

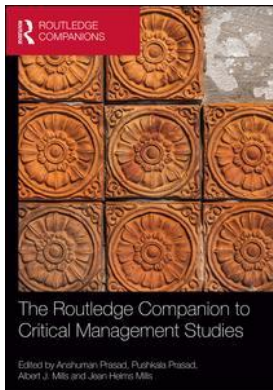
This article was downloaded by: 10.2.97.136

On: 27 Mar 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



## **The Routledge Companion to Critical Management Studies**

Anshuman Prasad, Pushkala Prasad, Albert J. Mills, Jean Helms Mills

### **Teaching management critically**

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315889818.ch15>

Gabriela Coronado

**Published online on: 08 Sep 2015**

**How to cite :-** Gabriela Coronado. 08 Sep 2015, *Teaching management critically from: The Routledge Companion to Critical Management Studies* Routledge

Accessed on: 27 Mar 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315889818.ch15>

**PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT**

Full terms and conditions of use: <https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms>

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

# Teaching management critically

## Classroom practices under rival paradigms

Gabriela Coronado<sup>1</sup>

---

Since the inclusion of management education (ME) in universities, there have been many debates around what it should be and whose interests it should reflect. Different perspectives on its value for business and/or society have divided the academic and professional communities. There is, however, agreement that universities need to provide knowledge and intellectual skills to prepare graduates to play a role in organizations where they will be employed. But what are the skills and knowledge needed, and whose interests define them? Should business schools respond to or challenge business interests?

Business schools<sup>2</sup> have an important role in determining what and how they teach, but they are exposed to multiple economic, academic and ideological demands. It is widely acknowledged that “coinciding with the period of neoliberalism, there has been a shift from considering education as a public good to education as a private consumer good” (Joseph, 2012: 240). In this process, the mission of universities as a service to society has shifted to become creators of products to be bought by students, to acquire skills that potential employers from business organizations demand. As a commodity, a degree stamped by a particular university becomes part of what Pfeiffer & Fong (2002) refer to as the pedigree syndrome. What matters is not the knowledge but what the degree symbolizes in measurable outcomes: university ranking, certification, grades.

Under these pressures, academics like myself, teaching in management programs, have to respond to procedures designed by universities to deliver education in a commoditized way, which claims to respond to student market demands and business expectations. In this context, curriculum development and the design of specific knowledge products (subjects and degree programs) respond to multiple pressures from universities and their business and academic stakeholders. As such, management education cannot be dissociated from the existing management paradigms and the legitimation of their knowledge, that is, the discursive regimes (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) that have shaped the evolution of academic thinking, practice and pedagogy in universities. In this chapter I address the differences in the two existing paradigms in management, one represented by *mainstream management* and its hegemonic discursive regime of neoliberalism and managerialism, the other *Critical Management Studies* (CMS), which questions the legitimacy of dominant hegemonic business ideologies.

With a focus on Critical Management Education (CME), I will discuss the implications of the coexistence of these different paradigms and how both shape forms of knowledge and

pedagogical practices employed in universities to teach business students. In my argument, I use critical readings of documents from management discursive communities (see Hardy & Thomas, 2012), including the business community and mainstream management discipline and the textbook industry that serves them.

Drawing on an autoethnographic approach, understood as personal self-reflexivity directed to my experience of educational practice (Coronado 2009b), I reflect on the challenges of making management students critical, referring to my own practice as a critical management educator teaching in an undergraduate management degree in an Australian university. I relate those experiences to CME and share some strategies I have developed. In particular, I will refer to students' engagement with, or resistance to, CMS and emphasize the importance of assignments as a driving force for promoting critical thinking and indirect forms of opposition to the hegemonic paradigm.

### **Implications of the paradigm divide in management education**

Historically, different academic disciplines have played a role in defining dominant forms of knowledge. As discursive regimes, they have limited the scope of inquiry and excluded alternative ways of thinking. According to Foucault (1971), a discursive regime defines what is legitimate knowledge (accepted as 'truth' or 'sense' for the specific community), constraining who can say what to whom and how it can be said (Coronado 2012). What prevails are hegemonic forms of knowledge, which constitute and reproduce academic disciplines as paradigms, i.e., a "constellation of concepts, values, perceptions and practices shared by a community which forms a particular vision of reality that is the way the community organizes itself" (Clarke & Clegg, 1998:9).

In the management discipline, the hegemonic discourse is held by two interconnected sectors: the mainstream management academics and the business community, whose interests and demands are at the center of the first group. Both share the dominant ideology in contemporary society, neoliberalism (Munck, 2005). Neoliberalism, like all ideologies, is complex and has been defined in many ways at different times (see Thorsen's 2009 review). For my argument, I use the term in Harvey's (2005) sense:

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.

(p. 2)

Neoliberalism's assumptions have been naturalized and globally spread, defining free market state policies. At a micro level, neoliberalism is represented as managerialism, an ideology that assumes that independently of different values, aims, industries or countries, all organizations are basically similar and can be managed in the same way, through generic business techniques and skills mostly defined by the American model of business management (Hodge, Coronado, Duarte & Teal, 2010). Neoliberalism and managerialism as constitutive of the management discursive regime are the hallmarks of the hegemonic management paradigm.

University teachers are under pressure to conform to these managerial models, which define how we perform our educational practices and what knowledge and skills we teach to business students. Through different discourses and practices, the hegemonic management paradigm

shapes the work academics do in business schools, impacting their capacity to teach management critically. Among these pressures, we can refer to managerial forms of “quality” control, the role of business as university stakeholders, and the influence of the textbook industry. These are not the only ones, but they represent some of the main *obstacles* for critical educators.

