

Incorporating Philosophy into Management Learning: Mapping and Evaluating Philosophy for Management Programs

Doctoral Thesis

presented to the Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences
at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland)

by

Aleksandra JASINSKA

From Poland and Canada

in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Management (PhD)

Accepted by the Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences
on September 22nd, 2025, at the proposal of:

Prof. Dr. Éric Davoine, University of Fribourg (first advisor)

Prof. Dr. Jean-Philippe Bouilloud, ESCP Business School (second advisor)

Prof. Dr. Sébastien Mena, University of Fribourg (president of PhD jury)

Fribourg, Switzerland, 2025

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.51363/unifr.eth.2025.030>

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The Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences of the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) neither approves nor disapproves the opinions expressed in a thesis: they must be considered the author's own (Decision of the Faculty Council of January 23, 1990).

Acknowledgments

It goes without saying that I have many people to thank for accompanying me on this journey – starting with my supervisor Prof. Dr. Éric Davoine who made it all possible. In addition to being a talented scholar, he is a generous and respectable person. Thank you for your example, inestimable help, and for all our wonderful discussions throughout the past five years.

I am also ever-grateful for Christelle Zagato who accompanied me in my studies and blessed me with her positive spirit, kindness, friendship and willing disposition to help. You have been a true gift to me. There have also been many other wonderful colleagues, students and academics who inspired me along the way. I am also appreciative of Prof. Dr. Jean-Philippe Bouilloud and Prof. Dr. Sébastien Mena for accepting to preside over my thesis defense.

I also must, of course, thank my beloved family and friends – spread around the world between Canada, Australia, Poland, Germany, Switzerland, and places in between. Lastly, I must recognize the undeniable help of Francis, Joseph, the other Joseph, Homobonus, John Paul, Mary, Thomas, and the three Teresas. I dedicate this thesis to all of you and thank you for encouraging and supporting me in uncountable ways.

Abstract

This doctoral thesis investigates the incorporation of philosophy into management learning and challenges the widely held belief that the two areas are incompatible. Historically, most managers have shown little interest towards studying philosophy. However, there is an increasing number of programs that blend both worlds along with a growing body of research defending this approach. After decades of poorly-adapted teaching and training methods in business, literature has taken under consideration some alternative approaches to management learning. Various academics advocate for non-business subjects in business curricula and recommend turning to more humanistic subjects such as history, arts, theology and philosophy. They believe the classics have the potential to further develop a wider range of competencies including communication, leadership and ethical thinking.

Yet there is wide disagreement about this proposal; numerous managers and management scholars are skeptical about philosophy. It is perceived as being complicated, abstract, aimless, and it is unclear how it might add value to business. This dissertation attempts to clarify the use and benefits of philosophy in management. Four distinct empirical studies strive to understand what philosophy for management consists of and how it is defined. By analyzing the aims of existing programs and the experiences of managers who took part in philosophical training, they also investigate the potential impact of philosophical learning on current or future managers.

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Abbreviations

ABM: arts-based methods

CMS: critical management studies

EMBA: executive master of business administration

FE: further education

HE: higher education

HEI: higher education institutions

HRD: human resources development

HRM: human resources management

L&D: learning and development

LO: learning objective

LTP: leadership training program

MBA: master of business administration

MLD: management and leadership development

ML: management learning

MLD: management learning and development

MLE: management learning and education

MLED: management learning, education and development

ME: management education

MP4M: management based on philosophy for management

MT: management training

MTD: management training and development

MOOCs: massive open online courses

OL: Organizational Learning

P4C: philosophy for children

P4M: philosophy for management

PP4M: philosophy programs for management

RQ: research question

T&D: training and development

VUCA: volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous

Introduction

There have always been advocates for mixing philosophy with business. In fact, Socrates himself philosophized with the managers of his time; back in Ancient Greece, he encountered them at the market and spent time questioning them in countless ways (Collins & Latemore, 2002; Kessels, 2001; Ledoux, 2012). Many other philosophers throughout history were proponents of blending management and philosophy; Plato believed leaders should develop the skills of philosophers (Schwandt, 2005), Xenophon examined the role of philosophy in administering goods (Deslandes, 2016), Adam Smith himself studied philosophy (Collins & Latemore, 2002), Peter Drucker developed business theories with philosophy (N. Laurie & Cherry, 2001) and Mary Parker Follett went as far as describing ‘management as philosophy’ (Ledoux, 2012). Philosophers also played an important role in developing young aristocrats and kings – namely notable figures such as Alexander The Great. In this way, since its very conception, the philosophical discipline has contributed to the development of individuals in positions of leadership or authority (Collins & Latemore, 2002; S. Wilson et al., 2022; Windsor, 2015). Yet, what about now? What role does philosophy play in the formation of such people? What role does philosophy play in the education, training and development of managers? Is Athenian philosophy still taught to those in leadership or management positions?

Some more recent scholars claim that philosophy is the foundation of management, and they highlight its importance for modern executives (e.g. Erk, 2025; Horikoshi, 2023; Joullié, 2016a; Windsor, 2015). It “can contribute to improved management practice” (Platts & Harris, 2011, p. 19) and can impact how organizations are led (Cunliffe, 2009). More concretely, academics believe it could perhaps develop managerial competencies such as conceptual thinking, critical thinking, decision-making and communication (Baurina, et al., 2022; Ledoux, 2012; Woiceshyn, 1992). Others believe it contributes to self-leadership while pushing managers to adopt more ethical and responsible behaviours (Saarinen, 2008; Small, 2004a; Spillane & Joullié, 2015; Zu, 2023). Despite an increasing number of publications that promote philosophical learning in business (e.g. Claes & Preston, 2009; Friedland, 2016; Goldman, 2009), and growing evidence in favour of teaching philosophy to executives (e.g. Davoine & Schumacher, 2009), there remains confusion as to what constitutes ‘philosophical’ learning in business and what it aspires to achieve. Moreover, there is a lack research as well as explanation about how competencies could develop through philosophy (Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023; Podolny, 2009). The benefits of philosophy – are they not mere wishful thinking (De Borchgrave, 2006)? There are numerous skeptics who would assent to that. They also complain about the abstract and frustrating nature of this discipline. From their view,

philosophy is a ‘waste of time’ and unnecessary detour for busy, pragmatic, action-oriented managers (De Borchgrave, 2006; Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023; Ledoux, 2012; Segal, 2004). Evidently, the idea of integrating philosophy into management learning (ML) produces mixed opinions and all the above-listed contentions have led me to pose several research questions (RQ):

RQ1. How can philosophy contribute to and be incorporated in ML programs?

RQ2. How can philosophical learning develop managerial competencies?

In the above-stated questions, ‘management competencies’ do not equate to ML; rather, they are a type of learning that can occur through ML – I will explain this relation afterwards in Chapter 1. Moreover, the term ‘philosophical learning’ is distinct from ‘philosophy’ as the latter denotes an academic discipline while the former pertains to education, training and development programs that are based on philosophy. These differences between philosophical terms will be explicated in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

The reason why these questions are being asked stems from the lack of clarity on how philosophy might provide value to managers through learning. That said, this doctoral thesis will investigate the incorporation of philosophical learning into ML. This includes understanding what philosophy in management consists of and how it is defined. It also investigates the potential impact of philosophical learning on current or future managers by analyzing the aims of existing programs and by investigating the experiences of managers who took part in philosophical training. More concretely, this dissertation includes an introduction, three chapters that set the context of my research, a section dedicated to my research methodology, four research papers and a discussion that summarizes my key contributions to literature and practice.

Chapter 1 outlines the field of ML in relation to HRM and defines some key concepts including training, development and education. Chapter 2 presents various critiques of ML and recommendations on how such learning should be approached. This includes academic perspectives that promote arts and humanities in business programs. Then, Chapter 3 narrows in on the idea of integrating of philosophy into ML curricula. This section considers arguments for and against the incorporation of philosophy and overviews literature on philosophical learning in business. Chapter 4 explains the research conducted for this thesis. In it I explain my research objectives, samples, approaches towards collecting and analyzing data, and the studies I conducted for this doctoral thesis. All this serves as a preamble to the manuscripts intended for this dissertation. Appendix A1 contains my paper *“Undercover philosophy?”*

Demystifying philosophy for management education” published in the Journal of Management Development. This study provides a typology of philosophy programs intended for management audiences and interesting insights on the usage of hidden curricula in ML (Jasinska, 2025). Appendix A2 encloses *“Philosophy or Philosophizing? The Learning Objectives of Philosophy Programs for Managers”* which was presented at the *Philosophy of Management* annual conference and is now under review for a ML journal. This paper describes the learning intents of philosophy programs delivered to managers. Appendix A3 showcases a third paper called *“How Philosophy Can Contribute To Management Development: The Case of a Swiss Executive Training Program”* which was co-authored with Professor Éric Davoine and is now under review. Appendix A4 includes a fourth paper called *“Bursting Bubbles: How Philosophical Practice Impacts Managerial Competencies and Ethical Development”* which was written with two colleagues in Spain. Finally, Chapter 5 features the last part of my thesis and, therefore, summarizes my key findings and contributions. It also overviews the implications of my work, its limitations and avenues for future research on philosophical learning in business. Ultimately, this thesis defends philosophy in ML; it outlines various ways of embedding philosophy into business programs, shows how the aims of P4M could align with ML objectives, and discusses the value philosophy could provide via a competency-based approach. This dissertation contributes to the fields of ML and human resource development (HRD) by suggesting ideas and supporting evidence on how to optimize the education, training and development of managers.

Chapter 1 – Management Learning

To begin, this chapter defines ML, its different facets and why it is relevant to HRM. According to ‘human capital theory’ – developed by Nobel Prize winner Gary S. Becker (1975) – the same way it pays to invest into machinery or equipment, it also pays to invest into persons. Since organizations consist of people, individuals ought to be perceived as organizational assets. This theory assumes that investing into their education, training and development could potentially step-change firm performance and, similarly, investing into managerial learning could greatly profit organizations (Baruch, 2009; Noe, 2023; Torraco, 2016).

ML is one of the fundamental ways of accelerating performance via human capital. The term refers both to a process of individual transformation and to a field of research that intersects education, management, sociology, organizational psychology (Harrison et al., 2007; Sonnentag et al., 2003). It is a branch of adult learning that refers to “any educational or developmental activity specifically designed to foster the professional growth and capability of persons in or being prepared for management and executive roles in organizations” (Swanson, 2022, p. 43) and, thus, considers a broad range of activities ranging from executive education to reading books about business. Though it is sometimes called management development (MD), management learning and education (MLE), management learning, education and development (MLED), management learning and development (MLD) or management education and development (MED) (Armstrong & Fukami, 2009; Guest & King, 2005; Swanson, 2022), in this thesis I simply use the term ML and associate a different definition to MD that will be defined at a later point. According to Sadler-Smith (2009), “learning is a longer-term change in the knowledge possessed by an individual, their type and level of skill, or their assumptions, attitudes or values, which may lead to them having increased potential to grow, develop and perform” (p. 4). Such change occurs through education, training and development, and could ultimately impact firm performance (Garavan, 1997; Mabey, 2004; Noe, 2023).

ML encompasses management education (ME), management training (MT), as well as management development (MD) (Anthony, 1986; Garavan, 1997; Guest & King, 2005; Noe, 2023). Broadly speaking, the three serve different objectives and vary in how management is learned. For starters, ME considers management learning that is formally provided by an academic institution; whether a business school, technical college or university. It seeks to prepare individuals to take on management roles by teaching relevant theory and skills for such work. On the other hand, MT is generally concerned with learning needed to perform a specific role and is typically managed by the employer. Training will vary according to the

manager's career stage and the organization's needs or expectations. In contrast to ME, MT has a performance paradigm, while ME has a learning paradigm and, thus, serves a different function (Antonacopoulou, 2001; Barrie & Wayne Pace, 1998). MD is a little bit of both; it embodies all the experiences that help managers grow and attain their full potential. It emphasizes both personal and professional development which can occur formally or informally (Anthony, 1986; K. Becker & Fish, 2017; Mabey, 2004; Sonnentag et al., 2003). Still, MD often takes place outside of formal programs and requires initiative from the learner. Joyce (1979) states: "all management development has to be self-development because no one can be developed without his active co-operation" (p.17). Some tend to group MT and MD to discuss management training and development (MTD) as a whole (Mabey, 2004) or discuss training and development (T&D) in the context of management personnel (Swanson, 2022). To better differentiate all these terminologies, Figure 1 below summarizes the three components of ML.

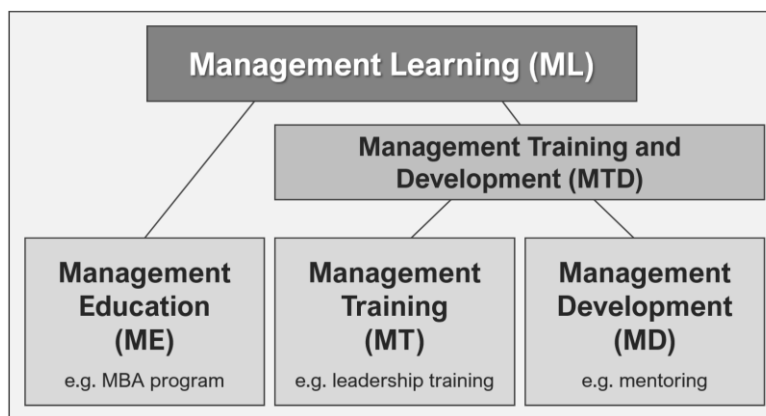


Figure 1 – Components of Management Learning Source: Adapted from Noe (2023)

Though some components of ML – such as MD – can occur informally through mentoring, on-the-job learning, stretch assignments or other practices, this dissertation mainly focuses on formal learning methods at a post-secondary level. Formal learning is characterized as being structured, having learning objectives (LOs), and methods of evaluation (Becker & Fish, 2017; Noe, 2023). It mainly includes education as well as training programs. Although formality commonly links ME and MT, training does not necessarily presuppose education (Barrie & Wayne Pace, 1998); "training must be supplemented by education, that is, by an understanding of the reasons and concepts which make training valuable in the first place" (Joullié, 2016a, p. 177).

It is important to take note of the various ways of referring to the formation of current or future managers. Since 'management' carries many names across the globe – whether 'business',

‘administration’, ‘business administration’, ‘economics’, ‘business economics’ or ‘commerce’ (Statler & Guillet De Monthoux, 2015) – some might discuss ML or its components with analogous expressions such as ‘business education’ (Colby, 2011; Guillet De Monthoux, 2015) or ‘commercial education’ (Shields, 1930). Others still discuss ‘management and leadership development’, ‘leadership development’ or ‘leadership studies’ indicating that ML could aspire to teach leadership competencies (Becker & Fish, 2017; Conger, 1993; Swanson, 2022). All these terminologies are used interchangeably to signal the formation of managers or future managers. Furthermore, it must be considered that there are some seemingly similar expressions that are *not* equivalent to the aforementioned words. For example, though ‘management studies’ denotes the study of the management field, this expression can be employed in two different contexts: it could either pertain to student learning or to research conducted by scholars who study management (Mir & Greenwood, 2021). Moreover, although some scholars discuss Organizational Learning (OL) in the context of individual learning, the concept itself extends far beyond ML and discusses learning on an organizational level. OL is viewed as a dynamic process of accumulating experience and knowledge to improve organizational performance (Crossan et al., 1995). “The knowledge could be embedded in a variety of repositories, including individuals, routines, and transactive memory systems” (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011, p. 1124). Thus, individual learning is a component of OL, but does not represent the totality of learning held by an organization.

