts needs to be provided beforehand. The guides can choose one profile and work on it, gaining a historical viewpoint of the rich phenomena of European pilgrimage and its traditions.
4. A pilgrimage also means walking through historical geographical spaces; therefore, let the guides use interactive maps of renowned pilgrimage paths in Europe (the St. James, the Via Romea, the Via Francigena and so on) and let them choose the trails of their own journeys.

#### Assignment description:

The guide is asked to reflect on what s/he has learned from certain situations were less positive than s/he had expected them to be. S/he needs to think of something in his/her personal or professional life, over which s/he had little control or no control at all. The circumstances should be briefly described.

#### Reflective assignment: *learning from adversity*;

- Reflect on what you experienced and how you responded to this situation. Was this problem your fault or was it attributable to outside factors? Did the situation cause you to challenge your assumptions and/or look at things differently? (1 page, at least).
- Make sure to include in your analysis the relevant concepts extracted from Frankl's texts and the search for meaning.
- Discuss at least three recommendations you would make (to yourself, to the other guides and to the future pilgrims) or insights you gained about learning about Frankl and the search for meaning.

#### Learning objectives:

- to reflect about challenging experiences and their impact in personal and professional situations;
- to consider how adversity (potentially also painful) may have actually contributed to a learning and development experience;
- to explore how this adversity may generate learned lessons for the guide and for the groups of pilgrim guides;
- and to develop certain writing skills for effective communication.

#### **4.2.2. Second layer: the postmodern pilgrim is embarking on the Hero's journey**

Self-transcendence and self-actualization need to be experienced. This can be done through a pilgrimage, as a *hero's cycle and journey*. The aforementioned *tension* within the postmodern pilgrim's search for meaning is well described by what

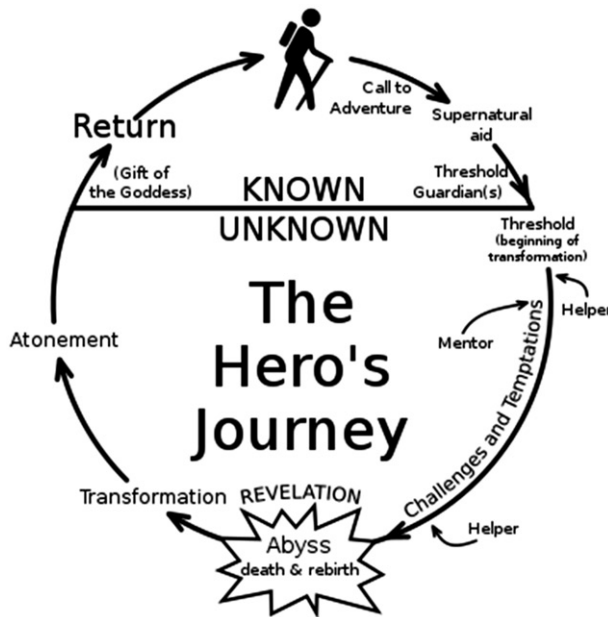
Campbell (1949, 2008) defined *the hero's cycle*, which is the right metaphor to define the pilgrim's journey (Ortony 1975).

We refer to the classic masterwork of Campbell (1949, 2008), *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and the inspirational declination, his work which still evokes today (see work of Allison and Goethals 2011, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017). In fact, as a comparative mythologist, Campbell (1949, 2008) explored, through the analysis of numerous myths, how the *hero*, the *heroic self*, (the definition of *hero* is addressed for male and female) seeks a spiritual expression, as a higher way of holding and conducting oneself. Campbell noticed that certain heroic sequences of actions were found in stories from all over the world and from different periods. The journey was often characterized by different obstacles. The overcoming of these obstacles strengthened the hero through the spiritual principle of life, which encouraged him or her to take courage and live more boldly. For Campbell, as a result, life is measured by the efforts to keep oneself alive, overcoming all sorts of difficulties and recognizing the complex psychological origins and consequences of life.

