

RESEARCH IN MANAGEMENT LEARNING & EDUCATION  
**unConference**

**2018**

**Research in Management Learning and  
Education (RMLE) Unconference**

**Held at The University of St Andrews  
in St Andrews, Scotland, UK**

**PROCEEDINGS**

Conference Chairs:

**Professor Emma Bell, The Open University**  
**Dr. Maribel Blasco, Copenhagen Business School**  
**Dr. Todd Bridgman, Victoria University**  
**Professor Kathy Lund Dean, Gustavus Adolphus College**  
**Dr. Matthew Drake, Duquesne University**  
**Professor Jeanie Forray, Western New England University**  
**Professor Bill Foster, University of Alberta**  
**Professor Paul Hibbert, The University of St Andrews**  
**Dr. George Hrivnak, Bond University**  
**Professor Amy L. Kenworthy, Bond University**



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## Overview

Research discussions shouldn't have to rise from the ashes of recycled rhetoric and boring presentations prepared months in advance. Interactions about research should be exciting, organic, and engaging. For those who are interested in being generators of innovative, cutting-edge research in management education or those who have questions related to research in management education that are not addressed through traditional conference or workshop forums our 2018 Research in Management Learning and Education (RMLE) Unconference was the place to be.

Unlike traditional conference formats that involve fixed agendas, established streams, and planned presentations, our RMLE Unconferences are organic and participant-driven. The fundamental goal of the RMLE Unconference is to bring together interested, passionate, and knowledgeable people to create a forum where they can share, learn, engage, question, contribute, discuss and debate about issues they deem to be important. Each participant is a contributor and all interactions take place in a flexible and highly interactive format (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unconference> for more information).

During the 2018 RMLE Unconference at The University of St Andrews, our goals were to:

- Share ideas about key research areas participants are interested in,
- Find answers and “paths forward” regarding current research questions or concerns,
- Learn from others about their experiences with research project design, development and publication processes,
- Consider issues that are emerging through recent research and publication,
- Meet and network in an intimate and informal setting with other faculty members interested in management education research, and
- Interact with numerous board members and/or editors of the *Academy of Management Learning and Education* (AMLE), the *Journal of Management Education* (JME), *Management Learning* (ML), and the *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education* (DSJIE).

In terms of scope, the domain for this RMLE Unconference was the same as the four previous events which included management teaching, learning, education, and the contexts within which these occur. As a result, the included submissions focus on a diversity of issues related to the business of management education (whether that be in universities, consulting agencies, or other organizations) as well as the processes and outcomes of management education.

The submissions included in these proceedings are called “Questions, Ideas, and Concerns” (QIC) documents. The QICs were written as free-flowing thoughts which encapsulate any questions, ideas, and concerns participants had with respect to research in management education. The content of this year's QICs was varied and rich, resulting in the following relatively large initial discussion group clusters. These assigned groups applied to our first discussion session only, after that participant contributors electively and organically shifted/morphed/adapted the groups based on their experiences. Here were the initial discussion group clusters:

- Group “Fortingall Yew” - The complex intersections between reflection, disclosure, emotion and learning
- Group “The Unicorn” - The intricacies and relationships between technology & teaching and learning
- Group “The Pedal Bicycle” - Innovations in teaching and learning: Moving beyond boxes
- Group “Swilcan Bridge” - Examining the tools and frames we use to design and assess
- Group “Sir Thomas Sean Connery” - Examining our models and lenses: Reflexivity, threshold concepts, development, and cultural considerations
- Group “Alexander Fleming” - Teams and Teamwork
- Group “William Wallace” - Corporate social responsibility and ethics: When theory and reality collide
- Group “Alexander Graham Bell” - Expanding our mindsets: Reframing and release

## **Participant Contributors**

We had 70 participant contributors at the 2018 RMLE Unconference from 52 universities and three independent research organisations drawn from across 15 countries on five continents. The countries represented by our contributors included: Austria, Australia, Canada, China, Croatia, Denmark, Dubai, France, Great Britain, New Zealand, Qatar, South Africa, Taiwan, Scotland, and the United States of America.

The tertiary institutions and organizations represented include the Auckland University of Technology, Beacon College, Cass Business School, Copenhagen Business School, Curtin University Dubai, Duquesne University, ESSEC Business School, Griffith University, Gustavus Adolphus College, HEC Paris, Henley Business School, Lancaster University, Menlo College, Miami University, Northumbria University, Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, QA Apprenticeships, St. John's University, Swinburne University of Technology, The New School, The University of Liverpool, The University of Texas at El Paso, University of Bath, University College Copenhagen, University of Alaska Anchorage, University of Alberta, University of Bradford, University of Calgary, University of Canterbury, University of Chester, University of Dubrovnik, University of Dundee School of Business, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, University of London, University of Maine, University of Manitoba, University of New Brunswick, University of Notre Dame, University of Nottingham, University of Nottingham at Ningbo China, University of Roehampton, University of San Francisco, University of South Alabama, University of St Andrews, University of Stellenbosch Business School, Vanderbilt University, Warwick Business School, Western New England University, York St John University, Zagreb University of Applied Sciences.

## **Event (Un)Structure**

As this was an Unconference, there were only be two formal presentations - a welcome and a summary – each facilitated by members of the conference chair group listed above. The minimalist formality of the event's structure was based on its underlying ethos. The bulk of the RMLE Unconference was designed to be 100% driven by the people who participate in the event.

Beyond reading the QICs in this document, the only preparation that people were asked to do prior to the Unconference is to bring energy and enthusiasm, a collaborative mindset, and an open-mindedness to going wherever our time together took us. Unconferences are uncomplicated. They are about knowledge generation via a minimally-structured, highly-engaging, and participant-driven format. The outcomes speak for themselves.

## **Expected Outcomes**

The outcomes from any Unconference are various in nature and organic in terms of growth. The 2018 RMLE Unconference was no exception. We look forward to hearing from our participant contributors as they navigate forward independently and collaboratively with the knowledge, passion, and excitement that was generated during this event.

## **A Special Thank You**

As with all of our RMLE Unconferences, we would like to thank our ongoing partner organizations, AMLE, DSJIE, JME, ML, & Bond University. This year, we were incredibly fortunate to partner with the amazing team at The University of St Andrews to have our event hosted at their stunning and very historic campus in St Andrews, Scotland. A very special thank you to Paul Hibbert, Caroline Rodger, and Drusilla Haskett from the University of St Andrews – there can be no doubt that we couldn't have put together this amazing event without you!

**Discussion Group “Fortingall Yew”**

**The Complex Intersections Between  
Reflection, Disclosure, Emotion and Learning**

**Paul Hibbert  
Katrina Radford  
Linda M. Sama  
Stephanie Welcomer  
Kathy Lund Dean  
Jeanie Forray  
Jill Shepherd  
Matt Peacock**

## Emotional Narratives and Reflexive Learning

Paul Hibbert  
The University of St Andrews  
[ph24@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:ph24@st-andrews.ac.uk)

I wish to explore stories of (and about) the emotional experiences of educators that promote reflexive, self-adapting learning; emotionally-laden stories that cause us to question in how past experience is understood, and have an impact on how future practice proceeds (Hibbert, 2013; Hibbert & Cunliffe, 2015; Hibbert, Callagher, Siedlok, Windahl & Kim, 2017; Kearney, 2001). The kind of emotional stories that open up practices to examination in a reflexive way, that can lead to new understandings about those practices and to changed practices in the future, with impacts on educators and students.

The connection between emotion, learning and changed practices has been studied in a variety of settings *outside* the classroom, and this body of research can inform our understanding of such processes when they take place *within* educational settings. Importantly, in general terms emotion is increasingly seen to be important in the reflexive engagement with practice, to the extent that attention to emotions is seen to be a key facilitator of reflexive practice (Burkitt, 2012). As Holmes (2010:148) puts it: ‘Reflexivity is not simply a rational calculation of the amount of satisfaction an aspect or way of life brings [...] Reflexivity is emotional and comparative and relies on interpreting emotions.’ King (2006) similarly emphasizes the value and importance of thinking both with and about our emotions. Emotions are valuable because they underpin and facilitate sensitivity to what is going on in one’s own practice contexts, thereby opening up the flow of experience to reflexive inquiry (Davies, 2010; Gilmore & Kenny, 2015). Heightened emotions allow us to sense that something is happening before we can quite express it words.

Emotions can, therefore, stimulate individual learning and reflexive change (Bowen, 2014); but both are strengthened when the possibility of open dialogue with others exists. Our own impressions and expressions benefit from conversation, as others have experiences, vocabularies and alternative expressions that can help us to give a richer framing or account of our own experiences. In this way, dialogic engagement can reveal aspects of our emotions, practices and understandings that we cannot easily discern by ourselves (Burkitt, 2012; Gilmore & Kenny, 2015; Holmes, 2010). My experience suggests that, in the classroom, enabling open dialogue between the educator and the students – and enabling deeper reflexive engagement on both sides – requires risky openness about experiences. This kind of openness about experiences can be achieved through sharing, rich, meaningful and emotionally affecting stories. But is this a (too) risky path to take, and are the learning outcomes worth the risk?

Building on this brief articulation, I would like to explore three avenues of inquiry in particular. First, inquiry about what *kinds* of narrative can facilitate emotional experiences, open dialogue and reflexive learning outcomes in the classroom. Second, inquiry on when and how emotional stories *should* be shared in the classroom to help students’ learning and with what (more or less acceptable) risks. Third, what other educators’ experiences of emotional stories in the classroom has involved, and the impact it has had on *them*.

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## **Are we really engaging them in a meaningful way? Exploring how adolescent cognitive development influences the strategies used to engage students in higher education classrooms**

Katrina Radford  
Griffith University, Gold Coast, Australia  
[k.radford@griffith.edu.au](mailto:k.radford@griffith.edu.au)

The exploration of new and innovative classroom teaching methods is ongoing with constant methods continuing to be espoused as the new ‘best way’ to engage students. More recently, there has been a push to respond to the changing student demands away from face to face delivery to online or mixed mode offerings of courses. In addition, ‘active learning’ techniques have been spruiked as the latest fad in engaging students, however are these effective in really engaging students within courses?

This question arises because, while adolescent cognitive development in regard to learning, working memory, and brain processing speeds are on par with adults, the prefrontal cortex is still developing into adulthood. This means that students aged 16-18 are still developing their abilities to: regulate their emotions, think about others and how their actions impact others, and interact amongst peers in a professional and functional way. In addition, their moral reasoning abilities are still developing (Crone, 2014). Thus, students aged 16-18 may not have developed the cognitive skills required to reflect critically on case studies and scenarios without guidance, work effectively in groups without some level of assistance from their teachers, and understand and effectively respond to someone else’s perspective on an issue discussed in class. Yet, adult learning theories applied to higher education students demand they work autonomously and apply developed moral reasoning skills in the classroom.

In addition to these deficits, 16-18year olds are also still developing their meta-cognition which relates to their ability to become self-aware and self-critical of their social identity, self-identity, and self-concept (Driessen, 2014). This means they may lack the confidence to speak out loud in class as well as question their teacher’s opinions, which results in them not demonstrating critical reasoning skills in assessment. Consequently, regardless of how we respond to students demands for flexibility in course designs, and methods of teaching, the fundamental cognitive development of students may, in fact, predispose them to not reach our desired standards.

The question then remains, how do we, as teachers, acknowledge these developmental challenges and respond to them? Some methods for discussion at the unconference can include the value that designing curriculum that provides regular feedback on a series of smaller assessment items that lead to their final report or using formative assessments to scaffold into summative assessment items, designing group discussions in class that challenge student’s thinking such as using think-pair-share methods, communicating real-world examples that apply theory into practice, and creating more structure to their learning environment in order for these students to succeed. The challenge of this then becomes, how to engage both mature age (those aged over 19) and school leavers, without isolating one group in the process.

At the unconference, I would like us to start questioning how we engage students in each year level and how this is reflected in our curriculum design across countries. I am also interested in starting a discussion to create a research team that test a series of strategies across multiple countries to explore the effectiveness of these strategies in different contexts.

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## Teaching and learning in a “post-truth” world

Linda M. Sama  
St. John’s University  
[samal@stjohns.edu](mailto:samal@stjohns.edu)

Stephanie Welcomer  
University of Maine  
[welcomer@maine.edu](mailto:welcomer@maine.edu)

In 2016, Oxford Dictionaries named “post-truth” the word of the year, defining it as an adjective “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief”<sup>1</sup>. While the term has been in use for well over a decade, its emergence as a foundational understanding of how facts can be distorted, truths difficult to recognize, and the objective rendered irrelevant poses new questions for management education. In the wake of a consciousness around our living in a post-truth world, educators are challenged in guiding learning that is built on facts, conducting research that relies on reliable sources, and sharing concepts that are not laden with subjective assertions.

We are interested in exploring these challenges, with a particular focus on what occurs in the post-truth management classroom. Specifically, we seek to identify the types of issues that arise in a learning environment where fictionalized events are more compelling to students than real events, where truth can be selective, where visual cues trump cognitive content analysis in conveying a message, and where learners’ reliance on social media is unprecedented. The higher education landscape, faced as it is with inordinate demands on professors’ time in an environment of shrinking resources, further aggravates these issues, as educators seek to encourage learning that engages and retains students while simultaneously challenging these post-truth biases and learning strategies. We acknowledge that some of the technological and cognitive shifts might also encourage creativity and critical thinking, enhance self-expression and invite innovation in both teaching and learning styles; yet, we remain concerned with how to balance the use of information that may not be credible and the vast amount of information available, against relevance and truth of the information.

Our goal is tri-fold:

1. To identify the “culprits” in rendering truth an irrelevant concept in learning – ‘What is the problem?’
2. To characterize how a post-truth learning environment can work to undermine the validity of concepts, the value of argumentation, and the validity of evidence – ‘What are the possible outcomes?’
3. To arrive at specific classroom strategies for leveraging the post-truth world in a way that will allow students to gauge relative truthfulness of the information they source, to frame issues in the context of facts/data, to make crucial distinctions in navigating the digital landscape, and to promote thoughtful and respectful discourse – ‘What are some remedies/solutions?’

Our investigation will explore the impact of social media on civil discourse and fact-finding in the classroom, and the value of “ground-truthing” (that is, collecting information at the source through observation of real events) in triangulating data, both from the perspective of the teacher and the learner. We also seek to examine how satire differs from “fake news”, and how opinion differs from “facts”. Ultimately, we want to arrive at classroom exercises and questions for students to ponder that will mitigate any deleterious effects of a ‘post-truth’ world on teaching and learning.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016> (accessed 1/7/18)



## Student Disclosures in Management Education

Sarah Wright  
University of Canterbury, New Zealand  
[sarah.wright@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:sarah.wright@canterbury.ac.nz)

Kathy Lund Dean  
Gustavus Adolphus College, USA  
[lunddean@gustavus.edu](mailto:lunddean@gustavus.edu)

Jeanie Forray  
Western New England University, USA  
[jforray@wne.edu](mailto:jforray@wne.edu)

Offering students the opportunity to process their learning via reflective writing, as a means to integrate classroom learning with everyday life, is becoming increasingly popular (Cunliffe, 2016; Hibbert, 2013). Within reflective pieces, self-disclosure can provide an opportunity to express thoughts and feelings, develop a sense of self, and process group experiences to enhance learning outcomes. Building self-disclosure into coursework is relatively common in courses related to counselling, psychology, or sociology. However, in business education, instructors do not expect nor are necessarily prepared for student disclosures of personal experiences (e.g. a student confessing to aggressive sexual advances toward a fellow team member; a student disclosing fraudulent activity to achieve a higher grade; students revealing prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour). Such disclosures can create challenges for both the student and the educator, primarily because the management classroom is not therapy, and nor should it be. Incorporating private information into coursework raises issues of role boundaries and the use of assessment for sharing potentially vilifying information.

To date, very little research has considered the ethical issues involved with self-disclosures in management education and the impact disclosures may have on learning outcomes. This QIC is generated from ethical uncertainty and a moral dilemma – as educators, how do we respond when students report immoral or unethical behaviour? Do we minimise risk and report the behaviour to administration and in doing so risk undermining the trust we have created through confidentiality? If we breach confidentiality what impact does this have on future learning journals? Are we risking the possibility that students will, in future, only provide superficial work that is ‘safe’ and miss a potential learning opportunity? If students are disclosing too much about their personal issues, how does our own behaviour play a role in contributing to these self-disclosures (Wambach & Brothen, 1997)? How does the nature of pedagogical caring, relational learning, and the instructor–student relationship affect our response to potentially damning self-disclosures (Hawk, 2017)?

Sensitive disclosures present challenges to the educator, and current literature in management education offers few insights. In common law terms, our responsibilities as educators are mainly straightforward, in that we are not normally obliged to report criminal activity to authorities if students share it with us. However, in specific (and increasingly diverse) cases such as with sexual assault, there may be legal obligations based on country, such as Title IX in the U.S. Additionally, we can breach confidentiality clauses if the behaviour is criminal or presents a health and safety concern. Institutionally, most universities have ethics codes; however these codes do not seem to tackle disclosures. In other professions such as psychology, the APA code of ethics indicates that students are not required to disclose personal information in their course work, and are informed that in certain instances, confidentiality may not be kept (Searight & Searight, 2012). There are times during a classroom discussion or review of an assignment when a student will disclose some type of immoral/unethical experience and can blind-side unwitting educators. With this QIC, we hope to surface these issues and ignite a conversation regarding the treatment of self-disclosures in management education.

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## Too many QICs: Our disruptive world of Management Degree Apprenticeships

Jill Shepherd

[jill.shepherd@qa.com](mailto:jill.shepherd@qa.com)

Tulika Jaiswal

[tulika.jaiswal@qa.com](mailto:tulika.jaiswal@qa.com)

Alison Love

[alison.love@qa.com](mailto:alison.love@qa.com)

Glenis Wade

[glenis.wade@qa.com](mailto:glenis.wade@qa.com)

Matt Peacock

[mattcpeacock@msn.com](mailto:mattcpeacock@msn.com)

QAA Apprenticeships, London, UK

As a team working in the new sector of UK management degree apprenticeships, we face questions purely because of their newness. How do we meet the more varied stakeholder needs of employers (who spend their apprenticeship levy on the management education), the employees with their numerous levels of experience, the government funding body (EFSA), several quality institutions (QAA, IfA, Ofsted) and our University partner? How do we use the newness to innovate in teaching and learning in ways that produce outcomes that increase social mobility to meet the UK government's agenda?