ML has been described as “one of the most dynamic and thriving sectors of adult education” (Yiu & Saner, 2009, p. 531), estimated at several billion dollars (Day et al., 2021). It is a well-studied field with sure relevance for management academics and practitioners alike. This is evidenced by the great number of journals dedicated to advancing ML including the *Journal of Management Education*, *Management Learning*, the *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*, *Journal of Education for Business* and the *Journal of Management Development*. There is also a number of notable works such as the *SAGE Handbook of Management Learning, Education and Development* and the McGraw-Hill textbook on *Employee Training and Development* that outline key debates on ML matters (Armstrong & Fukami, 2009; Noe, 2023; Rynes & Brown, 2011).

In short, ML is an umbrella term which encompasses ME, MT and MD; but analogous expressions such as ‘business education’ will be used across this thesis to speak of ML as a whole. This thesis primarily emphasizes formal adult learning which consists mainly of MT and ME, but can also pertain to MD. Thus, these three forms of learning will be outlined in the sections that follow.

1.1. Management Training and Development (MTD)

A broad range of terminology is used to discuss MTD; whether training, employee development, human resource development (HRD), learning and development (L&D), management development, learning at work, performance improvement, career development, coaching, continuous education or continued management learning (Sadler-Smith, 2009; Sonnentag et al., 2003; Swanson, 2022; Yiu & Saner, 2009). Many use these words interchangeably, but there are some nuances to consider. For instance, human resources development (HRD) – formally defined in 1964 – is a branch of Human Resources Management (HRM) concerned with organizational development (OD) as well as training and development (T&D). Although its T&D function seeks to improve “the expertise of individuals, teams, work processes, and the overall organization” (Swanson, 2022, p. 14), HRD is a broader concept than MTD as it regards a wider spectrum of personnel, not restricted to those in management. Still, MTD too is a rather expansive notion; it is an umbrella term for both MT and MD activities which is being employed more frequently due to blurring boundaries between training and development (Sadler-Smith, 2009; Winterton, 2009). The differences between both forms of learning will be clarified in ensuing paragraphs.

Generally, training aims to improve performance in current or imminent jobs, whereas development seeks to improve performance in future jobs. In other words, they vary in their aims: MT seeks to address current employer or job demands while MD seeks to grow managers for the long-term by equipping them with new skills to open more opportunities (Sonnentag et al., 2003).

Yiu and Saner (2009) are among many scholars who highlight the importance of MTD: “acquisition of knowledge and skills through formal management education (initial formal education at MBA schools) is no longer sufficient for future managers to ensure successful careers and adequate performance at the job site for the remaining years of their work life” (p.531). Although a general trend shows that the average investment into MTD per employee is rising, the amount and type of MTD received by employees depends on company strategy and could vary according to characteristics of their organization (Noe, 2023). Organizations are sometimes concerned whether there can be a return on the money invested into MTD (Antonacopoulou, 2001) and, thus, are careful when approach the training and development of managers. Below I will explain the specificities of MT and MD in relation to learning.

1.1.1 Management Training (MT)

One rarely starts a career equipped with all the skills and knowledge needed for their entire professional life. As managers' roles evolve throughout their career, demands change, and the skills needed to perform work inevitably alter accordingly (Noe, 2023; Sonnentag et al., 2003). To address this challenge, training bridges the gap between what a manager knows and does and what a manager needs to know and do. This means that MT is an intentional way of moulding management personnel: "it is concerned with a tactical approach to the acquisition of predefined knowledge and skills" (Sadler-Smith, 2009, pp. 5–6). In other words, MT comprises of formal and scheduled activities that lead to ML (e.g. Harrison, 2005) and requires "a planned effort by a company to facilitate learning of job-related competencies, knowledge, skills, and behaviours by employees" (Noe, 2023, p. 7). Training is therefore more instrumental than education: it has narrow goals, is application-driven and job-centric, ultimately seeking to develop expertise (Garavan, 1997; Sadler-Smith, 2009). Trainings are designed to achieve specific outcomes that, in the end, seek to produce learning that transfers to a work environment (Barrie & Wayne Pace, 1998; Van Der Locht et al., 2013).

This implies a performance dimension to MT. Some would say that training is effective to the extent that it contributes to improved on-the-job performance because the goal of training, after all, is to contribute to the organization (Antonacopoulou, 2001; Graham & Mihal, 1986). MT in particular has potential to generate impact because managers occupy influential roles that weigh more in organizations (Podolny, 2009).

Generally, off-the-job training is more current than on-the-job training; meaning that formal training approaches prevail. MT can be provided by higher education institutions (HEI), adult education institutions, consulting firms, private companies or individual service providers. The service provider determines whether trainings classify as internal or external. Internal trainings are delivered 'in-house' by organizations whereas external ones are hosted by a third party. In the 1970s, some scholars documented a tendency for companies to opt for internal rather than external training. Then, as MT popularized, it became financially viable for organizations to develop in-house capabilities to train their people. In the 1990s, 'corporate universities' entered the scene as internal, firm-specific training programs. Examples of these include 'Motorola University', 'Disney University' and 'McDonald's Hamburger University'. Today, internal training is especially popular in countries like Norway and Germany. Contrastingly, in the UK, the standard practice is to opt for external training (Crainer & Dearlove, 1999; Joyce, 1979; Mabey, 2004; Mintzberg, 2004; Noe, 2023; Penn et al., 1998; Yiu & Saner, 2009).

Since the 1980s, it has become common for HRM professionals to adopt competency-based approaches in MT. As per human capital theory, these seek to build individual capacity to perform a job (Antonacopoulou & FitzGerald, 1996; Dejoux, 2013; Szczepańska-Woszczyna, 2020; Van Der Yeught et al., 2013). According to the well-known psychologist McClelland (1973), competencies extend beyond skills to further consider a person's knowledge, traits, motives and behaviours. In other words, MT intends to grow “employment-related skills, knowledge, or attitudes of workers to achieve the goals and objectives of the company” (Gutterman, 2023, p. 1). Ultimately, competency development could expand organizations' intangible resources and leads to better performance at work (Boyatzis, 2008).

Still, even if training is successful and results in more competent managers, Sadler-Smith (2009) believes that MT is not enough:

“To concern ourselves solely with training is too narrow a view since for one thing it may focus too much upon the learning content (i.e. the subject of the particular training) but may ignore learning processes (i.e. how the content is acquired) and also may overlook the unplanned, incidental, informal and implicit learning that is inevitable in any organizational or social context” (p. 6).

Based on this comment, MD could potentially serve as a counterpart to address some of the limitations of MT. This sub-component of ML will be explained in the next segment.

1.1.2. Management Development (MD)

MD is a sub-component of ML which recognizes that managers' growth cannot be traced down to any specific activity, event or institution; their 'development' can happen anywhere and anytime whether through podcasts, informal discussions, life experiences, or trainings of any sort. Thus, MD admits that a wide variety of avenues can potentially add value to an individual and one does not need to collect credits or certificates to develop as a manager (Armstrong & Fukami, 2009; Garavan, 1997; Winterton, 2009). That said, according to Noe (2023): “development refers to formal education, job experiences, relationships, and assessments of personality and skills that help employees for the future. Because it is future-oriented, it involves learning that is not necessarily related to the employee's current job” (p. 377).

Evident work-applicability of an experience is not essential – instead, MD is oriented towards individual growth: “development focuses more on the learner than on her learning per se” (Garavan, 1997, p. 40) and the occupation is not as important as the human behind it

(Antonacopoulou, 2001; Sadler-Smith, 2009; Winterton, 2009). Nevertheless, MD is a career management tool that can be used to expand competence, but also accepts less formal approaches as a pathway towards development (Graham & Mihal, 1986; Guest & King, 2005; Temporal, 1990). This implies that it is not necessary to study management to grow as a manager, and learning can take place in non-educational settings (Armstrong & Fukami, 2009; Crainer & Dearlove, 1999). Swanson (2022) comments: “the idea of human beings purposefully developing themselves to improve the conditions in which they live is almost part of human nature” (p. 3).

MD is typically characterized as a process: “it is not a single event, or even a series of events, but a continuous process of many activities, events and experiences that never actually ceases” (Temporal, 1990, p. 8). It can occur by happenstance via unplanned experiences or more intentionally via management development programs (Sadler-Smith, 2009). MD is also defined as the overall evolution in competencies taking place in a manager’s career: “development is an increase over the longer term of the capacity that an individual has to live a more effective and fulfilling professional and personal life as a result of learning and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is a directional shift towards a higher condition or state of being and in this sense is concerned with an outcome” (idem, 2009, p. 10).

Confusingly, some refer to MD when referring to ML (e.g. Guest & King, 2005), but in this thesis these two terms are discussed as distinct concepts. ML mainly consists of acquiring management competencies or learning about management, while MD consists of learning made by managers which *could* be about management or other matters. Additionally, there are overlaps between MD and HRD, but MD strictly focuses on managers, not other personnel (Sadler-Smith, 2009).

Generally, there is more literature on training than on development (Sonnentag et al., 2003), but this does not indicate that one form of learning is more pertinent than the other. MD is “a widely recognized strategy for improving an organization’s effectiveness” (Graham & Mihal, 1986, p. 57) and it is assumed that managerial growth could be positive for organizations. However, MD does not always bring about benefits for a firm nor does it necessarily translate into desirable behavioural changes: “there has been growing concern that there may have been too much focus on developing managers and not enough emphasis on improving the quality of management” (Guest & King, 2005, p. 238). To maximize efficiency, researchers recommend linking MD plans to business plans (Graham & Mihal, 1986). Moreover, since it is not so easy to track the development of managers, some opt for more formalized learning

approaches; ME being most common. Thus, I will now detail what ME consists of and how it emerged.

1.2 Management Education (ME)

ME – sometimes referred to as ‘management studies’ or ‘higher education in business’ – refers to formal learning about business, economics, and management in the context of higher education (HE) (Armstrong & Fukami, 2009; Swanson, 2022). It “transfers theoretical knowledge, nurtures managerial talents for enterprises big and small, and influences successful business practices and public policies” (Li et al., 2005, p. 3). This presupposes a certain degree of formality in the process: “this type of learning is usually provided in organized, time-bounded and structured programs” (Armstrong & Fukami, 2009, p. 2).

Educational programs can be short or long, full-time or part-time, in-person or online (Engwall, 2007). They can also occur at different stages of one’s life:

“education (including vocational education) often takes place pre-employment, but also may continue during employment with employer support (for example, as part of a company-sponsored management development program) or without the sanctioning and support of the employer (for example, where an individual undertakes self-development activities that may or may not be work-related or career-related)” (Sadler-Smith, 2009, p. 13).

ME can also occur on the secondary level, but this thesis solely focuses on HE delivery of ME. Differently from MT, ME does not have a job focus but is rather geared towards transmitting management theories or concepts regardless of whether they will be utilized (Garavan, 1997). Chia (2009) refers to this as ‘formal knowledge’ implying a distinction in the types of knowledge taught via different ML variants. For example, informal MTD is likely to transmit tacit management knowledge whereas “formal education is believed to result in the acquisition of explicit or declarative knowledge” (Armstrong & Fukami, 2009, p. 2). To obtain this knowledge, there are rather few requirements; unlike medical or law school, ME is relatively accessible to all and rarely requires competitive entrance requirements (Engwall, 2007).

Moreover, since most ME takes place in business schools – which are also called ‘b-schools’ (e.g. Statler, 2014) – they are central to ML. These schools are “places where management training takes place” (Spillane & Joullié, 2015, p. 317). They are a *lieu* of socialization for current or future managers which influences their career paths and opportunities. Traditionally,

their role was to disseminate knowledge and to teach people how to 'get things done'. With the advent of university-based business schools and other educational institutions, this role has effectively evolved from transmitting knowledge to also creating knowledge (Benner, 2017; Boyatzis et al., 2002; Davoine & Schmid, 2022; Taylor, 2019). Now, "business schools are usually understood as organizations and workplaces engaged in the pursuit through research and the dissemination of knowledge through teaching and outreach activities" (Huzzard et al., 2017, p. xi).

Business education has been around since a long time; some trace its history back to 1759 when the Aula do Comércio (School of Commerce) opened its doors to commerce students in Lisbon, Portugal (Schlegelmilch, 2020). However, the École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris (ESCP) – founded in Paris in 1819 – is often considered to be the world's first modern business school (Deslandes, 2019; Passant et al., 2017; Spillane & Joullié, 2015). Its institution marks the beginning of the 'Founding Period' of business education; an epoch of 125 years during which ME was inaugurated – initially outside the realms of universities (Kaplan, 2014). The major industrial powers of the time – France, UK, Germany and the USA – each developed their own vocational school system to teach skills ranging from finance to sales. Those 'business schools' varied conceptually across cultures; each had their own philosophy towards forming managers, in spite of attempts to adopt like-minded approaches across nations (Davoine, 1997; Thomas, 2013).

This period was dominated by three educational models; each inspired by different traditions and pedagogical methods. The first model – called the 'Southern' or 'Latin' business school model – originated in France and was propagated throughout Belgium and Italy. It promoted theory, practice, and an international mindset through emphasis on language learning, geographical and historical knowledge. The second model was the 'Northern European' or 'German' model which – as the name indicates – emerged from Germany and spread to Nordic countries. Though it also favoured languages, the general approach was more academic in comparison to Latin schools. Germanic schools offered a wide array of courses whether law, commodities, science or economics which soon became a staple of what was named the 'science of business administration'. Moreover, since 1881 – a date which corresponds with the founding of the Wharton School of Finance and Economy at the University of Pennsylvania, the first business school in North America – a third model came about: the 'US' or 'American' model. Contrarily to the European business schools, the American ones did not have an international dimension and omitted language instruction. They taught business and finance classes, but were met with great skepticism from those who did not perceive management as

an academic field. These three models shaped the beginnings of management education and were the first exemplars of how business schools approach ML (Davoine & Ravasi, 2013; Engwall, 2007; Kaplan, 2014; Klarsfeld & Mabey, 2004; Mintzberg, 2004; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002; Starkey & Tempest, 2008; Starkey & Tiratsoo, 2007).

After World War II, ME underwent another historical phase called the ‘Assimilation Period’ which spans until today. It is characterized by three main pillars: (1) the ‘Americanization’ of business schools, (2) the ‘legitimization’ of management as a science, and (3) the introduction of b-school rankings (Kaplan, 2014). It is important to review these evolutions to understand the current state of ME. To begin, though Europeans were first to inaugurate formal ME establishments, American business schools developed more quickly than their international counterparts; mostly due to wealthy donors who provided substantial financing for them to grow. That said, by the mid-1900s, US schools were widely considered as best-in-class institutions. All eyes turned to America to see how they were teaching and leading business schools, as they served as a benchmark for the rest of the world (Starkey & Tiratsoo, 2007; Thomas, 2013). The prominence of these schools initiated a phase of ‘Americanization’ that consisted of adopting US-inspired practices across ME institutions. For example, case studies and textbooks became standard learning instruments. It also became common to hire American professors in non-American business schools, and the flagship American program – the Master of Business Administration (MBA) – was exported to other continents. Additionally, countless US-inspired business schools – tainted with American business values – were established in Europe and other parts of the world; such as INSEAD, IMD, ESADE and IESE. There remained, of course, those who resisted ‘Americanization’, but it took root under sustained pressure (Juusola et al., 2015; Kaplan, 2014; Khurana & Penrice, 2011; Starkey & Tiratsoo, 2007).