Universities increasingly respond to the pressures of neoliberal policies that use funding systems to define education and research. Instruments of “quality” control have been imposed in the form of policies and regulations for standardization and consistency in the “product” to produce the graduate attributes demanded by the workplace. These regulatory instruments respond to external pressures. At the national level, constraints from the funding models and curriculum audits are used to ensure international consistency in the quality of higher education, so that universities can compete successfully in the global education markets (de Meyer, 2012; Vaara & Faÿ, 2012).

One relevant Australian instance is the creation of national bodies such as the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), a regulatory and quality agency for higher education. In their own words: “TEQSA’s primary aim is to ensure that students receive a high quality education at any Australian higher education provider” (<http://www.teqsa.gov.au/>). Other influences defining ME include the role of business advisers in assessing management degrees and the demands for certification from professional associations. The expectation is to achieve homogeneous business programs that respond to business needs. In the words of the Business Council of Australia, “The challenges involved in adapting to new and changing workplaces. . . require effective generic skills. Generic skills including communication, teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, technology and organizational skills have become increasingly important in the workplace” (BCA, 2011: 8). That is to say, with minor differences, demands on management education include the development of intellectual skills similar to other disciplines, such as liberal arts and social sciences (Khorn, 2012).

Management degrees offer similar programs, with subjects with almost identical titles, using textbooks that represent minor variations of the same content. In this standardization process, the textbook plays a crucial function as an instrument to reproduce the dominance of mainstream management. Textbooks define content and teaching approaches that carry ideologies and values reflecting business interests to be transmitted in business schools (Coronado, 2012). In common pedagogic practice, every subject design must include one textbook, and the content and structure of the teaching program follows its structure. In this way the omnipresent textbook industry defines what forms of knowledge are acceptable, limiting the possibility of introducing *counter-hegemonic* alternatives. Decisions on what is published are based on what sells in the massive management degrees offered by neoliberal universities.

Even so, in practice there are still opportunities to circumvent this dominance. I have always struggled with the use of textbooks and resisted their use. As I explained to a colleague:

If you don’t use the textbook, students say the course is “unstructured”, but if you use it you have to spend so much time criticizing it. What else can you do? The problem is that students still believe that if it’s in the textbook it must be true. They always expect you to tell them what is right or wrong, and of course this means according to the textbook.

(May 20, 2012)

I tried compiling customized readers, with different perspectives from CMS and other disciplines (sociology, political science, complexity theory). This practice is not uncommon in other disciplines, but in management my students rejected it every semester. I also tried customized textbooks, which allowed me to provide readings in a glossier format. Even though students had

to pay a higher price, they found this more acceptable, and despite some limitations it did provide critical perspectives from other disciplines (e.g., Coronado, 2009a). This kind of resistance to the ideologies of the hegemonic paradigm is limited, and still dominant discursive instruments control the dissemination of knowledge. Critique is allowed but under their terms, i.e., as long as they are aligned with their assumptions, values and ideologies.

It would be simplistic to suppose that hegemonic and counter-hegemonic paradigms do not include competing perspectives. They do. Without ignoring such complexity, however, it is still possible to identify basic points that divide the two paradigms. The divide is evident in the critique of ME appearing in Adler, Forbes and Willmott (2007):

For many, work is premised on relations of subordination, exploitation, and intimidation. What we tend to find in textbooks and curricula in place of these topics, is a series of ‘code words’. Sweatshop exploitation, the vast inequalities of the global value chains, endemic economic disenfranchisement and the palpable alienation of the many are addressed (as if to protect ourselves from the mess that such issues provoke) by way of phrases like ‘strategic choices’, ‘corporate social responsibility’ and ‘diversity’, while alienation, disenfranchisement and subordination seem to be expressed in term of the problematics of ‘trust’ and ‘commitment’ and ‘loyalty’. . . what is taught is not meant to reflect current realities and ‘disturbances’ but to provide a sketch of ideal relations and circumstances that managers ought to try and create.

(p. 133)

In agreement with this view my intention is to stress key differences that characterize the tension between the two perspectives interacting within business schools. In Figure 15.1, I represent the two paradigms, highlighting key qualities that typify paradigm distinctions as transmitted in ME.<sup>3</sup>

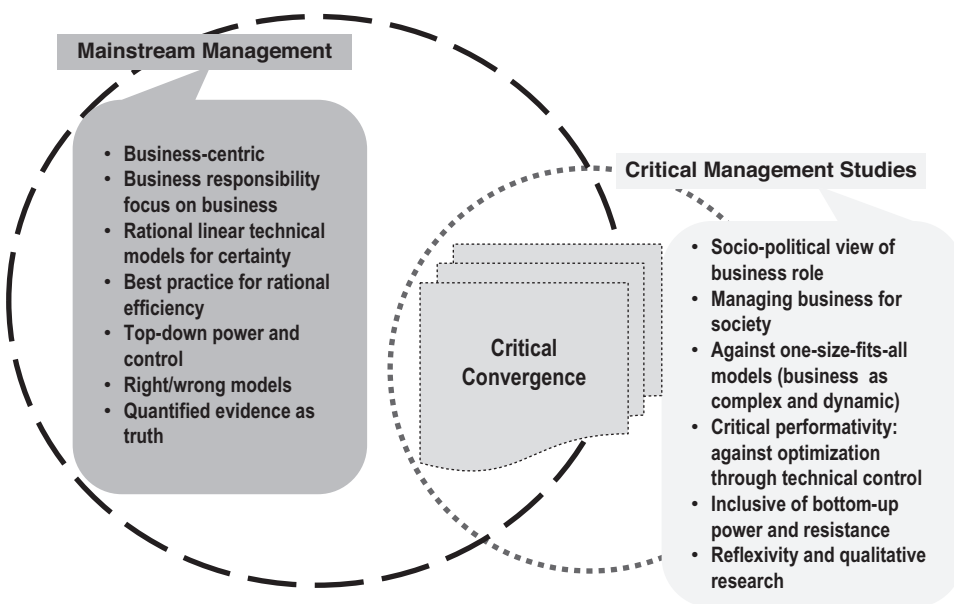


Figure 15.1 Contrasting mainstream and critical management paradigms.

