

This is the accepted version of the manuscript: Moving from responsibility learning inaction to ‘responsibility learning-in-action’: A student-educator collective writing on the ‘unnoticed’ in the hidden curriculum at business schools

Forthcoming in the journal: Management Learning

Accepted: 28 February 2023

Authors: Uracha CHATRAKUL NA AYUDHYA, Michelle EDMONDSON, America HARRIS, and Fabien LITTEL

**Moving from responsibility learning *inaction* to ‘responsibility learning-in-action’: A student-educator collective writing on the ‘unnoticed’ in the hidden curriculum at business schools**

**Uracha CHATRAKUL NA AYUDHYA, Michelle EDMONDSON, America HARRIS,  
and Fabien LITTEL**

**Abstract**

We are a student-educator writing collective that have come together outside the formal classroom to experiment with ‘writing differently’, imbued with a desire to enact collective resistance against ‘unnoticed’ and intentionally hidden aspects of the business school curriculum that condone, normalize, and reproduce social injustice and inequalities. As students and educator located in the Department of Organizational Psychology at a UK-based business school, we see our non-traditional writing and inquiry through collective writing as a form of resistance against hegemonic scientific norms of knowledge production that dominate our discipline. We evoked Freire’s problem-posing education through a collective enactment of ‘responsibility learning-in-action’ by participating in regular ‘writing as resistance’ sessions, where we wrote around our lived experiences of the ‘unnoticed’ and intentionally hidden curriculum and responsibility learning in the same virtual space and time and then read aloud to one another. Our coming together through this practice (re)claims relationality and solidarity in the student-educator relationship, which is in itself a contribution to the topic of the intersections between responsibility learning and the hidden curriculum at business schools.

**Introduction**

Responsibility learning refers to “the implicit and explicit learning and unlearning of and about responsible and irresponsible practices” (Laasch, 2018: 12). Within the business school curriculum, it has been linked to ethics, corporate social responsibility, sustainability, inequality, diversity, and governance (Padan and Nguyen, 2020). While business schools have

attempted to instil a heightened sense of responsibility among students in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and corporate scandals, they still appear to be failing to prepare students for the moral dilemmas they will encounter (Laasch and Gherardi, 2019). This paper is an exploration of the possibilities for responsibility learning when a collective of students and educator come together outside the formal classroom, to commune through writing, reading, and listening to each other in the same virtual space and time. Our collective writing experiment as a non-traditional writing form has empowered us to engage in reflexive dialogue (Cunliffe, 2002) as part of our responsibility learning process and practice.

Our collective is made up of four writers – three students and one educator. We are also workers in organizations, combining our studies with paid work and family responsibilities. We are linked by our shared identity and location as members of a Department of Organizational Psychology at a UK-based business school. Our desire to contribute to the ‘writing differently’ movement in management and organization studies is precisely because it “breaks out of the constraints of scientific writing” (Gilmore et al., 2019: 4) that dominates our discipline.

The catalyst for our ‘writing as resistance’ experiment was our mutual experience of ‘an unsettling’, described as “an insecurity regarding the basic assumptions, discourse and practices used in describing reality” (Cunliffe, 2002: 38). The unsettling process occurred when we were confronted with learning material in the business school curriculum that perpetuates the irresponsible practice of white supremacist scientific racism through the promotion of general cognitive ability testing (Andrews, 2021; Kendi, 2019) as “one of the best predictors of performance on the job” (Nye et al., 2022: 1119) that fails to acknowledge and redress its eugenics roots and legacy. Our work of collective writing is a cry against such epistemic oppression and inaction in the formal curriculum – that is, the “systemic exclusion of certain types of scholarship (... research using critical theory that interrogates systems of power, such

as racism, and research centered within marginalized populations, such as populations of color)” (Gomez, 2022: 32). We argue that such unchallenged irresponsible practice and epistemic oppression in our discipline constitute a form of ‘responsibility learning *inaction*’.

We fervently offer our collective writing to this special issue on “The hidden curriculum of responsibility (un)learning at business schools”, with a deep desire to call out the role of the ‘unnoticed’ (and at times, intentionally) hidden-in-plain-sight aspects of the business school hidden curriculum (Blasco et al., 2012) in perpetuating social injustice and inequalities and the implications for business schools in developing leaders and professionals with(out) a clear sense of their responsibility to the world. The ambition of this work is twofold. Firstly, it is a narrative and a living story of ‘responsibility learning-in-action’, by using our own reflections and lived experiences to contribute to knowledge around responsibility learning and its intersection with the hidden curriculum. Secondly, the act of coming together to write differently on this topic in response to epistemic oppression is our “vibrant activism of thinking as doing” (Diversi et al., 2020: 303) that opens the possibilities of knowledge production through student-educator relationality and solidarity inside and outside the formal classroom (Cunliffe, 2003; Orón Semper & Blasco, 2018). It is our way of enacting Freire’s problem-posing education, where “people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation” (Freire, 1970: 56).

We divide our paper into four parts. Firstly, we begin with an overview of central concepts that inform our work, starting with the hidden curriculum and responsibility learning in business schools. This is followed by a review of the concept and practice of ‘writing differently’, focusing specifically on ‘collective writing’ as a form of resistance against the conventions of scientific writing as the hegemonic form of inquiry and knowledge production. We also discuss the concept of reflexive dialogical practice and the importance of ‘being

struck' in management learning (Cunliffe, 2002), which are core to our collective writing ambitions. The second part of our paper sets the scene for our collective writing project, including how we came together to experiment with student-educator collective writing and how our positionalities have enabled us to take notice of the unnoticed in the hidden curriculum. The third part then offers our analysis of the writings we produced during our collective writing sessions on responsibility learning and the hidden curriculum in the business school. In the fourth part, we discuss our contributions through our collective writing as a form of responsibility learning-in-action.

Reflexive dialogic practice was embedded throughout our 'writing as resistance' sessions and we extend this practice throughout this paper in two ways. The first is with our reader, partly by weaving in extracts from our 'raw writings' that we produced during our collective sessions – not only in the findings and analysis section, but also our storytelling of the rationale for our project and our positionalities as members of the collective. They are raw because they are unedited and unrefined, to honour the thinking and dialogue we created within our collective writing space, inspired by Pullen and Rhodes' (2007: 243-4) work on dirty writing that "does not seek to clean up the mess in its own analytic authority, but rather to attest to that mess". We present them throughout this paper in italics. The second way is with our reviewers, to honour the generosity and collaborative nature of the peer review learning process by including reviewers' comments into the paper where appropriate (e.g., Hurd and Singh, 2021; Nordbäck et al., 2022).

### **Responsibility learning and the hidden curriculum**

Extant research on responsibility learning at business schools has largely studied the content and goals of the explicit curriculum (Antonacopoulou, 2010; Høgdal et al., 2021) and the values of individual students (Racz and Parker, 2020). Less research is on the implicit dimensions of educational environment, such as how business schools structure time, exercise

authority, their code of conduct, assessment procedures, rituals and traditions, socialization norms, rewards and punishments, and staff and student characteristics (Gair and Mullins, 2001; Sambell and McDowell, 1998; Trevino and McCabe 1994; Välimaa and Nokkala 2014; Wren, 1999). Therefore, there are calls for greater attention to these implicit dimensions of learning that may be subverting the responsibility agenda (Blasco, 2012; Painter-Morland, 2015), as they may lead to the unlearning of responsibility (Padan and Nguyen, 2020) and a misalignment between the theory and practice of responsibility learning, hindering structural change (Rasche and Gilbert, 2015). Through these implicit dimensions, norms that shape learners' behavior and values are tacitly transmitted and can have an essential socializing effect on them (Gofton and Regehr, 2006). Abetting the socializing effect is the curricula's abandonment of other forms of knowledge through its epistemic privileging of 'scientific rigor' that encourages an unreflexive and unquestioning approach to learning and subsequent enactment of what is required (Chia and Holt, 2008).

“Schools teach more than they claim to teach” (Vallance, 1974: 5), which points to the distinction between the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum (Hafferty and Franks, 1994). The hidden curriculum has a plethora of definitions and has been expressed with various terms such as the “implicit”, “unstudied”, “covert”, “latent”, “unwritten”, “invisible” and “silent” educational curriculum (Portelli, 1993: 344) and socialization processes (Margolis, 2001). Here, the hidden curriculum is 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 and McDowell, 1998: 391-392).