In the same era, ME engaged in a collective effort to legitimize management as a ‘scientific’ discipline. This occurred after two organizations – the Carnegie Corporation and the Ford Foundation – funded two significant studies about the state of management education. After identifying a range of issues pertaining to ME quality, many voices reverberated the importance of raising business school standards. A new narrative was supplied – that management had the potential to become a legitimate profession – comparable to medicine or law – that could produce knowledge and contribute to the common good of society (Pierson, 1959). At the time, it became more common to speak of the ‘science of management’ or of ‘administrative sciences’. Curricula were adjusted to be more rigorous as a way to counter those who still

viewed management as a trade or vocational program. This strong ambition also motivated the integration of b-schools into universities.

Though university-based business schools already existed in some countries, many had been standalone institutions until that point in time. Many academics resisted these mergers, but it did not prevent the eventual emergence of university-business schools. This integration expanded ME's scope from knowledge dissemination to knowledge production. In other words, research became an integral component of the mission statement of ME and this is still the case today. This is why university-based business schools are sometimes called 'research-based business schools'. Consequently to all this, b-schools started placing emphasis on theory over application and schools started hiring academics over practitioners (Engwall, 2007; Kaplan, 2014; Khurana & Penrice, 2011; Locke & Spender, 2011). Such strategic choice came with certain benefits; most importantly, it allowed ME to be part of larger "forums for intellectual exchange and encourage cross-fertilization among academic disciplines" (Harrison et al., 2007, p. 332).

To ensure a successful 'academization' of business schools, accreditation bodies were tasked with monitoring quality. In 1916, an American accreditation system called Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) was put in place. Its purpose was to systematize ME by ensuring consistent standards across business schools. A similar concept was put in place to monitor MBA programs; in 1967, the Association of MBAs (AMBA) was born and then, in 1997, the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) was founded to overlook norms in Europe. As business schools multiplied, competition amplified and international ranking systems were established to set apart 'good' schools from the 'best' ones (Kaplan, 2014; Kleiman & Kass, 2007). All these efforts were made to help management rise *au-delà* the perception that business is just a trade; to establish solid grounds via respectable ME.

Today, the ME landscape is very complex:

"there is a myriad of different [business] schools: private and public, self-standing and embedded in larger universities, theoretically oriented and managerially oriented, religious and secular, small and large, degree awarding and nondegree awarding, with executive education and without executive education" (Schlegelmilch, 2020, p. 100).

Most commonly, these schools provide 'academic' and 'commercial' programs; the latter can be segregated into public and custom programs whereas the former include undergraduate,

graduate and post-graduate education resulting in bachelor, master, doctoral, executive education and certificate programs. These educational levels partially result from the Bologna Accord – concluded in 1999 to standardize HE in Europe (Crainer & Dearlove, 1999). It is also important to note that, despite the variety of programs that exist, the MBA remains a staple of ME. Traditionally, such a degree is a two-year program if followed on a full-time basis. However, one-year MBA programs also exist, as do part-time programs, online MBAs, executive MBAs, and MBAs with specializations – whether in design management, luxury brand management or church management. They can also be customized for a specific employer to cater towards a company's needs (idem, 1999; Datar et al., 2011). Generally, “as companies acquire more influence over content, we also find more programs that are part-time, concentrated or at-a-distance” (Engwall, 2007, p. 27). There are countless options that exist to address the demand of highly sought-after ME.

In fact, the demand for ME is incomparable to other types of education. Today, around one fourth of freshmen choose to study business (Guillet De Monthoux, 2015) and “business schools are one of the most influential institutions in contemporary society” (Morsing & Rovira, 2011, p. xviii). The prevalence and significance of these schools justify the substantial scholarly attention they receive. They are subject to close scrutiny and notable criticism which will be the topic of my next chapter.

Chapter 1 sets the stage for this doctoral dissertation; it defines ML and identifies three types of learning methods: training, development and education. MT is oriented towards improving performance in a management job. MD is concerned with unlocking potential; it focuses on a manager's overall growth regardless of whether this impacts work performance. ME is management-related learning occurring in formal HE settings; MBA programs being well-known examples of this type of ML (Garavan, 1997; Mabey, 2004; Noe, 2023). In addition to defining these basic terms, this chapter also included the history of ME. This was needed to provide context; it explains why business programs are as they are and clarifies some regional differences in ML approaches (Davoine, 1997; Davoine & Ravasi, 2013; Starkey & Tempest, 2008). I also introduced the notion of a competency-based approach towards learning (Dejoux, 2013). Lastly, I described ‘human capital theory’ (Becker, 1975) so to justify the relevance of ML. According to this theory, investing into manager learning could leave lasting impacts on organizations.

Chapter 2 – Critical Perspectives of Management Learning

After defining ML and its three forms – ME, MT and MD – I will now present the polemic against it. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (2011), “there’s something wrong with the way B-schools, companies, and leaders are developing managers” (p.3). Mintzberg and Gosling (2002) believe a radical revision of ML is necessary whereas Guillet de Monthoux (2015) thinks business schools need to ‘wake up’, while Friedland and Jain (2022) say that ML is going through an ‘existential crisis’. Yet these are not new ideas – already 60 years ago, both the Carnegie and Ford reports raised ranges of ML issues needing to be addressed (Pierson, 1959).

Business programs are said to be too quantitative, technical, and they place too little emphasis on developing ‘soft skills’. This results in an obvious deficiency in critical thinking, conceptual thinking, moral reasoning, leadership and communication competencies (Braun, 2004; Muff, 2012; Podolny, 2009; Small, 2004a; Woiceshyn, 1992). Additionally, there is a lack of congruence between what is taught and what is practiced in the business world; management concepts are taught in schools, but management practice is omitted. In fact, Gosling and Mintzberg (2004) say: “managing is treated like your first kiss – you are supposed to figure it out, usually with about the same consequences” (p.156). Ultimately, ML is not sufficiently concerned with teaching managers to be effective at their work (Bilimoria, 2000; Grey, 2002) and Ghoshal (2005) thinks “managers cannot be trusted to do their jobs” (p.75). Thus, employers are dissatisfied, learners are disappointed, and managers continue to lack the competencies needed to navigate increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) conditions (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). To make matters worse, graduates are misled into thinking they are competent when they are not (Collinson & Tourish, 2015). They also tend to believe that HE will boost their careers whereas, in reality, Pfeffer and Fong (2002) discovered that business schools are not necessarily a stepping stone towards a higher salary or better managerial position. For those reasons, more and more scholars are pronouncing themselves on these issues.

On the other hand, some might argue that management practice is not failing because managers do not seem to be lacking anything in their work (Claes & Preston, 2009). Yet, according to (Small, 2004a):

“they may appear to possess all the external trappings and superficialities necessary in business, but if they lack a sense of trust, justice, honesty, integrity,

and other moral values, or they lack the strength of will to act morally in their business dealings, their success is likely to be short-lived” (p.194).

From another perspective, Schwandt (2005) suggested that perhaps ML is not quite the problem; rather the true problem could lie in overly-high expectations towards managers. Yet such reasoning is implausible due to the seriousness of the management profession; “[graduates] occupy positions with enormous responsibility that have a huge impact on society, [and] their ability to do harm is very great” (Podolny, 2009, p.66). In line with this thinking, expectations towards managers should not change; instead curricula need to improve to better equip managers to assume their responsibilities.

Thus, in this chapter, I will investigate the criticism oriented at ML. In sections 2.1 to 2.3, I will highlight three main points of concern; the organizations and individuals who deliver ML, the LOs and curricular content, as well as the didactics and methods employed to transmit learning. Afterwards, I will expound several remedies proposed to address ML shortfalls to also shed clarity on potential future directions of business learning.

2.1 Management Instructors and Institutions

Many scholars condemn the institutions and instructors responsible for transferring ML. There is an especially significant amount of critique oriented towards ME; business school institutions are said to be ‘sleepwalking’ and professors are discredited for lacking professional experience (Crainer & Dearlove, 1999; Podolny, 2009). Yet critics also point fingers at MTD; trainers lack theoretical knowledge and the local insights needed to be relevant (Analoui, 1994). Though not all scholars equate ML shortcomings with the deficiencies of institutions and instructors (e.g. Roca, 2008), there are considerable vantage points worth noting. In this next part, I will explain why scholars condemn the institutions and instructors accountable for ML.

2.1.1 Institutions: Corporatization, Globalization and Americanization

The ‘corporatization’ of business schools refers to the commercialization of ML programs and market-driven approach towards operating them (Benner, 2017; Boje & Al Arkoubi, 2009). Business schools – more than any other establishment – have been accused of being ‘money-grabbing institutions’ that turned learning into a big business (Ghoshal, 2005; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). Their commodification pushed them to become consumer-oriented; students are treated as customers who need to be satisfied for the business to keep running (Franz, 1998;

Starkey et al., 2004). To attract more of these ‘customers’, there is a “sustained pressure in business schools to adopt a teaching curriculum and pedagogical approach that appears immediately relevant to the perceived needs of practitioners” (Harrison et al., 2007, p. 332). As a result, learner expectations mold ML curricula and “we find business schools enslaved to their clients’ demand” (Roca, 2008, p. 608).

Scholars further highlight how money-making can be a distraction from LOs (Atkinson et al., 1987; Guillet De Monthoux, 2015). Importance is placed on school branding and ranking to ensure continuous enrolment rates – but is equal importance placed on quality? While schools have evolved to appear more theoretically ‘serious’, many are concerned that they are nothing more than vocational schools that have been glorified and marketed to seem grandiose (Muff, 2012; Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010). They remain part of university ecosystems because it builds on the image they wish to uphold and because universities also have a lot to gain from such arrangement. In fact, business departments have more profit potential and lower maintenance costs than other university departments such as engineering or medicine. They are appreciated – not because of the knowledge they produce and transfer – but because of the money they bring in. They are ‘cash cows’ for universities (Podolny, 2009; Starkey & Tempest, 2008).

On another note, although there are different approaches towards learning across cultures (Evans et al., 1990; Klarsfeld & Mabey, 2004; Mabey, 2004), it seems that business programs readily teach the same content all over the world. The industrialization and Americanization of business schools – described in Chapter 1 – contributed to the globalization of ML, rooted in Western culture (Crainer & Dearlove, 1999; Juusola et al., 2015). Yet Khurana and Penrice (2011) believe that the American model is outdated in today’s day and age and that, at this point, European business schools would be better off setting a global standard – if there were to be a standard as such. Still, any universal model is problematic as it would not grasp or address the management challenges inherent to different geographies or contexts. Institutional, cultural, macro-economic, national and sectorial variables need to be accounted for in ML (Li et al., 2005; Li-Hua & Lu, 2014; Mabey, 2004).

2.1.2 Instructors: Academics and Practitioners

There is a lot of scrutiny towards those who teach business – particularly in ME contexts. Yet trainers also get convicted of possessing inadequate backgrounds for ML. The main tension arises from an imbalance between individuals’ theoretical knowledge and practical experience

(e.g. Crainer & Dearlove, 1999; Shields, 1930). Yet there are more challenges which I will unravel.

Most typically, business schools employ academics – rather than practitioners – to teach business courses (Dent & Fearon, 2024; Monks & Walsh, 2001). Since the 1950-1960s, in the aforementioned quest of legitimatizing ME, business school faculty were expected to have doctorates so to produce knowledge via research in addition to their teaching duties. However, since management doctorates did not yet exist, they were trained in other fields such as sociology or economics (Khurana & Penrice, 2011; Mitroff et al., 2015). Therefore, originally, the majority of these professors had no theoretical background in management. Today, management professors are more likely to have doctoral degrees in business, but may still lack formal links to the business world. Admittedly, few business schools require professional experience from their faculty (Crainer & Dearlove, 1999; Muff, 2012; Podolny, 2009). Monks and Walsh (2001) criticize this: “such academics may never have set foot into the world of business and may show very little interest in its activities” (p. 149). They are said to be disconnected, ‘out of touch’ and irrelevant to the upraising of managers. Though theory-driven instructors might be teaching ‘business’, they are not teaching ‘how to do business’ (Mintzberg, 2008). For those reasons, increasing numbers of stakeholders value those who previously held industry roles: “faculty members from practice bring a wealth of business experience that enriches both faculty research and classroom learning” (Datar et al., 2011, pp. 459–460). Nevertheless, experience alone also seems insufficient for teaching business; instructors with professional backgrounds get criticized most often for being atheoretical or for lacking credibility to transfer their experiences in a university setting. Yet, these points of contempt also transpose to MTD settings, making it unclear as to what makes a trainer legitimate to deliver training.

Among the uncountable self-employed workers who self-identity as trainers across the globe, how can one evaluate whether they are competent enough to facilitate ML? Some efforts have been made to legitimize certain types of trainers. For instance, there are ‘Train-the-Trainer’ programs that offer certificates once they are completed (Georgy, 2024), and the International Coach Federation (ICF) certifies ‘coaches’ to give this profession more credibility (George, 2013). Still, many MTD trainers are seen as counterfeit or insufficiently qualified to take on the roles of ML instructors.

It does not help that trainers and professors typically get evaluated by learners. Though feedback can be constructive, extensive literature shows that it influences teaching behaviours (Ahmadi et al., 2001). Since it is important for them to get positive assessments, sometimes it

pays to avoid being ‘tough’ or ‘dull’, and to approach ML as entertainment rather than learning. Guillet De Monthoux (2015) calls this ‘edutainment’. “All too often, business professors are rewarded for their presentational skills rather than the quality of their thinking – or ideas” (Crainer & Dearlove, 1999, p. 79). Numerous instructors also lack training in didactics; faculty are rarely taught to teach and trainers are rarely taught to train (Greenberg et al., 2007; Pont, 1991). They rarely formulate teaching philosophies and select didactic approaches based on intuition (Beatty et al., 2020).

2.2 Learning Objectives, Content and Curriculum

Countless authors agree that business program contents and LOs need to be carefully reconsidered (Graham & Mihal, 1986; Muff, 2012). As seen in Chapter 1, while the management field evolved over the years, the purpose of ML fluctuated accordingly. Critical actors, historical events and dominant schools of thought expanded ML’s scope towards a mission of advancing disciplinary research in addition to transmitting business notions. Yet what managers are taught is not in line with management practice and has resulted in a myriad of poorly-formed managers (Ghoshal, 2005; Hay & Hodgkinson, 2008; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). Accordingly, the aims and ambitions of ML have become the object of massive critique; some question the way professional success is defined and measured (Friedland & Jain, 2022), others inquire about the learning orientation of programs (Bilimoria, 2000; Grey, 2002).

