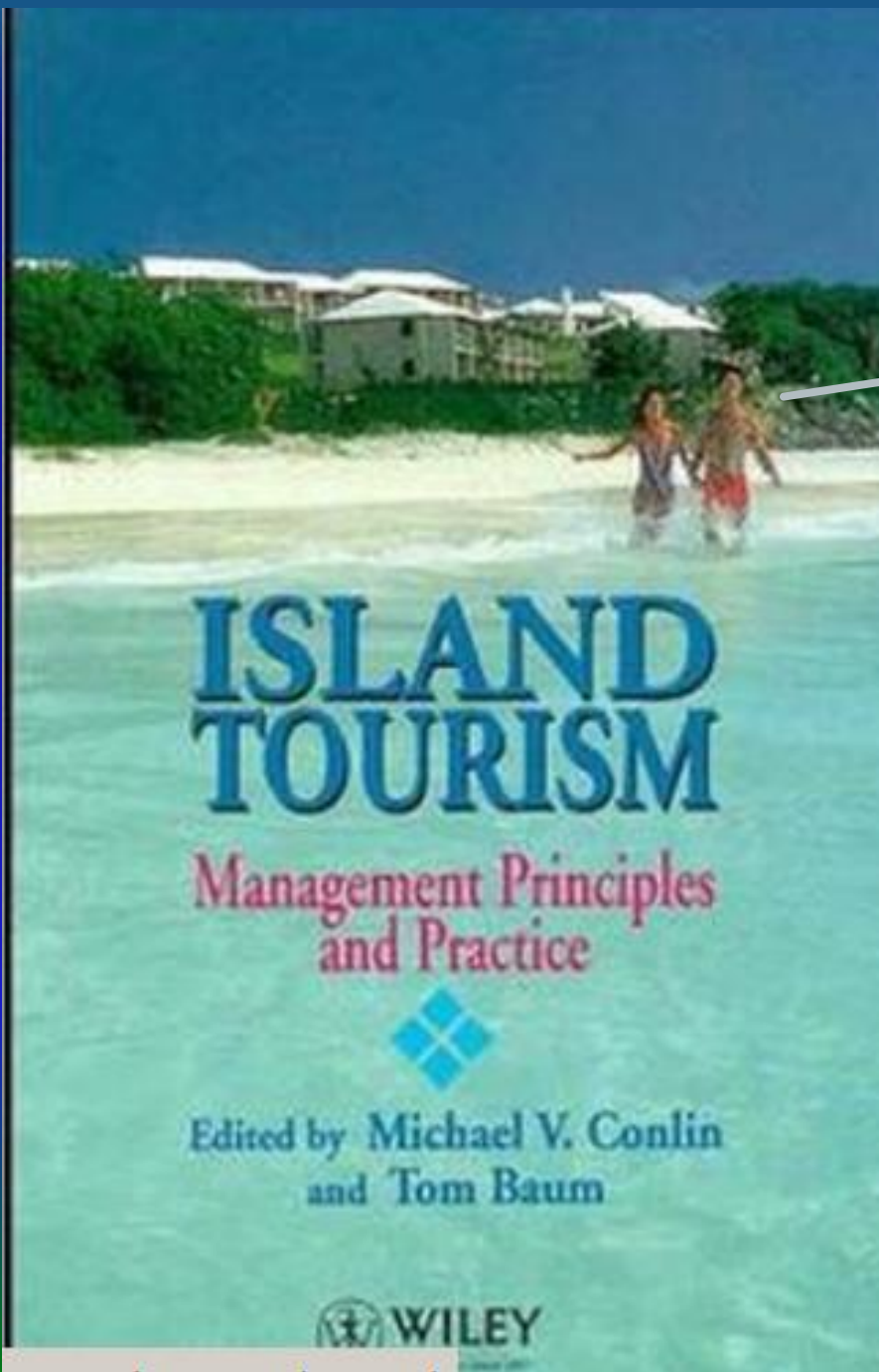


# Catching the VUCA Wave:

The implications of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity on the tourism workplace and on what we teach our students.