During the last decade, a new paradigm of research into heroes and heroism has started to develop (Allison et al. 2017; Zimbardo 2008; Franco, Olivia, and Zimbardo 2016; see also the initiatives organized by heroicimagination.org). The concept of the Campbell's *hero* has been re-interpreted and is used in education (Goldstein 2005), in counseling (Halstead 2000; Lawson 2005), as well as in other disciplines. The psychological transformation is considered central for the growth of heroism in individuals, an aspect also considered by the positive psychology movement (see also Lopez and Snyder 2011).

In particular, Allison and Goethals (2016) and Allison and Goethals (2013, 2014, and 2017) offered a deeper reflection on the different stages of *the hero's transformation*. These stages are summarized in the graph below (Figure 6) and in the following steps: The hero is introduced to the ordinary world, and then he/she receives a call to adventure. The hero is initially reluctant and might refuse the call, but is encouraged by a mentor to go on. The hero crosses the first threshold, enters into the special world, where he/she encounters test, allies, enemies. Then, the hero approaches the innermost cave, where he/she has to endure an ordeal and finally takes possession of the reward and pursues the road back to ... the ordinary world. The hero experiences a resurrection and is transformed by the experience, returning with the elixir, a sort of gift, as a precious treasure for the ordinary world. 'A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from his mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man'. (Campbell 1949,2008, 30).

For Allison and Goethals (2017), there are *three layers of transformations*: first, the transformation of the *setting*; second, the transformation of the *self* and third, the transformation of the *society*. Each transformation will have an impact on the others, because 'without a change in setting, the hero cannot change him/herself and without a change in him/herself, the hero cannot change the world'. (p. 381). One premise is necessary: The hero is obliged to leave his/her familiar world and needs to cross a different world, and once transformed, the hero goes back enriched to give back to



**Figure 6.** The *hero's journey* (a modern adaptation from the original of Joseph Campbell).  
Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero%27s\\_journey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero%27s_journey)

the world his/her new self. The hero's outer journey reflects the inner and psychological journey. The transformation is about consciousness, which requires *being, thinking* and *acting* in a different way. Campbell (1988) defined the journey's steps as a 'wake up call'.

Allison and Goethals (2017) summarized *the five reasons of the hero's transformation*. First, *transformation fosters developmental growth*, such as rituals and rites of passage; second, *transformation promotes healing*. This is based on sharing stories as within a therapy, bringing hope, relieving stress and fostering self-awareness, developing a sense of meaning about life events, the good ones and the less good ones, developing heroic traits of strength, resilience and courage. Third, *transformation promotes social unity*; the transformed hero is an example for the others, for the society, becoming a role model to refer to, because the hero might become *selfless, boundless, without ego*. The essence is the journey from egocentricity to socio-centricity. Fourth: *Transformation advances society*, because the transformed hero from the journey is a gift – an elixir – to society, giving newly acquired insights to better the world. The fifth and last one is transformation, which deepens spiritual and cosmic understanding. This very last transformation implies that the hero must die spiritually to be reborn to a larger way of living, through which 'death' (of the old self, for example) is necessary to produce a new enlightened self. This is the only way to become a new person (Campbell 1988, 2008 141).

Allison and Goethals (2017, 388) identified four internal sources of transformation: 1. Transformation can be a result of the human development stages, such as the development of different types of intelligences, levels of spirituality, levels of emotional growth, and so on; 2. transformation is experienced in the needs and goals of

individuals during their lifetime; 3. transformation is the enlightened beginning of responsibility. As Allison and Goethals (2017, p. 389) recall, in the moments of crises, a small but courageous minority of people do the right thing, overcoming great pressures and assuming responsibility. ‘These fearless ... ordinary citizens are able to transcend their circumstances and transform from ordinary to extraordinary’; and finally, 4. transformation is also based on how people overcome human transgression and failures.