As shown in the figure, the two paradigms are characterized by opposite emphases on some aspects of business practice and the significance or otherwise of the social impacts of those practices. Mainstream management gives priority to the ideologies, needs and processes involved in improving the efficiency of business for being profitable at any cost. As such, its objectives can be defined as business-centric and the consideration of impacts of business practices as restricted to business performance and interests. Any negative impact outside business is seen as collateral. To fulfill those priorities, emphasis in ME is put on the importance of management models that rationally, and using measurable facts, ensure certainty. In this way, the models defined as right promote the expectation that it is possible to identify and apply best practices to achieve business efficiency independently of contextual conditions. Business performance is guaranteed by the application of one-size-fits-all procedures. Under these rational models, top-down forms of power and control are legitimized in the hands of top executives, acting on behalf of corporate interests.

In contrast, the Critical Management Studies paradigm emphasizes the responsibility of business in society and highlights the existence of ideological forms of hegemonic power embedded in business practices. Through critical analysis of business performance its *de facto* status is denaturalized, exposing how management's existing models have ideological and ethical implication, perpetuating historical, economic, political and social forms of domination. Consequently, CMS scholarship incorporates debates on socio-political analysis of business organizations embedded in complex and dynamic power relations, in which potential resistance from all levels of the organization and society emerge. Based on those objectives, critical thinking and reflexivity are promoted in management education for students to uncover false assumptions regarding business performativity.

It needs to be noted that the diversity inherent in any paradigm demands recognition of existing self-critical perspectives that might converge with other paradigms. Academic management communities produce an exchange of perspectives that are more or less critical of hegemonic ideologies, generating an overlap. This is especially important when referring to CME, where academics not regarded as CMS also engage critically. In that respect, it is crucial to recognize that management as taught in ME includes many ways in which knowledge is represented, questioned, contradicted and transformed. Critical pedagogies have often been used in mainstream management, and when it comes to defining the mission, curriculum and pedagogies of business schools, discursive convergence and coexistence of different paradigms become evident. Paradigm concurrence constitutes one of the challenges CMS academics face when trying to teach management critically, since each paradigm carries ideologies that serve opposing interests.

CMS as a counter-discourse has been generated by dissenting academics with different disciplinary backgrounds (e.g., anthropology, sociology, psychology, etc.) employed by business schools. It is interdisciplinary and heterogeneous but unified around debates that emerge from critical views of the role of business and management in society. CMS academics and their allies focus their research precisely on the critique of hegemonic management theories and practices. Even if CMS can be considered as an “active and subversive intervention into managerial discourses and practices” (Spicer, Alvesson & Karreman, 2009: 538), its overlaps with some mainstream critical perspectives have opened up the possibility of its acceptance as part of the academic management landscape.<sup>4</sup>

Many CMS scholars are well-known and have published extensively in top journals and highly respected editorial houses (see, for example, Alvesson, Bridgman & Willmott, 2011; Jack & Westwood, 2009; Prasad, 2003, 2012; Willmott, Kenny & Whittle, 2011). Although some of their publications can be useful resources for teaching business students, with few

exceptions (e.g., Clegg, Khornbergger & Pitsis, 2005; Knights & Willmott, 2007), those are oriented toward higher research degrees or master's courses (including MBAs), rather than large undergraduate courses where students are just beginning to acquire basic academic skills. Consequently, CMS perspectives are still underrepresented in educational resources used in undergraduate ME.

## Challenges for critical approaches to management education

Having worked in the management program of a business school, I assume the presence almost everywhere of a diversity of academics, holding both critical and noncritical perspectives. I have also found, however, some agreement around the importance of critical thinking as a key graduate attribute. Therefore, the expectation that management students will acquire critical thinking can be seen as a discursive convergence between opposed paradigms. Such convergence is not uncommon within discursive regimes and can be explained in terms of what Hodge and Kress (1988) call the ideological complex. By understanding discourse as an ideological complex, we can recognize how contradictions can be incorporated within a hegemonic ideology to neutralize counter-discourses.

Appropriation of a critique in rhetorical terms can get around resistance without always transforming its effects of dominance. A clear example of the ideological complex in management education is the way business ethics and corporate social responsibility have become part of the managerial perspective in textbooks (e.g., Arnold, Beauchamp & Bowie, 2012; Steiner & Steiner 2011). Another example is how management programs are incorporating the United Nations' Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative by simply adding the word "responsibility" without any other change (Solitander, Fougère, Sobczak & Herlin, 2012).

The discursive convergence around critical thinking may offer a potential opening to teach CMS in management. But the question arises: is critical thinking in CME critical of the managerial paradigm or merely a tool to increase the latter's dominance? The ideological differences of the two paradigms create problems for critical teaching in business schools, where students are exposed to both, but these are usually presented as if the difference does not exist. Given that the two management approaches are divided by ideology, it is likely that uses of the term "critical thinking" will have different aims, depending on the respective paradigm.

The challenge for CMS, then, is to respond to a demand defined by mainstream management, which according to Datar, Garvin and Cullen (2011) must:

reassess the facts, frameworks, and theories that they teach (the "knowing" component), while at the same time rebalancing their curricula so that more attention is paid to developing the skills, capabilities, and techniques that lie at the heart of the practice of Management (the "doing" component) and *the values, attitudes, and beliefs that form managers' world views and professional identities* (the "being" component) [my emphasis].