We constantly engage with new ideas to increase the learning gain of our students. Needing to work in ways that are accountable, evidence based and constantly improving can feel paradoxical. Over and above this challenge, what ideas do we explore?

We use threshold concepts in each module and yet have concerns on how to identify them and help students engage with the struggle they involve; the concept of threshold concepts is a threshold concept.

The apprenticeship standards that students must meet (laid out in the form of knowledge, skills and behaviours) are interpreted as competencies. As the standards involve skills and behaviours, in addition to the more traditional knowledge, how do we teach these? They require the development of a more holistic approach. We use models of professional development that involve character/challenge/competence/conscience/confidence, adaptive leadership and professional identity. We also 'allow' students to follow a model of their own organisation. How do we work better to align personal and professional and organisational needs is another question we find worth asking. Uniquely, we require that students travel up Bloom's taxonomy at every level of the 3 level (FHEQ, 4, 5 and 6) degree programme, rather than the more traditional moving up across the 3 levels, only reaching the top in their last year of the degree (level 6). We thus require that students create their own theory-in-action made up of bits and pieces of theory from different sources to create a flat ontology that is unique to their 'ISCO' (idea, situation, challenge or opportunity). How do we scaffold such a process when such an approach involves working with different paradigms – a concept we wish to avoid teaching directly?

Working with both the student and the employer as stakeholders, a concern is how to introduce critical theory? We can, as it is, have cases where the view of a field of practice of a Line Manager is less than what we are teaching their employee. Broadening out the view of what managing is and should be and might be is often enjoyed by students.

The heritage of our organisation is technology and digital. Our students emanate from high technology companies or organisations interested in our programmes because they are close to digital and high technology practitioners. Degree apprenticeships are, after all, geared to improving social mobility

through greater levels of productivity. And yet a concern we have is the lag between academic research and publication. How do we help students access theory and recent practice in ways that are effective and easy?

More generally, we are an agile provider of education in how we work to update how we embrace teaching and learning; how can we ensure we are not too creative at the cost of students? If we have one over-arching question, it would be this one.

We pull on the work of Joe Raelin, Caroline Ramsey, Hari Tsouskas, Nic Beech, Michaela Driver, Tony Hall, Mary Crossan, David Seidl and Richard Whittington. Who else would inspire us? What other QICs should we have?

**Discussion Group “The Unicorn”**

**The Intricacies and Relationship Between  
Technology and Teaching and Learning**

**Peggy Hedges  
Norm Althouse  
Mark Dawson  
Vivien Hodgson  
Petar Jandrić  
Sneha Bhatia  
Christy Goodnight  
Terry Nelson  
Julia M. Puaschunder**

## Competing for attention, the classroom in the digital world

Norm Althouse

Haskayne School of Business, University of Calgary, Canada  
[norm.althouse@haskayne.ucalgary.ca](mailto:norm.althouse@haskayne.ucalgary.ca)

Peggy Hedges

Haskayne School of Business, University of Calgary, Canada  
[hedges@haskayne.ucalgary.ca](mailto:hedges@haskayne.ucalgary.ca)

Not surprising to academics, it is becoming increasingly difficult to engage students in the age of social media and digital distractions. McCoy (2013) conducted an interesting survey asking students at six universities, among other things, what their perceptions were regarding the use of digital devices for non-class purposes. An interesting outcome of the survey was that 80% of the 777 respondents admitted that the use of these devices during class resulted in them paying less attention in the classroom and, as a result, missing information and instructions. The main reason given for the use of digital devices for non-class use was to fight boredom. Has the use of a digital device taken over the art of doodling? As educators, we have long been challenged to reduce boredom.

We can design activities that pique interest, activities that are devised to force the use of a digital device for specific classroom purposes, etc., but these require considerable planning and imagination on the part of the instructor. As Sanacore (2008) notes, to motivate students the activities should encourage participation, create discussions, and help the students to become critical thinkers and retain information. However, students may still not be motivated to part with the digital diversion that has become their constant companion.

So the question is how, with the new digital era, can we motivate students to put down their “digital doodling” and engage with not only the materials, but move temporarily away from the social media to the social interaction that helps us to become critical thinkers?

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Sanacore, J. (2008, September 1). Turning Reluctant Learners into Inspired Learners. Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas, 82(1), 40-44.

## The Business School in the Age of Technological Un(der)employment

Mark Dawson

Lancaster University Management School, UK  
[mark.dawson@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:mark.dawson@lancaster.ac.uk)

Vivien Hodgson

Lancaster University Management School, UK  
[V.hodgson@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:V.hodgson@lancaster.ac.uk)

Petar Jandrić

Zagreb University of Applied Sciences, Croatia  
[petar.jandric@tvz.hr](mailto:petar.jandric@tvz.hr)

When trying to envision the future of Business and Management Education, the age of ‘algorithmic cultures’<sup>2</sup> presents a particularly complex concern. How Business Schools might respond to a possible future where digital technologies, through ubiquitous utilization of (semi)-autonomous algorithms, might destroy more jobs than they create? Arguably, this double-bind where the structures and processes through which the future of schools unfold are being disrupted by the very forces they are *at the same time* trying to comprehend, is a pressing issue throughout the educational sector. Yet, for educational institutions whose focus is the corporate and commercial worlds in which the threat of automation is particularly evident, this issue is becoming more and more pronounced. Indeed, it seems the complexity and scale at which teachers and researchers are being asked to operate in order to comprehend this issue is one at which only an algorithm could function; an irony which in itself delineates the problem.

The threat of technological un(der)employment challenges the basic concepts of work and education. What might we be preparing our business and management students for, if it’s not a future of full employment? In an imagined future of widespread un(der)employment, what will it mean to work and what will be the purpose of education? An adequate response to these questions cannot remain entirely in the artificially circumscribed world of HE. Not least because the processes and practices of much HE research operates at speeds incapable of matching the issue; HE research does not go on to (directly) inform the operational and strategic direction of the institution; the corporate and academic worlds often function according to very different principles; and much research on technological un(der)employment does not take up issues concerned with pedagogical theory and practice.

We want to explore a possible scenario which would offer a counterpoint to that outlined above; one that is based on the particularly unique concentration of Networked Learning expertise at Lancaster University Management School.<sup>3</sup> We want to claim that research into algorithmic cultures, their impact on learning and teaching practice, initiatives which focus on the operational and the strategic future of the school, and a Networked Learning approach to management education, can transform Business Schools from recipients of technologically driven social changes into their active (co)-creators. We propose that such an approach offers a dialectical response to a potentially inexorable intensification of technological un(der)employment, which opens room for addressing the problem beyond HE ‘employability strategies’ and reaches into the very fabric of the algorithm-driven workplace reality.

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<sup>2</sup> See ‘Learning in the age of algorithmic cultures’, seminar given at Lancaster University by Petar Jandrić, Zagreb University of Applied Sciences, [https://youtu.be/md\\_HKiZu5c8](https://youtu.be/md_HKiZu5c8) (accessed 21/12/17).

<sup>3</sup> For more on Networked Learning in the specific context of Management Learning, please see: Hodgson, V. E. and Watland, P. (2004) ‘Researching Networked Management Learning’ *Management Learning*, Vol. 35 (2) 99-116.

## **Innovation and technology: How can we improve our current practices?**

Sneha Bhatia  
Curtin University, Dubai, U.A.E  
[sneha.bhatia@curtindubai.ac.ae](mailto:sneha.bhatia@curtindubai.ac.ae)

(1) My research question- Sometimes the urge to innovate (and thrive on the opportunities) that allow organizations to become large and successful in the first place eventually fade out as the company peaks in its performance-why? I am inquisitive about how innovation thrives in the context of social systems. What role does the top management play (policies/frameworks/structures) in creating a culture conducive for innovation within the firms? Why do companies stress on hiring innovative employees but seldom give them a springboard to unleash their creative potential? My research focuses on Intrapreneurship, Innovation and knowledge sharing in established firms. There is a plethora of research on measuring the Intrapreneurial Intensity Index (and the likes) of an organization. This is not about ambidextrous companies. It's about day to day managerial practices that foster creativity among employees at all levels across the hierarchy. Just like we have TQM or JIT, innovation becomes everyone's business. Can we also use it as an instrument to increase employee retention?

(2) I'm interested in the use of technology as a tool in education. Does it foster or impede learning? I am teaching at a University that uses a lot of blended learning and flipped classroom techniques. Assuming this would give us and the students a considerable amount of flexibility, be a reliable source for reference and make things a lot more convenient for all the stakeholders involved- students, instructors, unit coordinators, sometimes even parents. However, I have observed the opposite - the use of technology in classrooms has, in my experience, impeded student engagement.

Through the interactive session(s) at the 'Unconference'; I wish to both collaborate with other academicians and inquire about the challenges (similar or different) that they may be facing (in their instructional design and delivery) as well as discuss how are these challenges dealt with? Are there any best practices to satisfy all the stakeholders:

(a) **parents**- pay for the tuition; feel that the student spends a lot of time in front of his/her screen (which is considered a wasteful activity). 'If I am paying for the tuition, I need to see the student teacher interact in a traditional classroom setting'; (No amount of technology can replace the value added by face to face interactions).

(b) **students**- these may be a heterogeneous group with varying learning styles (auditory, visual, kinesthetic); some may be more tech savvy and like the flexibility that online lectures provide where as some others may find the instructor led discussions more engaging. (some students come with the attitude - 'if I know that there is a bunch of videos that I can always procrastinate and watch later/ there is no sense of urgency to come prepared to class and be ready to engage').

(c) **Other stake holders- teachers/instructors, Unit coordinators** - What role do Accreditation policies and frameworks play in the larger scheme of things (when we claim to have 'state of the art technology' driven class room learning techniques that help the administrators gain points in an accreditation system/build a better brand image)?

- What are the various ways in which we can measure the learning outcomes of students (not just scores/grades).

- Is there a model or framework we can apply to measure student engagement? (Kirkpatrick model ends at reactionaries/ we get course feedback at the end of a teaching session- what next? We need to dig deeper)

- Do we need to stop and reconsider/ rethink the magnitude of technology intervention we allow in our classrooms?



**Fighting to keep up with the speed at which technology is changing the way our students find and engage with quality information? Partner with your library to improve management education!**

Christy W. Goodnight  
University of South Alabama, DBA candidate  
Stockton University, Outreach Librarian  
[Christy.Goodnight@stockton.edu](mailto:Christy.Goodnight@stockton.edu)

How do we keep our students informed on the best ways to find quality business information? We often overestimate our students' abilities. They struggle to find quality business information to back up their research statements. They use the first thing they find. Often they do not even bother with the library databases at all because they can find it all on the internet, right? Technology is changing the ways we find business research and how we engage with quality information. This is where management education can make a difference. We can partner with our business librarians who are experts on how to find management research and scholarship. We can invite them into our classrooms and to partner with us in our online environments to improve management education for our students.

Not only can business librarians help our students, but they can help us as well. We often forget that we have librarians to help us through the maze of new business databases available to us. They have to keep up to date on these things along with copyright laws, patent searching, and even journal quality and rankings. Can a partnership with business librarians help our junior faculty from falling prey to predatory journals? How would this partnership look? Are there resource-driven partnerships in other industries that we could use as a framework? How can we best leverage resources like our business libraries? They contain people who can enhance management education, research, and scholarship.

Business librarians are trained to ask questions and are on the cutting-edge of new technology. They can help us find what we are looking for from the management research tools available and help us engage with information in new and innovative ways. We often overlook their expertise. What do the library and librarians symbolize to business school students and faculty such that they fail to use these resources? Can we save time and frustration by having librarians come into our business college classrooms? They can show our students how to strip away the layers of complexity that we often heap on how to find business research. How can we embed librarians into our management courses to enable our students to get help where and when they need it? Are there best practices for partnering with librarians in management education classrooms? Can we find benchmark programs for integrating them into the undergraduate and graduate business research process in positive and productive ways? How can we do more to partner with the business librarians on campus? How much more could we improve management education each semester if we do?

**Remaining Relevant:  
Redefining the Classroom Value Added in a Digital Environment**

Peggy Hedges

Haskayne School of Business, University of Calgary, Canada  
[hedges@haskayne.ucalgary.ca](mailto:hedges@haskayne.ucalgary.ca)

Norm Althouse

Haskayne School of Business, University of Calgary, Canada  
[norm.althouse@haskayne.ucalgary.ca](mailto:norm.althouse@haskayne.ucalgary.ca)

As quoted by Davidson (2017) Tressie McMillan Cottom, a sociologist of technology: “If you believe technology is the answer to everything that plagues higher education, you probably don’t understand technology or higher education.”

In 2012, Mark Granito, and Ellina Chernobilsky conducted a nine-week study that examined the impact of technology on middle school students’ motivation to learn and retain new information. In this study, the authors found that, when given the choice, students were able to retain knowledge regardless of whether the project was completed using traditional or an on-line approach.

Since that time, a number of other studies have sought to better understand why students are increasingly turning to digital sources for information and analysis while simultaneously eschewing the more traditional classroom. With the growth of MOOCs and other on-line options that are content rich, then why should students even consider a more traditional setting? Some Universities have begun to simply capstone a free MOOC. Is that to become the new model? In light of high costs of education and the ever increasing class sizes, the argument for the provision of a traditional face-to-face classroom is becoming challenging – for both university administrators and faculty.

Is it possible for universities and faculty themselves to redesign their programs and classroom approaches to revive our relevance in this new knowledge era?

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## **Students' Insufficient Employability Skills: Who is Responsible – Higher Education?**

Terry A. Nelson  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
[Tnelson15@alaska.edu](mailto:Tnelson15@alaska.edu)

Employers contend that college graduates do not have sufficient skills in communication (oral and written), teamwork, problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, creativity, and leadership (Association of American Colleges & Universities [AAC&U], 2015; American Management Association [AMA], 2012) to be both successful and promotable in entry-level positions. According to surveys conducted by the University of Missouri – St. Louis (UMSL) in 2008, 2010, and 2012, a skill gap exists for ten skills employers deemed as critical for employee achievement.

Ironically, graduating students indicate that they consider themselves adept in these skills and feel that they have been prepared to succeed in the workplace (Jaschik, 2015). Approximately 75% of college students think their schools do a good job of preparing them for today's workforce, and 64% are satisfied with the effort their college is expending to help them obtain these skills (AAC&U, 2015). Thus, graduating students perceive themselves as being prepared for the workplace, unlike their future employers (Jaschik, 2015).

Assuming both perspectives are true, is it the responsibility of higher education which sets at the intersection of the two to resolve this divergence? Research indicates that employers feel the responsibility to correct these skill gaps resides with higher education (Arnett, 2017; AAC&U, 2015; National Association of Colleges and Employers [NACE], 2017). Indeed, research conducted by AAC&U (2015) revealed that approximately 60% of the employers surveyed indicated that universities must do more to prepare students to be successful in the workplace.

In response to this implication, universities have created internship programs, applied learning projects, mentorships, job-shadowing, etc. to augment coursework. Nevertheless, employers continue the dialogue that college graduates do not have adequate employable skills that are noted in the first paragraph. Furthermore, in a recent survey, 69% to 80% of employers expressed a desire to see evidence of leadership, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills on an interviewee's resume (NACE, 2017). What is the most effective way to depict these skills on a resume (paper), and does this provide sufficient evidence that students have actually acquired such skills?

I recently proposed (Nelson & Wozniak, forthcoming) that universities are providing students with employable skills but must do more to help students convert scholarship into demonstrated proficiency and one of the ways to do this is with an ePortfolio. The AAC&U deemed ePortfolios as its eleventh high-impact practice (Watson, Kuh, Rhodes, Light, & Chen, 2016). The ePortfolio contributes real-world artifacts and narratives that can authenticate a student's learning and skills. Porto & Thompson (2017) suggest that it is possible that an ePortfolio may eventually surpass the significance of a transcript and, subsequently play a complementary role to a resume. Also, I proposed that employers have a responsibility to provide newly graduated students with training and education beyond college.

Two questions emerge from this dialogue:

1. Is it the sole responsibility of higher education to ensure students are equipped with certain skills and at a level that is adequate for employability?
2. How do universities help students to better convey these skills on a resume or beyond a resume?

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## **Nudgital: Critique of a Behavioral Political Economy and Towards a Utility Theory of Privacy and Information Sharing**

Julia M. Puauschunder  
Columbia University & The New School for Social Research, NYC, USA  
[Julia.Puauschunder@newschool.edu](mailto:Julia.Puauschunder@newschool.edu),

Behavioral Economics revolutionized mainstream neo-classical economics. Behavioral economists propose to nudge and wink citizens to make better choices for them and the community. Many different applications of rational coordination followed, ranging from improved organ donations, health, wealth and time management, and numerous others. Yet completely undescribed remains the implicit hidden value derived from the information gained and possibility to nudge open a gate to deception.

In the digital big data era, social media forces unfold a class dividing nudgital society, in which the provider of social communication tools can reap surplus value from the information shared of social media users. The social media provider thereby becomes a capitalist-industrialist, who benefits from the information shared by social media users, or so-called consumer-workers, who share private information in their wish to interact with friends and communicate to public. The social media capitalist-industrialist reaps surplus value from the social media consumer-workers' information sharing. Social media space can be sold to marketers who can constantly penetrate the consumer-worker in a subliminal way with advertisements. Big data compiled about the social media consumer-worker can be resold to marketers and technocrats to draw inferences about consumer choices, contemporary market trends or individual personality cues used for governance control, such as, for instance, border protection and tax compliance purposes.

Addressing the nudgital society allows to better understand the laws of motion of governance in the digital age. Technological improvement in the age of information has increased the possibilities to control the innocent social media users and reap the benefits of their immersion in social media. In the age of populism, nudging can be criticized to be used by the ruling class to exploit the governed populace. In modern democracies, the right to rule was recently proven to be plundered in democratic votes through misguiding information of alternative facts and fake news circulated on social media.