In search of transformation, human seekers can encounter failures, which are sources of sufferings. The suffering can be the so-called *liminal space* (Turner 1969; Turner 1973; Cohen 1992; Rohr 2011), that is to say, ‘the transitional space between one state of being and an entirely different stage of being. ... *liminal space* ... is the fertile soil from which heroic transformations may bloom’. (Allison and Goethals 2017, 388). The concept of *liminality* is essential in pilgrimage studies. The basic idea is that pilgrimage can be analyzed in terms of *ritual process*, because it involves a phase where novices find themselves in a transitory stage between two established social statuses (Cohen 1992, 34).

The book ‘Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture’ by the Turners (1978) became the landmark study in the field. The authors drew theoretical inspiration from the Van Gennep’s (1909, 1960) model of *the liminal phase of rites of passage*, which implies changes of place, state, social position and age. Van Gennep explained that *rites of passage* are marked by three phases: *separation*, *margin* (*limen*=threshold in Latin) and *aggregation*. Turner (1969) reinterpreted these stages as: first, the detachment of the individual; second, during the liminal phase, the individual needs to go through unknown and new experiences; and third, the individual gains a new stable state and is expected to behave in accordance with certain norms and standards, binding him/her in a new social position within a system that expects it prepared to cope with the new responsibilities. During the rites of passage, the subjects are not alone, but have mentors. Turner defined these mentors as *liminal personae*, *threshold people*. They elude the classifications, because of their ambiguous attributes. This goal can be reached by having a guide as a mentor and facilitator. This represents the last goal of a pilgrimage: to help pilgrims to discover their own heroic gifts, through the pilgrims’ guide, who needs to be trained for this special search.

We suggest that the pilgrim’s journey is similar to the hero’s journey. In this journey, the postmodern pilgrim deals with different layers of complexities, where transformation *might be* one of her or his goals. The notion of heroism is bound to a virtuous existence, because it represents ‘the ideal of citizens transforming civic virtue into the highest form of civic action, accepting either physical peril or social sacrifice’ (Franco, Blau, and Zimbardo 2016, 99, see also West 2008). Popular definitions of heroes use words such as brave, daring, bold and virtuous. The stories of heroism and heroic virtue are narrating the enduring application of these ideals in our contemporary society; for this reason, we need many new heroes together with serious stories to live and to share.

### **Suggestions for training for pilgrim guides**

In embarking in the hero’s journey, the postmodern pilgrim can be mentored by a well-prepared pilgrim guide, who can help and inspire the pilgrim to reach his/her levels of transformation.

Thinking of the postmodern pilgrim as the new hero means focusing on the transformation. We offer the following three didactical suggestions, combined with the potential benefit for ICT applications to deepen this concept and to reflect about the meanings of transformation.

1. Let the guides use the graphical representation of the journey of Campbell's hero (Figure 6) and exploit it as a personal reflective map, in combination with the reflective practice below, to let the guides reflect on their own hero's journey. This exercise can be enriched with all sorts of documents, like pictures, poems and brief textual and/or audio reflections.
2. Let the guides explore how the Campbell's hero journey can be shared with other guides through reflective questions and exercises, which can be designed together and used during the training with other guides.
3. Because of the historical focus of the collection of pilgrim travelers, let the guides use the journey of Campbell's hero to reflect on past and current heroes (role models), who documented and/or wrote about their journeys.

Assignment description:

This assignment asks the guide to use his/her personal experiences as a pilgrim to write and reflect about his/her pilgrim story using the *Campbell's hero journey model*.

Reflective assignment: *Once upon a time: my story as a pilgrim's hero journey (based on Campbell)*

- Reflect again on your own story as a pilgrim; describe it using the *Campbell's hero journey model* (at least 1 page).
- In your story, comment on what lessons you learned from the *Campbell's hero journey model*; how could these lessons be applied to other pilgrims (at least 1 page).
- Based on the hero's journey model, include at least three recommendations you could make for other guides and pilgrims.

Keep your story simple and short.

- Include also three recommendations or lessons learned from this assignment.