(p. 456)

CMS academics have to acknowledge those demands, understood by their schools as legitimate, and at the same time denaturalize the assumptions of those who share "the managers' world views."

Although CMS academics are still a minority, some hold senior positions based on their research strengths, which are valued by university funding systems (see Contu, 2009). They also

have allies who may not be entirely convinced of various aspects of the heterogeneous CMS agenda (e.g., radically questioning business or Eurocentrism) but who share the belief that critical views of management and critical pedagogies are important. The contrasting assumptions of the two paradigms interact in business schools' attempts to define ME, with implications for teaching CMS and CME approaches in business schools.

### *Critical thinking in management education*

Since both academic groups are immersed in the management ideological complex, it is not surprising to encounter some convergence around what is quality education. I find it difficult to imagine, for instance, any opposition to what the Business Council of Australia expects from universities: “to produce graduates who have . . . ‘The ability to think independently, critically analyse issues and problems, and to adapt thinking and analytical skills to different contexts and new problems’” (BCA 2011; report in Hall, Agarwal & Green, 2012: 21).

Despite such convergence, these skills are interpreted *differently* under the two paradigms. There is no doubt that CMS academics agree that graduates should be critical thinkers, but it is expected that their understanding of the term “critical” is different:

The CMS use of the term critical signifies more than an endorsement of the standard norms of scientific skepticism or the general value of “critical thinking.” It also signifies more than a focus on issues that are pivotal rather than marginal. Critical here signifies radical critique. By radical is signaled an attentiveness to the socially divisive and ecologically destructive broader patterns and structures – such as capitalism, patriarchy, imperialism, and so forth – that condition local action and conventional wisdom. By critique, we mean that beyond criticism of specific, problematic beliefs and practices (e.g., about teamwork), CMS aims to show how such beliefs and practices are nurtured by, and serve to sustain, divisive and destructive patterns and structures; and also how their reproduction is contingent and changeable, neither necessary nor unavoidable.

*(Adler, Forbes & Willmott, 2007, p. 137)*

An examination of how critical thinking is understood in ME makes clear that the term “critical” is used mainly in the BCA sense, bounded by the ideological values of the hegemonic paradigm that CMS questions. This can be illustrated with how textbooks describe critical thinking:

The ability to think critically and analytically is a **conceptual skill**. It involves the ability to break down problems into smaller parts, to see the relation between parts, and to recognize the implications of any one problem for others. As we assume ever-higher responsibilities in organizations, we are called upon to deal with more ambiguous problems that have many complications and longer term consequences.

*(Schermerhorn, Campling, Poole & Wiesner, 2011: 22; bold in the original)*

This implies a skill that can be applied irrespective of what is the problem, who is affected and who is responsible. It indicates that thinking critically is a form of clear reasoning, useful for analysis independently of the subject matter (see also Datar, Garvin & Cullen, 2011). The assumption that practices are neutral appears in many other aspects of management textbooks. They presume a rationalistic management approach with clearly defined models that are taught



to students without recognizing the inherent complexities of the contexts of application or the power dimensions.

One common criticism of ME is its detachment from reality: “it is clear that many people’s experience of organizations is one that differs substantially from the presentation of work organizations found in conventional classrooms and textbooks” (Prichard, 2009: 53). Such lack of connection between models proposed in management teaching and the real organizations they are applied to is also criticized by university business stakeholders. As in the case of the term “critical,” convergence between business and critical academics on this issue too can be rather superficial. Businesses demand that management models are taught for more efficient control over workplace practice, so that managers reproduce businesses interests. From a critical perspective, the aim is for students to recognize that what they learn in mainstream management textbooks hides the reality of power underlying business practice and managers’ workplace behavior. From this perspective, the link with reality does not consist of merely learning models for business to be successful but learning the internal dynamics of such success and its impacts at the societal level.

Since the two distinct paradigms cohabit in business schools with some overlaps around how “critical” is understood, critical pedagogies can be applied to both forms of ME. Both may produce critical responses to business practices, but they do so in unpredictable ways. CME does not operate in a vacuum but includes a diverse range of experiences, values and ideologies carried by teachers and students. Thus, even if we hold a CMS perspective, our intent to transform students into critical thinkers does not necessarily mean they will become critical of business values and ideologies. Students are responsible for their own learning and subsequent practices.

Consistent with the principles of a critical education, we need to recognize students’ right to hold their own views, even if they reject our critique. Not to allow disagreement with critical perspectives on business would legitimize anti-CME claims that students are at risk of becoming confused: “[t]o engage such students in modes of critique that attack their dominant positions without enabling them to construct alternate subject positions is to risk their cultural displacement, alienation and disillusionment” (Fenwick, 2005: 34). Even if I agree with the importance of “enabling” alternative positions, the assumption that students share the dominant position seems to ignore the diversity currently existing in business schools.

In my experience, students are capable of integrating critical perspectives into a complex framework for when they are or will be participating in the workforce. When criticizing business practices in classes, I have encountered more resistance than disillusionment. But the resistance is not simply a rejection of the critique. Students may accept the validity of the criticism but challenge it because of the reality of the workplace, where questioning business power can be the difference between being employed or not.

