Call for Papers Special Issue of *Management Learning*

**Writing Differently**

Deadline for submissions: 30th August 2017

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A growing movement in management and organization studies (MOS) seeks to break out of the constraints of scientific writing in order to better develop insights and understanding about management and the world of work, and how to communicate those ideas. ‘Scientific writing’ is understood to put restrictions on the possibilities for thinking, discussing and learning, for maintaining a dysfunctional status quo through quashing the possibilities of even thinking differently. This has direct implications for management learning: if ‘writing differently’ were to assist in developing new ways of understanding of managerial research and its implications, would it prove a distraction that ‘dis-educates’ and prevents learning? The strengths of the arguments against dominant forms of academic writing suggest not. Indeed, they lead to the question: what forms can ‘writing differently’ take that will challenge dominant conceptions of management that, arguably, inhibit understanding and induct students and practitioners into maintaining, rather than challenging, neo-liberalist control regimes? This special issue will therefore explore some of the different forms that our academic writing might take and how these new ways of writing could change the boundaries of thought within schools of business and management. Its focus is on articulating ways of thinking about management learning differently, both by challenging the performative work of dominant modes of writing, thinking, reading and learning about management, and by offering alternatives.

There is a history of writing differently in MOS: there has been a playful engagement with forms of writing that are alternative to the scientific norm (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1995), and that experiment with mediums of representation that reach beyond the often stultifying formats inculcated by the social sciences and reinforced by the requirements of (many) academic journals (Parker, 2014). These include poetry (Kostera, 1997), textiles (Rippin, 2013) and biography (Rhodes, 2001), and ways of exploring the ‘bodiliness’ of academic research and writing (Essén and Värlander, 2012). These advancements could also be read as challenging masculine writing, some being explicit in offering...
While some have called for writing differently as a way to communicate less abstractly (Grey and Sinclair, 2006), others suggest a burst of creativity might follow if academics were loosed from the binds of academic writing. There is advocacy of the value of incorporating the voice and material presence of the author, especially when using autobiographical methods (Höpfl, 2007). The presence of the writer’s physical body remains speculative, yet there are writers who write of their bodies and the body has the potential to become a site of power and change, albeit a contested space. Other writings speak of writing from the body (e.g. Pullen and Rhodes, 2008). Some writers equate embodied writing as a feminine alternative to the disembodied masculine (Höpfl, 2000; Fotaki et al., 2015; Phillips et al., 2014). In this view, writing, like dancing, allows the body ‘to articulate itself as a complex site of passionate objection’ (Sweeney, 2015: 30) enabling the presence of materiality and naming its absences (Irigaray, 1985).

Writing differently as we have seen outside the discipline of management has been imaginative, experimental, dialogic (Helin, 2016), and reflexive (Richardson, 1997). Writing differently in management learning provides an opportunity for the possibilities of wonder, passion and imagination in management research and learning (Carlsen and Sandelands, 2015), and passionate, engaged learning about new possibilities for thinking and be(com)ing (Shotter and Tsoukas, 2014). The potential of absorbing arts-based methods of learning into our research and teaching has been advocated (e.g. Page, Grisoni and Turner, 2014), but we need concomitant ways of writing that allow dreams, poetry and the visual to inspire the ways in which we write, read, and think about management learning. Popular management texts borrow major themes from popular culture, so how can academic texts learn from that approach but go beyond it, perhaps by developing a new genre that engages and absorbs its readers so that learning happens almost unknowingly, through pleasure (Kociatkiewicz and Kostera, 2016)?

How, then, to write? In what ways can we use writing to write the (learning) self or to write social, organizational and managerial practices representative of subjectivity (Pullen, 2006)? Can we learn from feminist authors how to write in such a way as to capture and convey affect? Can we, through writing differently, touch vulnerable flesh and invoke new political and ethical practices? How can we write when grammar fails us, or when our writing refuses to let us complete it? Can we develop a genre of writing in Management Learning that carries passion and desire, replacing authorial primacy with relationships between writer and reader that are fluid, dynamic and unconstrained? In short, how can we write with resonance (Meier and Wegener, 2016)?

This special issue will therefore build on emergent work in management and organization studies to develop new ways of writing that oppose masculine scientific writing, opening the discipline to ways of better understanding ways of being and doing and learning in/of organizations. Papers may explore alternative forms of gendered writing, or their writing...
may name the sensuous or create a space for affirmative politics (Braidotti, 2011) and ethical encounters on the basis of difference. Writing may challenge binary dualisms through radical identity politics. This special issue may enable us to move from asking ‘who is speaking’ to ‘what affect can writing differently achieve?’ We welcome papers that contribute to the theoretical and philosophical challenges surrounding writing differently; that experiment with writing academic texts differently; present empirical research on management learning in experimental ways; and offer methodological contributions to writing differently in management learning. These contributions not only have academic value but also have the potential to shape organizational practice and practitioner engagement.

We therefore welcome contributions that address some of the following questions:

- How do we write from/about the sensory body in ways that can present the embodied lived experience of organizational members and allow researchers to make sense of lived experience?
- What alternative writings could transform academia through dialogue and reflection?
- How can minority voices surface through embodied or sensory writing?
- Stylistically, in what ways can our writing be inventive, creative and passionate?
- How can writing effect ethical and political change?
- Can writing be activism?
- What can we develop by working across disciplines, such as writing differently from feminist, queer and gender theorists working outside of management and organization studies?
- From what genres can we learn so as to engage with writing differently?
- How can we approach the teaching of writing differently, opening up spaces for learning through writing that is meaningful, engaging and thought provoking?
- How can writing differently contribute to organizational practice?

If you would like to discuss your article prior to submission please contact the special issue editors: S.Gilmore2@exeter.ac.uk; N.H.Harding@bradford.ac.uk; jenny.helin@fek.uu.se; alison.pullen@mq.edu.au.

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 in accordance with the journal submission guidelines.

References