Learning objectives:

- to reflect about the experience, the context and your role in relation to the *Campbell's hero journey model*;
- to describe how key components of the pilgrimage maybe highlighted in a story format using the *Campbell's hero journey model*;
- to reflect how these components connect with the class in the behavior and the performance as a pilgrim and a future pilgrim guide;
- to learn that stories (serious storytelling) about pilgrimage may share common themes with implications for other pilgrim guides and pilgrims, as well, using the *Campbell hero journey model*;
- and to develop certain writing skills for effective communication.

#### 4.2.3. Third layer: postmodern pilgrim guide as an authentic pathfinder, mentor and madrich

Through Campbell (2008), we learnt that the mentor 'may be some ... wise man or fairy godmother or animal that comes to you as a companion or as an advisor, letting you know what the dangers are along the way and how to overcome them'. (p. 116). The mentor can elevate the hero and can prepare him or her for future mentoring

duties. According to Rohr (2011), ‘transformed people transform people’ (p. 263), because a mentor can be seen as a hero, who is transforming the lives of others.

However, what about the search for the spiritual centre by the postmodern person, who feels ‘alienated’ from the modern society? With this question in mind, Cohen (1979, 191) defined five modes of the touristic experience: *recreational*, *diversionary*, *experiential*, *experimental* and *existential*. The existential traveler is the one, who is a committed seeker for meaning, who wants to reach an elective spiritual center, because he or she *lives in an exile*. The center of the existential tourist is *an elective one*, which he or she chooses ... as a journey from chaos into another cosmos ‘from meaninglessness to authentic existence’. In this framework, the pilgrimage can be a movement from a traditionally given center to an elective one, with the deep desire to find one’s spiritual roots ‘*motivated by the quest for meaning and for authenticity*, where the authenticity of the experience is crucial for its meaning’ (Cohen 1979, 193).

Later Cohen (1985) developed the profile of the modern tourist guide, considered as *a pathfinder and as a mentor*. He defined this role with four components: *the instrumental*, *the social*, *the interactionary* and *the communicative*. The role of the tourist guide has a long tradition, developed with the *Grand Tour* of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. In the *Grand Tour*, which was a series of cultural pseudo-pilgrimages-travelling experiences around Europe of young and rich Englishmen and Englishwomen to learn about other cultures and how to behave in society, the role of the *guide-tour-tutor* was the one of the *pathfinder* and *mentor*. In fact, the ideal *tutor* was ‘a responsible man of mature age, who would, in addition to his duties as a pedagogue and guide, watch over the morals and religion of his pupil’ (Hibbert 1969, 1987, 15–16). (See also Eliade, 1969; Schmidt, 1979).

The postmodern pilgrim guide needs to incorporate the roles of a *pathfinder* and of a *mentor* (Cohen 1985), but with the quality of being *authentic*. Already in the late 1970s, Cohen (1979) elaborated on the concept of *authenticity*, writing that the serious search of the modern man is embarking in a pilgrimage experience as an ‘earnest quest for the authentic’ (p. 182). (On the concept of authenticity see also Bugental, 1965, 1981; MacCannell, 1973; Cohen, 1988; Harkin, 1995; Belhassen, Caton, and Stewart, 2008).

We consider these two characteristics, *the pathfinder and the mentor*, essential for becoming a postmodern pilgrim guide. As Cohen (1985, 6) put it, ‘guiding is a complex concept’. The original profile of the *pathfinder* was to lead the followers through unknown territories, without maps, guidebooks, signals of any kind, often facing unforeseen situations. These persons were often locals with a good knowledge of indigenous territories and populations, without a specific training (like the Italian *vetturino*, for example, see Hibbert 1969, 1987). The *mentor*, on the other side, was a personal tutor and/or a spiritual advisor, often coming from religious settings and groups. As Cohen (1985, 8) highlighted, the profile of the guide involved *geographical*, as well as *spiritual* knowledge and skills. Cohen summarized the dynamics of *the pathfinder and the mentor* roles as follows:

	Outer-directed	Inner-directed
<b>Leadership sphere</b>	a) <i>Guide as a pathfinder with instrumental skills;</i>	b) <i>Guide as a mentor with social skills;</i>
<b>Mediatory sphere</b>	c) <i>Guide as a pathfinder with representation and organisation skills;</i>	d) <i>Guide as a mentor with communicative skills;</i>

In the leadership sphere and from the outer-directed perspective, the pathfinder needs to have instrumental skills, leading the way, having knowledge, specifying the *direction*, getting *access* through a geographical space, but also through a socially organized territory, having the *control* for a safe and protected journey. From the inner-directed perspective, the social dimension implies responsibility for the cohesion and the morale of the group, dealing with *the tension management* between members, intervening if conflicts develop, keeping the group together with a higher *morale* and in good spirits through *animation*, and several specific activities.

The mediatory sphere (outer-directed) implies that the guide has the function of a social mediation and a *cultural broker*, with two tasks: *representation* and *organisation*. For representation: The guide presents locations and makes a selection of the important parts of the environment; for *organisation*, the guide is responsible for ensuring supplies and hospitality under the touristic conditions, with arrangements and procedures to formalize and to manage. From the inner-directed perspective, the mentor is engaged with the communicative role, which implies *selection*, *information*, *interpretation* and *fabrication*. The guide is *selecting* the objects of interest, maybe in accordance with personal preferences, professional training and/or the directions to follow. ‘... the selection will ... structure his party’s attention during the trip: not only will they see what he wants them to see, but perhaps more importantly, they will not see what he does not want them to see’ (Cohen 1985, 14). The second aspect is the *information*. Information is given, exchanged, discussed, shared, even if Cohen recalls that the imparted information is rarely neutral. The information given is interpreted; in fact, *interpretation* is the next layer, and the interpretation of the visited place is influenced by the perception, the impression and the attitudes of the tourists. Interpretation is a different communicative function compared to sharing information. The guides play a mediating role. Cohen (1979, 458) recalls the definition of Schmidt: The guide is like a shaman who ‘must translate the unfamiliar’, assuming the role of mediating the information given. *Interpretation* is the role of the *culture broker*. Applied to the pilgrim guide, this aspect makes sense, because he or she is the shaper and translator of the heroic journey into the search for meaning, which is different for everyone, but also similar. The *interpretative skills* of the guides are expressing the capacity of what Cohen (1985, 16) defined as *fabrication*, by using appropriate language, metaphors and activities.

The Cohen tourist guide paradigm was further developed by Cohen, Ifergan, and Cohen (2002), with the so-called *madrach*, *the new role model*. The guide is no longer a pathfinder and a mentor, but also educates and spiritually guides, helping tourists find meaning in what they experience. Tour guides are becoming more professionalized, not only in the geography and history of the region where they are guiding, but also in sociological and psychological areas, such as group dynamics, motivation and cultural/ethnic background. Cohen, Ifergan, and Cohen (2002) characterized this role with the functions of the *madrach*. These are informal counselor-guides, who accompany adolescents from other countries on their trips to Israel. Their roles have an important impact in the growing field of educational tourism (such as school visits

and trips, parish, youth movements or organizations, summer or winter camps). ‘The *madrich* operates as an educational and ideological *model* as conceptualized in the framework of informal education. ... The mission of the *madrich* is entirely group-oriented and inner-directed. ... the tour must include three elements: the touring element, the social element, and a symbolic element that is likely to give the visit the status of a pilgrimage’. (Cohen, Ifergan, & Cohen 2002, 922).

The *madrich* function is the one of an *informal educator* (Kahane 1997), through which she or he is *in-synch* with the members of the group. The *madrich* is like a *model*, an important perspective for tour operators offering *existential tours*. ‘To be a model is to be an example for imitation and emulation’, acting as authentic as she or he can be, because ... ‘The more authentic the act, the greater the authority to call upon to ensure the smooth operation of the trip. ... The authority the *madrichs* has is derived primarily from the extent to which their personality and actions are congruent with the messages they are delivering as representatives of the program. Implicit to the notion of model is a proactive approach to education (highly motivated), as well as a desire to assert responsibility (has a sense of responsibility), ... a sense of responsibility is more central to the structure than the variables concerning leadership and interpersonal skills. ... Thus, the *madrich* is an individual who accepts responsibility in acting to ensure the continuity of the people’. (Cohen, Ifergan, & Cohen 2002, p. 922).