Applying critical pedagogies demands recognition of students’ different backgrounds. I teach in a non-elite Australian university attended by students from diverse cultural backgrounds. This case is different from that in many other universities, where “the typical students of the critical management educator are not those at the margins of society, but at the centre” (Perriton & Reynolds, 2004: 71). Many of my students speak English as a second language and are the first generation in their family to enroll in tertiary education. Even if they are exposed to mainstream management in other courses, critical perspectives can tap into their underlying empathy with CMS views. After the first moment of surprise (as they will have mostly encountered noncritical perspectives), students can quickly recognize that in exploitative business practices they will be the ones exploited, as their parents were.

In this context I will discuss some CME approaches and the implications for CMS academics teaching in business schools. I describe some tactics I have explored to teach management critically in my classroom practice and how students have reacted.

### *Teaching management with critical pedagogies*

It is possible to identify a number of different critical pedagogies in the Critical Management Education literature (see Grey, 2007). In many cases, these accounts focus on the application of one or another approach, emphasizing how it improves the learning experience, i.e., how to better learn what is on offer. Often these critical approaches do not explicitly question the hegemonic management discourse. Even more invisible is the role of educational resources in teaching practice.

The use of specific materials, for example case studies, is not uniform, and even if claims can be made for their value in learning, there are enormous differences in how to use them and what questions to ask. The case studies included in mainstream textbooks are generally used to reinforce the content presented in the chapter and to ensure that specific knowledge is attained, while implicit ideologies are internalized (see Nicolai, 2004). But using case studies detached from their original aims offers scope to critically question the accepted management models. Audiovisual materials present similar patterns, especially as packaged by business education providers. The use of such resources as critical pedagogies to promote critical thinking or problem solving might improve learning but not always the critical questioning advocated by CMS, unless the case studies used are provided by CMS academics themselves (Rostis & Mills, 2010).

The use of films and TV documentaries not controlled by the business education industries can offer more to support multiple modes of learning and provide broader scope for CME (see Panayiotou, 2011). However, what lecturers do with any of those resources is not well known, except occasionally when academics reveal how they use them (e.g. Mathews, Fornaciari & Rubens, 2012; Mallinger & Rossy, 2003). Outside these published accounts, we can only rely on our own experiences and those of colleagues that we overhear in meetings, corridors or the lunch room. Hence my account of attempts to teach management critically as presented here comes from everyday experience in my university, school and program.

### **An autoethnography of my undergraduate classroom**

Coming from anthropology to teach management, I found the CMS agenda invaluable and consistent with my previous interest in Freire's (1972) Liberation Education as a pedagogic framework. In ME, some have questioned the application of Freire's emancipatory pedagogy, arguing that it applies only to the "oppressed," the main target of Freire's literacy programs. Perriton and Reynolds (2004: 73) propose an alternative pedagogy, "pedagogy of refusal," to teach "the privileged business student," based on refusing to follow the dominant ideology of managerialism. Without discounting the potential of this form of critical pedagogy for CMS, attempts to limit Freire's usefulness and value for CME – on the unfounded assumption that business students are all privileged – appear to be flawed. Moreover, Freire's critique of power relations inherent in the hegemonic system of education – what he refers to as the "banking" system of education, where students are passive recipients of information "deposits" from lecturers – is highly pertinent for management education because it questions not only (1) the university model of commoditized education under which we have to teach but also (2) the resources provided by the hegemonic

discourse, namely, textbooks and other educational techniques, which reproduce student passivity and a relatively uncritical embrace of hegemonic ideologies by students.

Another key point in Freire's approach, which underlies the CMS paradigm, is the development of critical social consciousness, i.e., making students aware of how domination operates so that they are able to understand the conditions of power and oppression, independently of how "oppressed" they are personally. When we teach management uncritically, we reproduce the conditions to perpetuate *intellectually* "oppressed citizens," indoctrinating them into the hegemonic business discourse. CMS and liberation education are conceptually deeply intertwined, and I try consistently to follow this critical pedagogy.

Although I draw on other critical pedagogies as well (see Coronado, 2011), Freire's philosophical principles are the foundation of my CMS approach, always undergirding the "social contract" I use to construct relationships in class. From the beginning, an explicit agreement is established between me and the students emphasizing the dialogic character of the learning process. I also use his ideas in analytical practices required for classroom activities and in the design of assignments in which students are guided to discover "untested feasibilities," i.e., what is possible but hidden by taken-for-granted assumptions (Freire, 1972: 85). By challenging those assumptions, students might find possible solutions not seen before.

I applied these principles in the first subject I designed in the management degree in 2002, namely, Business Society and Policy. In my first week, I questioned the banking system of education and outlined the dialogic expectations of the class, emphasizing the students' right (even obligation) to question my perspective. I systematically worked on developing trust, so that students could believe that, irrespective of my position of power in the student-teacher relationship, I would not give them a failing grade for disagreeing with me. Every semester, I share the following real story from the early days of my teaching:

Once, one student worked very hard to defy my views on capitalism. He demonstrated an excellent understanding of the readings and used counter-arguments to sustain his perspective. He got a high distinction.

Also, I challenged the assumption of there being only one right answer when dealing with dilemmas involving ideological positions. In a Socratic approach, I generated group discussions where all points of view were invited for debate, including my having to play devil's advocate when everyone agreed with me (see Fallon, 2006, on uses of Socratic method in teaching business ethics).

In the second week, I introduced the study of capitalism based on a reading from the *Communist Manifesto* (Marx & Engels, 1970). I now recognize my naivety about business students, who were not expecting to find Marx as a main reading. After a bit of shock, my approach still generated critical thinking and some acceptance of criticism of capitalism. It is clear to me now that students generally tend to be conservative when it comes to innovations in ways of teaching. Any change from past precedents provokes a measure of rejection. Word of mouth to other students seemed to ease acceptance of my new approaches in later years.