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School of Tourism and Hospitality Management  
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Hi Geoff,

I thought you might like to know that you helped to brighten the day of my employees today! I brought the stereo out into the lobby during our morning huddle and cranked the tunes. Then I turned down the volume and told them how each day while I was away at school we would make up 3 dance moves and then do the dance.

Today we made up 3 housekeeping moves; the window cleaner, the high duster, and the bed maker! The team had a blast and we have decided to have a dance party Mondays to kick off our week.

Thanks for the inspiration!

# The big focus: our students

“What competencies and experiences does a student need to \_\_\_\_\_ in life, and in the tourism and hospitality workforce?”

- Cope, survive, thrive, lead, manage an organization, change, evolve with the times, control, succeed....

# The conclusion

- We need to revisit aim, rationale, and goals of our curriculum and how our programs address the needs of students and community, as well as work and global factors
- In particular, a focus on sustaining 'human' well-being

# The session:

1. Framing BC tourism human resource development
2. Defining VUCA
3. The VUCA wave and its impact on what we do
4. Revisiting the aim, rationale and goals of our core curriculum (feedback sheets, starting with stuff from the 90's!!!)



# 1. Framing BC tourism human resource development

- Tourism workforce research(2016)
- Unpacking BC Tourism Learning System (journey back in time)

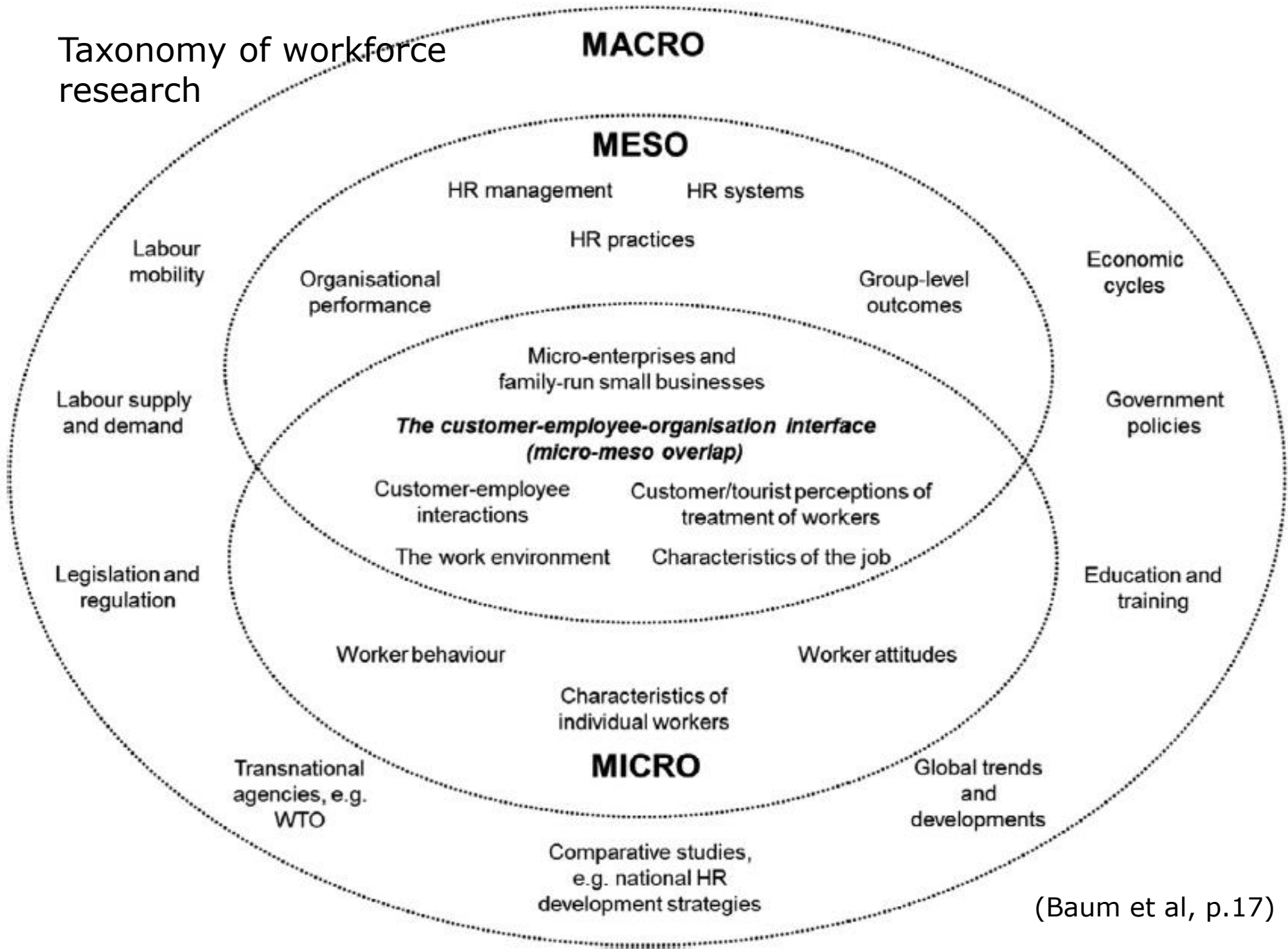
*Tourism workforce research: A review, taxonomy and agenda*  
(Baum, Krajl, Robinson & Solnet, 2016)