The socio-ethical crises that are rooted in the contradictory class division of the nudgital society are of direct relevance to the Research and Management Learning community. All of these issues are related to how and what we incorporate into our wide-spread new digital teaching and learning environments in the digital big data education era. Yet research on the nudgital society has just recently begun and limited information exists about the direct educational implications of the nudgital divide in the big data social media learning era.

The trade off between privacy and information sharing in social media must be unraveled as for shaping research and management decisions and behaviors online at the individual, societal, and global levels. Highlighting these issues as pressing promises to improve society and democracy in the big data digital age.

I would genuinely appreciate the opportunity to discuss these issues with the wonderful members of the RMLE Unconference group in St. Andrews this July. Having experienced the powerful information exchange of the bright and most benevolent Unconference community before, I am deeply convinced that the august Unconference community could guide my insights and empower my strengths to advocate for a democratisation of information, education about nudges, and well-informed distribution of transparent governance control in social media-enhanced research and management learning curricula. I hope to bring along heterodox insights to behavioral economics and cutting-edge research in the digital era. Further, I would like to deepen my network with the amazing Unconference community and exchange ideas on Research and Management Learning. Lastly, I would try to connect the RMLE community with contacts in the UK and look forward to experiencing how the wonderful Unconference spirit prospers in Europe.

**Discussion Group “The Pedal Bicycle”**

**Innovations in Teaching and Learning:  
Moving Beyond Boxes**

**Megan Gerhardt  
David Weir  
Daniel Wade Clarke  
Ashley Roberts  
Frank Meier  
Roddy Walker  
Alison Love  
Jeff McNally  
Ricardo Zozimo  
Magnus George**

## **As Long as It's Not a Paper: Toward Innovative Representations of Student Learning**

Megan Gerhardt  
Miami University  
[gerharmm@miamioh.edu](mailto:gerharmm@miamioh.edu)

Increasingly, student concern and questions regarding font size and line spacing has highlighted the overemphasis on standardization and regulation of learning products. The traditional default reflection of student learning is “the paper”. However, once a student moves beyond the university setting, the utility of long research papers and essays disappears. Clients and managers want and expect engaging, focused representations of content and insight—and it is rare for a paper to be particularly engaging or focused. Therefore, a paradox exists—while learning, integration, and application are the goals of any management education course, the typical paper assignment is limited in its impact.

To date, the most successful assignments I have created have avoided the traditional paper format, opting instead for end products that emphasize a degree of self-direction, innovation, and unconventionality. Embedded in these assignments is a degree of student uncertainty, as there is not a detailed checklist or specific rubric. Such assignments still have high expectations for quality, critical thinking, and analysis; beyond this there is an expectation that what is created will be interesting, informative, and engaging. Conceptually, this move from traditional papers is a nod to the shift we have experienced in academia from being “fonts of knowledge” to facilitators of interesting, timely conversations and connectors of ideas.

My experimentation with alternative formats of demonstrating learning began with a self-directed team project exploring the leadership styles of presidential candidates (during an election year). There were basic criteria for the knowledge that should be represented in the project, but the game changing directions were:

- The end product could be anything, as long as it was NOT a paper.
- Whatever was created should be something they would be proud to present to a prospective employer (if they wouldn't want their new boss to see it, I didn't want to see it either).

This project yielded end products that far exceeded what I would have thought to assign—including a magazine, campaign posters and propaganda, a board game, and a social media site. The students were excited to share what they had created, and the rest of the class was interested and intrigued to see the directions their classmates had taken.

Since that time, I have continued to experiment with alternative formats, including student generated case studies, concept maps, and podcasts. My questions include:

- What kinds of alternative assignments have others found successful?
- How can we better utilize new technologies to modernize what we assign and expect?

What kinds assignments do other management educators find have the greatest impact on student learning?

## Management Learning and Poetry: A conversation

David Weir  
York St John University, UK  
[Weir53@gmail.com](mailto:Weir53@gmail.com)

A few years ago I had arrived early at the small old fashioned rather grotty pub in a dilapidated back street off a road in the “regeneration area” with boarded up shops awaiting the wrecking ball, in a Northern English city.

As I took my place next to Michael, the second best whistle man of our company he suddenly said “I was talking to a guy in the other pub I go to on a Friday; we were just talking and I said that in here we have a poet and... and he said that he knew you; that you were a colleague. Someone had told him that you performed in a pub....But he’s a Prof at a University...are you a Prof at a University?” I had to own up: the news seemed to take him by surprise and I asked “is that OK?” “Oh Sure” he said “everybody’s somebody. I’m a school teacher. But to me you’re just what you are here...”

I felt his pain as he tried to reconcile roles, hierarchic positions, reality, illusion and we sat quiet and afterwards I have considered these dilemmas of role, entitlement and performance for about a decade So today we’ll try to enlist our combined forces to take the matters further...or if you’re really bad we might hear a poem or three, or have a bit of a sing.

As a part of the RMLE Unconference, I would like to engage others in a discussion about how these two genres of life overlap and inform each other and how these intersections can form the basis of working with executives, MBA students and keen –eyed undergraduates hoping to earn the magic ticket to lifelong prosperity and happiness at the expense of others.

I would like to explore how we can use conversations illustrated with examples of poetry, our own and other peoples’, to explain and to share a position as a subjective exposition of what it may be like to function as a member of what are oftentimes rather separate milieux and definitions of self. For example, I am a full-time professor of management, a sometime manager within complex organisations, and a working poet.

I would like to explore how we can include poems from different cultures including the Western tradition, from the Celtic, Arab and Islamic traditions, and from poets like O Sidheall, Hafiz, Rumi and Khayyam, others from Indian and Bengali, like Tagore, in our conversations. Each illuminates a process or dimension of organizational leadership. Others may have additional suggestions, either in the form of poets, poetry, or other forms of artistic expression that resonate with and potentially expand the learning resulting from this type of conversation.

I would like to discuss (and debate) our roles as teachers of management and share how we can incorporate into our managerial teaching the practice knowledge that we know about ourselves that is not warrantable by the rules of our scholarly trade.

By the end of the Unconference, I would like to expand the work that I’m doing in this domain by connecting with others who are interested in finding and sharing their own personal voices, as they encourage their students to do the same, with the knowledge that these voices are multiplex, and to be effective and fulfilled as a leader these voices have to be listened to and their messages heard.



## Concerns related to the impact of student passion(s) on undergraduate management learning: On poking around poetically and scholarly

Daniel Wade Clarke  
University of Dundee, School of Business  
[dclarke@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:dclarke@dundee.ac.uk)

### Concerns

As program director for a BSc Business Management degree, students regularly talk with me about transferring pathways. I often ask them what is it that they are passionate about to understand what makes them tick. Occasionally, my probing is met with deadening silence.

Sometimes, when I ask, *what do you want to do after graduation?* I hear things like, “become a manager”.

*Of what? In which sector?* I enthuse. Some respond with, “I just want to get onto a good management training scheme”.

*Managing what? For who? Which industry...? For whose benefit?* I ask. “I don’t know...to make important decisions and become the boss” is not an unusual response.

Students of medicine typically concern themselves to improve/save lives. Design students seek to create solutions to real-world problems. For some students of organization studies I speak with, however, they are seemingly concerned only with grandiosity (Alvesson & Gabriel, 2016): “becoming a boss” and “telling people what to do” and “make a lot of money” (actual student words).

I am concerned by the number of management students with seemingly very little passion for whatever it is they want to get into. I detect this not only in meetings with Advisees, but also in seminar rooms.

### Ideas

I am struck by three ideas.

First, Janesick (2016: 60) observes that “The human race is filled with passion”.

Second, Lamott (1995: 4) writes, “...anyone who survived childhood has enough material to write for the rest of his or her life”.

Third, Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) (Bradley & Nash, 2004; Nash, 2011) -including other ways of saying, such as identity poetry- are “quite suited to representing the mind and ideas” (Janesick, 2016: 63).

I wish to ponder the notion that poking around, writing (lousy) poetry may lead to “*good enough research poetry*” (Lahman et al., 2010: 47), ultimately helping students to create real possibilities and productive futures (Pelias, 2015).

### Research questions

Why are students all too often encouraged to surgically remove themselves -and their passion(s)- from the inquiries they make into human understanding?

Would writing a SPN/research poetry produce cognitive and affective engagement, helping students to tap into their passion(s)? Could writing with more passion further enhance student learning gains?

Is there a lack of engagement to begin with? What is engagement, anyway? Is there a need for the kind of engagement that personal narrative affords?

Considering all these QICs, two questions -posed by others- come to mind:

First, with Nash (2011) I wonder, “Why is it that when we get into an easy and engaging conversational flow in my seminars my students’ personal self-disclosures and unorthodox

intellectual insights can be so original and inspiring, yet their writing assignments turn out to be so disappointingly flat, uncreative, and impersonal?” (p.56).

Second, with Janesick (2016) I ponder, “Should we make more room for poetry in our qualitative researcher courses...” (p.60).

Where is the passion? What are students passionate about? How do we help cultivate, nurture and develop the space-time-matterings at the heart of what matters to students?

From all this, what are the matters that matter? What constitutes a difference that can make a difference in management education research?

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## **You've got a point! Visualizing narrative structures in academic writing**

Ashley Roberts  
WBS, The University of Warwick, UK  
[Ashley.Roberts@wbs.ac.uk](mailto:Ashley.Roberts@wbs.ac.uk)

University assessment practices may take many forms, yet one thing that remains a key skill for learners is the need to create sound, intellectually engaging narratives. The practice of academic writing is often a baseline of assessment methods, with essays, examinations and reflective pieces becoming the mainstays of traditional, normative higher education management practice. Yet, how often do we feel that 'an essay was nearly "there" but it just lacked a clear narrative' or ask questions such as 'where's the line of argument?'

Indeed, some essays can be solid in terms of their content, yet they fail to attain an 'A-grade' as they 'jump around' and may be a bit 'all over the place' structurally. Other essays may initially have their markers swayed with their enticing structures from an articulate author, yet upon further analysis, academically, they fall short of the mark.

Given the relative lack of academic writing provision before students embark on undergraduate degrees, many university students find assignment writing challenging, particularly in relation to how to construct and narrate an academic argument. Whether it be a learner's first degree (one that often comes with a big 'step up' from school/college life) or a returning student who's looking to secure their MBA, the scale, scope and impact of an individual's academic writing is wide.

So what can we do? Surely, this important concern merits our time and effort in order to a. Help out said individuals/ourselves and... b. Help generate even more impact through 'well-structured' work?

In this QIC, I'd like us to share best practice as to how we engage learners with academic writing. What provisions (if any) do we offer to help learners? Are they effective? Are there alternative ways of visualizing narrative structures and helping writers to create arguments through the written word? If so, what are they and how do we know if they work? Are any of using software to help students with their essay writing? If 'yes', then what is its impact for the student plus knowledge generation/skill development more widely?

It is hoped that, following these discussions, we will be able to apply the gained knowledge directly into our teaching/written practice. The outputs could lead to better teaching methods and also student success in their written work. Furthermore, we can make sense of our own practices of writing. Students and academic staff therefore stand to benefit.

## The role of texts in Leadership Development

Frank Meier  
Copenhagen Business School  
[fm.mp@cbs.dk](mailto:fm.mp@cbs.dk)

Roderick Walker  
Copenhagen Business School  
[rwa.ioa@cbs.dk](mailto:rwa.ioa@cbs.dk)

While Management Education and Leadership Development may be said to have the development of reflexivity, and for executive programs even *practical reflexivity* (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith, 2004) – as when the practice of the participant is the object of reflection - as core objectives, the scholarly field of reflexivity is found to be in confusion regarding core definitions and concepts (Cotter & Cullen, 2012). Much the same could probably be said about the various ways these programs *produce* reflexivity. However, in an actual program, it is likely that participants are made to reflect on something *in the medium of a text* or to be more concrete, some sort of *document*. This could be the output of tools like a 360° evaluation, a personality profile or a transcription of an interview with a significant colleague or manager. It could also have a more abstract connection to the student's practice, as when a journal article, describing some sort of leadership quality or schism, enters as the object of reflection. In all, the configuration is Student-Object or, if the reflection happens in a conversation, Student-Object-Teacher or Student-Object-Student. In the parlance of James Taylor (2006), this would amount to *co-orientation* toward a *shared object* or a *shared problem space* (Engeström & Sannino, 2010).

It is our concern in this QIC that we – as Management Teachers and as Management Learning Scholars – are caught up in what Derrida calls the 'metaphysics of presence'. This is the idea that the immediacy of speaking (the classroom conversation, the research interview etc.) is closer to truth and reality than is the written word, a derivative, the image as opposed to the object itself in Rousseau's words. While we don't want to get lost in philosophical intricacies, we do contend that the world of the management student is a 'textscape' (Keenoy & Oswick, 2004) and that much work of the student – and indeed the instructor – is 'textwork' (Van Maanen, 2006). We also contend, that the text exhibits some qualities speech does not: its ability to remain, even if the conversation strays away, its ability to make present that which is absent and its ability to regulate and authorize members sayings and doings in line with the institutional demands across multiple conversations (Smith, 2001). It makes sense then, we find, to devote more attention to the hidden work of these 'textual agents' (Cooren, 2009) that inhabit our Management Learning and Education world and that we devote much time to design or transmit. This allows us to orient ourselves towards the object of co-orientation – the text - rather than to the quality (critical, practical etc.) of reflexivity, as is usually the case (Swan, 2008).

Questions that in this light may be asked include:

1. What is the role of texts in practice-based post experience management education?
  - 1.1. How does the personality test constitute the person through the conversations of Management Education?
  - 1.2. What do textbook and journal articles depiction of managers and management do to and for the identity work of the manager student?
  - 1.3. How do written peer to peer ethnographies constitute 'practice' in assignments and exams?

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## Too many QICs: Our disruptive world of Management Degree Apprenticeships

Jill Shepherd

[jill.shepherd@qa.com](mailto:jill.shepherd@qa.com)

Tulika Jaiswal

[tulika.jaiswal@qa.com](mailto:tulika.jaiswal@qa.com)

Alison Love

[alison.love@qa.com](mailto:alison.love@qa.com)

Glenis Wade

[glenis.wade@qa.com](mailto:glenis.wade@qa.com)

Matt Peacock

[mattcpeacock@msn.com](mailto:mattcpeacock@msn.com)

QAA Apprenticeships, London, UK

As a team working in the new sector of UK management degree apprenticeships, we face questions purely because of their newness. How do we meet the more varied stakeholder needs of employers (who spend their apprenticeship levy on the management education), the employees with their numerous levels of experience, the government funding body (EFSA), several quality institutions (QAA, IfA, Ofsted) and our University partner? How do we use the newness to innovate in teaching and learning in ways that produce outcomes that increase social mobility to meet the UK government's agenda?

We constantly engage with new ideas to increase the learning gain of our students. Needing to work in ways that are accountable, evidence based and constantly improving can feel paradoxical. Over and above this challenge, what ideas do we explore?

We use threshold concepts in each module and yet have concerns on how to identify them and help students engage with the struggle they involve; the concept of threshold concepts is a threshold concept.

The apprenticeship standards that students must meet (laid out in the form of knowledge, skills and behaviours) are interpreted as competencies. As the standards involve skills and behaviours, in addition to the more traditional knowledge, how do we teach these? They require the development of a more holistic approach. We use models of professional development that involve character/challenge/competence/conscience/confidence, adaptive leadership and professional identity. We also 'allow' students to follow a model of their own organisation. How do we work better to align personal and professional and organisational needs is another question we find worth asking. Uniquely, we require that students travel up Bloom's taxonomy at every level of the 3 level (FHEQ, 4, 5 and 6) degree programme, rather than the more traditional moving up across the 3 levels, only reaching the top in their last year of the degree (level 6). We thus require that students create their own theory-in-action made up of bits and pieces of theory from different sources to create a flat ontology that is unique to their 'ISCO' (idea, situation, challenge or opportunity). How do we scaffold such a process when such an approach involves working with different paradigms – a concept we wish to avoid teaching directly?

Working with both the student and the employer as stakeholders, a concern is how to introduce critical theory? We can, as it is, have cases where the view of a field of practice of a Line Manager is less than what we are teaching their employee. Broadening out the view of what managing is and should be and might be is often enjoyed by students.

The heritage of our organisation is technology and digital. Our students emanate from high technology companies or organisations interested in our programmes because they are close to digital and high technology practitioners. Degree apprenticeships are, after all, geared to improving social mobility

through greater levels of productivity. And yet a concern we have is the lag between academic research and publication. How do we help students access theory and recent practice in ways that are effective and easy?

More generally, we are an agile provider of education in how we work to update how we embrace teaching and learning; how can we ensure we are not too creative at the cost of students? If we have one over-arching question, it would be this one.

We pull on the work of Joe Raelin, Caroline Ramsey, Hari Tsouskas, Nic Beech, Michaela Driver, Tony Hall, Mary Crossan, David Seidl and Richard Whittington. Who else would inspire us? What other QICs should we have?

## What is the Entrepreneurship Mindset and Should We Teach it?

Jeffrey J. McNally  
University of New Brunswick, Canada  
[jeff.mcnally@unb.ca](mailto:jeff.mcnally@unb.ca)

Maha Tantawy  
University of New Brunswick, Canada  
[maha.tantawy@unb.ca](mailto:maha.tantawy@unb.ca)

*“It’s not what you look at that matters, it’s what you see.” - Henry David Thoreau*

Although it has many definitions, the commonly accepted definition of the entrepreneurship mindset (EM) refers to the evolutionary cognitive process resulting from the acquisition of new assets and resources, which allows individuals to reflect on their own learning and move from a novice mindset to an expert mind set (Krueger, 2007). This is accomplished by structuring knowledge in different ways compared to those with low levels of EM (Baron & Ensley, 2006). As such, it should be ‘teachable,’ and may be of value to all management students, not just those majoring in entrepreneurship. However, to date it has not – why is this?