One of the most criticized issues in ML relates to ‘what’ is being taught to managers. ML content is regularly reproached for its static nature and unclear relevance. It also fails to emphasize the competencies that are most needed by employers (Muff, 2012; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002; Saarinen, 2008; Spillane & Joullié, 2015). Due to the wide variety of content embedded into curricula, courses rarely go in depth and constrain themselves to introductory levels of learning (Errington & Bubna-Litic, 2015). They are not future-oriented; in the best case scenario, ML responds to the latest learning needs, but rarely does it adopt a forward-looking approach that focuses on emerging requirements (Dehler & Welsh, 2014; Temporal, 1990). There is also much controversy over how content is chosen for a program or curriculum:

“the choice of subjects taught on any management education program is not necessarily based on any objective assessment of what managers might need to know. It is much more likely to be based on the skills and knowledge available within the business schools in which most postgraduate education takes place” (Monks & Walsh, 2001, p.148).

ML heavily emphasizes quantitative analysis over judgment and soft skills. That which is rational and functional overshadows that which is right or beautiful (Bouilloud, 2023; Sadler-Smith, 2009), while that which is reflective, wise or develops an ethical mindset is nearly entirely omitted from ML (Segal, 2022; Small, 2004a, 2004b).

2.2.1 Problematic Content: False Theories and Paradigms

Gosling and Mintzberg (2003) believe that management programs are full of contradictions: “be global, managers are told, and be local. Collaborate, and compete. Change, perpetually, and maintain order. Make the numbers while nurturing your people. How is anyone supposed to reconcile all this?” (para. 3). It seems that some of the biggest contradictions stem from the content transmitted in ME and MTD programs (Antonacopoulou & FitzGerald, 1996). Not only is it saturated with theories of no practical relevance, but these theories are not necessarily grounded on strong foundations nor acceptable premises. They are sometimes even called ‘folkloric’ and proclaimed guilty of transmitting conventional wisdom (Mintzberg, 2004; Zald, 1996).

The ML industry broadly embraces a scientific paradigm which is widely disapproved of and said to be restricting (Deslandes, 2017; Fontrodona & Melé, 2002; Ghoshal, 2005; Statler & Guillet De Monthoux, 2015). When business programs rose to prominence during the ‘Assimilation period’ described in Chapter 1, they strategically adopted this paradigm for business theories to appear more factual. “The transmitted models had to be morally and politically neutral, because they were grounded on the methodology and rationality of the natural sciences” (Roca, 2008, p. 608). Management was profusely looking for acceptance as a field and tinged all its content with a seemingly sensible premise. This in itself is not a concern; “the problem is not that business schools have embraced scientific rigor but that they have forsaken other forms of knowledge” (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005, p.102). The underlying paradigms in management schools exclude some types of knowledge and “the schools of thought that underlie today’s business research and education, empiricism and pragmatism, are both anti-reason” (Woiceshyn, 1992, p.79). In his well-cited paper ‘*Bad Management Theories Are Destroying Good Management Practices*’, Ghoshal (2005) testifies to the countless management theories that are based on incorrect assumptions. Business programs are largely normative, meaning that they are focused on how things should be (Morsing & Rovira, 2011). As a consequence of having erroneous premises, numerous business models are invalid. Management communities are more attentive to this matter and, by now,

“managers, CEO’s and academics alike are thirsty for a new paradigm through which to interpret our rapidly evolving global culture” (Segal, 2005, p.31).

The repercussions of such premises are not inconsequential. ML is sometimes said to promote misconceptions about the business world and has been accused of ‘dumbing down’ content (Smith & Rönnegard, 2016; Starkey & Tempest, 2005). It has also been said to promote overly simplistic theories that do not capture the complexity of certain concepts (Bouilloud, 2023; Cunha et al., 2004). For instance, ML has been accused of pigeonholing and labelling managers based on their personality type or learning style. However, in reality, such tests nor define nor capture the complex and changing nature of humans – and many criticize their validity (Gold & Holman, 2001). Though it is not necessarily wrong to teach such theories to business people, it is wrong to neglect delineating their boundaries. This example illustrates a common critique of ML content: “business schools often failed to emphasize the limitations of the theories they taught” (Datar et al., 2011, p. 456). Roca (2008) also believes that “as future managers, students should be aware of the limitations of the techniques they learn” (p. 614) while Joullié (2014) attests that “one really knows a concept or a theory when one understands where it starts and where it stops, in other words when one is able to argue against it” (p.206). According to these academics, business programs need to be more transparent about the frontiers of content.

Since ML promotes a solution-oriented mindset, managers often expect to be provided with formulas or techniques that serve as instant solutions to business problems. They presume they will acquire vocabulary or theories that will inform or justify their actions and decisions (Deslandes, 2016, 2017). They are appealed by numbered steps or recipes publicized in mainstream writings that make it appear as though ‘7 habits’ or ‘3 steps to success’ can, if followed, unlock pathways to business achievements (Blake, 2012; Covey, 2004). Many scholars think it is wrong to prescribe ‘magic formulas’ in ML: “the five forces and other generic frameworks for problem solving are heuristics. They can lead one to solutions but they cannot alone make you think” (Karodia, 2013, p. 2512). It is also unsuitable for “the discussion of cases [to be] terminated by being handed the ‘right’ answers by the professor” (Atkinson et al., 1987, p. 20). Such ‘spoon-feeding’ is futile (Dehler & Welsh, 2014). Besides, “no one ever has the answer” (Mintzberg, 2005, p. 245) to any business case since, in reality, management involves a lot of intuition, instinct and uncertainty. The ‘correct’ course of action depends on a myriad of factors. Management does not have any clear cut solutions – every situation is characterized by idiosyncrasy. Business school theories are not generalizable and should be approached with reservation (Cameron et al., 2003; Ghoshal, 2005; Segal, 2004). Still, they

are propagated via ML and pretend like there is a 'correct' and 'scientific' way to do things (Crainer & Dearlove, 1999; Segal, 2004). This is in part due to a predominating technicist approach to learning which views management "as a rational, scientific and morally neutral activity in which managers achieve their aims by applying objective knowledge and scientific techniques to a fairly concrete reality" (Gold & Holman, 2001, p. 385). With the rise of contingency theory – which states that there is no 'one approach' towards management that is superior – a technicist paradigm is incompatible with ML and several academics judge it as inappropriate (Joyce, 1979; Mabey, 2004).

ML is also said to be dogmatic and politicized (Ghoshal, 2005; Li-Hua & Lu, 2014). There are some broad tenets that impregnate management theories and content: "managers are often fed a diet of highly ideological imperatives [...] which, more often than not, mask the complexities and ambiguities of lived managerial experiences" (Chia & Morgan, 1996, p.39). For example, "managerialism is an ideology of performativity (work until you drop), efficiency (people defined as expendable resources), and commitment to short-term, bottom-line decision criteria" (Boje & Al Arkoubi, 2009, p. 104). This idea is presented to managers from one angle; other perspectives are not juxtaposed or presented to learners. Managers could complete the highest level of ML without hearing alternative views of managing. Chia and Morgan (1996) also believe "the ideological agendas of specific individual academics often take priority over the educational concerns of students" (p.39) whereas Cameron et al. (2003) worry that management textbooks promote propaganda.

2.2.2 Quantitative Focus: Analysis over Judgment

On another note, management programs are criticized for being too quantitative and obsessed with 'numbers' (Bouilloud & Deslandes, 2020; Podolny, 2009; Spillane & Joullié, 2015). This 'quantitative' approach towards management emerged in the 1940s under the influence of the scientific management movement (Joyce, 1979). "For people in that immediate postwar generation, numbers implied objectivity and accuracy. They were led to think, erroneously, that decisions based on numbers would be independent of the observer or of mere opinion" (Locke & Spender, 2011, p.xiii). Consequently, ML contains courses such as statistics, mathematics, finance and accounting that teach 'hard' skills and analytical thinking. Managers are taught to inform their decisions with data which is seen to be neutral and objective. It is little wonder that there are so many organizations nowadays that lean towards evidence-based management techniques (Greenwood et al., 2016; Procópio, 2019; Roca, 2008). Decisions based on

quantitative analysis can be tempting and presented as ‘unbiased’ but they fundamentally exclude critical decision variables and intuition.

As a result of instilling such mindset in business students, Woiceshyn (1992) complains about the ‘robots’, ‘management technicians’ and ‘number crunchers’ produced by ML, while Bouilloud and Deslandes (2020) comment on the ‘calculocracy’ that took over organizations. These reproaches are not meant to attack the value or benefits of quantitative analysis; they merely point out its limitations. There is no lack of scholars – such as Luc de Brabandere, a mathematician – who defend the importance of rigour in managerial decision-making, but believe it cannot be obtained with numbers alone (Auger, 2021). They believe ML needs to focus less on analysis and more on judgment. Non-visible and non-analyzable variables need to be considered even if quantitative techniques cannot capture them (Bouilloud, 2011; Mintzberg, 2004; Statler & Guillet De Monthoux, 2015). What is missing in ML is an ability to rely on reason: “the study of management has lost something over the years. That ‘something’ is the ability of management scholars to think and reason philosophically about their discipline” (Goldman, 2009, p.41).

2.2.3 Functional Approach: Compartmentalization over Integration

Another ML critique targets the functional approach to teaching business; management learners study a variety of subject matters – such as human resources, accounting, supply chain and information systems. In doing so, they attain a rudimentary understanding of business functions, but are rarely taught to make connections between different knowledge areas. Marketing is taught on Mondays, law is taught on Wednesdays, but at which point do learners bridge relevant topics such as consumer law? Scholars complain that business programs are overly-functional and non-integrative (Mitroff et al., 2015; Monks & Walsh, 2001; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). This siloed approach contributes to an ‘IKEA model’ to learning: “schools supply the pieces, neatly cut to size; the students do the assembly” (Mintzberg, 2004, p. 37). Except there is no clarity if students will manage to put those pieces together if they were never taught to do so: “programs designed on functionally based courses frequently leave participants with a set of disconnected knowledge and skills which bear little coherence and resemblance to the complexity of managing they experience” (Antonacopoulou, 2010, p. S8). Literature speaks against the compartmentalization of content: “programs should not be chopped into set ‘courses’, each with its own box of disassociated knowledge, all packaged

together into a ‘curriculum’” (Mintzberg & Gosling, 2002, p. 67). Monks and Walsh (2001) agree:

“the discipline-specific nature of such courses means that there may be little opportunity for the integration of material. This lack of integration is exacerbated by the discipline and research focus of those involved in teaching these programs” (p.148).

Thus, a functional learning approach could lead to over-specialization and to the formation of ‘narrow disciplinary minds’ (Mitroff et al., 2015; Pierson, 1959). Although some degree of expertise is acceptable, managers still need an overall understanding of how functions impact one another (Datar et al., 2011). They also ought to be careful about accentuating competency development because “technical knowledge does not age well and tends to be industry-specific” (Joullié & Spillane, 2015, p.317). All in all, ML is highly condemned for compartmentalizing knowledge and promoting narrow-thinking. Meanwhile, managers lack a basic understanding of several learning areas that are entirely overlooked – these will be covered next.

2.2.4 Curricular Shortcomings: Missing Ethical and Reflective Components

Management curricula omit or insufficiently accentuate certain critical dimensions of ML. Ethics, reflection and reflexivity are largely missing in ME and MTD, along with other contents that would benefit business learners.

Notably, insufficient efforts are placed into the ethical development of managers. In spite of the significant number of people who advocate for curricula anchored on responsibility, sustainability and ethical decision-making, this dimension of ML is ineffectively taught (Guillet De Monthoux, 2015; Painter-Morland, 2015; Painter-Morland et al., 2016). It is alarming that we continue to see unethical behaviours and managers involved in scandals considering that most business education, training and development programs include some type of ‘ethical’ component (Small, 2004a; Starkey & Tiratsoo, 2007). MacLagan (1990) believes that managers need to develop theoretical understanding and personal qualities to cultivate an ethical mindset. Decision-making also needs to be presented as always being ‘ethical’ (Ledoux, 2012). Roca (2008) suggests that “business students, as future managers, should be aware of the moral charge of their decisions” (p.608).

Moreover, business programs neglect to inculcate a reflective mindset in managers. According to Gosling and Mintzberg (2004), “reflection is a conversation between yourself as the actor and as an observer of the actions you take” (p.152). In another article, these authors specify how this extends outside the limits of introspection: “it means looking in so that you can better see out in order to perceive a familiar thing in a different way” (Gosling & Mintzberg, 2003, para. 4). This competency is critical since a manager’s main job is to reflect; he or she can delegate other tasks, but not the reflective component, tied to strategizing and decision-making (Auger, 2021). Reflection is separate from reflexivity which is another vital management competency related to critique. It consists of “complexifying thinking or experience by exposing contradictions, doubts, dilemmas, and possibilities” (Cunliffe, 2009, p. 38). ML needs to nourish both the reflective and reflexive capacities of business people (Antonacopoulou, 2010; Auger, 2021; Guillet De Monthoux, 2015; Segal, 2022). To do this, Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2010) believes management programs should become ‘identity spaces’ for managers to develop an understanding of themselves through reflection. Harrison et al. (2007) also reckon that the ability to reshape a person’s thinking – to reframe, re-perceive, re-prioritize goals – represents the true potential contribution of ML.

All in all, business programs seem to be missing some key elements – most notably, ethical and reflective components are mostly absent in ML. Prior to describing this perspective, I also discussed business content, its fallacious or misunderstood foundations, strong quantitative stance and functional nature that are often viewed as problematic.

2.3 Didactic Methods

Broadly speaking, didactics pertain to the ways one approaches teaching and learning. The word carries different meanings and connotations across cultures and languages, but in this thesis, it simply refers to the training and teaching methods employed by management instructors when delivering MT, MD or ME (Meyer, 2007; Vollmer, 2021; Wallin, 1988). Many scholars and educators employ the word ‘pedagogy’ as synonymous to didactics. However, ‘pedagogy’ literally translates to “a man having oversight of a child, or an attendant leading a boy to school” (Watkins & Mortimore, 1999, p. 1). This etymology is inappropriate to employ in adult learning contexts as it is meant to refer to teaching methods employed with children in school contexts – not HE (idem, 1999). Thus, the term didactics will be used in this thesis as it is deemed more adequate than pedagogy. That said, the succeeding section will explicate

some of the didactic and teaching methods in ML and why some are contested by managers and academics.