Research within higher education suggests that implicit educational and socialization dimensions of the hidden curriculum strongly influence students' ethics learning, values, and behaviour (Trevino and McCabe, 1994). These dimensions include socialization norms, the way authority is exercised, rituals and traditions, and other aspects of the education

environment. Several types of hidden or ‘implicit’ dimensions have been identified, such as dimensions that are yet to be discovered; unnoticed; intentionally hidden; and hidden in symbolism (Margolis, 2001). In this paper, we focus on the dimensions of the hidden curriculum that are intentionally hidden, whereby if made visible, would be resisted. These include forms of subordination, discrimination, and hegemony that benefit dominant interests (Margolis, 2001) and dimensions that go unnoticed because it has become routine or the norm in the educational context (Høgdaal et al., 2021; Margolis, 2001). Blasco (2012: 368) argues these hidden aspects “might more accurately be thought of as a backdrop that school actors learn to ‘not-notice’”, referring to the hidden curriculum as hidden-in-plain-sight. The two aspects of the hidden-in-plain-sight hidden curriculum are consciousness and social relations. Consciousness includes qualities and characteristics that represent middle/upper-class dispositions, patriarchy, whiteness, heterosexuality, and western perspectives that are implicitly valued (Margolis, 2001), as exemplified by the curricula on leadership and entrepreneurship. Social relations involve gendered and racialized hierarchies, class reproduction, and the indoctrination of cultural ideologies, which have been referred to as the “relations of ruling” (Smith, 1990: 11). These hidden-in-plain-sight aspects are implicitly taught and learned, reproducing habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) and privileging forms of cultural, social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986) that are white, male, middle/upper-class based, which serve elite interests and often go unnoticed because they have been normalized. Therefore, the hidden curriculum at business schools (re)produces hegemonic discourses on ethnicity, gender, class, colonialism, and neoliberalism that serve dominant interests (Apple, 1995; Mandiola Cotroneo, 2013; Nkomo, 2011).

Only a few studies have researched the hidden curriculum in the context of business schools (Borges et al., 2017; Ehrensall, 2001; Ottewill et al., 2005; Orón Semper and Blasco, 2018). Blasco’s seminal (2012) study aligned the hidden curriculum concept with Principles of

Responsible Management Education (PRME) (Alcaraz et al., 2011) to develop a framework that identified three message sites where the hidden curriculum operates. Students encountered implicit messages about what is valued by the business school via 1) the formal curriculum, 2) interpersonal interactions, and 3) school governance. Implicit messaging may shape the construction of a student's identity, thereby business schools can be viewed as identity workspaces; an institution that provides an environment for identity work (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010). Markedly, few studies have explored how the discrepancies between the formal curriculum and hidden curriculum socialize business school students in ways that may subvert responsibility learning (Blasco, 2012; Borges et al., 2017; Høgdal et al., 2021).

As business schools are social institutions with purported public responsibilities (Millar and Price, 2018), more understanding is required of the assumptions and dominant interests that underpin business school education. Our work aims to contribute to the role of the hidden curriculum in responsibility learning within business schools. Due to its nature, the hidden curriculum goes unnoticed by some, while some notice but do not resist. This paper is an act of noticing, disrupting, and resisting the irresponsible practices in the hidden curriculum.

### **Collective writing on responsibility learning and the hidden curriculum as a method of inquiry and a reflexive dialogical practice**

Writing differently is a movement in management and organization studies and management learning (Grey and Sinclair, 2006, Gilmore et al, 2019) that challenges normalized positivist and objectivist methods of inquiry and academic writing. It allows vulnerability and new practices to come through (Gilmore et al., 2019), including solidarity through the act of 'coming together' to write and allowing suppressed expressions to thrive (Ahonen et al, 2020). Extant literature on writing differently explores and centers the emancipation of voices (O'Shea, 2019), vulnerability (Behar, 1997), heart (Whiteman, 2010; Pelias, 2004; Van Maanen, 2010), and togetherness (Holman Jones, 2019). The inherent power, with hidden and



espoused values of what is published, and why, can be removed from its chains, enabling the authors to display self- and critical reflexivity within their text (Ahonen et al., 2020; Cunliffe, 2004, 2016). Shunning the gatekeepers of academic writing (Alvesson and Gabriel, 2013) can allow acts of decolonization, empowering academics to be the types of researchers they wish to be. In this work, we have experimented with ‘collective writing’ (also known as collaborative writing) as a form of writing differently. Collective writing enables us to resist, together (Abdellatif et al., 2021). It is a form of epistemic resistance, through providing writers the opportunity to redress unequal power relations, access, and take part in knowledge production (Jandric et al., 2022). Diversi et al., (2021: 302) have described it as “an act of leaning on each other in order to make sense of thinking and narrating hope and resistance”, which resonates deeply with us as fellow students, educator, learners, and writers.

The writing style that we have adopted in our collective writing speaks directly to Cunliffe’s (2002) work on management learning as reflexive dialogical practice, where students and educator become ‘practical co-constructors’ of the learning process through “engaging in dialogue (oral or written) with self/others/other” (Cunliffe, 2002: 38). Cunliffe (2002) invites us to rethink our notions of learning, learning conversations, identity, and student-educator power relations. We see our regular collective writing sessions and our paper as a way of actioning this rethinking, together, where “we create possibilities for change in everyday interaction” (Cunliffe, 2002: 37). It is the opportunity of creating such possibilities that we aim to contribute to.

Intersubjectivity is also central to our learning process through collective writing and reflexive dialogue. Intersubjectivity is “not just about two or more individuals interacting...but it is more crucially about recognizing that we are always in relation *with* others—we influence each other in responsive and often tacit ways” (Cunliffe, 2016: 742). By writing collectively as a form of responsibility learning-in-action, we engage with a moral responsibility that comes

with embracing intersubjectivity, relationality, and reflexivity, including asking the question “for what and to whom are we accountable as members of business schools” (Cunliffe, 2016: 742).

**Uracha:**

*I write as part of a collective because I seek connection. Connection nurtures me and gives me the energy to move forward. I write as part of a collective because I want to experience writing as a validating and joyful experience. For most of my academic career, I have felt intimidated by academic writing. I learnt through others, mainly more senior academics, that academic writing is serious. That there is good academic writing and bad academic writing. Good academic writing requires personal and professional dedication, sacrifices, and critiques that can bruise and harm in the name of professional development and growth. Writing differently and doing so together offered a new way to approach academic writing. I was excited by the possibility, and I wanted to share this with my students.*

One reviewer noted that “the list (?) of ingredients of what ‘good academic writing requires’ seems to stop short of some other interesting ideas”. The reviewer generously offered important starting points for us to engage with, including literature on wonder (Carlsen and Sandelands, 2014), passion (Kenworthy & Hrivnak, 2016), contemplation (Bartunek, 2019), and care, curiosity, and writing about matters that matter (Howard-Grenville, 2021). In writing about ‘good academic writing and bad academic writing’ in relation to the desire and craving to engage in ‘writing differently’, Uracha returned to an old wound, an ‘effect that lingers’ (Bochner, 1984; Ellis et al., 2011), from her early career days to highlight brutalizing processes and practices in the academy, which lacked the ingredients that the reviewer has shared. The possibility of writing differently as ‘good academic writing’, with care, curiosity, passion, contemplation, and emotively, came at a time when it was urgently needed and served to contrast the conventions of scientific academic writing within our subject discipline.

## **Setting the scene: Our coming together through ‘Selection and Assessment’ as the business school curriculum**

What brought us together as authors of this paper was our collective participation, as students and educator, to the Selection and Assessment (S&A) module of the MSc in Organizational Psychology. Our experiences of teaching and learning on the module provided us with many shared ‘striking moments’ (Cunliffe, 2002; Corlett, 2013) or ‘sticky moments’ (Riach, 2009), which provide sites for reflexivity. Being ‘struck’ in the learning process “involves our spontaneous response (emotional, physiological, cognitive) to events or relationships occurring around – a feeling there is something important we cannot quite grasp in the moment” (Cunliffe, 2002: 42). This concept is key, given our confrontation with unsettling material that points to irresponsible practices and ways of understanding. In particular, the realization that white supremacist scientific racism formed part of the formal curriculum and was not problematized in our subject discipline triggered a key moment of being struck. We experienced individual and collective discomfort that moved us to “reflect on and/or reflexively question our ways of being and understanding” (Cunliffe, 2002: 42) as students and educator in the Department of Organizational Psychology. It was this moment of being struck that compelled Uracha to mobilize fellow educators and students to “understand something that is already in plain view and the difference this new understanding may make to our lives” (Cunliffe, 2002: 57). The process of being open to reflexive critical questioning of our curriculum, be it in Selection and Assessment, in Organizational Psychology, or in the business school, helps us as students and educators to co-construct new readings of our individual and collective experiences in the hope that “little by little, this can undermine the structures and practices of domination” (Cunliffe, 2002: 37). Our collective experience on this module was fundamental to our desire to write together as a way of resisting irresponsibility learning.

