**IMOBTS Conference, Dublin**

**Developing Young Responsible Managers Through Whole Person Education**

Following the financial crisis of 2008, the United Nations introduced the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) which is aimed at promoting a set of norms, values and practices that will “develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy” (PRME, 2018). This session introduces a holistic framework founded on theories of responsible management on the one hand and emerging adulthood on the other, that can guide teaching interventions aimed at developing the responsible managers and leaders of the future.

**Keywords: responsible management education; holistic pedagogy; emerging adulthood**

**Introduction**.

There is a growing consensus that, over the past 10 years, business schools have faced a crisis of legitimacy perhaps best encapsulated by Giacalone’s comments about business schools promoting values whereby ‘the only important things in life are power, influence, status, and money—and where people, community, and concern for the next generation…fall by the wayside in the search for personal and institutional glory’ (Giacalone, 2009: 122). The task of the business school in the 21st century therefore becomes ‘how to develop ethically responsible, caring leaders and managers’ (Hibbert & Cunliffe, 2015) who will help in the co-creation of a sustainable, just and equitable society (PRME, 2017; Muff, 2013). Our session addresses the question of how we might best achieve this.

The session is rooted in a literature review investigating effective pedagogy for responsible management education. We have drawn on the review to help in the initial design of a theoretical framework that will guide future pedagogical interventions. The session is intended to test some initial ideas regarding this framework and is therefore of relevance to anyone interested in developing their teaching practice in the area of responsible management education and business ethics. The exercises we apply in the session have been taken from teaching interventions employed at undergraduate level.

**Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications**.

The purpose of RME is to develop the responsible managers of the future and for this to be successful, pedagogy within higher education has to stretch beyond the mere transfer of knowledge in order to affect the values, beliefs, attitudes and skills of our students (Sunley & Leigh, 2016; Hibbert & Cunliffe, 2015). In order to be able to do this effectively we need to: 1) establish the theoretical foundation underpinning responsible management; 2) identify the mindsets, attitudes and skills (attributes) of responsible managers; 3) identify the most effective methods for developing these mindsets attitudes and skills.

**1. Theoretical Foundations and Responsible Management Attributes**

Responsible management education is a transdisciplinary field that draws on three main theoretical discourses: CSR/social responsibility; ethics; complexity & systems thinking.

**1.1 The first theoretical influence is that of ‘CSR’** with its focus on social purpose that goes beyond the traditional mantra of maximising shareholder value. Maak & Pless (2009) suggest responsible leaders act as ‘agents of world benefit’ by building sustainable moral relationships amongst corporate stakeholders in order to address a range of economic, ecological, social, political and human challenges (Maak & Pless, 2009). For Nonet, Kassel & Meijs (2016) having a ‘higher purpose’ forms one of the core elements of the ‘responsible management. The notion of adopting a higher purpose at a corporate level has implications for the individual manager and for the teaching of responsible management by business schools. In other words, the concept of a higher corporate purpose raises questions of individual purpose - what role do individual managers play in society, what values do they embody, what purpose and goals do they pursue? In order to develop confidence and competence in addressing these questions responsible managers will need to cultivate *intrapersonal* skills and, what some call, spiritual intelligence (Bartsch, 2012).

Another crucial component of CSR is stakeholder theory. Responsible managers need to build and sustain relationships of trust whilst also crucially influencing others, bringing people together under a common purpose, negotiating, compromising and achieving shared goals. The kinds of qualities needed to be effective at building sustainable stakeholder relationships of trust include empathy, authenticity, listening, openness to diversity and self-awareness as well as a willingness to influence and be influenced by others. In order to be effective in managing and influencing stakeholders, responsible managers need to develop emotional intelligence and a range of interpersonal behavioural skills.

**1.2 The second theoretical influence is that of ethics.** Ethical theory and practice has played an important role in responsible management and responsible leadership theory (Gentile, 2012; Cameron, 2011; Nonet, Kassel & Meijs, 2016) Much of Mary Gentile’s work in this area is focused on educating students around the dynamics of behavioural ethics and cultivating the moral courage and skills required to ‘give voice to one’s values’ in the workplace. Hence, in order to become responsible managers, knowledge of ethics has to be supplemented by a range of behavioural skills that enable people to enact their values in the workplace. What is often referred to as ‘moral courage’, we refer to as the ‘will to act’ (the last stage of Rest’s ethical decision making model) which is also linked to moral character (Crossan et al., 2013).

**1.3 The third theoretical influence is systems thinking** and with this comes a range of cognitive skills that contribute towards the development of cognitive complexity (Pless, Maak & Stahl, 2011; Nonet Kassel & Meijs, 2016; Laasch & Moosmayer, 2015). Responsible managers and leaders recognise that much of our behaviour is systemic in nature and that any intervention they make in the system is likely to have unpredictable and unintended consequences. Engaging in systems thinking helps to identify global stakeholders, and contributes to the development of cross-cultural understanding so crucial to responsible management (Pless, Maak & Stahl, 2011; Muff, 2013).