Entrepreneurship education (EE) can stimulate the EM by helping learners in 'connecting the dots' between what can be seem as unrelated trends or events to identify opportunities and develop business ideas (Baron & Ensley, 2006). What differentiates individuals with high levels of EM is not how much they know compared to those with low levels, but rather how they structure their knowledge and how they use deep cognitive structures (scripts, maps, etc.) to see the world (Krueger, 2007). At this Unconference, we would like to engage others in discussions about whether teaching and training interventions can gradually alter deep beliefs in ways that allow learners to structure knowledge differently and positively. If they can, how should we not only shape and guide these interventions but also assess their outcomes? To examine the influence of educational programs, it is important to think about outputs, throughputs and inputs (Kreuger, 2007). It may also be of value to non-entrepreneurship students to help identify opportunities as either entrepreneurs or as ‘corporate intrapreneurs.’ This assertion may help change the views of management students and professors alike in terms of helping students to ‘think differently’ about problems and workplace applications. These are just a few of the topics we would like to discuss with interested and engaged others at the 2018 RMLE Unconference.

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## Live Guest Speakers or YouTube Videos? Effects on Student Entrepreneurial Learning

Ricardo Zozimo

Lancaster University Management School, UK

[r.zozimo@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:r.zozimo@lancaster.ac.uk)

Magnus George

Lancaster University Management School, UK

[m.george@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:m.george@lancaster.ac.uk)

Entrepreneurship educators take advantage of local, national or international guest speakers as a way to develop better student experiences within the classroom. In general, these guest speakers complement delivery of theory by offering insights into practical and real life applications of the theory. Concurrently and in parallel, educators have also taken advantage of the extensive opportunities offered by platforms like youtube to bring worldwide famous guests “into” the classroom.

Anecdotal evidence seems to suggest many factors might precede this choice, and hence we believe this issue requires examination. Colleagues have told us that availability of what they consider to be exceptional guests greatly affects the choice. Other colleagues have also reported that youtube videos provide a summarised, often well-articulated and in-depth overview of a topic, that can easily complement the theoretical insight, possibly being shown alongside or interspersed with theoretical content. This contrasts with messy real life examples provided sometimes by guest speakers. Indeed, advocates of youtube videos also discuss how these videos offer a more controlled supplement to theory with no surprise effects and no confused students. Finally, youtube videos allow students to potentially review material more easily and continue the educational experience outside the classroom.

In reflecting on the best way to impart entrepreneurial learning to our students, we see live or digital guest speakers as core dimensions of blending theory and practice and also delivering vicarious experiences of what it is like to be an entrepreneur. These encounters with digital or live guest speakers highlight possible future problems, and our implicit assumption or hope is that these things accumulate to impart or transfer at least some of what otherwise remains tacit, earned only through bitter experiences. Theoretically, it should also inspire them, or provide behaviours that, if emulated, are likely to be associated with a successful entrepreneurial career.

Accepting the fact that management in general and entrepreneurship scholars in particular make extensive use (and perhaps abuse) of live and digital guest speakers, our hope is that we can collectively reflect on the most appropriate ways of using live and digital guest speakers and how to implement this in our teaching practices.

**Discussion Group “Swilcan Bridge”**

**Examining the Tools and Frames we use to Design and Assess**

**Jakov Jandrić**  
**Kevin Lo**  
**Fabrice Cavarretta**  
**Lisa Anderson**  
**Carolyn Downs**  
**Uzair Shah**  
**Richard Howarth**  
**Chris Towers**  
**Arran Caza**  
**Glenis Wade**

## Re-problematizing rankings in management learning and education

Jakov Jandrić

University of Edinburgh Business School, UK

[Jakov.Jandric@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Jakov.Jandric@ed.ac.uk)

Specialised media rankings have over the years been central to some of the most engaging debates in management learning and education literature (e.g. Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Gioia & Corley, 2002; Ghoshal, 2005, to name a few). In recent years, however, interest in exploring their implications seems to have faded. This raises two important questions: have we come to a point in which specialised rankings are considered to be an integral component of the relationship between business schools, students and other stakeholders that requires no additional questioning? And if so, how did we reach that point despite strong concerns (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Zell, 2001; Furedi, 2011; Espeland & Sauder, 2007) that specialised rankings are at best meaningless, and at worst harmful for management education and its stakeholders? A potential answer to these questions lies in the fact that the discussions so far largely focused on the implications of rankings for business schools and their practices on one hand (Corley & Gioia, 2000; Wedlin, 2006; Morgeson & Nahrgang, 2008), and academic work on the other (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Zell, 2001).

Keeping in mind the lessons learnt from a large body of academic literature exploring the effects of rankings in institutional and sector contexts, I propose that focus should be placed on exploring the consumption of rankings, notably the implications of ranking-induced management education realities on student educational experiences. To do so, we must recognise specialised rankings as mechanisms that actively create and control the management education market, and position business schools in the role of suppliers (Wedlin, 2006; Kaplan, 2014) and, conversely, students in the role of consumers (Zell, 2001; Naidoo, 2003) of the commodified educational product. Findings of the exploratory study conducted among postgraduate students in one UK business school suggest that specialised rankings potentially play a significant role in student commodification of self. In their struggle for employment opportunities, students draw inspiration from business schools competing on a ranking-induced markets and identify their educational experience with a specific rank or, in some cases, the mere existence of their institution on the list. This way, rankings influence the change in the student perception of their educational experiences by blurring the line between the “academic relationship and a commercial transaction” (Furedi, 2011: 3). This is achieved through the features of rankings such as simplicity and user-friendliness, both resulting from commensuration (Espeland & Stevens, 1998) of inherently incommensurable (Karpik, 2010) features of management education through simplification of complex processes, relationships and outcomes.

This trend of student commodification of self represents an underexplored issue in the discussions on specialised rankings, one that has a potential to significantly challenge higher education as a process of individual emancipation and social progress. It also reflects the increased dehumanisation in contemporary management education that is in stark contrast with the core values held throughout the history of education (Freire, 1968; McLaren, 2002). These conclusions suggest that the implications of specialised rankings for management education are still not fully explored and understood and should, therefore, be re-problematized in the context of management learning and education.

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**Sharing Two Topics of Interest:  
Issues Related to (Forced) Participation and Required Quantification**

Kevin D. Lo  
University of San Francisco  
[kdlo@usfca.edu](mailto:kdlo@usfca.edu)

I have two topics I would like to discuss with others at the 2018 RMLE Unconference. The first relates to the consequences of, and inherent biases associated with, a strong focus on class participation both in terms of student learning and assessments. The second relates to issues associated with the pressure to quantify everything we do under the guidelines of accrediting bodies like AACSB. Below, I have included a more in-depth set of questions, ideas, and concerns related to each of these topics.

**1. Latent Disconsequences of the Bias Toward Class Participation**

Many of our syllabi include a component of in-class participation or contributions as part of the way grades are calculated. My classrooms tend to be very lively and energetic because I set early norms for engagement and contributing. I have never received negative feedback from students regarding my insistence on contributing. But I wonder the following:

Questions:

- (1) How might this practice unfairly favor outspoken students who think out loud?
- (2) How might this practice unfairly disadvantage students who might be non-native speakers as well as students who take more time to be thoughtful in their responses?
- (3) Does this practice inadvertently discriminate against deep thinking?

Ideas:

I am looking for ideas on how to integrate elements of class participation and contributions other than online dialogs. What are other people doing in this space?

Concerns:

Online dialogs have the potential to offer rich conversation but take so long to read and pick through. Also, it doesn't seem (based on my experiences using them) that students stay with the topic as easily, so discussions naturally take a lot of tangents. Without unfairly favoring or disadvantaging groups of students, what are best practices around eliciting high levels of student contributions and engagement in class?

**2. The Quantified University**

A push towards AACSB accreditation has necessitated quantifying many of our teaching activities.

Questions:

Are the pushes for AACSB accreditation and assurance of learning measurements distorting our teaching practices?

Ideas:

I would like to discuss this with others who might feel that they are being restricted by the need to quantify everything.

Concerns:

Are we losing academic freedom by teaching to rubrics and measuring student learning specifically for accreditation purposes?

## The misplaced love-hate relationship for evidence-based Management Sciences

Fabrice L. Cavarretta  
ESSEC Business School, Cergy-Pontoise France  
[cavarretta@essec.edu](mailto:cavarretta@essec.edu)

As a neo-Carnegie scholar, I have a keen interest on practitioners' ability to absorb theories, hence on issues of management education. As an illustration, I provide below the abstract of two of my papers that directly address those issues. In both cases, at stake is the relationship between what can be *acted on* in practice vs. what sciences *knows*. My propositions are that on the one hand, our scholarship tends to overvalue scientific production, even when it is not absorbable; and on the other hand, management scholars miss a great source of scientific production by ignoring clinically induced research questions. I hope to be able to join the conversation of the conference by discussing the inadequacies of those mostly misplaced love-hate relationships.

### **Study 1 : Management Theory as a Social Calculation : The Epistemic Properties of Pragmatic Theories of Action**

Bounded-rational managerial actors struggling to process information often use a limited set of theories of action expressed as simple rules. We assume a hierarchical structure where some *keystone rules* play a disproportionate role in guiding action and cognitions. We establish the complexity of determining an efficient set of such keystone rules, and therefore the necessity of using meta-heuristic approaches, such as evolutionary processes where the computationally hard problem of picking an optimal set of rules is solved by a social calculation. We explore the development of keystone rules among entrepreneurs and find that the emergent keystone rules among the observed entrepreneurs do not match existing "scientific" theories but have particular epistemic properties, such as fuzziness, inconsistency, counterfactual, as well as being polymorphic and self-fulfilling. Furthermore, inductive reasoning suggest that keystones rules evolve as bundle, due to interactions inter-rules shaping the emerging set. Such bundle of keystone exhibit *paradigm* dynamics as they follow a sequence of punctuated equilibria. The identification of keystone rules fills a theoretical gap between rational decision and social construction perspectives. It informs the ability to produce science that can be absorbed by the management practitioners.

### **Study 2 : The Management and Organization Science Puzzle: Questions from a Metaphorical Comparison of Medicine and Management**

Management and Organizational Science (MOS) has moved rapidly from an initial focus purely on practice to a current state where it relies on a "pure science" model. A key issue for such a relatively young field is whether it is appropriately covering the full extent of its scholarly jurisdiction. We identify a challenging issue in the current institutionalization of the MOS scholarly field. We do so by drawing a comparison with the medical field that reveals the dangers of the existing decoupling of practice and theory. Specifically, we metaphorically explore the question: if the MOS field were medicine, could we afford scholarship to be limited only to the realm of pure science, for example biochemistry, in the absence of clinical embeddedness? Finally, we propose questions and potential solutions to make progress towards resolving such decoupling: fostering epistemological analyses to deepen the comparison with fields such as medicine and law; targeting clinically oriented problems; mixing various sub-disciplines of management and practitioners; and fostering actual research collaboration from fields with similar practice affiliation.

## Assessing the impact of scholarship and teaching on management practice

Lisa Anderson  
University of Liverpool Management School  
[l.anderson@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:l.anderson@liverpool.ac.uk)

Paul Ellwood  
University of Liverpool Management School  
[paul.ellwood@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:paul.ellwood@liverpool.ac.uk)

There is a growing interest in the impact of teaching and learning in higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world, evidenced through both academic writing and governmental initiatives. In the UK, these initiatives include the recently introduced Teaching Excellence Framework that seeks to 'recognise and reward excellent teaching and learning' (HEFCE, 2017) and the Stern Review of the Research Excellence Framework that welcomes the connection between teaching quality and how it is informed by research and a recommendation that the 'REF impact element more broadly recognises the impact of research on teaching' (2016:31).

The measures that are currently used to assess the impact of the UK university experience upon our students are driven by a set of metrics largely derived from the National Student Survey (NSS) that relies on student feedback to questions about teaching, assessment and learning resources. In contrast to these metrics-driven approaches, we are embarking on a study of the nature of scholarly practice in DBA graduates that seeks to develop an alternative understanding of the impact of management education; one that is not measured by a feedback survey but provides evidence of how an excellent learning experience in a business or management school has an impact on managers in the workplace. Our focus on DBA graduates is deliberate as this degree itself embodies a concern for both scholarship and practice and whilst the numbers of DBA graduates has increased in recent decades, there has been little research on the impact of DBA programmes (Banerjee & Morley, 2013).

We take our inspiration from the original intentions of UK business schools which set out to form a partnership between the university and business, with a particular focus on understanding how managers learn in order to ensure that when they joined organisations after graduation they had the requisite skills and knowledge to be successful. In such a model, management practice is central to the mission with the premise that research and scholarship underpin excellent practice.

Our study is also driven by the research impact imperative, first introduced in REF 2014 and where impact is defined as 'An effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia'. (HEFCE, 2016). The 410 impact case studies submitted to the Business and Management panel in 2014 show a wide range of engagement with business, government and society yet the rules did not permit business and management schools to demonstrate how their research delivered impact through their teaching activities.

At the unconference, we would like some help and discussion around how best to design the study; we are currently considering diaries and shadowing. We would also like to talk about the broader issue of what the business school (in the UK at least) has become and how we might reframe our thinking and practice so that our research and teaching has a stronger impact on management practice.

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**Seeing Workplace as a Learning Space:**

## A Call for Developing Critical Work-Based Learning (WBL) Pedagogy

Carolyn Downs  
Lancaster University Management School  
[c.downs@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:c.downs@lancaster.ac.uk)

Farooq Mughal  
University of Bath, School of Management  
[F.Mughal@bath.ac.uk](mailto:F.Mughal@bath.ac.uk)

Uzair Shah  
Lancaster University Management School  
[s.shah2@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:s.shah2@lancaster.ac.uk)

While arguing that a workplace setting offers useful and rich opportunities to facilitate developing students' higher level skills, a recent report found that the workplace as a site for learning is 'not well-exploited' (Felstead and Unwin, 2016, p. 19) even in the UK where a model of work-based learning (WBL) through apprenticeships is well-established. Academic institutions engrossed in the process of formalizing learning, we feel, are failing to equip students with requisite knowledge and higher-level skills to absorb complex organizational realities and influence change. Such abilities, in our view, are particularly important to respond to the demands of the changing nature of workplace, to problematize knowledge and decision-making processes and their underpinning assumptions, and to deal with evolving uncertainties within and around organizations.

Also traditional WBL pedagogy that is based on acquisition model of skills formation, fails to provide adequate support to learners in challenging the common-sensical views which treat the workplace and its corresponding context as morally and politically neutral (e.g. Grey & Mitev, 2004). While there is growing recognition of the value of WBL within the UK business schools, there is however less attention paid towards the arrhythmic tunes of organizational life and its impact on student-practitioners in the learning process.

Studies in higher education around WBL demonstrate, benefits for using experiential learning, which often helps structure learning at the workplace that is often 'unplanned, informal, retrospective, and serendipitous' (Lester and Costley, 2010, p.562). However, in order to utilize the workplace as a learning space, in our view, there is a need to develop a pedagogical approach that goes beyond the duality of the workplace and higher educational institutions and facilitate student practitioners in learning to be open-minded and reflexive learners who are politically active professionals contributing towards the struggle for responsible and inclusive organizations and society. However, our concerns is about how we bring such ideas into our WBL pedagogical designs and practices.

In response, we wish to explore critical WBL pedagogy offered by business schools in collaboration with the employers in a *different* tripartite relationship with student-practitioners that can mobilize deeper forms of learning which helps put into perspective the irregularities of the workplace. Such a pedagogical approach that aims to facilitate students' enquiry of placement experience at not only a practical/technical but also critical level. The critical approach we seek addresses issues of power and politics and the challenges of the tripartite relationship through recognising that power is not static but is part of a negotiated process (Ogbor, 2001; Jones, 2008) – this will be particularly important for empowering students to take ownership and responsibility of their learning and practice. We position our WBL pedagogical framework in light of critical theory to goes beyond surface level notions of incidental, experiential and reflective learning (e.g. Vince 1998; Vince, 2002) to acknowledge the social, cultural, political and historical circumstances within which learning is situated (Lave & Wegner, 1991).



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**Is Tertiary Education in Dire Straits?  
(Is it money for nothing or just another brick in the wall?)**

Richard Howarth  
Nottingham Business School, UK  
[richard.howarth@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:richard.howarth@ntu.ac.uk)

Chris Towers  
School of Social Sciences, NTU, UK  
[Christopher.Towers@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:Christopher.Towers@ntu.ac.uk)

Much of our work is 'at the coal face' of university educational environments. For one of us (Richard) this stems from work as a Course Leader of a forward looking, experience and practice driven UG course in a large modern business school (although by the time we attend the Unconference, I will actually have stepped down from this role). The course was set up 20 years ago and I have run it for the past 5 years and also for 4 years prior to this.

For both of us, our overarching concern related to our work is the (potential) effect of the shifting space for business management education (esp. UK). Essentially, we see ourselves at a point in time of increased/increasing fees (subject to assessments of performance and a wider review) and, for example, a shifting role and/or position of students (e.g. as customers). The question here, in light/despite of current literature and research, is how we respond in practice (at a course, module and class level) and how this reflects/responds to wider and specific student needs (particularly if the latter needs are primarily evaluated via surveys and assessments of satisfaction – and changes and 'improvements' driven by responses to these). This is challenging/problematic as it assumes(?) that students (as the 'customer') are best placed to make such assessments and judgements on the learning approach/process, the course and module content etc – this approach also often misses the place of other stakeholders and, ultimately, the 'outcomes' too.

Although it is important to recognize, understand and seek to enhance student experience – one could argue that such assessments are only part of the picture here. One may also question if the/a student voice is too easily and readily attended to and heard. As such, can this approach and 'set up', in some way, undermine attempts to promote and support deeper engagement and wider learning – as, for example, assessments and surveys often capture feedback in the moment and can be influenced by emotion, perceptions and other factors too.

Our interest is whether, and if, other colleagues (and researchers) are observing/witnessing a push back from learners. For example, because work which supports reflection (and the process of reflecting) is seen to be content less and led by the student themselves. This can lead to questions around – what am I paying for and what am I getting for my money if I am expected to do (all) the work? Or – so you expect me to teach/learn myself, I thought that was what I paid the fee for? With a focus here on outcome (the certificate) and not the process and journey (and notions of transactional learning interpreted in a very different way).

