Call for Papers: Special Issue of *Management Learning*

Positive perspectives in management learning and teaching

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Guest Editors:
Marc Lavine, University of Massachusetts Boston
Laura Morgan Roberts, University of Virginia
Tim Peterson, North Dakota State University
Gretchen Spreitzer, University of Michigan
Arne Carlsen, BI Norwegian Business School

How can positive organizational perspectives foster management learning and teaching in pursuit of human betterment? Positive organizational scholarship (POS) (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012) since its inception has pursued fundamentally reflexive aims of seeking to realize notions of the good organization (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). POS emphasizes an ethical, humanizing approach to organizing that challenges the primacy of instrumental outcomes, encourages pro-social norms, and fosters the well-being of organizational members. The POS tradition has explored topics such as positive relationships (Dutton & Ragins, 2007; Gittell, 2016; Stephens, Heaphy, & Dutton, 2012), generative dynamics related to leadership and followership (Cameron, 2012, 2013; Lavine & Cameron, 2012), meaning making (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2013; Lavine, 2012; Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010) and compassion at work (Dutton, Worline, Frost, & Lilius, 2006; Rynes, Bartunek, Dutton, & Margolis, 2012)

To date, positive perspectives on organizations have played a minimal role in the literature on management learning and teaching, a field comparatively more influenced by critical management studies (CMS) perspectives. CMS is known for exposing and challenging power asymmetries and structures of domination, paying attention to that which is marginalized, and for questioning the taken-for-granted in social orders (Adler, Forbes, & Willmott, 2007; Alvesson, Bridgman, & Willmott, 2009), including in educational practices (Heizmann & Liu, 2018; Wright, Forray, & Lund Dean, 2018). While undoubtedly important, such perspectives have limitations and possible blind spots. Critique may be over-simplified (Fenwick, 2005), lack a language of possibility (Kurucz, Colbert, & Marcus, 2014) or a complementary ethics of care (Gabriel, 2009). Critical theory can be overly suspicious of managers (Clegg, Kornberger, Carter, & Rhodes, 2006) and has been accused of criticizing antagonistically, rather than engaging with people (Wickert & Schaefer, 2015).

The agenda of the special issue is twofold. We seek to explore new practices of management learning and teaching informed by positive perspectives. With positive perspectives we draw not only on the tradition of positive organizational scholarship (Cameron et al., 2012) but also include positive organizational behavior (e.g. Luthans & Youssef, 2007) and appreciative inquiry (e.g. Whitney & Cooperrider, 2011). Positive perspectives have begun to inform the management

classroom and also the scholarship of management learning and teaching. This is evident, for example, in published work on energy audits (Spreitzer & Grant, 2012), playing to one's strengths (Roberts et al., 2005), Reflected Best Self exercises (Spreitzer, Stephens, & Sweetman, 2009) or the growth of relational agency through teaching (Sundet & Carlsen, 2019). The influence of a positive lens has also been documented in books on learning (Quinn, Heynoski, Thomas, & Spreitzer, 2014), and significantly through widely used classroom and organizational tools, cases, videos, and exercises such as Job Crafting, Reciprocity Ring and the Positive Leadership Game. Overall, though, there is still limited research on how POS research and practice can be applied to understanding and building better learning and teaching environments. We believe positive perspectives may further enrich both the content and practices of managerial learning and teaching.

The other core aim of the special issue is to allow for and encourage more interweaving of positive and critical perspectives in the field of management learning and teaching. Both positive and critical lenses offer reflexive spaces for moving beyond instrumentalism and pursuing a humanizing and emancipating agenda. Yet, with few exceptions (Caza & Carroll, 2012; Cunha, Rego, Simpson, & Clegg, 2019), they are rarely combined. That is so in spite of critiques of both lenses calling for more blending (Caza et al., 2012; Fineman, 2006; Spicer, Alvesson, & Kärreman, 2009). Therefore we ask, how can management learning and teaching, as a form of systematic social inquiry, take on simultaneous qualities of offering critique and surfacing possibilities for reaching desired outcomes (Nilsson, 2015)? How can a language of impediments, obstacles and deficiencies of management learning and teaching be complemented with resource unlocking, capacity creating, and strength building (Spreitzer, Myers, Kopelman, & Mayer, in press 2019), or other amplifiers and facilitators?

We do not foresee, or desire, a simplified and unproblematic wedding of positive and critical perspectives, but nevertheless suggest moving more wholeheartedly towards a blending. Blending positive and critical lenses has the potential of enlarging the reflexive space of both CMS and POS (Roberts, 2006), licensing scholars to be more fully engaged in making management learning matter (Bell & Bridgman, 2017) and strengthening the tradition as a form of social inquiry into the good organization (Cunha et al., 2019; Nilsson, 2015).

We invite both empirical and theoretical contributions and are broadly interested in research that addresses how positive perspectives can enable better practices of management learning and teaching beyond instrumental outcomes and including, but not limited to, what goes on in the classroom. We also welcome critiques of these perspectives and encourage consideration of "shadow sides" or possible risks, challenges, and unintended consequences of positive perspectives. Central questions we seek to understand include:

- How can one equip learners to see the world as it is (in terms of appreciating strengths, acknowledging pain and uncovering structures of domination) as well as how it could be (in terms of possibilities and potentials for emancipation)?
- What does, or might, a positive orientation mean to the practice of management education, to teaching androgogy/pedagogy (Forrest III & Peterson, 2006), and to learning theory?
- What kind of management learning and teaching stimulates possibilities and increases a sense of agency in pursuit of the good of organization?

- How might practices for learning and teaching help people in organizations to think about how to generate resources and opportunities for joint/mutual gain rather than accepting a primarily exploitative view of resource use solely for performative ends?
- How can the classroom be used to promote diversity and inclusion while recognizing social forces that exacerbate inequality and exclusion, especially in a political environment that makes this particularly difficult?
- How do educators explore the stark contrasts between leadership practices modeled and legitimated in organizations and relational/humanistic principles for a better world?
- How do early career scholars experience the institutional environment for teaching from blended perspectives of POS and critical theory?
- What does a fruitful or failed blending of an ethics of care and an ethics of criticism look like? Which forms of inquiry successfully combine language of critique and of possibility, and which do not?
- What risks and downsides or shadow sides arise from emancipatory aims particularly if these are primarily created by educators? How might such aims be better co-constructed among teachers and learners?
- How might humanizing practices mask or neglect issues of organizational and institutional power?

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 should be original, not submitted to or published in any other outlets, and 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 in accordance with the journal submission guidelines.

Prospective authors and potential reviewers are invited to contact any of the editors about this special issue: Marc Lavine, University of Massachusetts Boston (email: marc.lavine@umb.edu), Laura Morgan Roberts, University of Virginia, (email: RobertsL@darden.virginia.edu), Tim Peterson, North Dakota State UniversityS (email: tim.o.peterson@ndsu.edu), Gretchen Spreitzer, University of Michigan (email: spreitze@umich.edu), Arne Carlsen, BI Norwegian Business School (email: arne.carlsen@bi.no).

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