**America:**

*The area of S&A is notoriously known for its emphasis on formalized, scientific and objective psychological measurements, tests and models; thus, my expectation at the start of the S&A module was to learn the greatness of cognitive ability testing (CAT) and personality testing and how to apply best practice models for the benefit of the organization. However, I was pleasantly surprised that the major tenants of S&A were challenged in this unorthodox S&A module. Largely, unless one is taught otherwise, one believes and accepts the educational curriculum that is offered, especially when it is done in the name of 'science'. And so instead of accepting the discourse that black and brown people, people like me, are less intelligent or intellectually inferior because they score lower on certain tests, and that these tests are correct because they are backed by science, this unorthodox S&A module armed me with a critical toolkit, to dare to question science; to ask whether the scientific and rational discourse is truly objective and fair and to question if there is an agenda behind CAT. To learn about the eugenics movement and the use of science and standardized testing to legitimize oppression and exclusion, provided me with a critical view and foundation to interrogate all S&A methods in an effort to develop something better and truly equal for all. But that is the true value of education, to reveal the full truth and history behind knowledge, instead of omit it and to learn from it in order to truly make this world a better place for all.*

**Fabien:**

*As the S&A module started, I was just in the process, in my role at work, of starting the implementation of a new large-scale selection and assessment process and reviewing supplier proposals. The stars had aligned for me, to put my learning into use, right as I was gaining it. And this is exactly what happened, however not in the way that I expected it. At least not entirely. The teaching on individual characteristics, cognitive and ability testing helped me to speak the same language as the providers I was working with. However, in parallel to this,*

*reading through critical papers about the mainstream ways of assessing and selecting people rapidly triggered a range of feelings within me. Some disbelief to start with, as it had become so obvious to me through my career that cognitive and personality testing were the right way to go, that my head initially had to let myself consider that this could be fundamentally critiqued. Once I got in that space, the critical teaching and reading really began what ended up being a transformative experience. Critical reviews of cognitive testing such as IQ, which were looking at the history of the tests, and how they were perpetuating inequalities started to appear very logical to me, and on the other end of the spectrum, claims that people from ethnic minorities perform more badly at these tests because of their inherent abilities left me absolutely appalled and enraged.*

*I took away from the S&A module the need, which feels to me like an absolute mandate, to question our practices in a critical way. It has, for many of us, acted as a call to action to do what we could to make a positive difference and foster more genuinely fair and equal working environments, based on empathy and compassion, resisting the weight of existing common practices.*

**Michelle:**

*Before I started the S&A module, I thought it would be the least interesting module of the MSc and it was the one I was least looking forward to. This was because I thought I had no interest in following a 'career' on selection and assessment areas and had expected it to focus on psychometrics. On reflection now that sounds very narrow minded and shallow! S&A was the opposite of my expectations. An engaging and thought provoking, sensitive module with a curriculum that covered a range of Organizational Psychology and humanistic areas from a critical viewpoint.*

*It personally resonated on many levels. Firstly, as I was job hunting in 2021 it made me more conscious of the way companies were seeking to hire staff and what they said about*

*their culture. Secondly as a human being I explored terms which were new or unfamiliar to me and were not being spoken about in many of my work and friendship circles. This module was a safe space to explore racism and I was shocked at how naive I was about any aspects of S&A for example CV whitening. Thirdly in terms of developing as practitioner, I volunteered for some virtual career coaching in my old sixth form and was humbled by the discussions. In the future I would like to volunteer with a social enterprise recruitment agency.*

*One of my biggest takeaways is how deep rooted the lack of a level playing field, how there is a different pedagogy to being told what to think/learn/feel – one that is collaborative, and a co-creation of knowledge. There are a lot of humans out there who don't have the same opportunities to learn that I do, or the mindset to discuss topics and this module has opened up a space for me to learn, grow, recognize the role I and the world play in perpetuating inequalities. I didn't know the world was like this and that it could be different if we looked at it with fresh eye and from genuinely multiple viewpoints.*

### **Uracha:**

*We have come together as a writing collective through our time together as educator and learner. As module convenor of the S&A module, I was preparing to deliver the module for the third time since joining my current institution as an academic in my department. A few weeks before the start of the term, the paper on 'Writing Differently' that appeared in this journal was introduced to me. It felt like a sign.*

*In the first year of being assigned to deliver this module, I reviewed material that was developed by my predecessors. S&A was not a topic that I had looked at since studying it as part of my own MSc education 17 years earlier. I remember the module that I took as being technical and positivist without acknowledging it as such. Central to the module and the area of S&A are two main methods of psychological assessment that are deemed as the 'gold*

*standard': cognitive ability testing and personality testing. This was the case 17 years ago when I was a student. It felt like not a lot has changed.*

*'Writing differently' as a paper spoke to me, because I was looking for a way to resist and to go on a journey with students on the module, who was about to be exposed to some new and unexpected ways of approaching this topic of S&A. I needed to put into practice Freire's problem-posing model of education as a form of liberatory practice. The idea of writing collectively with my students became my salvation and my way of existing and resisting in the business school curriculum.*

One reviewer, commenting on the autoethnographic approach which heavily influenced our first iteration of this paper, noted "there are hints of epiphany" in our writing, including in the raw writing above, i.e., "It felt like a sign". They asked, "is this 'sign' an intuition?" and encouraged us to acknowledge the role of epiphanies, which are "hallmarks of autoethnographic writing". These comments invite us to reflect on whether our raw writings 'qualify' as autoethnographic writing and refocus our analysis. O'Shea (2019, p. 38) grapples with the role of epiphanies: "I reveal how my writing has no epiphany, is repetitive and in its characterless depiction of others is a two-dimensional, monologue that fails the conventions of an evocative autoethnographic account. My writing is 'bad writing' but what should become of it?". We aimed to show through our raw writings how we found our way to one another to form a writing collective; each writer impacted by the S&A module and saw it as an event that triggered a turning point in our individual and collective journeys. To us, these are our version of epiphanies i.e., the "remembered moments perceived to have significantly impacted the trajectory of a person's life" (Ellis et al., 2011, p.275), because the people we were when we entered into the module (as students and educator) have been transformed through the process of the module and the process of writing together as a collective.

## **Our positionalities: Oscillating between the centre and the margin**

### **America:**

*I am what Puwar (2001) would call a 'space invader', a body that disturbs the racialized nature of spaces, a body out of place. I shift from the center to margins and back again. As an African-American woman, I was 'out of place' in attending predominately white universities, working in fortune 500 corporations and living in affluent neighborhoods. James Baldwin said that to 'To be African American is to be African without any memory and to be American without privilege.' Growing up in a working-class background in 1980s-90s America, marginality manifested itself on my opportunities in life, what someone like me could be and achieve. Being a member of a visibly marginalized group is to live one's life in a state of resistance, resisting...stereotypes, exclusion, being marginalized. My resistance at the margins were to beat the 'black' statistics and debunking stereotypes by becoming successful according to mainstream terms and to go against the 'racial contract' (Mills, 2014) that has demarcated spaces in accordance to who belongs where based on racialized bodies. Resistance takes many forms, mine took the form of micro-resistance. Instead of marches and demonstrations, I fought from the center by being a good representative of my social group; whilst at the same time adhering to the assimilative pressure of the 'somatic norm' (Puwar, 2001), thinking that if I could be one good example, it would make a difference. However, due to recent racial tensions in the USA, UK and elsewhere, I know now that it is not enough. This piece for me is another form of resistance, a scholarly resistance, one with higher stakes. As an author of this piece, my positionality on the margins informs my writing. But I recognize that still, through scholarly work, I still will have to go to the center to have my voice heard, to have my voice validated.*



**Fabien:**

*Using bell hooks' language and analogy of finding ourselves in the centre and in the margins, this feeling of straddling both is one that feels very familiar and does so from a few different perspectives. The first angle I would consider is with regards to class and economical background. I grew up in a dairy farm in a small village of the East of France. To complete my secondary education, I managed to successfully go through a selection process and enter a school in the nearby big city, where my own social background became much more obvious, and the feeling of being in the margins a lot more acute. Most of my schoolmates were from much more affluent families, and the very few of us coming from more humble backgrounds were at best treated with some attempt at compassion, which was bordering on pity, if not made to feel inferior through various means. Secondly, my experience growing up in these surroundings and coming to terms with the realization that I was gay presented a feeling of marginality of a different kind, as it was, for the first few years, a hidden marginality, one that I would only start sharing around the age of 19, meaning that during my teenage years I would have worked hard in finding my place in the centre, rather than being in a position to embrace my place in the margins. The third angle is with regards to mental health. I was diagnosed over 10 years ago with clinical depression, and have since found ways of managing it, through medication and counselling. I have also started being more open about my condition at work. I was pleased, over the years, to hear progress in the awareness which was raised, and support provided with regards to mental health at work. However, past this initial optimism, I started to realize that it was both a discourse and a set of actions which were taken from the centre, to try and fix the margins. This is a challenge in many aspects of marginalization, especially in the workplace, where organizations' feelings of needing to be seen to take action, to satisfy expectations from shareholders or other stakeholder groups, tend to come before a genuine*

*and compassionate desire to make a difference and empower individuals in the margins to lead fulfilling lives and careers as they are.*

**Michelle:**

*I feel I am in the centre as well as on the margins for multiple reasons. I am white, from a loving home, with two sisters. I went to University from A levels and applied for all the milk round jobs. I worked hard, I had lovely friends and hobbies. At 25 I did something a bit different. Instead of buying a flat with the money I had saved and using a help-to-buy scheme I took the money, quit my job and bought a round-the-world ticket. This surprised a lot of people as it was a societal pressure of time for finding a nice man and settling down or building my career. That 6 month was the best thing I have ever done. I found myself. Returning to the UK I moved to Cumbria from Oxfordshire to be with the boyfriend I met travelling – now husband and father of my two children. I found a job in Cumbria and soon joined a graduate scheme with a career path laid out for me. I was ambitious, but I saw that as a ‘dirty’ word for a female who also wanted a family. Following the birth of my daughter in 2012, I went back to work part time 3 days a week. My mum thinks I am mad for working and wanting to be a hands-on mum. I love spending time with my children. I feel on the margins at times as I am an ambitious 4 day a week working female who loves her children and wants to spend time with them. I juggle a lot of things to be the person I want to be. I couldn’t be a stay-at-home mum or have a less demanding job – that’s not who I am and how I am built. It took a long time to accept this and I am still working on this.*