For us – there is a further challenge related to the above – as, for example, business schools are also being encouraged to build partnerships and 'deliver' courses for organisations/employers (and these are on the whole 'regulated' by professional bodies and associated standards etc). This comes under, for example, apprenticeship levy funding and, although apprenticeships are grounded in a learners' ability to evidence their learning and development, the role of educators is (again?) placed after the needs of the customer (this time the employer) and the outcomes are also, potentially, undermined as a result.

## Finding the themes in our teaching

Arran Caza  
University of Manitoba  
[arran.caza@umanitoba.ca](mailto:arran.caza@umanitoba.ca)

When I was a new instructor, I was overwhelmed by all the things that I could / should be doing in my classes: discussion, deep learning, cases, team-based work, critical thinking, leveraging technology, and on and on. In the years since then, my feeling of overwhelm has grown, as I've learned about even more possibilities (e.g., gamification, threshold concepts, progressive stack, etc.). In response, I have ill-formed but sincere hopes about participating in a research program looking at the area of overlap between teaching methods and student outcomes, with the aim to defining an organizing framework that supports informed choices by instructors.

My hopes imply two areas of concern: what students should be learning and how they should learn it. Given the evidence that faculty, administrators, students, and future employers' desires for student learning are only weakly correlated (e.g., Cooke & Zaby, 2015; Shuayto, 2013), it's unlikely that there is an objectively correct answer to the question of *what* students should learn. Research probably can't resolve this issue -- though I'd be thrilled to be proven wrong.

In contrast, I think that research could help us more easily reach whatever goals we do choose. In particular, I'm imagining something that lets instructors make sense of the many methods that might be used to achieve a given goal. Despite the AACSB's confidence that there is a "generally accepted sets of learning experiences to prepare graduates for business and management careers" (AACSB, 2017, p. 34), and the EFMD's similar belief in "internationally accepted standards" (EFMD, 2017, p. 64), I am not aware of an established set of experiences that provide everything our students need. I am aware of lots of research showing how a specific method leads to particular outcomes (e.g., case teaching does this, problem-based learning does that), but I suspect that we can find a more comprehensive way to think about all the different teaching tools.

A team of researchers recently suggested the idea of "meta-practices," which are learning activities shared across different pedagogies (Bright et al., 2016). For example, they identified students evaluating each other (i.e., playing a role in grading) as a distinct practice that was shared by a number of pedagogies and which had identifiable effects on several student outcomes. The implication seems to be that the vast array of our teaching methods may have some unifying commonalities. By analogy to research methods, Bright and colleagues' (2016) paper suggests that we may be able to conduct a thematic analysis or dimensional reduction to provide a way to think about how we reach our instructional goals. I think the idea merits investigation. If the seven hundred and fifty thousand words of the English language (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017) are built with twenty-six letters, and the incredible diversity of life derives from combinations of five nucleobases, there has to be a framework we can develop to help instructors help students.

## Too many QICs: Our disruptive world of Management Degree Apprenticeships

Jill Shepherd  
[jill.shepherd@qa.com](mailto:jill.shepherd@qa.com)

Tulika Jaiswal  
[tulika.jaiswal@qa.com](mailto:tulika.jaiswal@qa.com)

Alison Love  
[alison.love@qa.com](mailto:alison.love@qa.com)

Glenis Wade  
[glenis.wade@qa.com](mailto:glenis.wade@qa.com)

Matt Peacock  
[mattcpeacock@msn.com](mailto:mattcpeacock@msn.com)

QAA Apprenticeships, London, UK

As a team working in the new sector of UK management degree apprenticeships, we face questions purely because of their newness. How do we meet the more varied stakeholder needs of employers (who spend their apprenticeship levy on the management education), the employees with their numerous levels of experience, the government funding body (EFSA), several quality institutions (QAA, IfA, Ofsted) and our University partner? How do we use the newness to innovate in teaching and learning in ways that produce outcomes that increase social mobility to meet the UK government's agenda?

We constantly engage with new ideas to increase the learning gain of our students. Needing to work in ways that are accountable, evidence based and constantly improving can feel paradoxical. Over and above this challenge, what ideas do we explore?

We use threshold concepts in each module and yet have concerns on how to identify them and help students engage with the struggle they involve; the concept of threshold concepts is a threshold concept.

The apprenticeship standards that students must meet (laid out in the form of knowledge, skills and behaviours) are interpreted as competencies. As the standards involve skills and behaviours, in addition to the more traditional knowledge, how do we teach these? They require the development of a more holistic approach. We use models of professional development that involve character/challenge/competence/conscience/confidence, adaptive leadership and professional identity. We also 'allow' students to follow a model of their own organisation. How do we work better to align personal and professional and organisational needs is another question we find worth asking. Uniquely, we require that students travel up Bloom's taxonomy at every level of the 3 level (FHEQ, 4, 5 and 6) degree programme, rather than the more traditional moving up across the 3 levels, only reaching the top in their last year of the degree (level 6). We thus require that students create their own theory-in-action made up of bits and pieces of theory from different sources to create a flat ontology that is unique to their 'ISCO' (idea, situation, challenge or opportunity). How do we scaffold such a process when such an approach involves working with different paradigms – a concept we wish to avoid teaching directly?

Working with both the student and the employer as stakeholders, a concern is how to introduce critical theory? We can, as it is, have cases where the view of a field of practice of a Line Manager is less than what we are teaching their employee. Broadening out the view of what managing is and should be and might be is often enjoyed by students.

The heritage of our organisation is technology and digital. Our students emanate from high technology companies or organisations interested in our programmes because they are close to digital and high technology practitioners. Degree apprenticeships are, after all, geared to improving social mobility

through greater levels of productivity. And yet a concern we have is the lag between academic research and publication. How do we help students access theory and recent practice in ways that are effective and easy?

More generally, we are an agile provider of education in how we work to update how we embrace teaching and learning; how can we ensure we are not too creative at the cost of students? If we have one over-arching question, it would be this one.

We pull on the work of Joe Raelin, Caroline Ramsey, Hari Tsouskas, Nic Beech, Michaela Driver, Tony Hall, Mary Crossan, David Seidl and Richard Whittington. Who else would inspire us? What other QICs should we have?

**Discussion Group “Sir Thomas Sean Connery”**

**Examining our Models and Lenses: Reflexivity, Threshold  
Concepts, Development, and Cultural Considerations**

**Rasmus Bergmann  
Christian Tangkjaer  
Nebojsa Stojcic  
Katija Vojvodic  
Amanda J. Martin  
Daniel Nunan  
Peter Lamb  
Maribel Blasco**

## **Management Theory in Public Management Practice: Questions of Critical Reflexivity and Performativity**

Rasmus Bergmann  
University College, Denmark  
[rasb@ucc.dk](mailto:rasb@ucc.dk)

Mie Plotnikof  
University College, Denmark  
[mipl@ucc.dk](mailto:mipl@ucc.dk)

Inspired by the ongoing debate in Denmark about the (missing) effects of management education in public management practice, and by the discussion on reflexivity and performativity in critical management studies, we are developing a research project about the relationship between management theory, critical reflexivity and management practice in the Danish public sector. We wish to examine how (critical) management theories and concepts inspire educated public managers and how this performs and effects practice. The purpose is twofold.

First, we wish to contribute to the debate about reflexive leadership and management with a (self) critical perspective on how the request for reflexivity in critical management and leadership studies establish a particular normative relationship to practice. This is relevant because the request for reflexive management and leadership seems to call for reflexivity about everything except about reflexivity itself. Of course, we do not intend to argue that managers need to stop being reflexive about their practice. On the other hand, we do not wish to intensify the machinery of reflexivity by pointing to reflexivity itself as a new focus point for reflexive leadership. Rather, our intention is to examine how reflexive management and leadership in itself represents a particular normativity that affects the practice that the reflexive manager or leader reflects and acts upon. Instead of looking on reflexive management and leadership as a more or less innocent enterprise that ensures high quality public sector management, we wish to study how some management theories and concepts condition the reflexive leader's scope of reflexivity and the practical implications of this.

By doing so, we, secondly, wish to contribute to the debate about how reflexivity oriented management theories and concepts perform in practice. On the one hand, such theories and concepts, which are founded on a (radical) constructivist epistemology (e.g. narrative or systemic approaches to management and leadership), play a central role in many management educations in Denmark aimed at public sector managers. On the other hand, such theories and concepts are often criticized for not offering tangible management tools and, hence, for not being particularly useful in everyday management practice. Concurrently, the debates in critical management studies on reflexivity and performativity are likewise questioning such impact.

Hence, we would like to discuss our questions regarding how management theories and concepts perform by offering managers and leaders a particular scope for thinking and acting. In other words, we want to contribute to producing a nuanced and practice-oriented language for what is at stake when educated public managers bring certain management theories and concepts into play in their management practice. Furthermore, how such performativity may reflect and expand the discussions about practice impact in critical management studies.

## **What is an impact in professional leadership practices and are we too conservative really to pursue impact in leadership development?**

Christian Tangkjaer  
Copenhagen Business School, Denmark  
[ct.ioa@cbs.dk](mailto:ct.ioa@cbs.dk)

How do threshold concepts influence the impact of learning for professional practitioners and how do professional practices influence threshold concepts in leadership development processes in academic learning spaces, i.e. part-time master programmes? This is basically the research question that I find relevant to pursue and to reflect upon. I have taught leadership and strategic management in part-timer master programmes for many years and I have facilitated leadership development in practical contexts as well.

What strikes me is that a threshold concept as it is described in the context of undergraduates and graduates must have other characteristics and forms when it comes to professional practitioners who are infused with practical knowledge and wisdom that are strongly connected to their identity as professional practitioners. A threshold concept has a transformative capacity in the meaning that the threshold concept basically represents a new way of understanding the subject matter, however perhaps it will idealistically also change professional experiences, identities and relations. If this is the case then leadership development becomes an ethical question due to its impact in professional worlds. Threshold concepts contain “potential spaces” as an intermediate area of experiencing wherein inner and outer reality can be separated (Winnicott, 1971).

When educating professional practitioners the educator must bear in mind that the professional practitioners have to unlearn as well as learn in these liminal spaces of potentiality. The concept of liminality has its origins in cultural anthropology, designating a space ‘between and betwixt’ – an instable or insecure phase or region of neither inside nor outside the social structure. Liminality is not a space of control, but a space of creativity and without a fixed outcome (...like the unconference concept!). Liminality is the seedbed of cultural creativity wherein new symbols, models, paradigms and constructions emerge and perhaps are integrated into the central economic and politico-legal domains and arenas, supplying them with goals, aspirations, incentives, structural models and *raison d’être* (Turner, 1967): p. 28.) The philosopher Björn Thomasson states that there is no certainty regarding the outcome of liminality, because in liminality there “is a world of contingency where event and ideas, and “reality” itself, can be carried in different directions” (Thomassen, 2009): p. 5).

If, which is a strong assumption in this framing, leadership development takes place in a liminal space wherein threshold concepts are important, then it is necessary to ask:

- How do we recognize transitions of learning in the different dimensions (borrowed from Henry Lefebvre...) perceived, conceived and lived professional spaces, and what does it really mean and matter?
- Are we as teachers stable or moving subjects and objects in these liminal spaces, and what kind of impact does this have on the learning experience for the professional practitioners?
- And should we really talk about “impact” and even measure “impact” if certainty is an illusion?



## Student engagement in culturally diverse classrooms

Nebojsa Stojcic

University of Dubrovnik, Department of Economics and Business Economics  
[nstojcic@unidu.hr](mailto:nstojcic@unidu.hr)

Katija Vojvodic

University of Dubrovnik, Department of Economics and Business Economics  
[katija.vojvodic@unidu.hr](mailto:katija.vojvodic@unidu.hr)

One of the greatest challenges for educators is the creation of effective learning environment. This task is particularly demanding in multicultural classrooms. Students of different cultural backgrounds come with learning predispositions that do not necessarily conform methods of instruction deemed “common” at their place of learning (De Vita, 2001). Failure to comprehend cultural differences leads to misinterpretation of student intentions and learning styles that, if not addressed properly and timely enough, can reduce student openness to learning. Typical response to these challenges delegates adaptive role to students who are expected to align their learning styles with teaching approach offered by instructors. Most teachers opt for such uniform approach in good faith efforts convinced that they provide students with equal treatment. Yet, diverse cultural settings rarely present fertile ground for uniform approach to fall on. Instead, the mismatch between teaching and learning styles can often create a gap too big for students to bridge and result in failure of teachers to properly engage all students in the learning process.

The challenge described above presents particular burden for students shaped through primary and secondary schooling in educational systems not promoting critical thinking, challenging of authorities and focused on unidirectional classroom communication. Finding themselves in teaching frameworks that expect them to provide own thinking and reach own conclusions such students may disengage and underperform. The challenge of education management in multicultural setting comes down to finding of the right balance between cultural backgrounds and related, often individual, learning styles on the one hand and teachers’ expectations on the other hand. The question that arises in such setting is how can optimal path for unleashing of student learning potential be created?

As observed by Weinstein, Curran and Tomlinson Clarke (2003), one of the fundamental tasks of culturally responsive classroom management is to create caring, inclusive and respectful classrooms. In addition, the emphasis should be put on the relationship between various cultural factors and learning style. In light of this, the following concerns emerge: How the individualism/collectivism framework, different levels of cooperation and competition, and time sensitivity affect group assignments? Do different styles of communication give teachers a wrong impression of the level of knowledge possessed by students? How can collision between teaching techniques applied and accustomed learning styles be overcome? Can a balanced multistyle teaching approach facilitate and encourage learning in the multicultural classrooms?

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## The neglected child of leadership education: Can the field of leadership education and development mature through more effective and sustained evaluation of what works?

Amanda J. Martin

Swinburne University of Technology, Australia

[amandamartin@swin.edu.au](mailto:amandamartin@swin.edu.au) & [amanda.martin@leaderimpacts.com](mailto:amanda.martin@leaderimpacts.com)

Seventeen years ago, Lowe and Gardner (2001) examined ten years of contributions to the *Leadership Quarterly*, looking for potential future areas of research. They found few studies focused on the impact of leadership development on organisational results (Lowe & Gardner, 2001). Other scholarly commentators have confirmed this state of affairs, including Day (2000); Hernez-Broome & Hughes (2004); Pearce (2007); and Riggio (2008). McGonagill and Pruyn (2010) citing (Charlton & Kuhn, 2005: 242-252) indicated that only around 3% of programs are measured at the level of understanding the organizational impact of the development program (McGonagill & Pruyn, 2010: 10; see also Beer, Finnstrom & Schrader, 2016: 1).

A recent comprehensive search for studies of the impact of leadership development interventions over the last century, found only 200 (Avolio, Reichard, Hannah, Walumbwa, & Chan, 2009: 766-76; see also Brewer, 2007: 27-28). Kaiser and Curphy (2014) in their study of leadership development indicated that one third of the programs they reviewed were evaluated to have no “positive result of any kind” (Kaiser & Curphy 2014: 296). Evaluation also seems to escape the attention of the leadership development industry, with a recent report on global best practice leadership development including only a paragraph on the measurement of its effectiveness (EFMD, NOCA & SHRM, 2016: 37).

As well as finding little evidence of studies examining the efficacy and results of leadership education and development, some scholars have also expressed concern about the state of leadership development practice itself. Day et al. (2014: 64), reviewing twenty-five years of leadership development literature concluded that the scholarly field of leadership development is still “relatively immature” in many respects (see also Allen & Middlebrooks, 2012: 86). The study by Lowe and Gardner (2001) mentioned above was only able to identify a few studies documenting the activities and methodologies incorporated in leadership development programs (Lowe & Gardner, 2001). Kets De Vries & Korotov concur:  
...it is not always clear...what the best approach for developing leaders is, nor is it evident how to distinguish, among the existing parade of leadership development programs, those which are useful, from those that bring little return on investment (Kets de Vries & Korotov, 2011: xviii).

It seems likely that this industry-wide lack of understanding and interest in what methodologies and development strategies work challenges meaningful measurement of results (Martin, 2012), reinforcing immaturity of the field and creating a vicious cycle (Riggio, 2013: 13; see also DeRue & Myers, 2014: 83). At the same time, leadership and its development is a multi-billion dollar business (Avolio & Hannah, 2008; DeRue & Meyers, 2014; Murphy & Riggio, 2011) so one would expect this vicious cycle to be of significant concern for the leadership education industry and for the “buyers” of leadership education and development. But neither group appears to be raising their concerns to a level that has piqued the sustained interest of scholarly researchers.

The question for the 2018 RMLE Unconference: Can the field of leadership education and development mature through more effective and sustained evaluation of what works?

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## Addressing Demographic Denial in Management Education

Daniel Nunan, University of London  
[d.nunan@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:d.nunan@bbk.ac.uk)

Maria Di Domenico, University of Surrey  
[m.didomenico@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:m.didomenico@surrey.ac.uk)

Recent trends within management education have seen a gradual decline in average age of management students, driven by a reduction in the age of MBA students, growth in undergraduate enrolments and a decline in mature students studying part-time. Each of these trends has a number of well understood, and perhaps justifiable, explanations. Business schools also argue that they are meeting the demands of recruiters, arguing that “*companies are looking for talent at an earlier age*” — *when that talent is still malleable*” (FT, 2017).

The underlying question we ask is whether a demographic gap has emerged between business education and the underlying characteristics of society and demographic changes in the workplace. Specifically, concern over the implications of aging populations has become a key topic of discussion amongst scholars in a range of disciplines. Changes in demographic structures resulting in the aging of populations have been identified as a key macro-trend impacting nearly all aspects of social and economic life in the 21st Century (United Nations, 2015). As life expectancy increases, and the proportion of those of working age decreases, the structure of the workforce and the nature of consumer demand will alter. These changes are not new or unsurprising, with a stream of literature in the social sciences over several decades looking at both the phenomena and its implications.