In developing this subject, I realized that explicitly reading and discussing Freire and Marx was counterproductive. Without changing the principles and the themes, I subsequently introduced these ideas in a more understated way. The ideas were received with less resistance but still with transformative outcomes: better informed students who were convinced by the critical arguments and students who intelligently challenged my views.

Other less socially oriented subjects pose a different challenge: How to teach management critically and still respond to students' needs to learn relevant skills to work within the mainstream paradigm? This question kept me awake when designing *Global Strategy and Management and Managing Professionals*. Although in general my approach was the same, I explored different ways to promote critical thinking adapted to the specificity of each subject, scaffolding content, learning outcomes, tutorial activities and assignments (Biggs, 2004). Reflecting on my 10 years' experience teaching management, it is clear that when dealing with two paradigms in the same program, as in my case, it is advantageous to introduce critical views of the hegemonic discourse in a less confrontational way. My main strategy to subvert the boundaries imposed by hegemonic discourse and practices has become to promote critical thinking through different assignments.

Assignments in my view constitute the best opportunity for developing critical perspectives in the context of predominant managerialism. Consistent with the discourse of neoliberal education, assignments are measurable outcomes linked to the final destination. Thus, they are the focus of students and represent one of the few spaces left in which academics have a dutiful audience. Besides, assignment design provides a level of flexibility that can defeat bureaucratic forms of control. Common assessment modes such as essays, research reports, case studies, film analysis, presentations and even exams can be designed in multiple forms for different goals. Assuming that each assignment has its corresponding process of learning in tutorial activities, I expect that individual values and ideologies (mine and students') will be the undercurrents in the learning process, to be discovered, reflected on, debated and their implications taken responsibility for.

In three subjects I designed from scratch, my assessments included reflection on experiential learning (Cunliffe, 2004), use of sociological imagination (Mills, 1979; Duarte, 2009), ideological analysis (Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002), case analysis, Web-based research (Coronado, 2011) and introduction of complexity thinking (Levy, 2002) for students to respond to uncertainty by analysis of multiple scenarios. In all cases I included the search for unseen possibilities, the ultimate outcome for Freire's transformative education. All assignments were connected to concepts subtly aligned with CMS perspectives (sometimes included in the readings, always in lecture notes or lecture presentations). In all cases I required students to conclude by proposing alternative ways to deal with the issues at stake and identify ethical dilemmas.

Similar types of assignments were uniquely developed and adapted to challenges posed by subject content. All were aligned with tutorial activities for developing analytical skills, through reflections on how theory applies (or does not apply) to practice and continuous discussion of values and ideological implications of management practices. I emphasized the rejection of decontextualized, simplistic interpretations when found in conventional management interpretations. (See Figure 15.2 for how assignments were adapted at different moments of development in different subjects.)

Each assignment required students to question theoretical assumptions, discover real organizational challenges and reflect continuously on ideological assumptions and values. In my experience, constantly applying critical thinking (in the CMS sense) indirectly in assignments fulfilled the aims stated in managerial discourse (promoting critical thinking, problem-solving skills, applicability of theory to practice) and also exposed students to counter-discourses, giving them the opportunity to decide what kind of citizen/managers they wanted to become.

Subjects Assignments	1. Business, Society and Policy (2nd year)	2. Global Strategy and Management (3rd year)	3. Managing Professionals (1st year Financial Advising)
<b>Reflective Journals</b>	a. Based on 3 key learning from each week reading using sociological imagination to link macro and micro business practices b. To document the process of research including suggestions to “solve” the problems and reflecting on ethical dilemmas.	Based on weekly questions around aspects of complexity and students’ reflections on attempts to uncover unseen possibilities.	Evaluation of theories in practice, link between issues discussed in class and previous knowledge, or future professional management practice. Included <i>Description</i> (e.g., How did we work as a team?) <i>Critical explanation or analysis</i> (of specific situation that triggered attention; connects past experience with current thoughts) and <i>Reflection</i> (rethinking experience during the “learning situation” for future professional practice.
<b>Case Analysis</b>	Group analysis of 1 case including 3 individual reports on one perspective each, and 1 group report jointly produced comparing the 3 perspectives, highlighting ethical dilemmas and proposing alternative ways of managing the conflicts.	<i>Case analysis</i> : Company to be researched using weekly themes (for research).	<i>In tutorial activities</i> : For teams to evaluate theoretical perspectives applied cases studied from real organizational researched stories. Case problems for virtual team discussion and in exam (see below).
<b>Research</b>	<i>Individual research project</i> based on selection of research question on different social impacts of business practice (e.g., child labor, discrimination, health impacts and marketing, fair trade)	<i>Report/portfolio</i> : Identify variation under the recognition of complex environments. Highlight uncertainty and question rationality. Concluding with evaluation, pointing out problems and ethical dilemmas and suggesting recommendations.	<i>Team</i> : Professional research report to develop independent and collaborative forms of inquiry, drawing on Web-based research on professional firms and associations and informal face-to-face interviews. Analytical tools designed by teams in class to classify and compare data collected.
<b>Presentations</b>	<i>Team</i> : Video analysis from TV documentaries, highlighting conflicts from the interaction between business and society, ideological positions represented and ethical dilemmas, if any. To finish proposing a question for class discussion.	<i>Team</i> : <i>Complexity &amp; Global Management</i> Application of Readings under a comparative frame of different multinationals researched by individuals	X
<b>Online discussion (part of Reflective Journals)</b>	Using sociological imagination and ethical reasoning to explain: Why capitalism is considered an unjust system?	X	Contribution and reflections from the virtual team work around a designated problem solving activity.
<b>Exam (when policy make it compulsory)</b>	3 questions to be selected out of 6 given in advance. Students to write 3 short discussion essays explaining and discussing their perspectives.	3 Questions on complexity concepts to be answered through short discussion essays substantiating own perspectives in response to the questions.	Based on 2 problem-solving questions considering the perspective of the manager and of a professional. students discuss the problem, evaluate options and propose a solution according to each role.