The *matrich* exerts influence not only by words, but also through attitude and behavior, by being a role model. Moscovici (1976) defines five behavioral styles: *investment, autonomy, consistency, rigidity* and *fairness*. *Consistency* is the principal behavioral style, because people perceive *consistency* as being *self-confident*, together with *fairness* (Cohen, Ifergan, & Cohen 2002, 926, 927). The *madrich* takes over the more familiar definitions of guide as a pathfinder and mentor, which can be very inspiring for training the postmodern pilgrims’ guide. This is in line with what PhD candidate Vreny Enongene (2018) is currently doing through her research on the question: *how does the spirituality of tour guides and leaders influence visitor experience and satisfaction at sacred sites in Ireland?*

### **Suggestions for training of pilgrim guides**

The guide’s profile has the role as a *pathfinder* and *mentor*, but also as a *madrich*, with qualities such as *authenticity, consistency, self-confidence* and *fairness*. For this third layer, we suggest the following three didactical activities.

1. For *the pathfinder role*, let the guides explore all the organizational aspects, e.g. organizing the essential information about health insurance aspects, first aid help in case of accidents, injuries and other unexpected health problems that might happen within the group during a pilgrimage. These essential aspects need to be mastered. The use of ICTs can be very beneficial in offering cases of training for prevention. In addition, another practical aspect is the reconnaissance of places by means of pictures and maps, as well as the weather forecast impact. These aspects are part of the responsibility of the pathfinder guide.
2. For *the mentor-madrich role*, let the guides create guidelines on how to do the reconnaissance of places, recorded by means of pictures and maps, because these can be used to plan the entire pilgrimage experience, together with the design of

spiritual exercises. The role of ICTs can help collect spiritual activities as exercises, accessible to the guides as inspirations, through specific databases.

3. Finally, let the guides use the ICTs as a sharing tool for the guides to easily access these contents. For example, providing a set of songs (with audios and texts) that can be easily accessible through apps and easily learnt by everyone before or during a pilgrimage. Another important function is the accessibility of spiritual texts and quotations related to past famous or not yet so famous pilgrims. These contents can enrich the pilgrimage experience, through easy access for the guides and for the postmodern pilgrims, as well.

Assignment description:

The guide is asked to identify something in his/her personal or professional life that s/he would like to try as a future pilgrim guide, according to Cohen's point of view.

Reflective assignment: *Cohen and the authentic pilgrim guide – between pathfinder and mentor*

Be sure that you select an intervention target that is feasible within a short period of time (a month, for example), and an intervention over which YOU have the control. Commit to it with a couple of sentences. Write one page (at least), which should be a reflective analysis of the pilgrim guide profile, based on Cohen's perspectives. Evaluate your outcome, taking into account the following questions:

- What did you learn from the description of this new role (the pathfinder, the mentor, the *madrich*)?
- What strategies would you like to use to support these roles, why and how?
- Include three recommendations or lessons learnt from this assignment and prepare to share these with the other guides.

Learning objectives:

- to reflect about the process of becoming a pilgrim guide and the challenges it implies;
- to consider short term and long term goals of these new roles;
- to develop certain writing skills for effective communication.

#### 4.2.4. Fourth layer: *seRious stoRytelling*

As Allison and Goethals highlighted, stories about heroes promote *an energizing inspiration*, through moral elevation. This *motivating function* relies on the fact that such stories inspire us in *the elevation* of human beings. For Haidt (2003, 276), elevation is 'elicited by acts of virtual or moral beauty; it causes warm, open feelings in the chest', motivating people to behave more virtuously (in Allison and Goethals 2016, 194). In whole, stories about heroes have three functions: *healing psychic wounds*, *promoting personal growth* and *inspiring us*. These functions can be also found in the stories of the pilgrims' guides, in their personal ones, in those collected through the encountering of pilgrims and in those of the past. These serious stories can become part of a serious group storytelling collection, which might become a quasi-group therapy, bringing people together and sharing stories to overcome traumatic situations, turning wounds into triumphs (see Yalom and Molyn 2005).