2.3.1 Didactic Tools: Lectures, Textbooks and Cases

There are some standardized training and teaching methods that are most typically used across ML programs around the globe; formal learning commonly incorporates lecturing, case studies and textbooks (Garavan, 1997; Mintzberg, 2004; Passant et al., 2017; Shugan, 2006; Woiceshyn, 1992). Sometimes simulations, role plays or research projects are leveraged and, over the past years – especially since Covid-19 – online learning has grown in importance (Hoidn & Olbert-Bock, 2016; Marsili, 2023; Yiu & Saner, 2009). Other less mainstream didactic tools and approaches include flipped classrooms, self-directed learning, video projects, gamification, problem-based learning and journalling (Dyan et al., 2008; Schultz & Quinn, 2014; Senali et al., 2022; Taylor, 2019). Additionally, there are some unusual examples outlined in literature such as the use of comic books and outdoor adventures (Gerde & Foster, 2008; Judge, 2005). Datar et al. (2011) notes that “many of the most innovative courses today employ some type of experiential or active learning” (p.459). The types of didactics that are implemented will vary according to multitude of factors; the teacher, the context, the language of instruction, and the “different assumptions about the nature of management and the nature of learning give rise to different forms of teaching practice” (Gold & Holman, 2001, p. 384). Didactic execution is not always successful – there are countless issues that can affect the learning process: “boring lectures, lack of meaningful content in e-learning, training that does not give employees the opportunity to practice and receive feedback, training that takes too long to complete” (Noe, 2023, p. 152). Every management education, training or development program is unique. Still, there are some tendencies for ML to opt for certain methods which are highly debated (Greenberg et al., 2007).

Regarding the most commonly-used didactic instruments in formal learning environments, there are many controversial opinions about their appropriateness in business. Some promote management textbooks, others condemn them (Cameron et al., 2003; Errington & Bubna-Litic, 2015). They serve as resources that outline information about subject-matter, they serve as a reference for managers who already completed their course, and they serve as a teaching aid for instructors who deliver business learning. A study showed that those who study accounting appreciate textbooks more than marketing learners (Chulkov & VanAlstine, 2014; Unni, 2005). Yet critics view them as having limited use: “popular management textbooks potentially inhibit,

or only weakly support, the development of students' capacity for critical thinking" (Errington & Bubna-Litic, 2015, p. 1). Guillet De Monthoux (2015) crudely comments: "management textbooks are full of beautiful ideal-types, with masterpieces to be copied and recommendations on what we ought to do and think depending on old templates and mind-maps. The fantasy worlds of organizational images are speculative fictions" (p.166).

Another widely-adopted teaching method is lecturing. Lectures are an inexpensive and effective didactic tool for transmitting knowledge. They are particularly convenient when portions or the entirety of learning takes place online. Unfortunately, it is not ideal for interacting with learners and gauging whether they understood what is being taught. It is especially challenging when there are no limits on the number of students per classroom. Some 'active participation' techniques can be used to mitigate those issues but they cannot fully address the inadequacies of this method (Chulkov & VanAlstine, 2014; Noe, 2023).

Other instructional methods are also disputed in ML: capstone courses, simulations and cases (Monks & Walsh, 2001; Shugan, 2006). At a later point, I will cover these in more detail and how they relate to other didactic considerations.

2.3.2 Classroom Setting: Teacher-Centricity and Missing Context

When it comes to teaching ML, Mintzberg and Gosling (2002) famously proclaimed that "managers cannot be created in a classroom" (p.65). They are among many (e.g. Locke & Spender, 2011) who defend management as a practice requiring a real context to be able to learn how to manage: "context-based learning, learning that occurs on the job and during the everyday performance of work, tends to be more unique to the employee's needs" (Noe, 2023, p. 292). Howbeit, around 40 percent of MT still strictly occurs in a classroom setting (idem, 2023). Conger (1993) pointed out the shortfalls of this set up: "to decide in a classroom that a company described in a case study should enter a new market is one thing; to actually lead a company in that direction is quite another thing" (p.49). Classrooms simply do not reflect the reality and complexity of management are not ideal learning settings (Noe, 2023).

When learning takes place in a classroom, frontal teaching approaches are commonly adopted: "teaching at higher education institutions relies traditionally on ex-cathedra methods – those based on the authority of the professor's position" (Marsili, 2023, p. 18). This implies that management instructors stand at the front of a room and teach or train through speaking, possibly with visual aids (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Temporal, 1990). Although it is undeniable that some managerial competencies can be developed through classroom learning (e.g. Bruya &

Ardelt, 2018), in order for lecturing to be effective in such context, “it requires the authentic exchange of ideas among students, attentive and insightful listening to each other, and a sustained practice of responding to and building on others’ arguments” (Colby, 2011, p. 106). The ‘teacher priest’ approach – which involves ‘preaching’ without engaging with the listener (Marsili, 2023) – is teacher-centric, implying that the instructor chooses “what students learn and how they learn as well deciding what constitutes reasonable evidence of absorption of the set material” (Monks & Walsh, 2001, p.150). Such teacher-centricity is increasingly condemned, drawing favour for student-centric didactic methods (Hoidn & Olbert-Bock, 2016; Joshi, 2013; Pont, 1991). To implement such teaching approaches, it is deemed necessary to redefine the ML instructor’s role as someone who ‘guides’ rather than ‘instructs’: “from being that of a controller of learning to that of a facilitator of learning” (Joyce, 1979, p. 16). Mintzberg and Gosling (2002) also promote facilitating over controlling; they believe that faculty should introduce formalized knowledge while participants should contribute their experiences because “learning occurs where these two meet” (p.67). When professors or trainers engage in a co-learning process, they become more student-centric. Additionally, this enables them to draw on principles of andragogy – an adult learning theory – which can result in improved transferability of ML (Joyce, 1979; Knowles, 1984; Monks & Walsh, 2001).

2.3.3 Formal Learning: Overemphasis on Theory and Explicit Knowledge

Lecturing and textbooks further elicit other concerns; most notably, they can lead to overemphasizing theory at the expense of practice which produces misalignment between what is taught and what is needed by management practitioners (Harker et al., 2016; Roca, 2008). McKenna and Intezari (2016) believe that “business courses and programs that concentrate simply on the accumulation and dissemination of knowledge and information are likely to fail to prepare students for today’s business world replete with socio-environmental and political complexities” (p. 1). Some call this the ‘deskilling’ of ML (e.g. Boje & Al Arkoubi, 2009) because learning does not necessarily equate to having the competencies needed to perform management roles: “students learn to talk about business, but it is not clear they learn business” (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002, p.85). Brook and Pedler (2020) echo this and contend that ML programs need to “educate *for* practice, not just *about* practice” (p.1). To illustrate the apparent disconnect between theory and practice, Mintzberg (2004) reminds us his book how: “collaborative teamworking [...] gets taught within organizational behaviour, without collaboration or teamworking (p.31). Nonaka and Takeuchi (2011) also indicate that the mere acquisition of knowledge does not translate into desirable management behaviours. All these

concerns push scholars to further question the relevance of business programs (Paton et al., 2014; Roca, 2008; Vaill, 1981).

On another note, theory-focused ML mainly transfers only one type of knowledge; the explicit kind. Meantime, tacit knowledge is mostly forsaken along with practical wisdom altogether (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2011). In formal learning settings, it is particularly hard to transfer 'sticky information' – which is knowledge tied to a particular context making it difficult to transfer and to apply outside of that context (Von Hippel, 1994). This is especially problematic in ML because managers never operate in sterile environments: “managers are not chess players absorbed in solitary calculations; they sit in meetings, observe, listen, explain and persuade” (Joullié & Spillane, 2015, p.304).

To bridge the gap between theory and practice, some ML instructors attempt to replicate managerial environments via simulations or case studies. Product pitches, competitions and role plays are example of simulations with an experiential learning component that accentuates tacit knowledge diffusion and competencies beyond knowledge (Menna, 2010; Pont, 1991; Schumm et al., 2022). Yet, more commonly, ML instructors tend to employ case studies. The case method is still one of the most prominent didactics tool in business, but it is also one of the most criticized learning approaches:

“real-life situations cannot be neatly summarised in a ten-page case study completed with a handful of financial reports and charts, which one could address once and for all through even shorter answers. Graduates convinced otherwise will be tempted to manage without leaving their office, relying on files and spreadsheets rather than on first-hand observations” (Joullié & Spillane, 2015, p.305).

Roca (2008) contends: “the case study is so impersonal that it is not lived by the students because they act externally: they develop an objective and aseptic analysis, and give remote recommendations from a very easy position” (p.617). Decision-making is artificial and no one needs to live with the consequences of a hypothetical classroom exercise. Moreover, though case studies have the potential of integrating various topics taught in business schools, they are rarely used with this objective in mind (Podolny, 2009). Still, Mintzberg and Gosling (2002) would argue that there is nothing wrong with cases as long as they are not at the center of learning. There are some contexts that are more or less appropriate for using this method and which determine the use this tool. For example, “case studies are helpful for well-defined problem-solving, but the more urgent problem facing the practicing manager is how to most

appropriately frame and define the ‘case’ problem in the first place” (Chia, 2005, p. 1091). Still, “[managers] seem far removed from the complexities of the real world of organizations, presenting one-dimensional pictures of the corporate world, undervaluing context, neglecting other stakeholders” (Starkey & Tiratsoo, 2007).

Yet the most useful cases are the ‘real’ lived experiences managers bring from their workplaces. Many scholars agree that these do not obtain enough attention in management programs (e.g. Chia, 2005). To feed these experiences into learning, Mintzberg (2004) underscores the importance of continuing to work during MBA degrees. Managers’ ongoing professional experiences provide examples to reflect on as well as opportunities to incorporate management lessons into day-to-day situations. They also provide value to other students: “managers often come back from development programs energized, [...] from what they learned from their colleagues at coffee breaks and after hours” (Gosling & Mintzberg, 2004). This also demonstrates that some degree of tacit learning could occur in formal ML, but is said not to be emphasized sufficiently.

To summarize, literature indicates that the didactic strategies employed in ML are not able to translate some of the key competencies needed in business. There seems to be a dichotomy between teaching practice or theory resulting in mixed opinions about the way management is taught (e.g. Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). Accordingly, many academics have proposed remedies to ML’s shortcomings which will be highlighted in the next section.

2.4 Redeeming Management Learning

Hitherto, I have explicated various critical perspectives of ML. There is contention on numerous fronts: the teaching is affected by institutional aspects and instructors who lack management experience, credibility or know-how (e.g. Ghoshal, 2005; Starkey & Tempest, 2008), while the learning is impacted by curricular and didactic choices which ineffectively prepare managers for their profession (e.g. Mintzberg, 2004; Monks & Walsh, 2001). Formal learning settings are restrictive, LOs are insufficiently anchored on competence, and contents mainly focus on technical and functional knowledge which prevent managers from gaining timeless and integrative skillsets (e.g. McKenna & Intezari, 2016; Podolny, 2009; Woiceshyn, 1992). All these aforementioned points of dispute lead to asking: what, then, should be taught in ML (Muff, 2012)? “Most organizations invest in leadership training and development initiatives, but which programs are worth the money is not always clear” (Day et al., 2021, p. 41).

Among the many suggestions to redeem ML, some are concentrated on the types of competencies needed to succeed in business while others are focused on didactic considerations. However, the bulk of discussions relates to curricular content. Interestingly, literature indicates that ML is expanding towards including new categories of courses such as arts-based methods and humanities (e.g. Guillet De Monthoux, 2015; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009). This trend extends to philosophy – a disciplinary area that shares a heritage with management. Yet, there are many more suggestions to be considered. In this imminent segment, I will delineate multiple proposals which are interested in improving the state of ML.

2.4.1 Redefining Learning Objectives and Competencies

I previously justified why scholars recommend re-examining the learning intents of ML. Objectives are very pertinent – they set a direction for learners and, ultimately, define learning outcomes (Whetten, 2007). They are particularly pertinent in the context of today's business programs which do not necessarily develop the competencies needed to practice management effectively (Mintzberg, 2004; Roca, 2008). Formerly, I explained that ML is perceived as siloed, calculative and analysis-driven, whilst insufficiently focused on leadership and 'soft skills' – such as communication, interpersonal competencies and empathy (Hogan & Warrenfeltz, 2003; Marques, 2019; Muff, 2012; Spillane & Joullié, 2015). To counter these shortfalls, Shotter and Tsoukas (2014) believe ML should aspire to develop 'phronetic leaders' which would allow learners to attain "a refined capacity to intuitively grasp salient features of ambiguous situations and to constitute a 'landscape' of possible paths of response" (p.224). Developing both 'wisdom' and 'leadership' is viewed by many as a noble and aspirational ML goal (e.g. Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2011; Statler, 2014). However, other types of competencies are also said to be missing in ML, and scholars dispute which would most benefit business.

Datar et al. (2011) identified eight competencies that ML should consider developing: an international perspective, leadership skills, integration skills to connect dots and diverse perspectives, an understanding of the role and purpose of business, the grasp of business realities including challenges related to execution, and the limitations of management models, creative thinking, critical thinking and communication. Several of these – including creativity and critical thinking – are also acclaimed by other academics (Antonacopoulou, 2010; Auger, 2021; Eabrasu, 2025). However, some would consider the list is incomplete – other development areas – such as virtue, ethical development, cultural intelligence and technical know-how – should also be contained in ML (Clegg & Sarkar, 2024; Kaplan, 2014; Klimoski,

2006; Small, 2004a). Evidently, there is no alignment on the competencies that should be taught in business.

Nonetheless, it is widely agreed that business programs need to revisit their LOs; not just the competencies developed, but their overall aims. Various scholars suggest prioritizing character and identity development in ML (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010; Starkey & Tempest, 2005), while others view ‘whole-person development’ as a pathway towards stronger leadership (Antonacopoulou & FitzGerald, 1996; Clapp-Smith et al., 2019; Harrison et al., 2007; Hoidn & Olbert-Bock, 2016). This aligns with McKenna and Biloslavo (2011) who believe that, ultimately, “the driving force for business education should be ‘human flourishing’” (p.692). This line of thinking assumes that when managers grow and thrive as individuals, they will also perform better in their roles as managers (Becker, 1975). All in all, although “many wise minds have articulated the leadership mindset we need for the future, and what remains stubbornly elusive is *how* we get there” (Paxton & Van Stralen, 2015, p. 11). For this reason, the next section focuses on the didactics and contents that could help reach a more desirable state of ML.

2.4.2 Adapting Didactics and Instructional Approaches

As formerly described, there are some skeptical views of the way ML is instructed; the people who are in charge of teaching and training – as well as the methods they use – are not necessarily adapted towards achieving optimal learning outcomes. For those reasons, literature extensively discusses what might be the most appropriate tools and techniques for ML. In terms of didactics, Monks and Walsh (2001) advise moving away from pedagogical approaches to andragogical approaches. To engage the adult learner, there should be more ‘learning by doing’ (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). Albeit, since opportunities for practice are not always accessible, researchers propose experiential learning methods and more experiences outside the classroom (Burga et al., 2023; Kolb, 1976, 1984; Muff, 2012). Teaching methods such as problem-based learning, active learning, gamification, and the ‘caring’ approach have been suggested to make learning more effective (Burton & Dunn, 2005; Schöbel et al., 2023; Sherwood, 2004; Stewart et al., 2012). While (Farashahi & Tajeddin, 2018) demonstrated that simulations can be particularly useful for developing self-awareness and interpersonal competencies, Kunsch et al. (2014) established the utility of ‘argument mapping’ for critical thinking. Interestingly, some atypical activities – such as journalling, walking and mindfulness techniques – have been proposed as embodied experiences that solicit reflective thinking (Beyes & Steyaert, 2021; Brendel, 2014; Deepa & Mansurali, 2022; Sebastião & Clement,

2024). Scholars have also made suggestions on how to leverage new technologies – such as social media and artificial intelligence – as didactic tools that could rejuvenate ML (Bachmann & Shah, 2016; Clegg & Sarkar, 2024).