*I am so centre though – I have a lovely home, husband, 2 children and a spaniel. We go to a nice school, go out for coffee, have two cars. It’s so suburban. I cried when I went to view a new house on a newly built family housing estate as it felt very not me. I am such a contradiction of centre and margins, middle class and anarchy. It is taking a long time to learn to live with the uniqueness that is me.*

*I have worried that I am not 'marginalized' enough to write as resistance on this project, and that as someone who is white, middle class, British female, that if I put my voice forward what right do I have to do this? Then I think that the very coming together of this group came from a place of support and solidarity from the S&A module and taking responsibility for myself to learn and grow in allyship is important. To spend time with the group is a privilege and an honour.*

**Uracha:**

*I have been a full-time academic for 14 years. 18 years if I was to include my four years as an academic-in-training as a PhD student. I didn't dare to question the orthodoxy of pedagogical practices that I observed and received as a student, which I then, to an extent, conscientiously reproduced as an early career academic. Educators educate learners. Students are learners. There is much lip service paid to the bidirectional relationship of this learning process, yet the power dynamics in this relationship is rarely acknowledged explicitly in the classroom.*

*I started my academic career as a young woman. A young woman in my late 20s, ready to prove to myself and those around me that I can be good at this chosen profession. I had a niggling feeling that my visible difference as an Asian woman might be something that I had to manage and navigate, but I wasn't going to let that get in the way. I experienced being treated differently in front of the classroom and in work meetings because of my gender and my age. I understood that the sexism that I experienced was also in part due to my ethnicity. How could these three identities not have shaped how colleagues and students interacted with me? As I entered my 30s and became a mother, the sexism changed in its format, but was very much still present in how I was perceived as an academic in my institution.*

*I recognize that while I have lived experience of being marginalized in different spaces, I also have privilege. I have been able to occupy a space in centre in my institution through*

*assimilation. I assimilate less now, but a degree of it is still required by the institution in order for me to survive. Writing together with students on the S&A module is my way of resisting so that I can be part of a collective that aims to subvert hierarchies and established ways of learning.*

### **How we wrote collectively**

As the educator on the S&A module, Uracha took the opportunity of weekly live discussions with students to propose an experiment of collective writing. The expressed intention from the start was to use collective writing as a form of resistance, building on the exchanges and topics covered in the teaching module, approaching S&A from a critical perspective.

The initial offer was met with great interest from over 20 students, and discussed further during initial virtual meetings in August 2021, which were followed by our first collective writing session in September 2021, and subsequent weekly writing sessions up to December 2021. The writing sessions typically lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. As the authors were geographically dispersed, the writing sessions were conducted on a virtual collaboration platform, Microsoft Teams. Authors joined from their homes or sometimes offices, in a quiet space, occasionally joined by family members, bringing intimacy and humanity into these gatherings. All the sessions followed a similar structure: initial discussions on the themes and direction of our respective writing, followed by 30 minutes of individual writing (while remaining connected online to the rest of the group with our microphones muted), and then the reading aloud of our individual pieces at the end of the sessions. All individual writing pieces were saved each week on a shared online folder, allowing the group to read and reflect in more depth on each other's pieces between sessions. We started with the theme of responsibility learning as part of the hidden curriculum in the business school, with free rein on the angle to take in our individual writing. We recognize and embrace the intersubjectivity enabled by the

sharing which took place before and after our individual writing, adding an element of collective and relational sensemaking into our individual reflections. Some of us produced a continuous writing piece over the weeks, while some of us decided to focus on a new topic or perspective at each session, at the start of which we gained inspiration from collective discussions. We occasionally exchanged emails between sessions. We were free to reflect or review writings further as we saw fit, with no expectation for additional work to be conducted, out of respect and empathy for one another's other life commitments, and to honour the project's aim of working as a collective during the dedicated writing sessions. A common thread running through this project was our desire to engage in critical dialogue and respond to the call for papers to expose what is hidden in our business school learning and teaching. Our writing was fuelled by a wish to show a different side of our learning experience. Our project required an interest and a commitment to this objective, as well as the time and energy to maintain momentum alongside paid work and postgraduate studies. For many of the 20 students who initially expressed an interest, they recognized that it was not possible to reconcile the additional time and energy for the project. This was respected and acknowledged by everyone in the collective. Subsequently, the number of students who participated reduced over the initial sessions, with the final collective being made up of four writers.

### **Bringing ourselves and our writing together – our analysis**

The individual raw texts produced by each member of the collective during the sessions were compiled into one single document for ease of review. This was followed by group discussions on the most appropriate and impactful ways of analysing our output and how to build our collective and reflexive dialogues on responsibility learning in the hidden curriculum. Each member reviewed the entire collection of raw writing and then identified and named key themes through which the different parts of the collective writing spoke to the topics of

responsibility learning, the hidden curriculum, and their nexus. The themes were then shared and discussed as a collective and we settled on three themes to depict our movement from being struck to actioning responsibility learning through collective writing as reflexive dialogic practice. Excerpts from each writer were then selected for each theme. The selection of raw writing was undertaken collectively, where Fabien led on constructing the full writing into three sections. All of us were then invited to discuss and suggest modifications, including choosing our raw writings and editing some out, which may be too personal or sensitive for potential publication. It was important for the collective that raw writing produced as part of our collective sessions did not get altered for inclusion in this paper, to retain the spontaneity with which this initial writing came about and embracing the flaws this may involve as part of our epistemic resistance.

In parallel to conducting the analysis and following reviews of other papers adopting different forms of writing such as collaborative autoethnography (Nordbäck et al., 2022; Cruz et al., 2020), Uracha suggested additional collective writing sessions to provide context for our shared experience of the S&A module, as well as our own positionality and experiences of marginality. We held two targeted writing sessions, following a similar format to the previous ones, albeit with a specific focus, inspired by an autoethnographic approach, where we wrote personally about our own experiences, allowing inquiry and expression (Wall, 2008). Excerpts from this writing were then selected by Fabien and reviewed by the collective to form part of the introductory sections of this paper.

The analysis of this collectively generated body of individual writing constituted a further exercise in reflexive dialogical practice (Cunliffe, 2002), to build our collective voice and path from noticing the unnoticed, critically reflecting on the hidden curriculum's omissions, to enacting responsibility learning-in-action. We present our movement through these three themes, with our individual raw writing presented in italics.

## **Being struck: Noticing the unnoticed in the hidden curriculum**

### **America – Noticing conformity to ‘WWM’ (White Western Male) norms:**

*Recollections of my business school learnings are marked by teachings of 'strategize like Jack Welch', 'envisage like Steve Jobs', 'risk-take like Elon Musk'... in a nutshell, mimic white men from the Global North/West. A postcolonial analysis of much of business school education illustrates the hegemony of Western knowledge underlying much of the curriculum, which dominantly teaches the opinions of white American and European men (Bhambra et al., 2018; Nkomo, 1992) and conformity to white male performativity (Dar et al., 2021). These informal teachings of conformity to western, white male norms and values are implicitly embedded within the hidden curriculum and may be characterized as an extension of the 'colonial project' (Iwowo, 2015) through the 'colonization of the mind' (Thiong'o, 1986); which should be unlearned and resisted.[...] Of course, as an MBA student, I did not think of my education that way; like many, I just wanted to learn the 'secrets' of business success. It is only after critical questioning learned from critical Psychology studies years later, did I start to wonder... 'as an African-American woman buying into business school education, did I pay over \$60K to promote western white male (WWM) intellectual hegemony facilitating the reproduction of my own oppression?'*

### **Fabien – Noticing responsibility through critical thinking in the hidden curriculum:**

*The last couple of years have brought to life for me what “responsibility” means in the context of management, and for organizations more widely. To begin with, sustainability has started taking more meaning, seeing the accelerating reality of the impact humans are causing on the environment, and how gradually everything in our lives, at work and beyond, has to be considered through this lens. Around that time, the role of organizations had started evolving as well, manifesting itself by new legal status for some, such as “profit-for-purpose” organizations (Levillain et al., 2019), while expectations from investors have also increasingly*

*involved sustainability considerations, with the rise of the “ESG” acronym, representing the Environmental, Societal and Governance aspects of sustainability.*

*The development, albeit still in its infancy, of this type of consciousness within organizations calls for an adjustment in the way responsibility is incorporated in business management studies. This should manifest itself through a focus on critical thinking, and a need to continuously challenge what has been predominantly considered as accepted truth and knowledge. It should also go further by helping students develop an understanding of the economic models structuring the way societies work, such as the prevalence of neoliberalism in most Western societies. This understanding should integrate input from various disciplines, including history to make sense of the way certain models and ways of thinking have developed, and under which influence.*

*As an MSc student in Organizational Psychology, I have been fortunate to have my eyes opened to some of these considerations through my studies to date and reading. Critical thinking has been at the forefront of what we were expected to develop, even if for many students bringing to life what that actually means in practice may have been a challenge. Still, critical thinking feels like it is something that runs as a building block of the teaching we are receiving, and I would consider it to form part of the hidden curriculum.*