Lugmayr et al. (2017) elaborated the concept of *serious storytelling*, offering such definition: '*Storytelling outside the context of entertainment, where the narration progresses as a sequence of patterns impressive in quality, relates to a serious context, and*

is a matter of thoughtful process'. (pp. 15708, 15709). This is important for the PEARL model, because storytelling for pilgrim guides has a purpose beyond simple entertainment. The postmodern pilgrims' guide needs to be aware to coordinate the exchange of stories between pilgrims and its potential.

Important aspects of storytelling are the emotions and the cognitive aspects that stories evoke. The features of serious storytelling are unique within all features in storytelling. One feature is the *mimesis*, which means *imitation*, which is a way to approach reality. In addition, triggering emotions and stimulating human cognition can be a feature of storytelling, because it promotes the engagement of the audience, who will perceive the narrative as an emotional experience and providing a mental model. This aspect is defined as *diegesis*. The outcome is a copy of the real world (*mimesis*), but it is presented to an audience (*diegesis*).

Lugmayr et al. (2017) defined the 4Cs (*context, course, content and channel*) of the serious storytelling model from a media point of view. 1. *Context* implies the modalities where the narration is taking place. It deals with the real-world understanding, requiring a deep understanding of the functions and the goals within the particular application scenario, where the perspective is created based on the context. 2. *Course* is the sum of the plot: explicit and non-diegetic events, as well as the audience-interpreted and inferred events, and how content evolves in a cause-effect relationship; it implies knowledge creation and a process of orientation. 3. *Content* is the contextualized material presented in a certain perspective; the narrative becomes an artifact for discussion and analysis. 4. *Channel* is the actual media technology.

We interpreted Lugmayr's serious storytelling framework as a very valuable tool for using narratives within a group engaged in, e.g., an interfaith dialogue, based on narratives of faith, stories of ordinary life, interpreted from an existential perspective. Serious storytelling can deal with ethical problem solving, engaging different participants who want to solve ill-defined problems or simply share them. The serious storytelling approach would involve different stages: a) identifying the problem and its facts; b) generating solutions by applying creative problem-solving strategies; c) finding ideal solutions and d) applying the solution.

Lugmayr et al. (2017) summarized the *serious storytelling features* as instructional content; perspective on serious contexts; taking a serious and thoughtful process; sharing of experiences through modes of communications; provision of real world understanding; serious pursuits; collective memory; relating to a matter of importance, development, advance, experience, knowledge and understanding; reflective, introspective, sense related to seriousness; serious communication and collaboration; personal value systems, ethics, subjective situations and circumstances; facts as content and stories as tacit knowledge; intrinsic motivation; self-empowerment, personal advancement and self-reflection; involvement in the knowledge creation process through observations and phenomena understanding. 'Serious stories convey a perspective in serious application context utilizing narrative as a vehicle to trigger emotional and cognitive responses to achieve certain serious goals within the solicitation context' (Lugmayr et al. 2017, 15718). The goal is to create a feeling of commonness,

presence, belonging, motivation, knowledge sharing and to create solutions to life's issues.