To further improve the instructional aspect of ML, Mintzberg and Gosling (2002) deem it necessary for classroom dynamics to take precedence over course design and curriculum. From their view, falling off the rails of the program schedule is not perceived as a bad thing: “this can play a bit of havoc with the schedule for the day. But we are here to learn, not to ‘cover ground’” (p.67). Such didactics approach could favour learning over instruction while improving student-centricity (e.g. Joshi, 2013). Additionally, in response to the shortcomings of ML instructors, there are proponents of team-teaching methods which give access to a wider set of competencies (Greenberg et al., 2007; Hiley et al., 1985)

Although didactics can play a major role in improving content delivery and learner engagement, ML critics believe that adjusting the quality of instruction without adjusting the substance and its assumptions would pose problems. Strong didactics without appropriate content would push ML instructors towards being ‘edu-tainers’ rather than learning facilitators (Guillet De Monthoux, 2015). That said, subsequently, I will delve into the types of content scholars propose integrating into business programs.

2.4.3 Incorporating Interdisciplinary Content

Another way of redeeming ML is through adjusting curricular contents, but determining the substance of learning is complicated and contentious. Which might be those few critical subjects every manager ought to be trained in? Such question is difficult to answer (e.g. Day et al., 2021; Graham & Mihal, 1986). Since the diffusion of the Carnegie reports, it has become less unusual for management programs to incorporate non-business subjects as diverse as science and martial arts (Ledley & Holt, 2014; Norris, 2022; Pierson, 1959). However, it is more common – and perhaps more fitting – for programs to embed arts-based methods, liberal arts and humanities (Antonacopoulou & Bento, 2018; Guillet De Monthoux, 2015, 2022; Küpers & Pauleen, 2015; Morten et al., 2016; Springborg & Ladkin, 2014; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009; Zald, 1996). Courses in literature, history, poetry, music, theatre, dance, painting, theology, religion and spirituality can potentially address some of the aforementioned shortcomings of ML (Antonacopoulou & Bento, 2018; Harrison et al., 2007; Marques, 2019; Moya & Toledano, 2025; Passant et al., 2017; Zald, 1996) while moving curricula closer towards broadly resembling the original ones which were interdisciplinary in nature (Kaplan, 2014). Back in 1996, Zald (1996)

saw that “the turn to the humanities to be almost inevitable – inevitable because the humanities give us tools for the analysis of substantive meaning and the analysis of cultural traditions within which we live” (p.260).

Humanities and liberal arts have the potential of humanizing management (e.g. Antonacopoulou & Bento, 2018). Scholars associate empathy and emotional intelligence as potential outcomes of arts-based methods (Garavan et al., 2015; Statler & Guillet De Monthoux, 2015), while a study by Roach and Slater (2016) showed that humanities-educated managers are more socially responsible. “Though humanities and management is not a match made in heaven [...] it could be a vehicle for contributing to a politics of human progress” (Gilbert, 1997, p.33). This pairing can also cultivate creativity, critical thinking and moral reasoning (Antonacopoulou & Bento, 2018; Podolny, 2009) while fostering a more holistic development (Antonacopoulou & FitzGerald, 1996; Harrison et al., 2007). Spillane and Joullié (2015) attest that, in an ideal world:

“business schools should abandon their scientific bias, overhaul their curricula on the basis of those of arts and humanities departments and only propose a handful of business subjects proper as complements to a liberal arts education” (p.315).

Indeed, liberal arts and humanities are often endorsed as solutions to ML shortcomings. Nevertheless, this is non-consensual among scholars; several critics approach humanities with more caution. Gilbert (1997) warns that “management and the humanities are not yet married [...] a growing number of educators are pushing the couple not too subtly toward the altar when a cautious period of flirtation and dating is more appropriate” (p.23). Meantime, Zald (1996) perceives “the turn to the humanities to be almost inevitable” (p.260) and worthy of pursuit. Whilst Woiceshyn (1992) agrees, she believes it is simply insufficient to supplement ML with humanities courses and to expect better results. Instead, she advocates for changing the base assumptions of learning and believes humanities conform well with such transformation.

Among the so-called ‘classics’, there are proponents of embedding wisdom or philosophy courses into business (Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2011; Roca, 2008; Small, 2004a). Many appealing arguments justify their position; for example, such subject matters can construct paradigmatic awareness and management competencies while explaining the origins of theory – particularly in business (Baurina, et al., 2022; Harrison et al., 2007; Spillane & Joullié, 2015). However, philosophy – as a humanistic subject and stand-alone discipline – does not escape critique. Most notably, its impact and relevance are often unclear to business

audiences (Collins & Latemore, 2002; De Borchgrave, 2006). Despite contentions, management literature increasingly endorses philosophy in business learning and instances of combining management with philosophy are multiplying (e.g. Claes & Preston, 2009; Hategan & Hategan, 2021). That said, the ensuing chapter will dive into this subject matter in depth to explain what philosophy in management consists of, what is done in practice and why it is debated.

Chapter 2 describes the extensive criticism pointed at ML. Despite significant investments in learning, training and development, literature indicates a general discontentment with the learning institutions, instructors, objectives, contents and didactic methods employed across business programs. Employers, management learners as well as management instructors are not fulfilling expectations and continue to lack competencies needed in VUCA contexts (e.g. Boyatzis et al., 2002). They are concerned that the paradigms that underly theories are fundamentally flawed, and that business programs tend to promote narrow-thinking due to an overly-functional and non-integrative approach to learning (Ghoshal, 2005; Mitroff et al., 2015; Monks & Walsh, 2001; Segal, 2004). While students and trainees are taught management concepts, they do not learn how to practice management (Mintzberg, 2004; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). There is apprehension that inadequate teaching methods lead to inadequate preparation for the management profession (Muff, 2012). The disconnect between learning and work is accentuated by the choice of didactic methods and teaching staff. The current mainstream approach to ML is worrisome and has pushed various intellectuals to reflect on the future of ML (e.g. Guillet De Monthoux, 2015; Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010; Roca, 2008). Many of them have proposed a humanistic angle and suggest the integration of philosophy in business degrees (e.g. Ciappei & Cinque, 2015; Harrison et al., 2007; Spillane & Joullié, 2015).

Chapter 3 – Incorporating Philosophy Into Management Learning

ML is under scrutiny and, as emphasized in the Chapter 2, stirs a great deal of controversy among academics, companies, management students and faculty alike (Boyatzis et al., 2002; Feldman, 2005; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). Many have proposed a humanistic angle and suggest the integration of philosophy in business degrees (e.g. Ciappei & Cinque, 2015; Harrison et al., 2007; Spillane & Joullié, 2015).

From its inception until today, there have been countless proponents of incorporating philosophy into business and ML (e.g. Erk, 2025; Small, 2004a). Intriguingly, philosophy underpins both management and learning – why then should it not underpin ML? Since the very first schools were founded by philosophers – Plato founded The Academy while Aristotle founded the Lyceum – philosophy used to be a critical component of general education. Philosophy is also the foundational discipline of management and can therefore explain the underlying premises of modern-day business concepts and techniques (Ciappei et al., 2014; Collins & Latemore, 2002; Erk, 2025; Goldman, 2009; Jasinska, 2024; Joullié, 2016a, 2018; Karodia, 2013; Ledoux, 2012; Pastin, 1985; Small, 2004a). In this chapter, I will define philosophy in relation to management and I will speak of its footprint in ME and MTD. I will close by presenting a subsisting debate between skeptics and advocates who share divergent views on philosophical learning in business. This last part will establish the basis for my empirical work.

3.1 Philosophy in Management

Multiple meanings can be assigned to philosophy, especially in management settings. This impending passage contextualizes philosophy in business and speaks of its crossroads with the management discipline.

3.1.1 Defining Philosophy in a Management Context

Philosophy comes from a Greek word that translates as ‘love of wisdom’ (e.g. Greenwood et al., 2016), but what does that really mean? The concept itself is abstract and interpretable, and questioning its meaning is in itself a philosophical query (Beatty et al., 2020; Priest, 2006). Descartes believed philosophy seeks to clarify thoughts whereas Plato viewed it as a process that illuminates; illustratable with a cave allegory (Auger, 2021; Segal & Bruce, 2017) and defined as a “love of learning” (Bøyum, 2010, p. 546). According to Deleuze and Guattari

(2015), “philosophy is the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts” (p.2), Priest (2006) sees it as an “intellectual inquiry in which anything is open to critical challenge and scrutiny” (p.202) whereas Moulder (1975) describes it as “an attempt to explore those questions which are intelligent enough to ask but neither clever nor wise enough to answer” (p.75). Still, there are many other perspectives about what philosophy is about which impedes any form of consensus.

Indeed, since its inception, philosophers deliberate over the meaning of philosophy – yet this debate is of little interest to managers and management scholars who attribute entirely different significance to this term (e.g. Deslandes, 2016). In my paper “*Undercover philosophy? Demystifying philosophy for management education*” (Jasinska, 2025) [available in Appendix A1], I explain the various ways of defining ‘philosophy’ in business contexts. Most importantly, I elucidate the conceptual differences between ‘philosophy of *managers*’ and ‘philosophy of *management*’, and propose the term ‘philosophy *for* management’ (P4M) to describe philosophical content intended for managers or managers-in-the-making. I use it principally in the context of ML to denote philosophy as a subject matter for business. It is worth noting, nonetheless, that ‘teaching’ philosophy also differs from ‘teaching philosophy’ as the latter pertains to an educator’s personal beliefs about teaching, whereas the former refers to philosophical instruction (e.g. Beatty et al., 2020). The same can be said about a ‘training philosophy’ which merely speaks of the particular approach a training chooses to implement.

3.1.2 The Role of Philosophy in Management

When it comes to philosophy, this stand-alone discipline can sometimes intersect with others – whether medicine, law or even business. The term ‘philosophy *in* management’ refers to the inclusion or application of philosophy specifically within the field of management – regardless of the shape or form (Small, 2004a). In 2009, Claes and Preston claimed there was a “philosophy boom in management” (p.69) as it became increasingly common for the two to intertwine. This continues to manifest itself in various ways; philosophers are stepping into business contexts, managers are turning to philosophical counselling services, and companies are hiring philosophical consultants and in-house ‘corporate philosophers’ (Brendel, 2014; Brière et al., 2018; Colby, 2011; De Borchgrave, 2006; Hategan & Hategan, 2021; Hiley et al., 1985; Koestenbaum, 2002; Lahav, 2001; Ledoux, 2012). Philosophers are writing more books dedicated to management audiences – for instance ‘*Manager avec la philo*’ and ‘*If Aristotle Ran General Motors: The New Soul of Business*’ (e.g. Bernard, 2016; Morris, 2013; Vegleris,

2006) – and philosophical practice is being popularized in business with all kinds of techniques such as the Socratic method or *crealectics* based on process philosophy (Bolten, 2001; De Miranda, 2025; Kessels, 2001). It is more common for business schools to hire philosophers (e.g. Bowie, 1997; Hiley et al., 1985; Morsing & Rovira, 2011), and companies are hiring them too. For instance, it is worth noting that Reid Hoffman and Stewart Butterfield – founders of LinkedIn and Flickr – have become prominent examples of contemporary business leaders with philosophy degrees (Baurina, et al., 2022). Overall, it seems that “philosophical knowledge in the modern business world is very demanded and vital” (idem, 2022, p. 19), and there is increased interest in joining these two different spheres.

While “practitioners are concretely using philosophy, more or less consciously or appropriately” (Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023, p. 312), a growing number of management scholars are conversing about it (e.g. Segal & Bruce, 2017; Zald, 1996). Ever since the *Reason in Practice* journal launched in 2001, publications intersecting management and business have become more frequent (Laurie & Cherry, 2001) and, by 2004, Small was one of the first to outrightly identify philosophy as a business trend. Over the years, such discourse proliferated resulting in many interesting texts. For example, De Borchgrave (2006) published a book that justifies the pertinence of philosophy for managers, Platts and Harris (2011) wrote a paper about the ‘*The Place of Philosophy in Management*’, and Ledoux (2012) spoke of the commonalities between philosophy and business. Management literature further shows interest in aesthetics – an area of philosophy concerned with that which is beautiful (Bouilloud, 2023; Bouilloud & Deslandes, 2015; White, 1996) – as well as ethics (Fontrodona & Melé, 2002; Hühn, 2015). There is a movement dedicated to advancing critical management studies (CMS) (e.g. Boje & Al Arkoubi, 2009; Oleksyn, 2013) and another interested in wisdom (Küpers & Pauleen, 2015; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2011; Peltonen, 2019; Small, 2004b; Statler, 2014). Philosophy of science and epistemology are also commonly cited in journals (e.g. Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2018; Zald, 1996), and there is substantial interest in the ‘philosophy of management’ discipline which seeks to analyze business concepts (Balsas & Silva, 2018; Blok, 2020; Koslowski, 2010; D. C. Wilson, 2023). Generally, management shows interest in philosophy and there are more and more scholars and practitioners who are implicating themselves in this field.

Various philosophers – such as Plato, Machiavelli, Aquinas, Descartes, Bacon, Hume, Comte, Popper, Leibniz, Fichte, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud, Kierkegaard, Wojtyla, and many others – have directly influenced the management theory that, today, is taught in business schools (Fontrodona & Melé, 2002; Small, 2004b; Spillane & Joullié, 2015). They “produced

material that is still relevant in contemporary business society” (Small, 2013, p. 341), therefore, it is unsurprising that management literature often discusses ideas proposed by philosophers. For example, Deslandes (2012) looks at the Socratic care-of-self ethic, Small (2004) investigates Plato’s *Theory of Justice* and Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics*, Spinosa et al. (2017) outlines how Heidegger’s thinking can lead to business transformation, whereas Woods and Lamond (2011) examine Confucian philosophy in business. According to Erkal and Vandekerckhove (2021) – who conducted a systematic literature review of the *Philosophy of Management* journal – there is no single philosopher that dominates this field, but Aristotle is most frequently alluded to, while Karl Popper comes second. Ethics was also identified as being the most popular subset of philosophy, followed by social and political philosophy and epistemology (idem, 2021). However, these tendencies concern philosophy in management on a broad level that extends to practice and research. They do not reflect the contents taught in P4M programs which will be the focus of this next segment – concentrated on philosophical learning in business, a subset of management.

3.2 Philosophy in Management Learning

To continue, this part will discuss philosophy in the context of ML. As mentioned previously, the abbreviation P4M will be used to denote philosophical instruction in business, but I will also clarify how this term differs from similar nomenclature. My aim for these next paragraphs is to illustrate the prevalence of P4M and forms in which it is delivered. This is critical for outlining some of the gaps that are later addressed in my research.