Yet, we suggest that management education has not effectively responded to these challenges. For example, why is business education focused on the young, when evidence suggests that older students perform as well or better as younger students (Gropper, 2007)? As society shifts towards portfolio careers, there is an increasing requirement for management education to support the needs of older members of society beyond the traditional lifestage views of education (Gratton and Scott, 2016). Our questions on this topic are as follows:

- \* What are the unmet needs of students in non-traditional age groups?
- \* What are the barriers, both internal and external, to meeting these needs?
- \* How do experiences and expectations of aging populations and student groups vary across countries and disciplines?
- \* What is the role of new forms of technology & blended/online delivery modes in meeting these needs?
- \* Are existing programmes / subject areas appropriate?
- \* How might management education create intergenerational connections?
- \*

Our interest in this question, and others’ experience and insight into it, is framed by our belief that addressing these demographic challenges is core to the future relevance of management education.

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## Contextualisation as a threshold concept: Success and failure

Peter Lamb

Nottingham University Business School, Ningbo Campus, China

[peter.lamb@nottingham.edu.cn](mailto:peter.lamb@nottingham.edu.cn)

There have been many critiques of the nature of knowledge generated within business schools and its impact on management education and learning. Critics have highlighted disconnect between abstract management knowledge and the context of management practice (e.g. Raelin, 2009). In the cross-cultural context, critics have suggested that there has been a decoupling of the consumption and utility of Western management education, with the brand element of Western management education prospering, whilst the transmitted knowledge often being of little relevance to non-Western students at Western business schools or to students at international branches of Western business schools (e.g. Joy & Poonamallee, 2013)

I work for a branch campus of a UK university in China, where we teach a UK centred curriculum, and I have first-hand experiences of some of the issues that critical voices have raised. Through the years I have received feedback from both Chinese and international students demanding more contextually relevant teaching and learning. Consistent with extant literature, my students have doubted the relevance of Western management knowledge or have made requests to know how to apply Western management knowledge in the Chinese context. In response to these demands I have developed an approach which has focussed on the cross-cultural contextualisation of Western management knowledge, and I claim that the process of cross-cultural contextualisation qualifies as a threshold concept in principle.

I have some success with the approach where some students crossed a threshold and experienced transformation in their learning. However, I have also had some failures with the approach. For various reasons some students rejected the approach, some seem incapable of crossing the threshold and some students gamed the approach. When reflecting on these outcomes I reminded of the adage 'that you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink', and I wonder what implications this has for the threshold concept idea in practice.

The questions I want to raise concern the following:

- What are the implications of pedagogic failure for contextualisation as a threshold concept?
- Does contextualisation still stand as a threshold concept if some students do not want to, or are unable to cross the threshold to transformative learning?
- What are the impacts of different student identities, motivations, and abilities on the viability of contextualisation as a threshold concept or any threshold concept for that matter?
- Can there be a threshold concept for teaching, but not for learning?

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## **‘Schema-washing’: A concept to capture a particular form of social responsibility negligence**

Maribel Blasco  
Copenhagen Business School, Denmark  
[mbl.msc@cbs.dk](mailto:mbl.msc@cbs.dk)

### **Issue: Letting the models do the thinking**

Undergraduate business school students I interviewed recently about their views on social responsibility expressed utter faith in the neutrality, objectivity and truth claims of the models, theories and other disciplinary schema they had been taught. What is more, mastering these ‘technical’ schema seemed to free them, in their minds, of the task of reflecting on the models’ societal impact or questioning their validity:

*“I mean, as long as we are taught different theories and models that actually you use - and most of them are models that the National Bank is using or other people - so I mean... they don’t need to consider responsibility. As long as the models that you are taught are sustainable, then it’s ok ... It’s just about using the models right*

If we are to believe these students’ reports, at no point were they challenged by their teachers to look critically at the models used, including considering their potential societal impact if applied ‘in real life’:

*“I would say that in our classes, we are taught how to do economics. We don’t talk about social consequences. It’s just like we should know what the ethics are. We talk a lot about economics... but we have never touched the subject of social consequences if we do those kind of models in real life.”*

Scholars broadly agree that to be critical means adopting an attitude of ‘scepticism towards arguments, assumptions, practices, recognizing the impact of social and political dynamics and the implications of the inequalities of power and control’ (Antonacopoulou 2010: 9). These quotes, then, should give us cause for concern.

My **questions** are, therefore: how come certain disciplines remain impervious to decades of well-founded and intensive critique both of the type of theories taught (Ghoshal 2005; Grey 2004), and the lack of critical thinking and reflexivity skills development at our business schools (Akrivou & Bradbury-Huang 2015)? And at what point, and through which mechanisms, do students acquire such cocksure disciplinary convictions?

### **Concern**

My concern is that business students are being taught to let particular schema (theories, models, frameworks) do the thinking for them when it comes to responsibility. Social and environmental issues, for instance, are assumed to be a priori built into models, obviating the need to address these issues separately. If it is true, following Aristotle, that virtue is a result of routines and habits – i.e. ‘what we repeatedly do’ (Durant, 1961 in De los Reyes et al. 2017: 330-331), then it follows that disciplinary schema cemented during a student’s business school years will prove enduring in their subsequent professional lives.

I propose the concept of ‘schema-washing’ to denote this reliance on models to waive social responsibility. Akin to the concept of green-washing, ‘schema-washing’ describes the legitimization of negligence through the appearance of virtue – in this case neutrality. We need to name this practice so that it can be purposefully countered at different levels, including accreditation criteria, programme/course design, and evaluation criteria including learning objectives.



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## **Discussion Group “Alexander Fleming”**

### **Teams and Teamwork**

**Cameron Welsh**  
**Farooq Mughal**  
**Jamie Griffiths Craighead**  
**Kathi Lovelace**  
**Sarah Wright**  
**Helena Cooper-Thomas**  
**Rachel Morrison**  
**Chris Quinn Trank**



## **Building High-Performance Student Teams**

Cameron Welsh  
Haskayne School of Business, University of Calgary  
[cnwelsh@ucalgary.ca](mailto:cnwelsh@ucalgary.ca)

A key learning for business students is to learn how to work in team environments. Once they graduate and move into their careers they will become members of numerous work teams that will be expected to achieve their high-quality work in reasonable time periods.

What does this mean for business education?

Answer: At school, business students are required to develop numerous teamwork skills. These skills become important learning objectives for business students and this means instructors are required to be able to help students function at a high level in team environments.

At many teaching and learning conferences, there are sessions about helping student teams work better. The learning objectives of these sessions are aimed at helping instructors create team assignments that deliver both high-quality work and high-quality student experiences. Typically in these sessions, the presenter discusses tools like team contracts, team goal setting, and team evaluations to help the team to function well. I have attended many of these sessions and most often leave these sessions wondering if the task is really about helping the student teams perform better by giving tools like those mentioned above or is it about educating the team to be a team and how to function as a team. I often feel at odds with the presenter in these sessions given my experience with training high-performance student teams for business case competitions.

Over the past 14-years, I have coached hundreds of students on competitive academic teams at a North American business school. My success rate sees almost 50% of these teams reaching the podium (top three at the competition). I have coached teams that have competed at the regional, national, and international levels in an array of academic streams from business strategy to business ethics to corporate governance including interdisciplinary teams of engineers and business students.

My 14-year journey has led to a number of questions that I try to answer with every team I coach:

- What are the best practices that allow students to perform at a high level?
- How do you take a team of students and build them into a team that can create a "winning" performance?
- What are the key aspects of training students to achieve high performances in a team setting?
- Is there a difference between the competition team experience and the classroom experience?
- Are there differences in these experiences? If so, what are they and more importantly should there be differences in the experiences?
- How do students' experiences differ between those that get little or no instruction on how to work in teams and those that are taught how to work in teams or, as Walker and Angelo (1998) call it, "teaming"?
- What factors allow students to experience greater success and better performance on these teams?

Overriding these questions are a couple of additional thoughts. Do these questions have different answers depending on the team composition? Are there commonalities between different types of teams?

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## **Position and Position-Taking in Groups: Theorizing Member Positionality in Action Learning Sets through a Bourdieusian Lens**

Farooq Mughal  
University of Bath, UK  
[f.mughal@bath.ac.uk](mailto:f.mughal@bath.ac.uk)

The idea for this paper arose from an action learning study that engaged 31 full and part-time MBA students, organized into small groups, across three Pakistani business schools to examine the cultural complexity of group-reflection and self-directed learning. As the study progressed, it revealed important dynamics pertaining to power relations and cultural conditions that limited the utility of reflective practice among groups on the Pakistani MBA. This was experienced, first, because of the shift in the group dynamics created by the questioning of taken-for-granted assumptions that were 'overtly situated in the context of real-life power relations' (Vince, 2004); and second due to the pedagogical shift from expert to exemplar, power-position to personal authority and content to context and process-driven modes of learning (Pedler, 1997). Both of these aspects re-directed my attention towards the unfolding of interpersonal relations during instances of group or public reflection (e.g. Raelin, 2006; Reynolds & Vince, 2004; Vince, 2002).

If developed, this idea will aim to explore the social organization of action learning sets with the aim to theorize the position and position taking of members in deconstructing the interoperability of power during phases of reflection. I wish to shed light on the objective structure of relationships in action learning sets by examining member positionality through participant and facilitator accounts of group interactions. I am inclined towards using Bourdieu's theory of practice, in particular his notion of field, to examine MBA students' intersubjective practices in organizing group reflection, to draw out specific member positions that preserve cultural orthodoxy. The initial findings, so far, suggest that members tend to misrecognize structural relations as result of habitual (or embodied) practices, which are further reinforced through the co-construction of an intersubjective (or shared) space within the sets. Based on this, I would like to argue that reflecting publicly risks the exposure of the subjective and relational self, which compromises the position of the learner and prevents meaningful (inter)-action.

On this line, I would like to advance research work (e.g. Reynolds & Vince, 2004; Raelin, 2006 and Hibbert et al. 2016; 2017) that turns the focus of reflection on subjective experiences, i.e. the embodied dimension of one's own thoughts, actions and feelings in predisposing learners to adopt certain positions. This is mainly to unpack the complex interrelationship between reflection and experience to understand how embodied dispositions can inter-subjectively reinforce and legitimize social structural relations, resulting into position takings. I would also like to argue that the primacy of subjective experiences and the politics of reflection often remains implicit in critical management education research (e.g. Kayes, 2002; Gray, 2007 etc.) – an important dimension in shaping group dynamics (Vince, 2008). I believe this idea has the potential to contribute towards the theorizing of group and relational spaces in an attempt to outline the broader social, political and relational dynamics shaping the act of reflection.

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## Utilizing Needs Assessments, Active Learning, Design Thinking and the Jigsaw Team Model in Business Courses for ePortfolio Artifact Development and Refinement

Jamie Griffiths Craighead  
Beacon College  
[craigheadjamie@gmail.com](mailto:craigheadjamie@gmail.com)

After the UnConference in NYC last summer, I completed two graduate level courses offered during the second half of summer 2017, “Planned Change in Instructional Design” and “The Nature and Development of Creativity.” In August, I took an opportunity to move from teaching in a newly designed, active learner flipped classroom, general business degree program at the second largest public research university in the United States to a small, not-for-profit, liberal arts school that caters to students with learning differences, including dyslexia.

In the Planned Change course, I learned to take a Needs Assessment approach to business research and completed a Needs Assessment Plan on a “moderately successful” ePortfolio competition in a general business program at a large public university. I quickly adopted the Needs Assessment approach in my Business Research course in Fall 2017. In the Creativity course, I was required to develop an ePortfolio and then required my students, including five classes of Freshmen, to develop ePortfolios.

Business students graduate with a degree but may lack an easily accessible portfolio of work to share with future employers or include in graduate school applications. Colleges of Business can borrow from the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) where students are encouraged or required to graduate with Portfolios of their work often developed as ePortfolios (using sites such as [www.wix.com](http://www.wix.com) or [www.weebly.com](http://www.weebly.com)). In addition to projects, ePortfolios may include evaluations or recommendations from peers, faculty, and staff as well as reflective writing to prepare students for interviews.

Business courses can be intentionally designed with individual assignments and team projects that can be included as artifacts in ePortfolios. Teams can be structured as Jigsaw teams (<https://www.jigsaw.org/>) encouraging active learning, peer teaching, and multiple deliverables. Introducing business students to design thinking will allow artifacts to be viewed as “works-in-progress” continuously improved through iteration.

I've loosely taken the following as my approach for course and assignment design: What skills will students obtain and what artifacts can they produce to demonstrate those skills? How can evaluations be designed as opportunities to reflect on the learning experience and to refine artifacts with the goal of including artifacts in ePortfolios?

Questions:

1. What should a professional ePortfolio for a business undergraduate or graduate student include? What assignments or projects can be modified to create artifacts?
2. What is the appropriate balance of individual and team work in a course to demonstrate mastery of material and provide individual as well as group created artifacts for inclusion in an ePortfolio.
3. How do we structure teams and teams-of-teams to simulate the experience of working in an organization to promote helpful peer feedback for career success?
4. What is the role of faculty in peer feedback? Should we teach students that effective feedback is positive, specific, and provides a next step? Should faculty censor peer evaluations?

## Millennial teams: Learning teamwork basics

Kathi J. Lovelace  
Menlo College  
[kathi.lovelace@menlo.edu](mailto:kathi.lovelace@menlo.edu)

Sarah Wright  
University of Canterbury  
[sarah.wright@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:sarah.wright@canterbury.ac.nz)

We would like to contribute to the management education literature by advancing research in the areas of student teams and millennial learners. We are interested in creating teaching experiences and conducting research that addresses the following questions, issues, concerns (QICs):

1. Does the current management education literature suggest that traditional team-based skills (such as those itemized in the CATME; Ohland et al, 2012) still resonate with millennial learners? What are the necessary teamwork basics for contemporary management/managers?
  - a. What are some ways to update traditional topical management education activities (communication, conflict management) so that these exercises are applicable to contemporary work environments? What exercise extensions make sense (e.g., online versus face-to-face) to millennials?
2. Research has identified the emotional intelligence of groups as an important attribute of team success (e.g., Druskat & Wolff, 2001). How important is emotional intelligence (EQ) to team success in organizations? Is EQ different/unique for millennials?
3. Are there “newer” concepts such as shared leadership that should be considered core concepts in management education and team courses? Should we focus on face-to-face skill building in our management education delivery to compensate for lack of experiences in this area?
4. Much research emphasizes training/teaching one topic at a time (e.g., conflict management; O’Neil et al, 2017) versus a situational (holistic – multiple, interrelated concepts) approach.
  - a. How does a holistic approach to learning teamwork basics translate to the management education classroom? What foundational management theories would serve as frameworks for a holistic approach to learning teamwork basics?
5. Research on team-based learning (TBL) has demonstrated consistent positive results. Should this approach serve as the pedagogical framework for learning about teamwork basics? Would a TBL framework add to overall learning because of the individual/team aspect?
6. In what ways do we need to change our teaching (i.e., change the type or delivery of assignments/activities) to best reach millennial learners?
  - a. Is the term “millennial” learner still applicable? What do applications of learning theory tell us about current student learning preferences – e.g., what gains students’ attention, what approaches or hands-on activities increase retention, what reflective activities help students learn?

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss these QICs with the management education and scholarship of teaching and learning community.

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## Friendships in management learning contexts: Hazardous or helpful?

Helena D. Cooper-Thomas  
[helena.cooper.thomas@aut.ac.nz](mailto:helena.cooper.thomas@aut.ac.nz)

Rachel L. Morrison  
[rachel.morrison@aut.ac.nz](mailto:rachel.morrison@aut.ac.nz)

Auckland University of Technology (AUT), New Zealand

Our key Question/Idea/Concern (QIC) is: “What is the impact on management learning and education of student friendships (undergraduate, postgraduate, and MBA) that are developed in management learning contexts?” For example, positive outcomes might include increased enjoyment, improved attendance, greater participation in classroom activities and discussion, more collegiality in groupwork, and better grades. Downsides might include the social liability of classroom friendships such as distraction, increased off-task behaviors, fallings out that could reduce attendance or participation, and peer pressure not to stand out by joining in activities or excelling in assignments. Further, we are interested in the role we, as educators, might play in developing a context that optimizes the role of friendships to facilitate and promote learning.

Our interest in this topic stems from the combination of our own research on workplace friendships (Morrison & Cooper-Thomas, 2017), including their upsides and downsides (Morrison & Macky, 2017), along with the increased emphasis on experiential and interactive learning at universities in recent years. Such learning activities may facilitate friendships between students, depending on how they are structured. While initially the generation of friendships among students may seem like a positive spin-off from university learning, we think this requires a more critical analysis.

Workplace friendship research suggests that, while friendships can offer support and elicit positive emotions, they can also be related to distractions and the added demands of maintaining the relationship, and can therefore inhibit task performance. It is plausible that university student friendships in the classroom have these same mixed positive and negative impacts. For example, university classroom friendships may have benefits such as motivating attendance as an opportunity to meet friends, increasing enjoyment of class exercises, and social support with learning activities and assignments, especially groupwork (Tomlinson & Egan, 2002). On the other hand, university classroom friendships may have costs such as increased risks of social loafing (Fellenz, 2006), plagiarism (Palmer, Oakley, & Pegrum, 2017), and the potential for social or cultural norms enforced via friendships to restrict participation or performance.

In 2018 we will be conducting a systematic literature review on this topic of university classroom friendships, analyzing and compiling evidence on the associations between friendships with outcomes such as student engagement, motivation to learn, class attendance, course retention, and grades. Our initial scoping suggests that there is little research directly on this topic, although related issues have been studied (e.g., friendships during primary and secondary education; optimal ways of structuring university student groupwork).

At the RMLE Unconference we would like to generate a discussion of colleagues’ experiences of student friendships in class, including:

- Perspectives and activities focused either on enabling students to work with friends, or instead separating friends and encouraging new contacts (e.g., via the way activities or assignments are designed by the instructor).
- Perceptions of positive and negative impacts of classroom friendships over different timeframes: In the immediate term for classroom engagement and learning; in the medium-term for course performance, such as exam results; and in the longer-term for students’ career choices.
- Other ideas not covered above that participants identify as important considerations.