**Michelle – Noticing responsibility within the neoliberal workplace:**

*The context in which these responsible students are sent into is one of shareholders looking at bottom lines, senior managers (stale, pale, male?) who may not embrace RME and be open to ideas. What proportion of students who do go through the UN PRME curriculum then go into the working world and use that knowledge to make a difference? What proportion of MSc OP students use the S&A module knowledge and critical thinking to make a difference in organizations? What does good look like in the sustainability space? And by trying to*



*quantify this are we making assumptions about targets, best practice and productivity which feeds a neoliberal culture, and thus this writing is implicit messaging to neoliberalism?*

*Is it unconceivable that a person may return to the workplace with ideas of how to challenge entrenched workplace practices, then find themselves exhausted and ostracized by work colleagues? If that person then changes jobs to find a better fit, is this a win or a loss? Stay and change vs leave and fit in? If you parachute a person with different/new ideas into a neoliberal situation, what happens?*

*The fact that there are so many questions posed here is very positive as it stimulates a discussion. One next step is to have a space where these discussions can be held – in education and in organizations. [...]*

*The hidden curriculum of responsible learning at business schools – when reflecting back on this statement this week I think about morality at work. [...] I think responsible learning at business schools would benefit from moral learning, conflict of interest and ethics emphasis in the curriculum. How can we create a new breed of student who enter the working world when there are so many organizational paradoxes of loyalty and speaking up?*

### **Uracha – Noticing (ir)responsible education:**

*How do we learn and how do we teach responsibility? Firstly, when we teach responsibility, to whom are we responsible? Is responsibility about accountability? Being able to live with the outcome of my actions – the things I think, do, and say? [...]*

*I knew from a young age that education was a privilege, because of the possibilities of what it could allow me to be and do. The doors it's supposed to open. What I didn't realize back then was that education was a commodity and that education alone would not necessarily guarantee that I could do and be whatever I wanted to do and be. Competition and networking did not factor into this story of pathway to success as a young person. I was told to study hard. Work hard. Don't get distracted with other things in life. Education was key. [...]*

*I wanted to know how I could help workers feel better. My 21-year-old-self had found a calling. I would help organizations to make their workers feel less stressed. This, to me, was a win-win. Why would there be any losers in this scenario? [...]*

*We need critical conscientiousness in education. Education in the hands of those who hold power is a form of control. I can't remember ever being taught this in my school years or indeed during my undergraduate and Masters years. [...]*

*Ten years after completing my PhD in Organizational Psychology, I returned to a work in a Department of Organizational Psychology. I felt like an outsider.*

Through our collective writing sessions, we discussed and reflected on our experiences of the hidden curriculum in the business school and what they have conveyed to us about responsibility. Our experiences of the module and our writing sessions enabled us to take notice of when we felt struck, lighting a fire within us to keep critical questioning through reflexive dialogue and writing. Noticing our feeling of being unsettled has allowed us to articulate what we see as part of the hidden curriculum in our discipline of Organizational Psychology and its place within the business school, which remain largely unnoticed. By taking the first step of noticing the unnoticed in the hidden curriculum, we can move towards going beyond what is taken for granted and delving deeper into the omissions which constitute part of the hidden curriculum, be they unnoticed knowledge already there in plain sight (Cunliffe, 2002; Blasco, 2012), or other forms of knowledge intentionally hidden, devalued and 'othered'. Exposing these omissions, how they create, maintain and condone inequality, and whose interests they serve or marginalize, becomes in itself a critical aspect of responsibility learning.

### **The hidden curriculum's omissions and their impact on responsibility learning**

#### **America – Omissions as an extension of the 'colonial project':**

*The historical devaluing and omission of non-western knowledge have configured global management knowledge in a way that 'privileges the western worldview over others' to*

*position 'Western' knowledge as mainstream management education...essentially committing 'epistemological totalitarianism' (Iwowo, 2015). [...]*

*The mainstream positioning of business education is not neutral; it is an extension of the 'colonial project' as knowledge and best practices are immersed in western intellectual hegemony (Cooke, 2003). This is evidenced by the curriculum's selective focus on western global leaders relative to others, which leans towards the prioritization of 'westernized' leadership qualities. This is evidenced by the focus on large, powerful nations, thus silencing the voices of smaller and developing countries (Osland et al., 2020). This is evidenced by the abundance of management studies that use multinational organizations from the Global North/West as the primary unit of analysis and the treatment of their business strategies as the gold standard to be copied. That is, seldom is one taught about the business success stories in China or innovations from Africa. [...]*

*The omission of non-white/indigenous, female and the Global South/East knowledge in the business school curriculum reinforces the western white male intellectual hegemony in global management knowledge and tacitly communicates devaluing knowledge and 'bodies' that have been 'othered' and the need to conform to the 'right body' in order to succeed in business. As a consequence, for students who are not white, heterosexual Christian males from the Global North/West, they implicitly learn to devalue 'othered' parts of their identities and learn 'internalized oppression' (Hipolito-Delgado et al., 2014). [...]*

*This brings to question, 'is this omission of 'other' knowledge and teachings of western white male conformity a mistake?' I think not. Business school students are implicitly taught that their responsibility as future business leaders is to maintain the elites' power and maintenance of that power requires the (re)production of western white male intellectual hegemony and associated imagery as the standard, norm and requirement for business success. Therefore, the perpetual unquestioning of these teachings facilitate the hidden curriculum of*

the 'colonization of the mind' (Thiong'o,1986) and 'internalized oppression' at business schools.

**Fabien – Omissions that maintain a dominant 'comfort zone':**

*While an expectation to read and approach readings critically is quite clear and tangible, advancing through the studies, one can still feel that certain paradigms remain dominant, or mainstream, and that although we cover in lectures, readings and exchanges, the more challenging topics, which does open our eyes and widen our thinking, truly critical approaches, often labelled as “the dark side of...”, remain seen as a deviation to the mainstream, something students need to be aware of, rather than something that is expected to be a fundamental part of their learning. Interestingly, it also often comes with warnings of the sensitive or challenging nature of such views, which position them as alien to the main curriculum. [...]*

*Kallio (2007), in an article from the Journal of Business Ethics, focuses on the existence and nature of taboos in the corporate social responsibility (CSR) discourse within organizations (...) Kallio puts continuous growth in the context of sustainability, and the fact that a model combining population growth and consumption growth cannot be sustainable in the longer run. The taboo here lies in the fact that this untenable model isn't being spoken about, and the quest for economic growth remains the norm for corporations. [...]*

*Continuing on the side of the hidden curriculum which consists in the decisions pertaining to which topics are included in the curriculum or not, as well as how certain topics are being brought to life, I believe that responsibility learning should also involve a clearer and more prominent connection to other social sciences, particularly history, and I would argue even that art could be an effective way of bringing some learning to life. Focusing on my own studies in Organizational Psychology, I was fortunate to have been exposed to some of the historic roots of particular constructs and paradigms. I recognize that taking into*

*account history in the way certain phenomena have evolved involves in itself already a certain view of the world, which people with more objective interests may object to. That said, it is difficult to challenge the fact that clearly documented events have happened, even if how exactly they have happened can be more open to contention. For example, the second world war remains a significant source of change, and influences for the ways in which organizations and businesses have developed since then, including individual behaviours, and created ripple effects for decades after. Understanding the way in which the Nazi regime operated and developed their authority and structure can give parallels to other situations of power emerging later on. Furthermore, some of the principles which influenced the Nazi in the way they organized themselves, and indeed the people who influenced these principles, have gone beyond the second world war, to filter into what developed into management. Picking back on the earlier topic of taboo, this probably is a parallel that many do not feel appropriate to make in the course of teaching, and the context of business studies. However, it gives us a view of how certain management, organising and authority principles were applied, and a warning of what their misuse can lead to. As difficult and painful it is to look back at this time in history, it also feels essential, as it offers us an opportunity to view the cost people have had to pay as a result of certain approaches being taken.*

**Michelle – Asking questions around the purpose and impact of omissions:**

*As an OP student I have learnt briefly about Milgram from an ethics point of view, but not about the four psychological mechanisms. We touched on Tajfel and Janis [1] in Life Career development. We've not looked at Speer, Kelman, Kahneman [2]. Who decides the curriculum? Who reviews it? What does all this mean to me? I think responsible learning at business schools would benefit from moral learning, conflict of interest and ethics emphasis in the curriculum. How can we create a new breed of student who enter the working world when there are so many organizational paradoxes of loyalty and speaking up? [...]*

*If we consider systematic and institutional racism, who does it benefit and enable if we deny there is racism? Who does it support and enable if we agree there is racism? Is there a third way where we can call out racism and then open the debate on who teaches us and how, and for what purpose?*

*[1] H Tajfel: social identity theory; I L Janis: groupthink theory*

*[2] P W Spear: participatory decision making; H C Kelman: social influence and attitude change; D Kahneman: thinking mechanisms and decision making*

### **Uracha – Omissions as an exercise of power:**

*What I didn't see at the time was that there were power relations at play when we talk about work-related stress. I understood that individuals are not passive, yet I had learnt that because work-related stress was something that individuals experienced and felt, a large part of the solution had to be located at the individual workers. The models of stress that I was taught recognized the roles of working conditions, line management, and the employment relationship. They also considered the role of work-life conflict, where individuals' personal life responsibilities might be in tension with paid work responsibilities. What the models didn't teach me was the importance of power relations within capitalist mode of production on which contemporary models of paid work are based. [...]*

*Terms like 'evidence-based', 'fact-based', and 'data-driven' make me uneasy, because they fail to acknowledge that any form of knowledge production is open to interpretation and are socially constructed. And who gets to interpret data? Who gets to decide what is evidence and what is factual? Again, we return to power and how knowledge production is an exercise of power. [...]*

*The colonization of knowledge, knowledge production, and education are not something that featured in my formal education. My formal education of Psychology and Organizational Psychology also did not acknowledge this colonization. The curriculum that I*

*studied did not talk about the legacy of imperialism and colonization on what constitutes legitimate knowledge. The Psychology and Organizational Psychology that I studied was mainstream right up until my Masters.*

Choices of subjects and perspectives that are included in the formal curriculum constitute the hidden curriculum. They characterize the business school and influence its approach to responsibility learning. As such, omissions within the formal curriculum can say much about the values of an institution. In our writing, we identified two main types of omissions.