3.2.1 Philosophy Learning and Philosophy for Management

Not to be confused with ‘philosophy of education’, ‘philosophy education’ is an entire field of research and practice pertaining to the teaching and learning of philosophy on all levels (Brosow, 2020; Pfister & Richter, 2020). In other words, it discusses the “growth or formation that philosophical reflection might, should, or will bring about” (Bøyum, 2010, p. 543) and analyzes didactics and pedagogical approaches for delivering philosophical content across disciplines. For instance, “academic schooling in philosophy” (idem, 2010, p. 543) is a subset of philosophy education that investigates matters such as Philosophy for Children (P4C) (Lipman et al., 2010). These subjects are of particular interest to various organizations – including the *American Association of Philosophy Teachers* and several journals: *Teaching Philosophy*, *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, *The Journal of Didactics of Philosophy* and

the *Journal of Philosophy in Schools* (Hayden, 2012; Llamzon, 1993). Nonetheless, it appears that the field of philosophy education is not particularly concerned with P4M; few academic papers allude to management at all – with perhaps the exception of a handful of papers on business ethics (e.g. Atkinson et al., 1987; Hiley et al., 1985; N. Laurie & Cherry, 2001).

The field that does, in fact, concern philosophical learning in business was not previously labelled and thoroughly depicted in research. This is why I took the initiative to name it – the term P4M strives to create order and consistency in management nomenclature (Jasinska, 2025). When it comes to P4M in ME and MTD, the majority of literature emerges from handbooks and management publications. It is dispersed across a variety of journals: the *Journal of Management Development*, *Management Learning*, *Journal of Management Education*, *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, *European Management Journal*, *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, and the *Harvard Business Review* among others. Yet, *Philosophy of Management* is the most implicated in this subject area; the journal even dedicated an entire special issue to teaching P4M (Preston, 2009). There are other niche publications and conferences that merge business and philosophy such as *Filosofie in Bedrijf* in the Netherlands (a Dutch title which translates to ‘philosophy in business’), *Philoma* in Belgium, *Société de Philosophie des Sciences de Gestion* for French speakers and an electronic journal called *Philosophy for Business* (Bazin & Lamy, 2011; Klempner, 2009; Lamy et al., 2014; N. Laurie & Cherry, 2001; Ledoux, 2012). Based on literature accumulated from all these sources, I was able to overview the state of P4M and the type of philosophical content that managers are exposed to. Therefore, this next part explains how philosophy is embedded into ML.

3.2.2 The Prevalence of Philosophy for Management Programs

Philosophy in HE is not inexistent – universities around the world tend to offer introductory courses in ‘logic’ or ‘critical thinking’. These are less frequent in further education (FE) – especially in business settings (Byerly, 2019). Nevertheless, scholars argue that management learners are exposed to philosophical concepts within their business studies (Karodia, 2013; Small, 2004a) even though this is “fragmented philosophy in different forms” (Windsor, 2015, p.20) that – for some – hardly classifies as philosophical learning. The focus of this dissertation is to examine philosophical programs that are specifically taught to and intended for managers. Based on such definition, it is rather uncommon for business schools to propose such courses (Beltramini, 2019; Joullié, 2014; Spillane & Joullié, 2015). It is especially uncommon in

particular types of contexts; for example, Collins and Latemore (2002) consider it rare in English-speaking cultures even though the first business school professors in the UK were philosophers (Cowton & Crisp, 2024; Mahoney, 2013). It is equally uncommon in some places like Japan (Horikoshi, 2023). Meanwhile, certain European countries – such as France – cultivate philosophical intellectual traditions and are more accustomed to integrating arts and humanities into ML. This makes them more accommodating towards philosophical instruction (Pesqueux, 1998; Statler & Guillet De Monthoux, 2015). Religious HEIs – such as Catholic or Protestant universities in the USA – are also more likely to teach philosophy; they too generally favour humanities (Collins & Latemore, 2002; Mahoney, 2013; Pruzan, 1998). Yet the average ME program is not likely to contain philosophy courses. The exception would pertain to business ethics which has become a mainstream subject in business schools. Howbeit whether business ethics is truly philosophical depends on how it is taught and therefore does not automatically classify as P4M (Hühn, 2015; Jacob Dahl Rendtorff, 2016; Ledoux, 2012; Seele, 2016; Small, 2004a).

The same could be said about MTD; philosophy-based trainings or development programs are rare or seemingly unheard of. Since MT is mainly concerned with pragmatic knowledge or skill gain – intended to convert to a job-context to generate returns for an employer – it interests itself in matters that produce demonstrable results (Bouilloud, 2023; Sadler-Smith, 2009). For example, a training on a new software can result in a manager's ability to use this software at work which could then, in turn, equate to increased productivity. In such a case, the time invested in MT is justifiable. However, philosophical MTs are harder to defend; philosophy is far less utilitarian and sometimes even negatively perceived as being useless or impractical (Cowton & Crisp, 2024; Ryan, 2021).

Of course, there are some notable exceptions of ML programs that embrace philosophy at the service of business. Regarding HEIs, back in 1995, the Copenhagen Business School was the first to establish an entire department dedicated to P4M and remains a rare example of a university-based business school that embraces philosophy in such way (Morsing & Rovira, 2011; Morten et al., 2016, 2016; Pruzan, 1998). There are other noteworthy cases dispersed around the globe; these will be described in the ensuing paragraphs dedicated to describing the contents of P4M programs.

3.2.3 Types of Philosophy for Management Programs

As mentioned previously, the Philosophy of Management journal published a special issue on 'Teaching Philosophy to Managers' which contained several interesting examples of P4M programs; such as the 'History and Philosophy of Management' course at The University of Johannesburg (Preston, 2009). Literature contains various other cases of philosophical instruction in business; the International College of Management in Sydney, Australia offers a P4M course, the University of Liverpool hosts a 'Critical Thinking' course in their MBA, and the Royal Holloway University of London teaches a 'Philosophy of Management' class (Antonacopoulou, 2010; Colby, 2011; Goldman, 2009; Joullié, 2014; Shaw, 2008). Although not as numerous, these cases also extend beyond ME; journals reference a wide assortment of MTD programs whether corporate seminars, philosophical retreats, 'dilemma trainings' or Socratic Dialogue experiences (Bolten, 2001; Ledoux, 2012; Marinoff, 2002; Morris, 2013). They clearly range in form and content; some concentrate on moral philosophy, others delve into process philosophy. Some outline the history of ideas, others examine the thoughts of specific philosophers (Chang, 2008; Goldman, 2009; Platts & Harris, 2011; Schumacher, 2009; Segal, 2004). Some take interest in Derrida, others take interest in Socrates (Bolten, 2001; Rhodes, 2016). Some embed Chinese and Confucian philosophy, others are more interested in Catholic social teaching (Li, 2012; Li-Hua & Lu, 2014; Melé, 2020; Woods & Lamond, 2011). In truth, many types of programs can fall into the P4M category. The above examples cover three sorts of philosophy as defined by Ledoux (2012): critical, practical and technical philosophy. They exemplify how varied P4M can be. Nevertheless, philosophical learning in ML is often synonymous to business ethics and such courses are most commonly seen in curricula:

“business ethics is already well established in business education. Other mainstream areas within philosophy such as: metaphysics and ontology, epistemology and logic, and ethics and political ontology seem to have been overlooked. These areas have yet to make a significant contribution to management and organisation studies” (Small, 2004a, p. 183).

Consequently, while one area of P4M is well-established, others remain mostly anonymous. Although it can be assumed that P4M programs show variance, there is no overview of the different ways they are taught. This led me to ask the first RQ: How can philosophy contribute to and be incorporated in ML programs? Understanding the forms and contents of philosophical learning in business would help demystify P4M's value.

3.3 The Debate About Philosophy for Management Learning

As mentioned in the previous chapter, P4M provokes mixed opinions. Though it can be perceived as ‘intriguing’ or foundational to learning, it is often accused of being impractical, overly-complicated and insufficiently actionable (e.g. De Borchgrave, 2006; Joullié, 2016a). In this next part, I will outline the debate about inserting philosophy into ML by explaining why its contribution to business is questionable.

3.3.1 The Case in Favour of Philosophy for Management

A good number of scholars have articulated reasons why philosophy could be of interest to business. According to Ledoux (2012), the two disciplines are radically different, yet similar – making them complementary. Philosophy – alike to management – is concerned with thinking and problem-solving (Morton & Rainbolt, 2016; Moulder, 1975; Saarinen, 2008) and, what is intriguing, is that at the core of both disciplines lies a need and desire to understand human behaviour (Case, 2006; Gibson, 1972; Shaw, 2022). In fact, “both deal with human action [...] and with the need for the coordination of human actions” (Koslowski, 2010, p. 10). Philosophers seek to answer questions about identity and purpose – managers do too. Yet managers are more likely to struggle with reflecting on complicated matters relating to humanity and its nature, while philosophers have already reflected and provided many answers to these key questions (Gare, 2022; Morton & Rainbolt, 2016). That potentially qualifies philosophy as a source of knowledge for addressing the human and social issues it shares with management (Ciappei & Cinque, 2015) and perhaps “philosophy can be the compass we need to find our way back to what it is to be truly human” (Ledoux, 2012, p. 22).

There are overlaps in terms of content that is relevant for both fields, and “concepts commonly treated by philosophers increasingly figure in management debates; power, authority, rights, justice, virtues, citizenship, community, property, value, knowledge, rationality, dialogue, responsibility, passion, emotion etc.” (Ciappei & Cinque, 2015, p. 352). According to Spillane and Joullié (2015), since it predates management, philosophical content is a critical area of study for business learners. It is the theoretical pillar needed to interpret contemporary theories and “studying management concepts demands reaching back to the intellectual substrata that nourished them” (p.319). By “understanding the philosophical foundations that made their formulation possible in the first place” (Joullié, 2016, p.176), managers can make more appropriate use of them. It is unsurprising then, that many academics suggest philosophical

books or authors as relevant to management audiences (Guillet De Monthoux, 2017; Hiley et al., 1985; Ledoux, 2012).

Many defenders of P4M articulate not what links philosophy and management, but what philosophy could offer to business. Discussions most commonly revolve around the competencies that managers could develop (e.g. Baurina, et al., 2022; Oleksyn, 2013), but they also allude to the discipline's distinctive value proposition (Hand, 2018). Philosophy provides a much-needed space for reflection and thinking (Antonacopoulou, 2010; Collins & Latemore, 2002; Harrison et al., 2007; Oleksyn, 2013; Spillane & Joullié, 2015). This can provide enlightenment and clarity (Hand, 2018; Pesqueux, 2001; Tsahuridu, 2023), but also contributes to self-development and introspection: “[with philosophy,] a person has a chance to understand: who he is and how he behaves” (Baurina, et al., 2022, p. 17). Saarinen (2008) says that “for a manager’s self-leadership and character-building, philosophical literature is indeed a treasure chest” (p.6). Furthermore, it is certainly not uncommon for P4M programs to provoke questioning about life and meaning (Hurtado, 2023; Tsahuridu, 2023). Managers better motivate their subordinates by better comprehending and conveying the meaning of work (De Borchgrave, 2006; Tweedie, 2020).

To continue, since philosophy involves a “thorough examination of ideas and beliefs” (Morton & Rainbolt, 2016, p. 10), it allows managers to think deeply and to “look at familiar things differently” (Baurina, et al., 2022, p. 16). They can juxtapose ideas and form opinions on diverse matters since philosophy aids with reasoning, drawing conclusions and ‘giving birth’ to thoughts (Abenzoza & Arjona, 2017; Bolten, 2001; Ciappei & Cinque, 2015). Philosophy can also contribute to a mind shift. In truth, it is an antidote to parochialism; it helps managers to think broader and to consider other perspectives – whether from other cultures or systems of thought:

“One of the great benefits of philosophy thus comes from the attempt to enter the mindset of another person or age. In today’s organization surely a similar endeavour – to understand one’s clients, partners and colleagues – is central” (Collins & Latemore, 2002, p.56).

Curiously, P4M promotes honest perspective-sharing because philosophy gives permission “to express one’s point of view without violating others rights” (Karodia, 2013, p. 2510). Evaluating diverse outlooks and opinions makes managers more understanding and more capable of comprehending why someone might think what they think. Through the “the studious examination of the plausibility of all considerations presented” (Brosow, 2020, p. 23),

it is possible to gain appreciation of varying perspectives. This leads to more open minds, acceptance of opposing worldviews and – very practically – makes it easier to work collaboratively (Byerly, 2019; Morton & Rainbolt, 2016).

Moreover, scholars enumerate several intellectual benefits that can be supplemented by P4M (Antonacopoulou, 2010; Hand, 2018; Koestenbaum, 2002). As already mentioned it improves reasoning by teaching abstract, analytical and systematic thinking (Oleksyn, 2013). It also develops logic and problem-solving abilities, eventually setting the grounds for stronger argumentation (Baurina, et al., 2022; Ciappei & Cinque, 2015; Karodia, 2013). Philosophy can also be used to identify one's own biases and the underlying premises that shape thought. As stated by (Segal & Bruce, 2017), “a manager cannot see their blind spots on their own but requires the perspective of the others to go beyond their limitations” (p.130). The ‘others’ could be philosophers – presented through lectures or readings – or fellow learners who co-participate in the philosophical experience.

Similarly, reflexivity and critical thinking are frequently named as key outcomes of philosophical exposure (Antonacopoulou, 2010; Brendel, 2014; Harrison et al., 2007; Karodia, 2013; Oleksyn, 2013; Segal, 2022; Zu, 2023). This is particularly interesting considering the myriad of management scholars – described in the previous chapter – whom advocate for such competencies in ML (e.g. Podolny, 2009). Spillane and Joullié (2015) say that a “course in philosophy is always a course in critical thinking: as the course unfolds, powerful and well-rehearsed counter-arguments become available to refute opposing philosophical positions” (p.312).

According to Ledoux (2012), “philosophy’s main contribution to management is the relentless questioning of the adequacy of our representations” (p.14). Baurina, et al. (2022) explain how “strict standards of argumentation, analysis and the search for new approaches make it possible to master critical thinking skills and make competent decisions in various areas of activity” (p.17). On an intellectual level, P4M could further teach managers to conceptualize, clarify concepts and make links between different ideas (Davoine & Schumacher, 2009; Lamy et al., 2014; Woiceshyn, 1992) because it shows them how “to think, to analyze, to synthesize, to isolate or link ideas” (Ledoux, 2012, p.17). Managers learn scrutiny by evaluating and apposing views. Also, “establishing causal relations makes it much easier to “fountain” ideas, initiate new and sought-after solutions, and bring really new and necessary ones to the world” (Baurina, et al., 2022, p. 16). This, in turn, can facilitate decision-making (Zu, 2023).

One more critical point involves communication; especially oral and written forms (Morton & Rainbolt, 2016). P4M untangles commonly-used jargon and teaches managers to use more precise language. It develops verbal skills and shows why it is worth paying attention to the true meaning of words and expressions that are employed. It further helps produce new language to interpret reality (Collins & Latemore, 2002; Eabrasu, 2025; Ledoux, 2012; Morten et al., 2016; Spillane & Joullié, 2015). Saarinen (2008) claims that: “the creation of a space for new words and concepts, is of course, at the core of philosophy” (p.8). Additionally, business people learn to synthesize and convey complicated ideas (Morton & Rainbolt, 2016). They also learn to express themselves correctly – that is, in a way that reflects their thoughts or intentions – because philosophical exercises force them to defend and explain their own views (Harrison et al., 2007; Morton & Rainbolt, 2016). In fact, “philosophy helps make us self-aware of critical assumptions we tacitly incorporate in our organizational theorizing” (Tsoukas & Chia, 2011, p.7) and makes it more clear whether what is stated reflects that which is meant to be stated.

