

**Call for Papers: Special Issue of *Management Learning***

**The hidden curriculum of responsibility (un)learning at business schools**

**Deadline for submissions: December 1, 2021**

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Despite efforts to instil a more robust sense of responsibility among students following the 2008 financial crisis and recent corporate scandals, business schools still seem to be failing to prepare students adequately for the moral challenges that they will face (Laasch & Gherardi 2019; Parker 2018). In some cases, business education even seems to have a negative impact on students' sense of responsibility (Baker et al. 2006). While research to date has mostly looked for the underlying reasons for this in the formal, or explicit, curriculum, this special issue invites scholars to explore the intersections between the (un)learning of responsibility and the implicit, or 'hidden' curriculum, defined as 'what is implicit and embedded in educational experiences in contrast with the formal statements about curricula and the surface features of educational interaction' (Sambell & McDowell 1998: 391–392).

Responsibility learning involves 'the implicit and explicit learning and unlearning of and about responsible and irresponsible practices' (Laasch 2018: 12), notably pertaining to ethics, sustainability, inequality, diversity and governance. Studies on responsibility learning at business schools have so far mainly targeted explicit curricular goals and content (Antonacopoulou 2010; Høgdal et al. 2019;) and individual learners' values (Racz & Parker 2020) rather than the wider study environment. Yet some scholars have suggested that *implicit* dimensions of learning may be undermining the responsibility agenda (Blasco 2012; Cornuel et al. 2015;), possibly even leading to the unlearning of a sense of responsibility (Padan & Nguyen 2020) and a decoupling between rhetoric about responsibility and what really goes on in practice that prevents deeper structural change (Rasche et al. 2013). These implicit dimensions of learning are thought to have a significant socialising effect by tacitly transmitting norms that shape learners' values and behaviour (Gofton & Regehr 2006). The above critiques take on especial relevance against the backdrop of neoliberalism as the broader context for the current direction and expansion of business education (Parker, 2018). In that respect, the hidden curriculum at business schools has, according to some scholars, been promoting 'the virtues of capitalist market managerialism [. . .] as if there were no other ways of seeing the world' (Parker, 2018a: 46).

The hidden curriculum concept includes taken-for-granted routines, structures (physical, spatial, temporal), biases, content choices and omissions, incentives and rewards, rules and discipline, expectations, informal interactions, and implicit messages about 'the right way to be', which are not

necessarily conscious or acknowledged (Gair & Mullins 2001; Margolis 2001), and may even be misaligned with an institution's formally stated objectives (Dewey 1938). The concept has been widely used not only to study the inner workings of schools, but also to critically explore the mechanisms through which education can reflect and reinforce cultural and ideological messages that serve dominant interests – e.g. class, ethnic, gender, colonial and market interest - through the hegemonic discourse of neoliberal managerialism (Apple 1995; Mandiola 2013; Nkomo 2011;). Given that business schools are 'social institutions with clear public responsibilities' (Millar & Price 2018: 347), the concept is helpful in interrogating the broader structures and societal interests that underpin, are tacitly represented in, or left out of, business school education, and how this affects the way that business schools function and their students are socialized – as 'agents of change or ... institutions for the maintenance of the elite' (McIntosh 2017: 6-7). The hidden curriculum concept is therefore also well suited to studying responsibility learning, which involves not only acquiring cognitive *knowledge* about professional standards, behaviours and principles but also the internalization of responsibility as a mode of *being*, including reflexive awareness of one's position in the world and wider responsibility towards others in society (Allen et al. 2019; Padan & Nguyen 2020).

So far, however, little attention has been devoted at business schools to the hidden curriculum (Borges et al. 2015), with a few exceptions that have used the concept to explore how business students are socialized through implicit structures, pedagogies, and misalignments between the explicit and hidden curriculum in ways that can undermine responsibility learning (recent studies include Blasco 2012; Borges et al. 2017; Høgdal et al. 2019). Others have noted that 'positive hidden curricula' can also exist, or be designed, that can support, rather than undermine, responsibility learning at business schools (Blasco and Tackney 2013; Trevino and McCabe 1994).

The time is ripe to build on these few existing studies and leverage the potential of the hidden curriculum concept to open up new ways of thinking about how responsibility is learned – or unlearned – at business schools. Through its emphasis on encountering 'the familiar as new' (Antonacopoulou 2010: 8), the concept can, we suggest, enhance critical reflexivity about the supposed 'value neutrality' of business education (Millar & Price 2018: 347) that, some would argue, conceals neoliberal market logics (Mandiola, 2013), and about the many, and often subtle, ethico-political choices we face, both as educators and as learners, as well as offering a concrete basis for rethinking practices in the design of responsibility learning environments.

We are especially keen to receive contributions that address the hidden curriculum concept critically in regard to responsibility learning, are informed by gendered postcolonial and decolonial standpoints, use non-traditional writing forms to depict 'hidden' aspects of responsibility learning, shed light on contexts where the hidden curriculum concept has so far not been widely applied, apply innovative or underused methods in deploying the concept, or propose ways to operationalize the concept in practice in relation to responsibility learning. Suggested areas for contributions include, but are not limited to:

- How the hidden curriculum shapes responsibility learning at business schools in particular cultural-historic contexts. For instance, whether representations in hidden curricula – e.g. neoliberal, racialized, masculinist, heteronormative – reinforce inequalities and hegemonies, especially in the Global South.
- Whether/how business students' value orientations affect their receptiveness to hidden curricula.

- Forms of resistance against the hidden curriculum of responsibility learning.
- Tensions between espoused and actual values and curricula at business schools.
- Positive hidden curricula in regard to responsibility learning.
- How neoliberal, hegemonic ideology in the hidden curriculum shapes experiences of business school responsibility learning and (un)learning.
- The effect of disciplinary boundaries, e.g. the hard-soft/practical-theoretical divide, on students' sense of responsibility, as part of the hidden curriculum.
- The hidden curriculum in visual /multi-modal /online communication, e.g. websites, intranet, email, virtual campuses, in regard to responsibility learning.
- Quantitative and/or comparative inquiry into the pervasiveness and generalizability of hidden curriculum elements at business schools.
- Trace effects of the hidden curriculum: overall responsibility messages and attitudes that students take away at the end of their studies; whether the hidden curriculum fosters responsibility *unlearning*, and how this works.

### Submission guidance

To discuss your article prior to submission, please contact the special issue editors: Maribel Blasco: [mbl.msc@cbs.dk](mailto:mbl.msc@cbs.dk); Tony Wall: [t.wall@chester.ac.uk](mailto:t.wall@chester.ac.uk) ; Stella Nkomo [stella.nkomo@up.ac.za](mailto:stella.nkomo@up.ac.za) ; Marton Racz: [mracz@ibs-b.hu](mailto:mracz@ibs-b.hu); Marcela Mandiola: [mmandiol@uahurtado.cl](mailto:mmandiol@uahurtado.cl)

This call is open and competitive; manuscripts will be double-blind reviewed and a limited number of papers will be selected by the guest editors for publication in the special issue. Submissions must fit with the aims and scope of *Management Learning*: <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/management-learning#description> as well as with this special issue call. All submissions should be made online: [http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/management\\_learning](http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/management_learning) in accordance with the journal submission guidelines.

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