The first is an omission of topics and perspectives that have not been taught or referred to as part of the formal curriculum. Our raw writings have highlighted a lack of a deeper engagement with key moments in history as fundamental to understanding today's practices; of business stories, practices and role-models coming from outside the western world; and of a greater and more deliberate emphasis on morals and ethics. All of these have a clear connection to responsibility learning and these omissions have a consequence of narrowing the perspectives offered to students and perpetuating the prominence of certain perspectives in mainstream business school education and practices.

The second is an omission of different paradigms, in favour of mainstream theories and perspectives. In our collective writing sessions, we raised and reflected on colonialism and the hegemony of western views on business and on knowledge in general, which we sensed were seldom acknowledged within our discipline of Organizational Psychology. What constitutes knowledge itself is critically questioned, with the prevalence of positivist theories in our teaching and learning in Organizational Psychology, overshadowing social constructionist views, and an acknowledgement of the politics of knowledge production.

As a student-educator collective, the noticing, reflecting, and discussing of these omissions led us to consider the power relationships influencing them, their intentionality and

purpose, particularly in the context of participating in a learning experience led by Uracha, who actively instilled a critical perspective. This collective experience, illustrating the possibilities that can be gained through acknowledging and centering the otherwise unnoticed, led us to consider how positive change could be achieved through education and practice, moving our student-educator collective into responsibility learning-in-action.

### **Enacting responsibility learning-in-action through noticing the unnoticed aspects of the hidden curriculum**

#### **America – Responsibility learning through resisting and unlearning:**

*The hidden curriculum of a 'colonial mentality', is teaching the preference for white cultural values, behaviors and objects that derive from the 'West' with disdain, exclusion and/or subjugation of non-white and non- 'Western' perspectives, objects, values and behaviors (David and Okazaki, 2010). There is an inextricable link between the colonized mind and the majority of education systems that propagate lone, colonial narratives. According to Fanon (1986), inspired by my business school education, I unwittingly perpetuated a 'colonial mentality' and my own oppression by striving to emulate the culture and ideas of Western white male business leaders. However, this is the 'colonial awakening', so to speak...discovering one's own colonized mind, regardless of background, is the first step to unlearning and resisting the hidden curriculum of a 'colonial mentality' and decolonization.*

*Resistance to the 'colonization of the mind' is the unlearning of the implicit WWM intellectual hegemony embedded in the hidden curriculum. We must learn to recognize the value of the non-white and non- 'Western' in order to decolonize our minds. Resistance to the hidden curriculum can take many forms. Critical scholars advocate for the introduction of non-white/indigenous and non-Western narratives to the educational curriculum; as well as race, indigenous genocide, colonialism, and slavery regarding contemporary capital accumulation and the wealth disparity in the western world (Cooke, 2003) in order to challenge what is*



normal. Freire (1970) advocated for 'liberation literacy', teaching literacy and political awareness together. It will take more than passive awareness to deconstruct hundreds of years of WWM intellectual hegemony embedded within the educational curriculum; however, awareness and acceptance of the existence of the 'colonization of the mind' hidden curriculum are the first, most crucial, but most difficult step in deconstructing it.

**Fabien – Developing responsibility learning with intent:**

*What I believe needs to be discussed with anyone entering into Organizational Psychology studies, at any level, is the very purpose of these studies, and the impact that developing knowledge is expected to have in the world. In my experience, this remains somewhat of a taboo in Organizational Psychology studies. (...) Core values that transpire from an institution, through their hidden curriculum, the way they communicate, what their activities and research interests focus on, etc., can help shape students' view on the ultimate purpose and goal of the acquired knowledge. [...]*

*Following this logic, developing responsibility learning through the hidden curriculum may also involve for business schools to make choices about who they get to teach their curriculum. It means not to try and ignore or suppress a lecturer's views or beliefs, but rather being open about it, and using it to present students with a variety of perspectives, directly from the people who feel strongly about these perspectives. This would give more color into exchanges revolving around matters of responsibility, about the ultimate purpose of the learning, and its use and impact onto the world. [...]*

*Looking to implement change and drive responsibility through the hidden curriculum involves resisting ways of working and teaching which happen in part subconsciously, and are heavily influenced by social context, group identity and social capital as described by Bourdieu in terms of habitus. External context and pressures play a large part in developing those views and deeply rooted ways of operating. These pressures may come from grass-root levels of*

*activism, driving general consciousness, but may also grow at different levels of stakeholders from within and outside the business school. One should probably not underestimate the role and energy that students themselves, within business schools, can bring into this matter.*

**Michelle – Responsibility learning through action and personal responsibility:**

*How can employees and students speak up when they see an injustice? (...) It can be exhausting to act as a sole voice standing up and challenging 'the norm'. (...) It is painful for those with lived experiences of injustice to be regularly called upon to retell these moments. Once these voices are heard is there now a following step to start to make changes? Yet I write this as a white privileged human. Whilst I am female it is not for me to say how these challenges can be addressed, but to support and enable a space for different voices to be heard. In summary, it is not about fixing, it is about listening. [...]*

*What I am I going to do next:*

- *Enjoy my second year – I am exactly where I need to be right now*
- *Support first years where I can*
- *Enjoy my dissertation, and bear in mind I may not change the world with it, but I am going to master a research skill.*
- *I take Uracha's phrases into work and home with me: 'Thank you for your question, would you like to share what you think first?'*
- *Try and find a home for my new OP skills with my current employer*

*There is a call to arms of what humanity can do:*

- *Read widely*
- *Read novels from POC, from WWII,*
- *Academia – read peer reviewed journals*
- *Ask your workplace to subscribe to Scopus/Web of Science?*

- *Challenge adverts on LinkedIn which ask for disproportioned experience and do not indicate salary*
- *Tag people on LinkedIn who are looking for work*
- *Listen to podcasts*

*Can I work with my writing colleagues to expand this list? [...]*

*Perhaps responsible management education then needs to cover mentoring, coaching and sponsorship – to explain the power middle/senior leaders have to help others. This isn't nepotism. It is providing a voice to those who don't have one or who are silenced. How much does our MSc OP teach us to go out and share these skills with others, or how much are they secrets to be gained only through paying for the Masters? Who are we to decide what is free to humans and what is accessible by money privilege? We have monetarized and commodified the further education sector. Only those with time and money can join in.*

#### **Uracha – Responsibility learning through enacting resistance:**

*As time passed and I studied and completed my MSc in Organizational Psychology, which was part of a business school and not within a School of Psychology, I came to see that the role of psychology in the workplace is to somehow make all parties 'happy' and to help organizations make workers 'productive'. Because productivity is what counts. For a long time, I saw nothing wrong with this equation of happy workers = productive workers. [...]*

*Teaching this [S&A] module every year weighed heavily on my mind and my heart. I remember the confusion, shock, and disgust that I felt when I came across journal articles that were part of the curriculum that argued the following:*

1. *General cognitive ability (GCA) testing is the best predictor of job performance and is therefore the superior method of selection.*

2. *It is unfortunate that test takers who are racialized as Black perform less well than test takers who are racialized as white. The issue is not with the tests themselves, but it is with the test takers.*

*As a woman of minoritized ethnicity in a white dominant society, this argument did not sit well with me. I did not want to teach this material. Three years ago, I was afraid of calling out what this material for what it is: racist.*

*After delivering the module for two years, the second during the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and first national lockdown in the UK and during the global movement of Black Lives Matter following George Floyd's murder in the US, I found the language and the courage to speak out against the curriculum that condones scientific racism. Not only does the curriculum condone, it promotes it as knowledge that is based on scientific evidence.*

Our reflections on responsibility learning and the hidden curriculum were influenced by our positionalities and were connected to matters of injustice and inequality in the curriculum, our workplaces, and our practice. They evolved and took shape as we engaged in reflexive dialogic practice through collective writing. We sensed and noticed the western colonial and neoliberal values and assumptions that underpin the business school curriculum. We reflected on how the hidden curriculum had the power to limit students' understanding of responsibility and its meaning in the world of work and in wider society. We reflected on our disciplinary context of Organizational Psychology and its formal curriculum, where responsibility came through the way in which we and other students might use the skills and knowledge taught, how we might go about critically questioning them, and what impact this may have on the world. This could either perpetuate the inequalities which transpire through the hidden curriculum or become a force for positive change through action. The latter remains dependent on other students and educators seeking to put responsibility learning-in-action, in the way this collective has done.