Figure 15.1 Critical assignment designs in different subjects.

## Conclusion

The challenges that CMS academics face in teaching management critically are complex and require dealing with multiple interests represented by various stakeholders involved in reproducing the hegemonic management paradigm. Given the university context and its identification with the hegemonic paradigm, CMS academics need to find alternative strategies to fulfill their critical objectives in teaching management degrees. First, we must survive as employees in a managerialist university, and second, we have to overcome the limitations imposed by the dominance of the managerial discursive regime and its instruments of control over management education.

Teaching management critically under these paradigms requires a continuous struggle to counteract the constraints on management degrees imposed by university management systems, as they try to make education a “commodity” – mass-produced, consistent and with quality controls that conform to the international competitive environment. As a minority position, CMS-rooted critical approaches to ME need to be strategically presented, providing critical intellectual skills commonly accepted as legitimate in conventional ME, while disseminating critical perspectives on business and management. In terms of my own experience, these strategies should not be confrontational so that they might circumvent resistance from students used to mainstream approaches, while also passing unnoticed by hegemonic forms of managerial control.

Although my account is anecdotal, I do not suppose my situation is unique. Like many other academics, my quotidian practice is just a constant quest to fulfill my educational aims, trying to contest a hegemonic ideology in my teaching and my praxis. By identifying discursive practices that influence the way in which ME has developed under the hegemonic discourses, I have uncovered some challenges that the CMS field faces in introducing a counter-hegemonic version of business education. Reflecting on my own classroom experiences and student responses, I have also shared in this chapter some positive strategies to help overcome the obstacles to teaching CMS under these difficult conditions.

## Notes

- 1 I want to thank my colleagues in Organisational Studies, School of Business in UWS for sharing reflections on their teaching experience. Thanks in particular to Dr. Wayne Fallon for his constant experimentation in teaching management from a CMS perspective and for his feedback on a previous version of this text.
- 2 I refer to business schools in generic terms, but my focus is only on the discipline of management.
- 3 For this comparison, I draw on CMS publications (such as Adler, Forbes & Willmott, 2007; Alvesson & Willmott, 2011, 2012; Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Fournier & Grey, 2000), together with the analysis of textbooks I have evaluated for my undergraduate teaching (e.g., Hill, 2010; Steiner & Steiner, 2008).
- 4 It is now possible to find CMS sessions in mainstream academic conferences (e.g., Critical Management Studies Division of the Academy of Management in the United States [<http://group.aomonline.org/cms/Index.htm>] or ANZAM, the Australian New Zealand Academy of Management). Critical views have a significant presence in organizational studies conferences and journals (APROS and *Organization*), and CMS has another Biannual International Conference as well.

## References

- Adler, P. S., Forbes, L. C., & Willmott, H. (2007). Critical Management Studies. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 1(1): 119–179.
- Alvesson, M., & Spicer, A. (2012). Critical leadership studies: The case for critical performativity. *Human Relations*, 65(3): 367–390.
- Alvesson, M., Bridgman T., & Willmott H. (Eds.). (2011), *The Oxford handbook of critical management studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Alvesson, M., & Willmott, H. (2012). *Making sense of management: A critical introduction* (2nd Ed.). London: Sage.