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**Discussion Group “William Wallace”**

**Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethics:  
When Theory and Reality Collide**

**Helene Smit**

**Annette Yunus Pendrey**

**Jessica McManus Warnell**

**Maria Fernanda Wagstaff**

**Matt Drake**

**Tulika Jaiswal**

**Morten Thaning**

## **Educating for Depth Leadership**

Helene Smit

University of Stellenbosch Business School, South Africa

helene@feather.co.za

In 2018, it seems we are faced with a world that may experience radical systemic step-changes. I have worked in the field of management education for 30 years, and more than ever, I am concerned about the practical relevance and focus of how we research and teach ethics, integrity, sustainability, and systems thinking. Although these approaches are being well integrated into management education theory, especially with initiatives such as Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), I am still concerned about the level of integration in the literature between the functioning of the individual psyche (including the role of the unconscious mind), that of the collective psyche and the full complexity of larger environmental and technological systems within which organisations function.

My concerns are exacerbated by the fact that I live and work in Cape Town, a city that is about to run out of water. This means that in about two months' time, in a developed urbanised context, the taps will be turned off and more than 5 million people will be queueing daily for their allocation of 25 litres of water. It only takes a little imagination to understand that the socio-economic implications are potentially catastrophic. In addition, everyday observation of the psychodynamics of the people of Cape Town (and their faltering leadership, as our city council is in a significant crisis) do not seem conducive to excellent co-operation and fairness. Judging (unscientifically) by the reactions of the general population as reported in the media, and as visible on social media platforms, many ordinary people still have a child-like approach to their leaders, expecting them to be all-providing parents. Also, the psychology of our leadership varies from the embodiment of an entitlement to loot state coffers, to traditional tribally-based hierarchical leadership, to blatant corporate greed, and to exceptional grassroots visionary social activism and everything in between. The leaders and managers that truly need the good management education, either do not regard themselves as needing it, or are unable to access the networks and resources that would enter them into the fold of sophisticated management learning. Also, my current reading of the literature seems to indicate that even if the right people had the willingness for and access to management education, there is too little of it that is sufficiently relevant to enable us to send the necessary excellent, effective leaders and managers back into our organisations.

Finally, many authors of management education articles insist that we need new models for changing times, but often, the theory offered is so conceptually sliced and diced, that it does not lend itself to immediate practical and transformative systemic application.

I am interested in the following questions:

1. How can management education as a discipline quickly develop relevant, catalytic methodologies and content?
2. How do we ensure that management education directly develops the integrity and psychological health of its recipients?
3. How do we ensure that management education is sufficiently inclusive that it addresses the system as an entirety?
4. How does a long-term activity such as management education continue in a survivalist world, where the main pre-occupation may be to collect your clean water every day?
5. How do we make ourselves ready and able to help the emerging informal leaders in these crises?

## **Business schools and Corporate Social Responsibility education: Is Corporate Social Responsibility becoming part of the business manager's habitus?**

Annette Yunus Pendrey  
University of London, UK  
[Annette.Yunus-Pendrey@cass.city.ac.uk](mailto:Annette.Yunus-Pendrey@cass.city.ac.uk)

Jean-Pascal Gond, André Spicer, Sébastien Mena  
University of London

Sustainability/business ethics/responsibility education, hereafter referred to as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) education, is now an institutionalized, mandatory requirement by the key accrediting bodies, AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS. This requirement is based on the assumption that CSR education can play a role in preventing future corporate ethical scandals and global financial crises (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002; Mintzberg, 2005; Bennis & O'Toole, 2005; Khurana, 2007; Augier and March, 2011). The question that we would like to put forward at the RMLE Unconference, to stimulate debate and future research is: Is this assumption true?

A stream of research which can contribute answers to this question focuses on the socializing influences of educational institutions. We know that educational institutions are central to the socialization of business managers. Bourdieu and others such as Ghoshal (2005), Ferraro, Pfeffer and Sutton (2005) as well as performativity scholars such as Callon (1998) and Marti & Gond (2017) have previously broadly explained this, arguing that managers and executives are “cognitively embedded” within theories and representations that shape their actions. However, we don't yet know about CSR habitus: Is CSR becoming a new part of the business manager's habitus and, if so, how are educational institutions shaping this process? According to Aguinis (2011) CSR refers to organizational actions and policies that consider several types of stakeholders and the triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental performance. He continues: “although CSR takes place at the organizational level of analysis, individual actors are those who actually strategize, make decisions, and execute CSR initiatives” (ibid: 953). Thus, how CSR plays out at the individual level is key to macro level outcomes.

In recent years, extant research has studied micro-level CSR by examining CSR strategizing, decision-making and execution at the individual level (Gond et al, 2017). Yet they failed to address the question: How do these individuals develop their values, beliefs and skills through education/socialization? By focusing specifically on the individual's CSR habitus we hope to contribute answers, using Bourdieu's concept of habitus to capture individuals' socialization. Habitus is both a concept as well as a practice (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Habitus as a concept is a way of being, or in Bourdieu's words: “a predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination” (Bourdieu, 1977:214). In practice, habitus is reified within our being as we inter-relate with the field (the socio-cultural context), as they become accepted and taken-for-granted at both the micro and macro levels.

We suggest that an appropriate context for studying individuals' CSR habitus through education is business schools, using a case study approach to analytically compare and contrast how the individual's CSR habitus is shaped by different educational processes. In doing so we expect to find new CSR-based dimensions to Bourdieu's four types of capital, as indicated in italics: (i). Economic capital (money, property) *merges with* symbolic capital (socially recognized legitimization such as prestige or honour) *to form a psychologically-driven type of capital which allows for the reconstruction of the meaningfulness of work* (ii). Cultural capital (forms of knowledge *including business ethics/CSR/sustainability, educational credentials, technical business skills and formative development (soft skills)*) (iii). Social capital (networks of influence or support such as family, friends and business contacts). These micro-CSR insights on how individuals develop their CSR values, beliefs and skills through their education therefore has the potential for wider implications on CSR business behaviour, thinking, feeling and being.

However, our concern is that this early germination of CSR habitus through education may remain overlooked if the phenomenon is not appreciated through further study. Instead, the continued dominance of current, surface-level, ‘tick box’ approaches to CSR education may well uproot these early beginnings and thereby prevent a more deep-seated and meaningful CSR embedding approach that develops the individual’s CSR habitus through education.

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## Teaching business ethics in the time of Trump: Engaging students for ethical leadership

Jessica McManus Warnell  
University of Notre Dame, USA  
[jmcmanus@nd.edu](mailto:jmcmanus@nd.edu)

I hope to explore business ethics teaching and learning, specifically within the context of divisive political and business leadership characterizing the United States. I have the privilege of teaching over 400 undergraduate students each year in a required course at a top U.S. business school. Now in my tenth year of full-time teaching, I feel distinct changes, and would like to explore them empirically and with others. My relevant work includes a book on engaging millennials for ethical leadership, articles published and in progress, and academic and corporate presentations. I was grateful to receive the 2017 Principles for Responsible Management (PRME) Teaching Excellence award (North America Chapter). I am passionate about and committed to this topic.

I see the polarization of opinions and changing nature of class discussions. In the news and social media these dynamics are ubiquitous. Disillusionment, anger, and cynicism are increasing, as is validation for speech and behavior antithetical to ethical values and hostile to core principles of our disciplines. The sociopolitical context is omnipresent.

Thus, what is the “Trump effect” in our classrooms? How do we effectively teach values-based leadership, stakeholder accountability, sustainability, and other management topics in a context characterized by divisive dialogue, moral relativism, anti-globalism, and rejection of reason? Research reflects that business students and early career professionals explicitly desire to align work with values, and cite the importance of prosocial business. I am heartened that young people largely report a rejection of divisiveness, anti-globalism and environmental degradation. I struggle to reconcile some of these findings with what I am increasingly seeing in the classroom and in our broader society. I question how to inspire young people when they see examples of leaders supporting or apathetic to destructive discourse and policies. Core themes of the “other” RMLE, Responsible Management Learning and Education, include transdisciplinarity, pluralism, inclusivity, and pragmatism. The PRME and AOM MED offer similar frameworks. These themes express specific values, some of which are rejected by our students, our colleagues, and certainly our leaders. What are the implications?

Research questions might explore teaching effectiveness – how to validate and supporting students who feel marginalized in the current climate, and maintain engagement with those who purport to disagree with some of the fundamental assumptions of business ethics. Which pedagogical approaches are most effective at this time, with these students? Building on the work of others, a project might explore student attitudes about business and society, and correlations with political persuasion, resonance with personal values, connections to perceived university or corporate missions and values, or other variables. We might consider implications of emerging research in behavioral ethics. High-profile CEO activism and other phenomena are other contextual inputs as the question of the purpose of the corporation continues to be debated. Ultimately, what draws students to the study of business, and how can we encourage ethical leadership development?

I seek participation in the Unconference to re-energize and enhance my teaching and scholarship, to engage with others considering these and related concerns, and to exchange ideas on turning these questions into a research agenda. I am intrigued by this unique format; participation would be a privilege. Thanks for your consideration.

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## On the Teaching and Learning of Business Ethics Education in the Context of International Business

Maria Fernanda Wagstaff  
The University of Texas at El Paso  
[fwagstaff@utep.edu](mailto:fwagstaff@utep.edu)

John Hadjimarcou  
The University of Texas at El Paso  
[jhadjima@utep.edu](mailto:jhadjima@utep.edu)

Franziska Renz  
The University of Texas at El Paso  
[fmrenz@utep.edu](mailto:fmrenz@utep.edu)

### *Issue:*

Despite the importance of ethical business education in the context of internationalization and more generally globalization, business ethics education lacks a comprehensive review that maps and explains the richness of the various paradigms, theories, and practices used in the classroom across educational program levels (e.g., undergraduate, MBA, EMBA). The lack of this comprehensive review undermines the effective planning and implementation of teaching designs across both academic programs and courses with an ethical content domain. Which theories do we use? What paradigms guide our work? In drawing from these paradigms and theories, what ontological and epistemological assumptions do we unconsciously or consciously defend and support? Some of these issues become evident in the process of teaching and learning, while others remain hidden.

Consider the issue while keeping the focus on business ethics education. When the process of learning unfolds in a classroom setting, instructors facilitate the reflection and crystallization of various processes (e.g., individual, group, organizational, and international), sometimes from different theoretical lenses clouded by a plethora of affective states exhibited by students and the instructor. This complex task becomes even more challenging when the goal of teaching shifts away from learning business ethics to the mechanics of teaching business ethics in the context of international business.

### *Concern:*

Our concern centers, on the one hand, on instructors tasked with teaching a training course in which students must design and implement a training program on business ethics in the context of international business. What tools do we use for this task? Which theories, and more generally which paradigms are most appropriate to utilize? Which practices facilitate, and which ones impede the successful accomplishment of this task? On the other hand, our concern centers on students. How do we capture, manage, and reflect on the students' own varied ethical assumptions, assuming that some may clash and others may fit the theories advanced by the instructors? How do we reconcile these differences? We propose to reflect on the various approaches scholars have proposed in relation to the teaching of business ethics education in the context of international business. We consider the different paradigmatic lenses, theories, and assumptions embedded in these lenses. We review the various practices and techniques that facilitate the teaching and learning of ethical business. Finally, we examine how to uncover students' ethical assumptions. In the end, we evaluate the best teaching and learning practices from both points of view, by instructors and by students.

## Too many QICs: Our disruptive world of Management Degree Apprenticeships

Jill Shepherd

[jill.shepherd@qa.com](mailto:jill.shepherd@qa.com)

Tulika Jaiswal

[tulika.jaiswal@qa.com](mailto:tulika.jaiswal@qa.com)

Alison Love

[alison.love@qa.com](mailto:alison.love@qa.com)

Glenis Wade

[glenis.wade@qa.com](mailto:glenis.wade@qa.com)

Matt Peacock

[mattcpeacock@msn.com](mailto:mattcpeacock@msn.com)

QAA Apprenticeships, London, UK

As a team working in the new sector of UK management degree apprenticeships, we face questions purely because of their newness. How do we meet the more varied stakeholder needs of employers (who spend their apprenticeship levy on the management education), the employees with their numerous levels of experience, the government funding body (EFSA), several quality institutions (QAA, IfA, Ofsted) and our University partner? How do we use the newness to innovate in teaching and learning in ways that produce outcomes that increase social mobility to meet the UK government's agenda?

We constantly engage with new ideas to increase the learning gain of our students. Needing to work in ways that are accountable, evidence based and constantly improving can feel paradoxical. Over and above this challenge, what ideas do we explore?

We use threshold concepts in each module and yet have concerns on how to identify them and help students engage with the struggle they involve; the concept of threshold concepts is a threshold concept.

The apprenticeship standards that students must meet (laid out in the form of knowledge, skills and behaviours) are interpreted as competencies. As the standards involve skills and behaviours, in addition to the more traditional knowledge, how do we teach these? They require the development of a more holistic approach. We use models of professional development that involve character/challenge/competence/conscience/confidence, adaptive leadership and professional identity. We also 'allow' students to follow a model of their own organisation. How do we work better to align personal and professional and organisational needs is another question we find worth asking. Uniquely, we require that students travel up Bloom's taxonomy at every level of the 3 level (FHEQ, 4, 5 and 6) degree programme, rather than the more traditional moving up across the 3 levels, only reaching the top in their last year of the degree (level 6). We thus require that students create their own theory-in-action made up of bits and pieces of theory from different sources to create a flat ontology that is unique to their 'ISCO' (idea, situation, challenge or opportunity). How do we scaffold such a process when such an approach involves working with different paradigms – a concept we wish to avoid teaching directly?

Working with both the student and the employer as stakeholders, a concern is how to introduce critical theory? We can, as it is, have cases where the view of a field of practice of a Line Manager is less than what we are teaching their employee. Broadening out the view of what managing is and should be and might be is often enjoyed by students.

The heritage of our organisation is technology and digital. Our students emanate from high technology companies or organisations interested in our programmes because they are close to digital and high technology practitioners. Degree apprenticeships are, after all, geared to improving social mobility



through greater levels of productivity. And yet a concern we have is the lag between academic research and publication. How do we help students access theory and recent practice in ways that are effective and easy?

More generally, we are an agile provider of education in how we work to update how we embrace teaching and learning; how can we ensure we are not too creative at the cost of students? If we have one over-arching question, it would be this one.

We pull on the work of Joe Raelin, Caroline Ramsey, Hari Tsouskas, Nic Beech, Michaela Driver, Tony Hall, Mary Crossan, David Seidl and Richard Whittington. Who else would inspire us? What other QICs should we have?

## Reconceiving and re-invigorating the role of reason in management learning and education

Morten Sørensen Thaning, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark  
[mst.mpp@cbs.dk](mailto:mst.mpp@cbs.dk)

Mike Zundel, University of Liverpool, UK  
[M.Zundel@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:M.Zundel@liverpool.ac.uk)

Johan Gersel, Independent Researcher, PhD (Philosophy)  
[jgersel@gmail.com](mailto:jgersel@gmail.com)

In what sense is rational action an ideal for the activities constituting management practice? Our goal is to re-engage others in a continuation of the stimulating exchange that took place at the RMLE 2017 about rational action, situated judgment and management learning.

The question about rationality of management action has gained renewed importance in the age of fake news; information and propaganda warfare; and the exponential growth of data produced by increasingly digitalized management information and other decision support systems which render traditional management approaches increasingly narrow and selective.

On the one hand, we currently encounter an ever-increasing endeavor to define generic standards, evidence-based procedures and calculable aims for management activity. On the other hand, management educators and theorists as well as practitioners of strategy and leadership have begun to emphasize forms of judgment drawing on experience, skill, and wisdom when engaging with specific and concrete situations. Some even abandon the notion of reason altogether, instead entertaining ‘absurdity’, ‘play’, ‘luck’, ‘spirituality’, ‘agility’, or ‘mindfulness’ as more appropriate modus operandi for organizational actors.

Still, a key goal of management is to ensure that employees and organizations make rational decisions. At stake in this debate about the role and cultivation of rationality in management learning and education is thus a grounding question: does the problem with traditional management theories invoking reason stem from their narrow and inadequate conception of rationality, rather than from something being inherently wrong with reason? Relatedly, how may management educators cultivate and develop rational managers and workplaces?

Has our understanding of reason as management educators been somewhat restricted to a logical entailed ordering of weighted decision making that lends itself to the quantification of and abstraction from the situations ‘requiring’ management? While we acknowledge that the current hegemony of quantifying goals and producing generic guides of best practice method has its uses, it cannot capture all rational choices. Trained professionals subject to management in organizations seem to have a situated capacity for discerning what to do in in specific situations; a skill which transgresses what can be made fully explicit in procedural terms. A trained doctor, for example, simply has a clinical grasp that will in certain cases allow him to perceive that a treatment isn’t working, without being able to provide a generic guide to the signs he relies upon. According to the rules of procedural forms of management, these professionals aren’t allowed to rely on such immediate judgements as they do not figure as rationally motivated. Our point of departure, informed by a venerable philosophical tradition going back to Aristotle and Kant, is that these responses aren’t blind gut-feelings, but examples of our capacity for situated rational choice.

At the Unconference, we would like to facilitate a broad discussion of theoretical, empirical, and (critical) approaches to how reason has and might be understood and translated into management education and learning. Our discussions relate to an upcoming special issue of AMLE on Reason, Rationality and Management Practice: Reconceiving and re-invigorating the role of reason in managerial thinking and activity.

**Discussion Group “Alexander Graham Bell”**

**Expanding Our Mindsets: Reframing and Release**

**Ian Fouweather  
Sharm Manwani  
Tali Padan  
Tony Wall  
Carole Elliott  
Jamie Callahan  
Wolfgang Amann  
Annemette Kjærgaard  
Sarah Robinson  
Johan Gersel**

## Unteaching: Searching for Black Swans

Ian Fouweather  
University of Bradford School of Management  
[i.m.fouweather2@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:i.m.fouweather2@bradford.ac.uk)

Sharm Manwani  
Henley Business School  
[sharm.manwani@henley.ac.uk](mailto:sharm.manwani@henley.ac.uk)



The concept of ‘unteaching’ emerged at an Unconference a few years ago. We didn’t set out to invent a new term, rather we stumbled upon it. The Un of the Unconference gave us the time to unlearn from our own experiences. A few of us gravitated into one of the groups drawn together by a common connection to the post experience managers we teach – and like them we became practitioners taken outside the familiar and encouraged to reflect.