From this brief overview we see that responsible managers demonstrate a range of attributes that comprise a ‘holistic’ approach to development that engages the mind, the will to act and emotional and spiritual intelligence (Waddock & Lozano, 2013; Laasch & Moosmayer, 2015).

However, whilst this top down, theoretical and normative approach to responsible management plays an important role, we feel that the bottom-up, practical and developmental needs of undergraduate students in this discourse, have been somewhat ignored. This link to student needs is vital if our pedagogy is going to have any effect, so it is to this area that we now turn.

**1.4 Emerging Adulthood and Developmental Needs**

According to the theory of ‘emerging adulthood’, in developed societies where the transition from childhood to adulthood is significantly extended, young people between the ages of 18 and 25 have unique developmental challenges which revolve around identity explorations in the areas of love, work and worldviews (Arnett, 2000). In other words, according to Arnett young adults bring with them to university, whether consciously or sub-consciously, spiritual questions concerning meaning, purpose and identity; emotional issues around personal relationships, taking responsibility and personal confidence; behavioural challenges around skill and competence and cognitive questions around truth, belief and worldviews (Arnett, 2015). By the end of higher education students “have often committed themselves to a worldview different from the one they brought in, while remaining open to further modifications of it in the future” (Arnett, 2000, p. 474).

Hence, we can see there is a useful coalescence of the educational needs of young emerging adults and the agenda of responsible management education.

The question then remains of what kind of pedagogy can best bring these two agendas together and at the same time be deliverable within the constraints of current higher educational systems. We are exploring how to deliver a holistic pedagogy for RME that meets the educational and developmental needs of young emerging adults whilst at the same time fitting the constraints of business school teaching systems.

**Learning Objectives** **– A Pedagogy for Responsible Management Education**

Our exercise today draws on the four sets of attributes identified above (spiritual and emotional intelligence, the ‘will to act’ and cognitive complexity) to offer some simple approaches specifically aimed at teaching responsible management within the context of higher education.

By the end of the session participants will:

* Have experienced a holistic approach to elements of responsible management education
* Be able to apply ideas to their own practice either in relation to responsible management education or within a broader teaching context
* Share their own approaches to holistic pedagogy in the classroom

**Exercise Overview**

The exercise will take one hour and consists of 3 phases: short briefing, participatory exercise & group discussion. There are no restrictions on class size and no materials are needed.

**Exercise Description**

***Phase 1- Briefing (5 minutes).*** We will ask our participants to enact a class full of bored/cynical students disengaged from learning and not really sure why they are attending university.

***Phase 2 –3 short classroom activities (30 minutes).***

i. **A storytelling exercise** (10 mins) ‘Personal stories are central to who we are’ (Gallo, 2015:53) and they have the power to connect us with other people’s hearts and minds. This exercise is designed to encourage and illustrate the role of emotional intelligence in building relationships through storytelling and listening. We will invite a few participants to talk for 1 minute about something they are passionate about eg eating pasta, walking the dog etc while the group listen and observe. We will then discuss the power of authentic narrative for both speaker and audience, and how stories can include, inspire and influence. These communication skills are essential in a digital age.

ii. **A video exercise** **(10 mins).** This is designed to present cognitive content regarding ethics in a manner that engages emotions and reflections around identity. We will start by asking the ‘class’ if anyone would voluntarily marry a stranger. This question often provokes a range of responses but most people say they would not marry a stranger. We then show a video where people are picked off the street and ask to ‘witness’ a marriage. During the procedure it is clear that instead of witnessing the marriage, they are actually being married to a stranger. They all go along with the process. This is a very funny video and provokes interesting questions about values, identity, conformity and how much we are in control of our own behaviour. This then leads into discussion around behavioural ethics.

iv. **A reflective exercise (10 mins).** This is designed to link personal insights around identity and purpose. We ask the class to think of times in their lives when they have experienced a state of flow or being in the zone – in our experience some students have experienced this and some have not but we expect most people in the room have experienced a state of flow at some stage in their lives. We ask them to describe the situation using a particular approach which eventually leads to each student coming up with a short phrase which seems to describe their unique gift/core purpose.

***Phase 3 – Group Discussion (20 mins)***

There will be 3 minutes of silence so participants can reflect on what they have seen and heard. This will be followed by an opportunity for everyone to share their own approaches to holistic pedagogy in different subject areas. All ideas will be logged and circulated to participants for their future use.

***Plenary (5 mins)***

During the plenary we debrief the design of these exercises in a manner that demonstrates how we meld the theory of RME with that of emerging adulthood.

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