- Arnold, D. G., Beauchamp, T. L., & Bowie, N. L. (2012). *Ethical theory and business* (9th Ed.). Old Tappan, NJ: Pearson Higher Education.
- BCA. (2011). *Lifting the quality of teaching and learning in higher education*. Melbourne: Business Council of Australia.
- Biggs, J. (2004). *Teaching for quality learning at university: What the student does*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.
- Chiapello, E., & Fairclough, N. (2002). Understanding the new management ideology: A transdisciplinary contribution from critical discourse analysis and new sociology of capitalism. *Discourse & Society*, 13(2): 185–208.
- Clarke, T., & Clegg, S. (1998). *Changing paradigms: the transformation of management knowledge for the 21st century*. London: HarperCollins Business.
- Clegg, S., Khornbergger, M., & Pitsis, T. (2005). *Managing and organizations: An introduction to theory and practice*. London: Sage.
- Contu, A. (2009). Critical Management Education. In M. Alvesson, T. Bridgman & H. Willmott (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of critical management studies*: 536–550, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Coronado, G. (Comp.) (2009a). *Business, society and policy 200158, Customized Book of Readings*. Sydney: Pearson Education.
- Coronado, G. (2009b). From autoethnography to the quotidian ethnographer: Analysing organizations as hypertexts. *Journal of Qualitative Research*, 9(1): 3–17.
- Coronado, G. (2011). Web-based research as critical pedagogy: A reflection on its application to undergraduate management education. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 8(2), Article 6. Retrieved from <http://ro.uow.edu.au/jutlp/vol8/iss2/6>.
- Coronado, G. (2012). Constructing the ‘neocolonial’ manager. Orientalising Latin America in the textbooks. In A. Prasad (Ed.), *Against the grain: Advances in postcolonial organization studies*: 155–177. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.
- Cunliffe, A. L. 2004. On becoming a critically reflexive practitioner. *Journal of Management Education*, 28(4): 407–426.
- Datar, S. M., Garvin, D. A., & Cullen, P. G. (2011). Rethinking the MBA: Business education at a crossroads. *Journal of Management Development*, 30(5): 451–462.
- de Meyer, A. (2012). Reflections on the globalization of management education. *Journal of Management Development*, 31(4): 336–345.
- Duarte, F. (2009). Rekindling the sociological imagination as a pedagogical “package” in management education. *Journal of Management Education*, 33(1): 59–76.
- Fallon, W. (2006). Rethinking ‘business is business’: A criticalist perspective on teaching business ethics. *Australian Journal of Professional and Applied Ethics*, 8(2): 78–92.
- Fairclough, N., & Wodak, R. (1997). Critical discourse analysis. In T. A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse as social interaction*: 258–284. London: Sage.
- Fenwick, T. (2005). Ethical dilemmas of critical management education. Within classrooms and beyond. *Management Learning*, 36(1): 31–48.
- Foucault, M. (1971). Orders of discourse. *Social Science Information*, 10(2): 7–30.
- Fournier V., & Grey, C. (2000). At the critical moment: Conditions and prospects for critical management studies. *Human Relations*, 53(1): 7–32.
- Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.
- Grey, C. (2007). Possibilities for critical management education and studies. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 23: 463–471.
- Hall, R., Agarwal, R., & Green, R. (2012). The future of management education. Scoping paper, Australian Business Deans Council, March. Retrieved on April 23, 2012 from <http://www.abdc.edu.au/events.html>.
- Hardy, C., & Thomas, R. (2012). Strategy, discourse and practice: The intensification of power. *Journal of Management Studies* [doi: 10.1111/joms.12005, Consulted February 13, 2013].
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hill, C.W.L. (2010). *Global business today*. Sydney: McGraw-Hill.
- Hodge, B., Coronado, G., Duarte F., & Teal, G. (2010). *Chaos theory and the Larrikin Principle. Working with organisations in a neo-Liberal world*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.
- Hodge, B., & Kress, G. (1988). *Social semiotics*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Jack, G., & Westwood, R. (2009). *International and cross-cultural management studies: A postcolonial reading*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Joseph, C. (2012). Internationalizing the curriculum: Pedagogy for social justice. *Current Sociology*, 60(2): 239–257.
- Khorn, M. (2012). Wealth or waste? Rethinking the value of a business major. *The Wall Street Journal*, April 5, 2012. Retrieved on June 13, 2012 from <http://csi.sagepub.com/content/59/4#content-block>.
- Knights, D., & Willmott, H. (2007). *Introducing organizational behaviour and management*, London: Thompson.
- Levy, D. (2002). Applications and limitations of complexity theory in organization theory and strategy. In J. Robin, G. J. Miller & B. Hildrot (Eds.), *Handbook of strategic management*: 67–87. New York: Marcel Dekker.
- Mallinger, M., & Rossy, G. (2003). Film as a lens for teaching culture: Balancing concepts, ambiguity, and paradox. *Journal of Management Education*, 27(5): 608–624.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1970). Communist manifesto. In *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Selected Works*: 35–47. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Mathews, C. S., Fornaciari, C. J., & Rubens, A. J. (2012). Understanding the use of feature films to maximize student learning. *American Journal of Business Education*, 5(5): 563–574.
- Mills, C. W. (1979 [1959]). *The sociological imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Munck, R. (2005). Neoliberalism and politics, and the politics of neoliberalism. In A. Saad-Filho & D. Johnston, *Neoliberalism: A critical reader*: 60–69. London: Pluto Press.
- Nicolai, A. (2004). The bridge to the “real world”: Applied science or a schizophrenic tour de force? *Journal of Management Studies*, 41(6): 951–976.
- Panayiotou, A. (2011). Deconstructing the manager: discourses of power and resistance in popular cinema. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 31(1): 10–26.
- Perriton, L., & Reynolds, M. (2004). Critical Management Education: From pedagogy of possibility to pedagogy of refusal? *Management Learning*, 35: 6–7.
- Pfeiffer, J., & Fong, C. T. (2002). The end of business schools? Less success than meets the eye. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 1(1): 78–95.
- Prasad, Anshuman. (Ed.). (2003). *Postcolonial theory and organizational analysis*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Prasad, Anshuman. (Ed.). (2012). *Against the grain: Advances in postcolonial organization studies*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.
- Prichard, C. (2009). Three moves for engaging students in Critical Management Studies. *Management Learning*, 40: 5–68.
- Rostis, A., & Mills, J. H. (2010). A pedagogy of the repressed? Critical management education and the teaching case study. *International Journal of Management Concepts and Philosophy*, 4(2): 212–223.
- Schermerhorn, J. R., Jr., Campling, J., Poole, D., & Wiesner, R. (2011). *Management: An Asia-Pacific perspective*. Milton, Queensland: Wiley.
- Solitander, N., Fougère, M., Sobczak, A., & Herlin, H. (2012). We are the champions: Organizational learning and change for responsible management education. *Journal of Management Education*, 36: 337–363.
- Spicer, A., Alvesson, M., & Karreman, D. (2009). Critical performativity: The unfinished business of critical management studies. *Human Relations*, 62(4): 537–560.
- Steiner, G., & Steiner, J. (2011). *Business, government and society: A managerial perspective*. Sydney: Irwin McGraw-Hill.
- Thorsen, D. E. (2009). The neoliberal challenge. What is neoliberalism? Working paper, Department of Political Science, University of Oslo, October 10. Retrieved on June 13, 2012 from <http://folk.uio.no/daget/neoliberalism2.pdf> 26/05/2012.
- Vaara, E., & Faÿ, E. (2012). Reproduction and change on the global scale: A Bourdieusian perspective on management education. *Journal of Management Studies*, 49(6): 1023–1051.
- Willmott, H., Kenny, K., & Whittle A. (2011). *Studying identity and organizations*, London: Sage.



This page intentionally left blank