Tourism workforce research:

- “...Fails to position itself within the wider social, political and economic context ... of tourism research (p.2)”
- Hospitality as opposed to a tourism focus
- Without a theoretical base



# Taxonomy of workforce research



(Baum et al, p.17)

# Unpacking the BC Tourism Learning System

- Curriculum standard for a relevant skillset for industry
- Articulation to facilitate for student transfer, particularly diploma to degree
- Marketing to industry of our students
- Collaboration on common curriculum and resources through articulation
- Relevant and accessible

# Why did we do this?

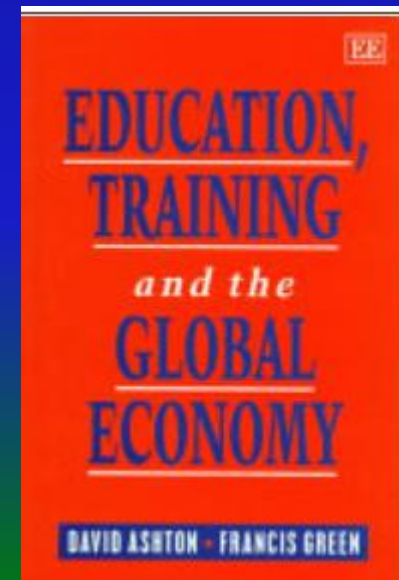
- Fragmented system
- Government focus to coordinate
- 'New' area, opportunity to learn from other jurisdictions
- Relevant and accessible programs
- Endorsed by employers
- Better job opportunities
- Broad skillset

# Nine Policy Requirements of TLS

(Bird 1997; Bird, White & Hood 2001)

1. Government committed to a vision of tourism & HRD
2. Employer committed to a vision of tourism & HRD
3. Incentives for employees, employers & students
4. An overall coordinating agency for tourism HRD
5. Core standards
6. Practical and theoretical education and training
7. Access to and flexibility of education and training
8. Partnerships: industry, government and education
9. Marketing – to employers, employees, govt.