With one thing in common we naturally explored our own teaching. Having no lesson plan, no learning outcomes and unencumbered by a syllabus, we considered what it was that actually happened in the classroom. After a while, we concluded that success in teaching management is often indirectly correlated to the amount of planned and structured teaching that you engage in. We hit upon the concept of unteaching. However, like a Black Swan, we noted this this turned prevailing logic upside down. How can one possibly teach by not teaching?

We realised that success (in terms of outcomes and student satisfaction) was often most pronounced by not teaching (as it is typically conceived). Ditching the lesson plan, responding to the environment and allowing students to proactively shape their learning (and our teaching) could be a rich and productive strategy for both the students and ourselves. In doing so, we recognised that classifying managers and professionals with substantial practitioner experience and prior qualifications as ‘students’ underplayed the considerable opportunities for shared learning.

In that Unconference and subsequent discussions we explored the term further, conceptually and in practice. Conceptually, unteaching is not doing no teaching; but it does mean doing things differently. Alternative approaches to teaching go back as far as the first teachers. The Socratic Method was an alternative to traditional didactic teaching. Since then the classroom has been flipped in so many ways that teaching has gone way beyond its traditional confines.

On the practical side, the Unconference encouraged us to create frameworks for Management Education – and one resulting paper has recently been published in a journal. We see this year’s Unconference as a further opportunity to collaborate with others willing to search for the Black Swan of unteaching, both in developing a theory and how it is practiced. If this challenge resonates and inspires you, please join us to see if we can further develop what unteaching is and more importantly discover how we can use it to enhance management learning and education.

**Phronesis in executive education**  
**– Impact on restructuring learning journeys in executive education**

Wolfgang Amann  
HEC Paris  
[amann@hec.fr](mailto:amann@hec.fr)

Shiv Tripathi  
CMR University  
[shiv.tripathi@cmr.edu.in](mailto:shiv.tripathi@cmr.edu.in)

This research project questions the current focus in executive education seminars and calls for a stronger emphasis of practical wisdom beyond mere knowledge. Currently, executives around the world are experiencing substantial challenges and face adversity on several levels. On the normative and ethical levels, signs of unsustainability persist everywhere, and future sustainability risks may not be adequately anticipated (Ghosh, 2010). They are even endangering the survival of the companies. This raises the question whether firms deserve corporate sovereignty with regard to ethical behavior (Rhodes, 2016). Although measurement issues persist, Cândido and Santos (2015) mention that 50-90% of strategic initiatives fail. Betof, Owens, and Todd (2014) argue that this percentage is not likely to improve, given that business environments are becoming increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). Challenges for executives are often of a “wicked” — that is, not “tame” - nature. These factors have repercussions for business schools (Brown, Holtham, Rich & Dove, 2015), because they need to ensure that their program graduates have the right capabilities to match these demands.

This research initiative suggests there should be a stronger emphasis on *phronesis* – practical, applied, and actionable wisdom – as a target of executive education. According to Flyvberg (2017), Aristotelian *phronesis* refers to “practical judgment, practical wisdom, common sense, or prudence.” Since the concept is applied in a leadership development context, Shotter and Tsoukas (2014) mention that phronetic leaders have “a refined capacity to come to an intuitive grasp of the most salient features of an ambiguous situation and, in their search for a way out of their difficulties, to craft a particular path of response in moving through them, while driven by the pursuit of the common good” (p. 225). We are passionate about designing unique learning experiences and about having positive impact as educationists. Yet, we see many executive education seminars being limited to the easier task of conveying knowledge and enhancing skills. Higher levels of value added are often not reached. We ask what it takes to change this value proposition and organizational setup. We are also keen to find out if Aristotle’s concept of *phronesis* is still relevant today the way it was back then.

For example, today’s business complexity did not exist in ancient Greece. Today’s levels of ambiguity are much higher, so always knowing what the right answer is might well be more difficult. Also, Aristotle prescribed that working towards high levels of *phronesis* should be everyone’s goals. Yet, at lower management levels technical knowledge is more important. Growing wisdom without higher level positions might well lead to frustration. We ask about *phronesis* 2.0 and how Aristotle’s concept needs to be adapted for today’s world and executive education seminar. We equally ask how to subsequently accelerate a business leader’s journey towards more practical wisdom. Can current faculty members and teaching formats still be useful when shifting attention towards *phronesis*? If we can advance *phronesis*, then aforementioned challenges can be coped with more easily.

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## Unlearning: A transformative, uncomfortable process

Tali Padan  
Copenhagen Business School, Denmark  
[tp.msc@cbs.dk](mailto:tp.msc@cbs.dk)

As a new PhD candidate from January 2018, I come into a context of business education, new for me as I cross over from the NGO world, where I have been giving trainings and workshops in conflict, democracy, inclusion and reflexivity. Unlearning as applied there can also be applied in management education, where unlearning has been largely a topic of organizational change. In this context, the interest in unlearning is motivated by an interest to maximize profitability, rather than an interest in the process itself and what that can bring.

Certain academic texts define unlearning as the discarding of inadequate knowledge (Nystrom and Starbuck 1984). But the process of unlearning holds much more than this definition can express. The experience of unlearning can be seen as a part of a transformative learning experience, a process that affects change through the experience of questioning one's own habits, beliefs and assumptions (Mezirow, 1997). Not everybody is naturally inclined to question their assumptions and beliefs, because these have brought certainty and security (Kim, 1993), and therefore to question these means getting into a space of uncertainty and insecurity. However, there are certain educational and methodological tools from practitioners which have enabled the support of this discomfort, and therefore allowed the group to face and learn from the discomfort rather than avoid it.

What happens when we face the discomfort? From my experience holding workshops and trainings, much of the avoidance, resistance and rejection of discomfort creates and enforces divisions, borders and conflict. The 'othering' becomes much greater. When, however, this discomfort is confronted, there is a recognition of assumptions, thoughts and beliefs that are limiting and divisive. This is where the personal growth happens.

Because it is a process, unlearning requires a full experiential immersion in order to understand not just what it is but how to pass it on to students. Therefore, as teachers, it also requires an experiential unlearning process, which includes facing the discomfort.

It would be interesting for me to discuss others' experience of going through this discomfort, and how this has been embraced or resisted, either as teachers or as seen in students. Does this uncomfortable space indeed lead to a transformative learning experience? In what cases, does it do so, and in what cases not?

I would also be able to offer a workshop that includes this experiential learning through discomfort, and let the conversation emerge from there.

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## **QIC #1: On becoming a pedagogical performance artist**

Tony Wall  
University of Chester, UK  
[t.wall@chester.ac.uk](mailto:t.wall@chester.ac.uk)

Contemporary forms of management education continue to reproduce the mechanistic, bureaucratic structures which shape and position all involved in the management learning context. This includes hidden (and not so hidden) co-ordinates of how we should relate to each other, the planet, and its co-inhabitants. Such co-ordinates continue to be imbued with dis-passion and de-tachment, with dramatic and traumatic consequences in relation to sustainable development: the need for radical leaps in holistic, affective engagement is therefore urgent. As Paul Shrivastava's work on 'pedagogies of passion' has illustrated, the arts are central to this movement. But as we move towards such spaces, some crucial questions remain: Who is the artist? What does it mean for a management educator to become an artist? What does it mean for the metaphorical classroom to become the canvas or the stage? Might becoming a (management) pedagogical performance artist become a path to existential crises? This QIC aspires to explore these prompts to raise new questions, concerns and ideas.

## **QIC #2: The Empty Box // Relevance Interrupt**

We were once accustomed to uncomfortable questions, ideas and concerns about the relevance of management education. Fierce debate not only questioned our methodologies, methods, practices, and the structures of management education organisations, but also our inner most thoughts, perspectives and identities of being a management educator. At the same time, there is an omnipotent, omnipresent, and insidious drive for gain and utility which stains our desires to be relevant. Such desires become boxes which imprison our trajectories of how we think we should act. Yet what happens when we let go of such drives and desires? What happens when we have an opportunity to explore what might be outside of these prescribed boxes? This QIC aspires to explore these questions, with and amongst management educators, what happens when we temporarily suspend the need for utility, and literally and metaphorically play with empty boxes.



## Organizing Collaboratively for Action: Exploring Activism's Place in Academia

Carole Elliott  
Roehampton Business School, University of Roehampton, UK  
[carole.elliott@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:carole.elliott@roehampton.ac.uk)

Jamie L. Callahan  
Newcastle Business School, University of Northumbria, UK.  
[Jamie.callahan@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:Jamie.callahan@northumbria.ac.uk)

Our motivation to participate in the *RMLE conference* stems from our experience as feminists attempting to organise collaboratively for action. We are two feminists amongst a larger group who participated in the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2017 Women's March on Washington. During our most recent professional association conference in March 2017, we tried to tap into the energy from that social movement to begin a process of policy formation as a collective response from our association to Donald Trump and the Executive Order commonly referred to as the "Muslim travel ban". We created an event we hoped would launch our association's journey toward a policy on treatment of the marginalised to serve as a supplement to our professional code of ethics. To date, we believe we have failed in our efforts to mobilise colleagues to initiate a policy as no progress has been made since the March conference.

Currently, we are writing to make sense of and theorise our experience; we want to understand how we can better learn from, and for, activism. We believe that prior to, and during, our intervention we underestimated the value and importance of the role of emotion and emotional politics in organising for change. Our intervention prompted a maelstrom of emotions amongst a group of individuals whom an outsider would judge to share a common value set. Currently, our analysis is informed by literature that examines the relationship between social movements, emotions, and the role that space (physical, cognitive and emotional) plays in creating an architecture that frames our interactions. During the *RMLE conference*, we would like to engage in conversations that bring insight to how we work with organisational architectures to create spaces where different voices can be heard.

For us, this exploration is not just a theoretical exercise to produce another paper for publication. The Management Learning field has long recognised the importance of making sense of the dynamic nature of practice and practicing as critical to theory development and organisational learning (Antonacopoulou 2009). Our inability to influence our professional association strikes at the heart of the association's mission to lead learning and development initiatives and to examine processes such as organisational change and strategy development, which we use as a basis to profess improvements to practice. Our beliefs about a feminist agenda for change were challenged—by other feminists and by other non-feminist stakeholders in our association. We are now questioning to what extent, and whether, constructive activism includes compromise in uncomfortable spaces. The outcome of the experience is that we have been found wanting in our attempt to apply our scholarship to oppose populist movements that discriminate and marginalize large numbers of our colleagues.

We are revisiting our unsuccessful event at our next professional association conference and we want our activism to have a more productive impact. We would like to explore with conference participants how we might have done things differently within our context, and how we might be 'better' activists next time around. How do we engage with our colleagues so we can learn from each other, instead of against each other?

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**Leadership and governance of a business school**  
**– A critical review of a contingency framework based on a case study**

Wolfgang Amann  
HEC Paris  
[amann@hec.fr](mailto:amann@hec.fr)

According to Lorange (2002), business schools are becoming more market-oriented, pioneering, proactive, and value creating. Brandenburg and Federkeil (2007) note that major progress has also been made regarding internationalization, which can challenge established structures and budgets (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Technological change requires adaptations, and so does the call for more ethics and relevance (Amann et al., 2011).

Based on the logic of requisite variety (Ashby, 2011), such massive changes require business schools' upper echelon to be fully prepared to cope with these challenges. These include the ability to design and implement adequate leadership and governance systems. There are numerous suggestions for such systems. One example has been put forward by Steger and Amann (2008) who propose a framework that integrates the two. They outline that the model can add value across industries, ownership settings, and cultural contexts. Two key questions determine the dominant role of a school board, or how school executives can lead subsequent levels. They propose that, as part of orientation, the first question should be: What is really at stake? Are there significant, or insignificant, externalities? Second, they recommend that organizational leaders should critically review the question: Are the levels below effective or not? These questions span a simple 2 x 2 matrix with four scenarios, which the model covers. They suggest prescriptive roles regarding how boards or school leaders manage the relationship with their direct reports.

In this context, I am passionate about understanding best and next practices in leading and governing business schools. I am concerned about business school leaders are not developed as professionally as their counterparts in the corporate sector. In light of the aforementioned growing and comprehensive list of tasks, this would lead to a substantial misfit. Students, staff members, and other stakeholder groups would suffer. I do not deem this to be a fatalistic situation as more research into sound leadership and governance can help proactively prepare future business school leaders. Therefore, this project pursues inductive research, building towards a critical review, and an extension of one of the best practice models. Empirically, the research is based on a case study, which adds dynamics not hitherto described or integrated in this model. The researched business school has recently appointed a new dean based on his impressive publication record, even though he has no leadership experience. Soon thereafter, staff members saw their levels of frustration go up. Instead of relying on the textbook version of the model, the dean chose to operate with a command and control approach, relying heavily on centralization and micro-management – in contrast to the prescriptive model. This raises the question: How can personal preferences and different levels of training be incorporated in the aforementioned model? Furthermore, it addresses the points of what a rational choice would be if a dean is still keen to have time for publications, but is shackled by the endless time micro-management requires.

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## Game changer? Situational orchestration of pedagogy in higher education

Annemette Leonhardt Kjærgaard  
Copenhagen Business School, Denmark  
[amk.msc@cbs.dk](mailto:amk.msc@cbs.dk)

Thyra Uth Thomsen  
Copenhagen Business School, Denmark  
[tt.marktg@cbs.dk](mailto:tt.marktg@cbs.dk)

Academic development programs are part of most universities today. They are meant to improve faculty's teaching practices and pedagogical skills in pursuit of optimal learning outcomes. In this QIC we would like to discuss if and how academic development programs can benefit from focusing on the contextual and reflective relationship between teachers and students, instead of primarily being a source of good practices, tips, and tricks as we often see in organizations including our own.

Consequently, we would like to bring to the foreground an aspect of teaching which is less frequently discussed, i.e. teacher's situational orchestration of pedagogy (Tapp, 2014). According to Kreber (2014), teachers should aim to develop 'situational wisdom'. She emphasizes the importance of being critical towards implicit assumptions and suggests that a central purpose of academic development programs is to establish occasions that encourage teachers "to make judgments about what the 'wise' thing to do is in each particular situation" (Jones, Lygo-Baker, Markless, Rienties, & Di Napoli, 2017: 120). Such a contextual and reflective approach to academic development aims for long-term changes to teachers' thinking and practice, instead of short-term, instrumental fixes that might be easier to generate, but are less likely to foster reflective change (Jones et al., 2017: 124).

1. How can we best support teachers' reflections on their practice and help them to oscillate between different roles to improve pedagogical practice in context and thereby produce situational wisdom?
2. Which theoretical framework(s) would be most suitable for the construction of academic development initiatives that foster 'situational wisdom'?
3. What are the challenges to current academic initiatives if we want to implement more reflective practice?

We welcome a discussion on academic development for reflective practice and see RMLE as a perfect incubator for our continued research on this topic.

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## Reconceiving and re-invigorating the role of reason in management learning and education

Morten Sørensen Thaning, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark  
[mst.mpp@cbs.dk](mailto:mst.mpp@cbs.dk)

Mike Zundel, University of Liverpool, UK  
[M.Zundel@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:M.Zundel@liverpool.ac.uk)

Johan Gersel, Independent Researcher, PhD (Philosophy)  
[jgersel@gmail.com](mailto:jgersel@gmail.com)

In what sense is rational action an ideal for the activities constituting management practice? Our goal is to re-engage others in a continuation of the stimulating exchange that took place at the RMLE 2017 about rational action, situated judgment and management learning.

The question about rationality of management action has gained renewed importance in the age of fake news; information and propaganda warfare; and the exponential growth of data produced by increasingly digitalized management information and other decision support systems which render traditional management approaches increasingly narrow and selective.

On the one hand, we currently encounter an ever-increasing endeavor to define generic standards, evidence-based procedures and calculable aims for management activity. On the other hand, management educators and theorists as well as practitioners of strategy and leadership have begun to emphasize forms of judgment drawing on experience, skill, and wisdom when engaging with specific and concrete situations. Some even abandon the notion of reason altogether, instead entertaining ‘absurdity’, ‘play’, ‘luck’, ‘spirituality’, ‘agility’, or ‘mindfulness’ as more appropriate modus operandi for organizational actors.

Still, a key goal of management is to ensure that employees and organizations make rational decisions. At stake in this debate about the role and cultivation of rationality in management learning and education is thus a grounding question: does the problem with traditional management theories invoking reason stem from their narrow and inadequate conception of rationality, rather than from something being inherently wrong with reason? Relatedly, how may management educators cultivate and develop rational managers and workplaces?

Has our understanding of reason as management educators been somewhat restricted to a logical entailed ordering of weighted decision making that lends itself to the quantification of and abstraction from the situations ‘requiring’ management? While we acknowledge that the current hegemony of quantifying goals and producing generic guides of best practice method has its uses, it cannot capture all rational choices. Trained professionals subject to management in organizations seem to have a situated capacity for discerning what to do in in specific situations; a skill which transgresses what can be made fully explicit in procedural terms. A trained doctor, for example, simply has a clinical grasp that will in certain cases allow him to perceive that a treatment isn’t working, without being able to provide a generic guide to the signs he relies upon. According to the rules of procedural forms of management, these professionals aren’t allowed to rely on such immediate judgements as they do not figure as rationally motivated. Our point of departure, informed by a venerable philosophical tradition going back to Aristotle and Kant, is that these responses aren’t blind gut-feelings, but examples of our capacity for situated rational choice.

At the Unconference, we would like to facilitate a broad discussion of theoretical, empirical, and (critical) approaches to how reason has and might be understood and translated into management education and learning. Our discussions relate to an upcoming special issue of AMLE on Reason, Rationality and Management Practice: Reconceiving and re-invigorating the role of reason in managerial thinking and activity.