Responsibility learning-in-action was a shared process and outcome, yet materialized in different ways in each author's ambitions and commitments. In Uracha's case, she is compelled to use her position to challenge the dominant formal curriculum by introducing different perspectives and paradigms. America acknowledges her colonial awakening as a first step to affect change. Fabien calls for a conscious discussion with students on the purpose of the knowledge they acquire. And Michelle, in the most striking example of personal responsibility, looks ahead by listing her own call to action, as well as one for humanity. All of these are influenced by some of the ways in which the hidden curriculum of our MSc – including this very experience of collective writing – have shaped our view of responsibility learning, and how we wish for ourselves and others to act upon it.

### **Concluding discussion**

Our paper came into being through a deep desire between three students and an educator to enact responsibility learning through writing differently and collectively. Our inquiry through collective writing was triggered by an unsettling following a confrontation with learning material that perpetuates and fails to problematize and condemn white supremacist scientific racism in the formal business school curriculum. It unfolded in a way that moved us to take notice of the unnoticed and the intentionally hidden aspects of the business school curriculum that uphold social injustice and inequalities. Our collective 'writing as resistance' sessions empowered us to engage in a form of "activism of thinking as doing" (Diversi et al., 2021: 303) through reflexive dialogues on how the hidden curriculum comes to be through the dynamics of power and institutional interests; on what the omissions of topics and paradigms can tell us about the intentions of the business school; and on how our own experiences of the formal business school curriculum has moved us to collectively call out responsibility learning inaction and enact responsibility learning-in-action. Our shared experience of learning and teaching on the S&A module have brought us to write together and led us to continually reflect

on ourselves within our practice, including on our working environments, our (past/present/future) careers, and our academic and pedagogical approaches. We offer three humble contributions from our time together.

Firstly, we have introduced the concept of ‘responsibility learning-in-action’ into the conversation and literature around responsibility learning and the hidden curriculum. Through the writing and sharing of our stories in a collective space and time, we have noticed a form of responsibility learning inaction, based on our experiences of studying and teaching in business schools. We have argued that this inaction is a form of irresponsible practice, and our development of responsibility learning-in-action is a direct response to this. We have done this through writing our stories of being ‘unsettled’ and ‘struck’ to explore what responsibility learning meant to us in the business school. We shared our stories and ideas as a form of reflexive dialogical practice, which would otherwise remain untold in the business school formal curriculum. Our collective writing provided a space and time for a common ambition to be explored and enacted. It is through the writing and telling of our lived experience of the business school curriculum as a way of enacting responsibility learning-in-action that we have made the hidden aspects of responsibility learning inaction tangible and thus harder to ignore.

Secondly, by introducing and developing the concept of responsibility learning-in-action through ‘writing as doing’, we have shown another way for the work of responsibility learning and noticing the unnoticed in the hidden curriculum to become central to the formal business school curriculum and thus not confined to standalone modules on business ethics, business and society, or social corporate responsibility. We have shown the impact that the hidden curriculum has had on us, prompting us to notice the unnoticed by reflecting, challenging, and exploring what is implicit or absent in the formal curriculum. We hope that by bringing light to the unlit (Orón Semper and Blasco, 2018), we have revealed omissions and shown the unseen through our writing. The influence that the hidden curriculum has on the

ethics, values, and behaviours of students has been exposed as full of discrepancies. By confronting what is hidden and unnoticed, we reveal the power dynamics that shape responsibility learning. We have questioned the role that Organizational Psychology as a discipline has played in responsibility learning and how it simultaneously shapes and is shaped by the hidden curriculum of western colonial and neoliberal logics in business schools. We invite the discipline and its gatekeepers to grow as a critical friend through self-reflexivity.

Our third and final contribution relates to the form of reflexive dialogical practice and responsibility learning-in-action that we have enacted through our collective writing and discussions. Our student-educator collective writing offers a methodology and a model for co-authorship and co-production that reimagines what is normatively practiced within Organizational Psychology and more broadly, in business schools. While it is not unique for educators who are also researchers to co-author with students, the collaboration is usually based on student(s) having collected data for a project that is deemed ‘interesting’ and ‘publishable’ by the educator(s) who has taught and/or supervised them. It is also accepted practice within Organizational Psychology for students to participate in studies conducted and eventually published by educators, turning students into ‘data’ rather co-authors. Power is at the heart of knowledge production and this project had set out with a clear intention to develop students’ power as active, central, and legitimate knowledge producers.

Intersubjectivity lies at the heart of our enactment of responsibility learning-in-action. The four of us have come together to work as peers and have developed a relationship which provided personal growth, enabling us to embrace and enrich our positionalities. We have exercised and experienced solidarity and relationality in new ways as individuals, a collective, members of a business school and the wider academy, and fellow human beings. This empowered us to develop collective responsibility learning-in-action steeped in care, mutual respect, and vulnerability. When Uracha experienced family illness and bereavement one week

prior to the submission deadline for the special issue, the three student co-authors, Authors B, C, and D, collectively led the completion of the manuscript. This collective care towards Uracha made room for her to show vulnerability as an educator and a co-author. This was one example of the collective leadership and collective care that have been fundamental to how our paper developed throughout the different stages of writing and re-writing. Through this experience of relational knowledge production, we have taken responsibility for ourselves and one another as members of a business school and in turn, found courage and strength in noticing and resisting together against the hidden curriculum of irresponsible practices.

## References

- Abdellatif A, Aldossari M, Boncori I et al. (2021) Breaking the mold: Working through our differences to vocalize the sound of change. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 28(5): 1–24.
- Adams TE (2012) The joys of autoethnography: Possibilities for communication research. *Qualitative Communication Research*, 1(2), 181-194
- Adams T (2017) Autoethnographic Responsibilities. *International Review of Qualitative Research*. 10. 62-66.
- Ahonen P, Blomberg A, Doerr K et al. (2020) Writing resistance together. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 27(4): 447–470.
- Alcaraz JM, Wiktorja Marcinkowska M, and Thiruvattal E (2011) The UN-Principles for Responsible Management Education. *Journal of Global Responsibility*, 2(2), 151–169. <https://doi.org/10.1108/20412561111166021>
- Allen-Collinson J and Hockey J (2008) Autoethnography as ‘valid’ methodology? A Study of disrupted identity narratives. *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, 3 (6): 209-217.
- Alvesson M and Gabriel Y (2013) Beyond formulaic research: In praise of greater diversity in organizational research and publications. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 12(2): 245–263.
- Andrews K (2021) *The New Age of Empire: How Racism and Colonialism Still Rule the World*. London: Penguin Random House.



- Antonacopoulou EP (2010) Making the Business School More ‘Critical’: Reflexive Critique Based on Phronesis as a Foundation for Impact. *British Journal of Management*, 21, s6–s25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2009.00679.x>
- Apple M (1995) *Education and power*. New York: Routledge.
- Barnett R and Coate K (2005) *Engaging the curriculum in higher education*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Bartunek JM (2019) Contemplation and Organization Studies: Why contemplative activities are so crucial for our academic lives. *Organization Studies*, 40(10): 1463-1479.
- Behar R (1997) *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Bhambra GK, Gebrial D, and Nişancıoğlu K (2018). *Decolonising the university*. London: Pluto Press.
- Blasco M (2012). Aligning the Hidden Curriculum of Management Education With PRME. *Journal of Management Education*, 36(3), 364–388. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1052562911420213>
- Blasco M, Wall T, Nkomo S, et al. (2021) Call for papers: The hidden curriculum of responsibility (un)learning at business schools. *Management Learning* .
- Borges JC, Ferreira TC, Borges de Oliveira MS, Macini N and Caldana, ACF (2017) Hidden curriculum in student organizations: Learning, practice, socialization and responsible management in a business school. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 15(2), 153–161.
- Bochner AP (1984) The functions of human communication in interpersonal bonding. In: Arnold CC and Bowers JW (eds) *Handbook of rhetorical and communication theory* . Boston: Allyn and Bacon: 544-621.
- Bourdieu P (1977) Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction. In: Karabel J and AH Halsey AH (eds) *Power and Ideology in Education*, . New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 487–511.
- Bourdieu P (1986) The Forms of Capital. In: Richardson JG (eds) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood.
- Carlsen A and Sandelands L (2015) First passion: Wonder in organizational inquiry. *Management Learning*, 46(4): 373-390.
- Chia R & Holt R (2008) The nature of knowledge in business schools. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 7(4), pp.471-486.