Adapted from Ashton & Green, 1995



# Personal observations

- Focus on industry
- More meso focused – not micro/macro
- Focus on skills for employment
- Little to nothing on with well-being and adaptive capacity, work-life balance, healthy living (i.e. mindfulness)
- No onus on employers, the industry to do anything in terms of good practice
- We are reverting to a provincial / regional approach

# 1. Defining VUCA



# Our world today?

- Volatility
- Uncertainty
- Complexity
- Ambiguity



## In summary

- VUCA helps in the exercise to explore three spheres of micro, meso and macro forces.
- Helps us think about forces that play upon our students, our programs and institutions, the industry and society



Volatility: Unexpected, unstable, out of our control, but understood in terms of cause and outcome (predictable).



- Labour shortage
- (meta)

# Uncertainty: Understood in broad terms, but not predictable

- “There are many fewer paths today to reliably get one somewhere in life than there were in the past.”  
(Prensky, 2014)
- Trump



Complexity: Many forces, certain degree of predictability but potential to feel 'swamped'

- Overtourism

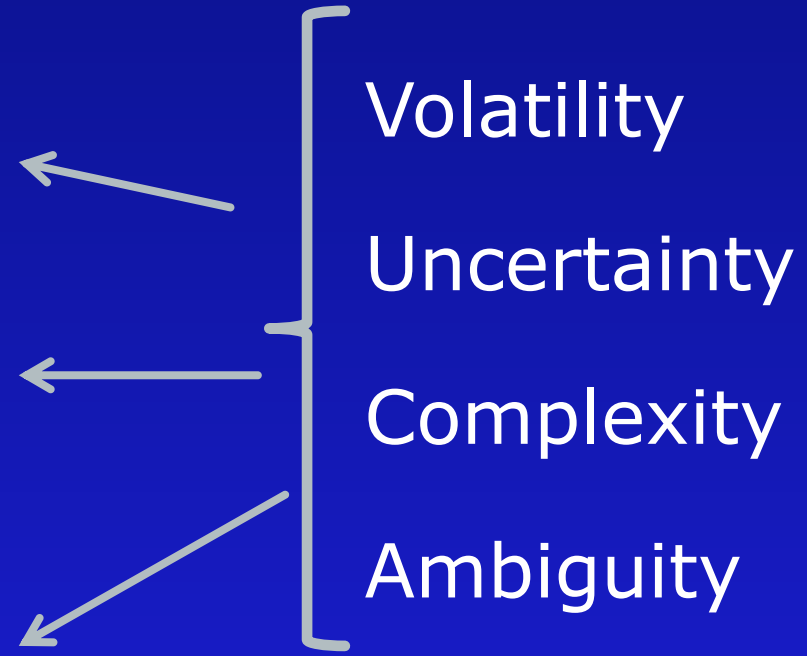


Ambiguity: no understanding with issue; no experience.

- International student flow over time



## 2. VUCA Wave and its impact on what we do



# Go2hr (2016). BC tourism labour market impact survey

- Reduced customer service;
- Staff burnout;
- Lost revenue;
- Missed business opportunities;
- Increased business costs;
- Increased overtime; and,
- Reduced business hours of operations.

Padlet resource: share,  
comment, and contribute!

[https://padlet.com/geoff\\_2bird/vucawork](https://padlet.com/geoff_2bird/vucawork)



### 3. Revisiting the aim, rationale and goals of our core curriculum (feedback sheets)

handout

# Why would we do this?

- Main debate at articulation
- Started with what we could agree to
- Over time, taken for granted, summarized and shortened
- Wanted to 'load up' with enough tools to help a student adapt to a range of career options

# 15-minute activity to start

- In 2's and 3's
- Review the old aim, rationale, and goals
- What revisions / additions would you like to see prefaced in the core curriculum documents?
- Write them in
- Key words and include some detail

# The conclusion

- We need to revisit aim, rationale, and goals of our curriculum and how our programs address the needs of students and community, as well as work and global factors
- In particular, a focus on sustaining 'human' well-being

Thank you

- Aim: what are we doing?
- Rationale why are we doing it?
- Goals: what do we aspire to achieve?