### **Suggestions for training for pilgrim guides**

The impact of digital technologies can be relevant on serious storytelling, because it is a powerful tool for creating more engaged learning experiences through the creation and the sharing of personal stories, involving the learners as knowledge creators in the process, rather than leaving them to be passive receivers of information. Digital stories do not need to be based only on text, but also on a mixture of media. The three didactical suggestions are as follows:

1. Schank (2007) proposed the so-called *story centered curriculum*, through which the guides as learners can work together on situations and issues. The problems are real stories. Learners are given story templates with blank spaces for learning concepts. The learning experience is turned into the consumption of a story, and the progress in learning is the progress of the story. It can be used in a collaborative and cooperative learning environment, through which interactivity is considered as knowledge creation and communication to achieve serious contextual goals.
2. Let the guides reflect, learn and experiment, through mini e-learning lessons, about non-verbal communication, rhetoric strategies, presentation strategies and how the use of their voice. As a guide, it is important also to learn how to use the body as a communication vehicle of important messages.
3. In applying the five principles and the 4Cs (*context, course, content and channel*), let the guides work on their own personal stories and reflect on how this approach can promote a more authentic pilgrimage experience, shared among the pilgrim guides and later with the pilgrims.

#### Assignment description:

The guide is asked to identify in his/her personal or professional life an event that compelled him/her to change or that s/he wished to change. S/he has to follow the serious storytelling features. The goal is to describe the 'change story' with its impacts and challenges.

Reflectivity assignment: *A personal or professional story about change – a serious storytelling exercise*

Write one page (at least), which should be a reflective analysis of your *change story*. Evaluate your outcome, taking into account the following questions:

- Were you satisfied with your change progress and outcomes? Why yes or why not?
- What strategies did you use/did you want to use to support this change?
- What did you learn/did you want to learn from this experience?
- Include three recommendations about promoting *change* in life and be prepared to share your insights with the other guides.

#### Learning objectives:

- to reflect about the process of personal and professional change and its challenges;
- to demonstrate that serious storytelling techniques can be also used for crafting serious stories about change;
- to consider short-term and long-term outcomes of change;
- and to develop certain writing skills for effective communication.

## Conclusion

Through this article, we showed that, because of the growing number of pilgrims, initiatives such as the Swiss National Pilgrimage Day in 2017 and a decade of training pilgrim guides by the Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Zürich are worth studying. The boundaries of the *tourist-pilgrim nexus* are, in fact, blurred and many scholars, coming from different disciplines, are trying to understand the phenomenon of the postmodern pilgrim.

The ‘Research Manifesto of the Pilgrims in the Digital Age’ (De Ascaniis & Cantoni 2016) can help in bringing a sort of coherence within the cyclical and reciprocal loop of influences, where the search for new meaning/s through spirituality can be a driver for promoting postmodern pilgrimage experiences, which will have an impact on spirituality. This dimension is fostering new learning and training needs, such as the ones we highlighted in this article through the PEARL pedagogical model, framed by the conceptual framework of informal learning, and enhanced with reflective practices together with the potentialities of ICTs. These are consequently raising new interests and new needs enriching tourism and pilgrimage offers and studies. Consequently, the loop goes on and involves all types of secularized tourists and postmodern pilgrims. In fact, recently Farias et al. (2018) conducted an interesting and first in its genre study, measuring six types of motivations for going on pilgrimage (closeness to nature, community, religious growth, and search for life direction, sensation seeking and spiritual seeking) comparing Atheists with Christians. Using a social psychological and quantitative based approach, Farias et al. (2018) found that there are no statistically significant differences between the two groups related to four of six motivations’ goals: spiritual seeking, the search for life direction, closeness to nature and sensation seeking. Atheists scored lower on religious growth and on community. These results are very interesting, considering the wider secularization of the West, and that little psychological research work on postmodern pilgrims has been carried out until now.

On whole, the PEARL is still a work-in-progress pedagogical model, which can be enriched by additional points of view, authors, scholars, activities, because of the potentialities of the value-based co-creative behaviors. (For value creation in tourism and in pilgrimage studies, see Pera, 2017; Prebensen, Vittersø, and Dahl 2013; Liutikas, 2017; Kim, Kim, and King 2016).

We believe that our proposed pedagogical model can be useful for designing informal learning projects and processes; therefore, we invite scholarly scrutiny, efficacy and improvements’ suggestions for enriching the model even further, so helping the *postmodern* pilgrims to find their own gleaming PEARL.

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