- Cooke B (2003) The Denial of Slavery in Management Studies. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(8), 1895–1918.
- Corlett S (2013) Participant learning in and through research as reflexive dialogue: Being ‘struck’ and the effects of recall. *Management Learning*, 44(5): 453-469.
- Cruz J, McDonald J, Broadfoot K, Chuang AK and Ganesh S (2020) “Aliens” in the United States: A Collaborative Autoethnography of Foreign-Born Faculty. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 29(3): 272–285.
- Cunliffe AL (2002) Reflexive dialogical practice in management learning. *Management Learning*, 33(1): 35-61.
- Cunliffe AL (2003) Intersubjective voices: The role of the “theorist”. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 25(4): 481-498.
- Cunliffe AL (2004) On Becoming a Critically Reflexive Practitioner. *Journal of Management Education*, 28(4):407–426.
- Cunliffe AL (2016) “On Becoming a Critically Reflexive Practitioner” Redux: What Does It Mean to Be Reflexive? *Journal of Management Education*, 40(6): 740–746.
- Dar S, Liu H, Martinez Dy A and Brewis DN (2021) The business school is racist: Act up! *Organization*, 28(4): 695–706.
- David EJ and Okazaki S (2010) Activation and automaticity of colonial mentality. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 40(4): 850-887.
- Diversi M, Gale K, Moreira C and Wyatt J (2021) Writing With: Collaborative Writing as Hope and Resistance, *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 14(2): 302–312.
- Dotson K (2012) A cautionary tale: On limiting epistemic oppression. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 33(1): 24–47.
- Ehrensals K (2001) Training Capitalism’s Foot Soldiers. In Margolis E (ed.) *The hidden curriculum in higher education*. New York: Routledge, pp. 98–113.
- Ellis C, Adams TE and Bochner, AP (2011). Autoethnography: an overview. *Historical Social Research*, 36(4): 273-290.
- Fanon F (1986) *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto Press.
- Freire P (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Penguin.
- Gair M and Mullins G (2001) Hiding in plain sight. In: Margolis, E (Ed.) *The Hidden Curriculum in Higher Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Gilmore S, Harding N, Helin J and Pullen A (2019) Writing differently. *Management Learning*, 50(1): 3–10.

- Gofton W and Regehr G (2006) What We Don't Know We Are Teaching. *Clinical Orthopaedics & Related Research*, 449: 20–27.
- Gómez JM (2022). Epistemic Oppression, Construct Validity, and Scientific Rigor: Commentary on Woo et al. (2022). *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 18(1): 32-38 <https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916211072830>
- Grey C and Sinclair A (2006) Writing Differently. *Organization*, 13(3):443–453.
- Hafferty FW and Franks R (1994) The hidden curriculum, ethics teaching, and the structure of medical education. *Academic Medicine*, 69(11): 861–871.
- Hipolito-Delgado CP, Payan SG, Baca TI and David EJR (2014) Self-hatred, self-doubt, and assimilation in Latina/o communities: Las consecuencias de colonización y opresión. *Internalized oppression: The psychology of marginalized groups*, pp.109-136.
- Høgdal C, Rasche A, Schoeneborn D and Scotti L (2021) Exploring Student Perceptions of the Hidden Curriculum in Responsible Management Education. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 168(1), 173–193.
- Holman Jones S (2019). Living an autoethnographic activist life. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 25(6): 527-528.
- hooks b (1989) Marginality as Site of Resistance In: Ferguson, R, Gever, M, Minh-ha, TT, and West, C (eds) *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*. New York: MIT Press, pp. 341–343.
- Howard-Grenville J (2021) Caring, courage and curiosity: Reflections on our roles as scholars in organizing for a sustainable future. *Organization Theory*, 2(1): 1-16.
- Hurd F and Singh S (2021) ‘Something has to change’: A collaborative journey towards academic well-being through critical reflexive practice. *Management Learning*, 52(3): 347-363.
- Iwowo V (2015) Leadership in Africa: rethinking development. *Personnel Review*, 44(3), 408–429.
- Jandrić P, Luke TW, Sturm S. et al. (2022). Collective writing: The continuous struggle for meaning-making. *Postdigital Science and Education*: 1-43.
- Kallio TJ (2007) Taboos in corporate social responsibility discourse. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 74(2): 165–175.
- Kendi IX (2019) *How to be an Antiracist*. New York: One World.
- Kenworthy AL & Hrivnak GA (2016) When in London, It's a Burger and Neapolitan Ice Cream for You: Rejoinder to “Identifying Research Topic Development in Business and

- Management Education Research Using Legitimation Code Theory”. *Journal of Management Education*, 40(6): 732-739.
- Laasch O (2018) Delineating and reconnecting responsible management, learning, and education (RMLE): Towards a social practices perspective of the field. *Centre for Responsible Management Education Working Papers*, 4(5).
- Laasch O and Gherardi S (2019) Delineating and reconnecting responsible management, learning, and education (RMLE): A research agenda through a social practices lens. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 2019(1). <https://doi.org/10.5465/ambpp.2019.13369abstract>
- Levillain K, Segrestin B, Hatchuel A (2019) Profit-with-Purpose Corporations. *The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility, April 2021*, 489–513.
- Mandiola Cotroneo M (2013) Management education in Chile: From politics of pragmatism to (Im)possibilities of resistance. *Universitas Psychologica*, 12(4): 1085–1098.
- Margolis E (2001) *The Hidden Curriculum in Higher Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Millar J and Price M (2018) Imagining management education: A critique of the contribution of the United Nations PRME to critical reflexivity and rethinking management education. *Management Learning*, 49(3): 346–362. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507618759828>
- Mills CW (2014) *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Nkomo SM (1992) The Emperor Has No Clothes: Rewriting “Race in Organizations.” *Academy of Management Review*, 17(3):487-513.
- Nkomo SM (2011) A postcolonial and anti-colonial reading of ‘African’ leadership and management in organization studies: tensions, contradictions and possibilities. *Organization*, 18(3): 365–386.
- Nordbäck E, Hakonen M and Tienari J (2022) Academic identities and sense of place: A collaborative autoethnography in the neoliberal university. *Management Learning*, 53(2): 331-349
- Nye CD, Ma J, & Wee, S (2022) Cognitive Ability and Job Performance: Meta-analytic Evidence for the Validity of Narrow Cognitive Abilities. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 37: 1119–1139.
- O’Shea SC (2019) My dysphoria blues: Or why I cannot write an autoethnography. *Management Learning*, 50(1):38-49.
- Orón Semper JV and Blasco M (2018) Revealing the Hidden Curriculum in Higher Education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 37(5): 481–498.

- Osland J, Mendenhall M, Reiche S et al. (2020) Perspectives on Global Leadership and the COVID-19 Crisis. In *Advances in Global Leadership* (Vol. 13). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Ottewill R, McKenzie G and Leah J (2005) Integration and the hidden curriculum in business education. *Education + Training*, 47(2): 89–97.
- Padan T and Nguyen N (2020) Responsible management unlearning. In *Research Handbook of Responsible Management*. Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 501–515.
- Painter-Morland M (2015) Philosophical assumptions undermining responsible management education. *Journal of Management Development*, 34(1): 61–75.
- Pelias RJ (2004) *A methodology of the heart: Evoking academic and daily life* (Vol. 15). Rowman Altamira.
- Petriglieri G and Petriglieri J L (2010) Identity Workspaces: The Case of Business Schools. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9(1), 44–60.
- Portelli JP (1993) Exposing the hidden curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 25(4): 343–358.
- Pullen A and Rhodes C (2008) Dirty writing. *Culture and Organization*, 14(3): 241–259
- Puwar N (2001) The Racialised Somatic Norm and the Senior Civil Service. *Sociology*, 35(3): 651-670.
- Racz M and Parker S (2020) Critically responsible management: agonistic answers to antagonistic questions. In *Research Handbook of Responsible Management*. Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 686–699.
- Rasche A and Gilbert DU (2015) Decoupling Responsible Management Education: Why Business Schools May Not Walk Their Talk. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 24(3): 239–252.
- Riach K (2009) Exploring participant-centred reflexivity in the research interview. *Sociology* 43(2): 356–370.
- Sambell K and McDowell L (1998) The Construction of the Hidden Curriculum: messages and meanings in the assessment of student learning. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 23(4): 391–402.
- Semper JVO and Blasco M (2018) Revealing the hidden curriculum in higher education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 37(5): 481-498.
- Smith DE (1990) *Texts, Facts, and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling*. London: Routledge.

- Thiong'o N (1986) *The language of African literature*. Kenya: Heinemann/East Africa.
- Trevino LK and McCabe D (1994) Meta-learning about business ethics: Building honorable business school communities. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 13(6): 405–416.
- Välilä J & Nokkala T (2014) The dimensions of social dynamics in comparative studies on higher education. *Higher Education*, 67(4): 423-437.
- Vallance E (1974) Hiding the Hidden Curriculum: An Interpretation of the Language of Justification in Nineteenth-Century Educational Reform. *Curriculum Theory Network*, 4(1): 5-21.
- Van Maanen J (2010) You gotta have a grievance: Locating heartbreak in ethnography. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 19(4): 338-341.
- Wall S (2008) Easier said than done: Writing an autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 7(1): 38-53.
- Whiteman G (2010) Management studies that break your heart. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 19(4): 328-337.
- Wren D (1999) School culture: Exploring the hidden curriculum. *Adolescence*, 34(135): 593-596.