There is a faction of academics whom discuss the connection between P4M and ethical development (Fontrodona & Melé, 2002; Hühn, 2015; Small, 2004a). Not only does philosophy potentially lead to more ethical and responsible behaviours (Claes & Preston, 2009; Oleksyn, 2013; Small, 2004a; Zu, 2023), but it also reinforces civic engagement (Joullié & Spillane, 2015). By allowing managers to step back and to relativize, they can identify what is important and recognize opportunities for involvement (Ledoux, 2012; Vegleris, 2006). In this way, P4M could produce a positive impact and address some of the moral objections directed at business leaders (e.g. Starkey & Tiratsoo, 2007).

All in all, various scholars attest that philosophy could enhance managerial practice, most especially by developing competencies which are essential to performing management functions (Collins & Latemore, 2002; Morton & Rainbolt, 2016; Platts & Harris, 2011). Many of these competencies – such as communication and problem-solving – were outlined in this segment, but there are other ones referenced in literature; whether independent thinking, wisdom or even patience (Ciappei & Cinque, 2015; Cowton & Crisp, 2024; Ledoux, 2012). Some scholars further believe that P4M could boost creativity or concrete skills such as negotiating, design, planning and management (Baurina, et al., 2022; De Borchgrave, 2006; Karodia, 2013; Oleksyn, 2013; Segal & Bruce, 2017). Additionally, ‘philosophical competence’ is a contribution in itself that provides value to management (Erk, 2025). Nonetheless, philosophy is far from quintessential – alternative perspectives portray it in a less appealing manner. These will be presented in the next part, dedicated to the case against philosophy in ML.

3.3.2 The Case Against Philosophy for Management

Despite various arguments in support of P4M, there are many more that counter this form of learning. The undiscounted cynicism directly oriented towards philosophy reveals some of its inadequacies in a business learning setting. To start, skeptics might accuse philosophy of being too theoretical, abstract and detached from reality (Collins & Latemore, 2002; De Borchgrave, 2006; Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023; Guillet De Monthoux, 2017; Makinde, 1987; Pesqueux, 2001). It can be seen as irrelevant, impractical or even dogmatic (Cowton & Crisp, 2024; Ryan, 2021). As per Eabrasu and Lamy (2023):

“[There is] contention that philosophy is inherently abstract, has limited practical value in real-world situations, and its focus on metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical inquiries often results in intellectual exercises detached from everyday experiences and concerns” (p.312).

This also means that engaging with philosophy can be tiresome or uncomfortable (Deleuze & Guattari, 2015). It can result in endless discussions (Kessels, 2001) and, as you pose questions and reflect deeply on complicated matters, “your mind will probably be twisted and turned about, which can be an uncomfortable experience” (Morton & Rainbolt, 2016, p. 10). Many managers complain about it being an unnecessary headache (e.g. Mintz, 2010). In truth, for those not accustomed, philosophy has a frustrating nature: “unlike scientific or historical disciplines, it gives no new information about nature or society. Philosophy aims to provide not knowledge, but understanding” (Kenny, 2006, p. xi). Priest (2006) shares a similar perspective on the matter:

“Learning philosophy is something that many students find unsettling. This is because (unfortunately), much of the (at least contemporary Western) education system tells students what they are supposed to think – or at least, if they are allowed to criticize, where it is permissible to criticize from. When students start to learn philosophy they may well feel that they have had the rug pulled from under them” (p.203).

In a time and context of scientific thinking, philosophical thinking is commonly rejected (Fontrodona & Melé, 2002), and countless negative stereotypes foster negative attitudes oriented at the philosophical discipline. Bøyum (2010) confesses that some managers perceive philosophers as clumsy and idealistic while De Borchgrave (2006) says they are depicted as studious, introverted individuals hiding in the corner of libraries. No wonder business people “view philosophy as a book section in the library, next to other exotic material; none of which

they read” (Claes & Preston, 2009, p.72). They are simply disinterested in learning more about it. However, the reverse is also true: “it appears that professional philosophers seldom think about philosophy of management, and management scholars more than match that disinterest” (Beltramini, 2019, p. 546). Other scholars converse about this apparent disengagement from both ends (Deslandes, 2016, 2017; N. Laurie & Cherry, 2001; Neesham et al., 2022; Segal & Bruce, 2017).

The issue is not necessarily that philosophy risks producing adverse effects – rather, it takes away precious time from learning other topics: “introducing philosophy to an organization might mean valuing theory at the expense of practice” (Collins & Latemore, 2002, p. 57). In some parts of the world, people perceive philosophical learning as a luxury: “we were often told that philosophy was what people did after all the necessities and comforts in life had been provided. It appeared, therefore, that, for many African countries, philosophy was a luxury they probably could not afford” (Makinde, 1987, p. 227).

Finally, it is really hard to set up P4M programs; figuring out who should teach them and which institution or department should host them is complicated and political (Goldman, 2009). It is also not straightforward to determine the contents of such programs: “the development of programs for management education is itself an exercise in the application of philosophy to management” (Platts & Harris, 2011, p. 37). Such exercise is even more complicated when it involves philosophers. Besides, some say P4M is just a trend – perhaps a new fad will come to replace it (Atkinson et al., 1987; Pesqueux, 2001). Besides, what if the benefits associated with philosophical learning – such as self-development or creativity – could be attained with other forms of learning; such as story-telling or yoga (Gold & Holman, 2001). Why bother managers with philosophy? How are busy, pragmatic managers supposed to make time for a seemingly useless activity (Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023; Jones, 1983; Segal & Bruce, 2017)? Making a case for philosophy is no easy task. There is so little evidence about this subject-matter’s contribution to ML: “although anecdotal evidence attests to its positive reception within a few circles, one has to admit that this contention is still to be shared by a wider academic audience” (Joullié, 2014, p. 197). Even if evidence existed, some say philosophy would not revolutionize ML; Woiceshyn (1992) believes that as long as we do not change the dominant paradigms that underpin business education, adding philosophy courses cannot address the issues in ML.

3.3.3 An Inconclusive Debate

In truth, philosophy in ML is often discussed at a conceptual level and there is very little empirical evidence to support either perspective; the one in favour and against P4M. Eabrasu and Lamy (2023) explain that “one might be privately convinced that (theoretical) philosophy is helpful in management practice but proving this to someone else is no easy task” (p.311). Indeed, it is challenging to measure whether philosophy truly contributes to positive outcomes and whether it can generate a positive return for organizations (Chochard & Davoine, 2011; Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023; Podolny, 2009). De Borchgrave (2006) believes that organizations can – at the bare minimum – indirectly benefit from the manager’s acquired ability to take a step back to examine problems with perspective. Such view accords with human capital theory as it perceives organizations as being composed of people whose individual transformation results in organizational impact (Becker, 1975). Still, the degree of that impact is unclear making it difficult to promote P4M as a form of learning without more concrete evidence (e.g. Morton & Rainbolt, 2016).

One of the most common assertions against P4M states that is simply impractical. Yet, several authors underscore the contrary – philosophy *can* be made useful (Brière et al., 2018; Eabrasu, 2025; Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023). Strangely enough, it can even be useful by not being useful (e.g. Ledoux, 2012; Vehkalahti & Saarinen, 2017). However – outside of its useful uselessness – it also has supplementary benefits. For instance, it helps “to know oneself, to learn to think, to act as if nothing were self-evident” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2015, p. 7). The issue is that many philosophers fail to convey the benefits of P4M; they either assume that the value of philosophy is obvious or lack evidence to demonstrate its advantages (Morton & Rainbolt, 2016, p. 9).

Another point to mention concerns the claims made about philosophy’s advantages. Those contemplating P4M must be cautioned that some of the arguments for or against it stem from personal opinions which could be debated. For example, purists criticize philosophy in business because they wish to preserve philosophy from any practical application (Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023). Nonetheless, if someone disagrees with this purist approach, this argument should not be attributed significant weight.

Furthermore, advocates view P4M as an opportunity to question sense and meaning (e.g. Hurtado, 2023) but, in truth, philosophical practice leads to more questions than answers (Tsahuridu, 2023). Rather than creating clarity, philosophy can generate turmoil since “the task of the philosopher is to render uncertain what might seem clear, to question what is falsely presented as obvious” (Lamy et al., 2014, p. 157). Astonishingly, in philosophy, clarity does not

come from having solutions – this is an uncomfortable and unacceptable reality for most managers partaking in philosophical learning. Based on the above, one might conclude that the practice does indeed have its peculiarities, but these are the precise characteristics that are defended as worthwhile for business people. In fact, from Hand's (2018) perspective, philosophy delivers a value that is distinctive and cannot be imitated by any other discipline. (Spillane & Joullié, 2015) would align with this view due to the historical roots it shares with management. Still, the counter-arguments cannot be discredited. They present valid concerns about P4M and push scholars to ask honest questions about the legitimacy of philosophical learning in management.

To summarize, there are many reasons why business learning might strive towards incorporating philosophy. Nonetheless, the challenge is that all these arguments in favour of P4M are merely theoretical; few cases have demonstrated the true value of philosophy in business. In search of understanding if philosophy is relevant to managers, I conducted research that will be presented in the next segment.

Chapter 3 was paramount to understanding some of the key questions investigated in this dissertation. After overviewing how philosophy is defined and applied to business settings, I more narrowly examined how it is incorporated into ML. I also explained that there are opposing perspectives about P4M. A subset of academics and practitioners alike argue that philosophy should not be overlooked in ML (e.g. Goldman, 2009; Joullié, 2014, 2016a, 2018; Ledoux, 2012) for it stimulates thinking, invites reflection while unlocking clarity (Antonacopoulou, 2010; Collins & Latemore, 2002). All the while, it could develop competencies that are useful in business and that would be difficult to cultivate otherwise (e.g. Baurina, et al., 2022; Hand, 2018). At the same time, as explained, there are many reasons to be dubious about philosophy; it has a bad reputation in management circles and claims about its value are typically unfounded (e.g. De Borchgrave, 2006; Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023). Copious complaints focus on its impracticality (e.g. Ryan, 2021) but not everyone concurs – there are also those who believe that philosophy is useful (Brière et al., 2018) or that it is useful by not being useful (e.g. Ledoux, 2012). The ongoing debate about the pertinence of P4M is, therefore, inconclusive and requires considerably more research.

Chapter 4 – Research Studies and Methodology

The last three chapters overviewed literature on ML, its critiques and P4M, and hence form a bedrock for my research. By presenting the many arguments in favour as well as those against philosophical learning in business, I was able to showcase sources of tension that make P4M controversial. Nevertheless, it must be noted that most of these debates are merely conceptual; they lack empirical evidence that supports one position over the other. While there are many reasons why business learning might strive towards incorporating philosophy, few cases have demonstrated its added value. Therefore, its pertinence cannot be evaluated nor contrasted with other curricular proposals due to the scarcity of research on the matter (e.g. Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023; Joullié, 2014).

To make strides towards resolving this debate, I now wish to converge the contents of the previous chapters into this next part focused on explaining my own research. I will outline the studies I conducted, their objectives and the methodology I applied to achieve their aims. My main purpose is to provide context and background since each paper already includes a methodology section which can be consulted in Appendix A.

4.1 Overview of Studies

To continue, I will outline the studies I conducted for this dissertation. I will overview the papers I wrote on P4M, I will explain which ones are included in my thesis and, finally, I will proceed towards recapitulating each of my research papers.

In essence, Table 1 summarizes the articles I produced to advance P4M research. I am the first author for four of them, the sole author for three of them, and I second-authored one of the manuscripts. Regarding the publication status of my manuscripts, two of them are already published, while three others are undergoing revisions. One of my studies has been published in the *Journal of Management Development* – a prominent ML journal – and another was featured in a special issue of the *Journal of Human Values* alongside of notable P4M scholars such as Domènec Melé, Matthias P. Hühn, Marcel Meyer and Claus Dierksmeier. Additionally, my work is currently being reviewed by the *International Journal of Training and Development*, *Journal of Management Education* and *Philosophy of Management* journal which attract communities of ML and P4M subject-matter experts. Three of these papers were presented at conferences and are included in the conference proceedings for the *EURAM Conference* in Dublin, Ireland (2023), *Philosophy of Management Conference* in Oxford, England (2024) and the *ACFAS Congress* in Ottawa, Canada (2024). I also presented a paper at the *Academy of*

Management Learning and Education Workshop in Reykjavík, Iceland (2023). All those conferences helped me obtain invaluable feedback to improve my work.

	Manuscript Title	Authors (in order)	Publication Status/ Date	Journal/ Conference
1	Undercover philosophy? Demystifying philosophy for management education	Aleksandra Jasinska	Published: May 15, 2025	<i>Journal of Management Development</i>
2	Philosophy or Philosophizing? The Learning Objectives of Philosophy Programs for Managers	Aleksandra Jasinska	Under Review: since February 2025	<i>Journal of Management Education (under review), Philosophy of Management Conference 2024 (Oxford, England)</i>
3	How Philosophy Can Contribute To Management Development: The Case of a Swiss Executive Training Program	Éric Davoine and Aleksandra Jasinska	To be submitted: in October 2025	<i>International Journal of Training and Development (to be submitted), ACFAS Congrès 2024 (Ottawa, Canada), Academy of Management Learning and Education Workshop 2023 (Reykjavík, Iceland)</i>
4	Bursting Bubbles: How Philosophical Practice Impacts Managerial Competencies and Ethical Development	Aleksandra Jasinska, Sira Abenoza and Claudia Gimeno-Ruiz	Under Review: since April 2025	<i>Philosophy of Management Journal (under review), EURAM Conference 2023 (Dublin, Ireland)</i>
5	Bring Back Philosophy: The Roots of Both Business and Ethics	Aleksandra Jasinska	Published: December 8, 2023	<i>Journal of Human Values (Special Issue)</i>

Table 1 – Publication Status of Studies on P4M Source: Created by author

My dissertation will showcase the first four papers listed in the table above whereas the fifth paper “*Bring Back Philosophy: The Roots of Both Business and Ethics*” is merely contained in Appendix B. Since it focuses more narrowly on business ethics as a subfield of P4M – and utilizes a purely conceptual approach – I decided to allude to it in my work, but to exclude it from the main body of research which explores P4M from a broader and empirical angle. However, I still mention this paper since it is relevant to philosophical ML.

The four enclosed manuscripts – which are available in Appendix A of this thesis – explore P4M from complementary views requiring some theoretical background. In 1995, Barr and Tagg defined two approaches towards HE that affect whether emphasis is placed on teaching or learning. The ‘Instruction Paradigm’ pays attention to instructors and instruction – what they teach and how they teach – whereas the ‘Learning Paradigm’ evaluates what was gained by learners and the quality of learning. To study P4M from multiple perspectives, both paradigms were utilized in my research; the initial two papers focus on the instructional paradigm while the third and the fourth adopt a learning paradigm [view Figure 2]. More precisely, the first pair of papers deciphers what P4M consists of and what it seeks to teach. Meantime, the subsequent manuscripts focus on understanding the impact of philosophical learning on managers by analyzing two concrete programs. In the forthcoming parts, I will describe the methodology adopted for each of my studies including the sample, recruitment, data collection, and process of analysis.

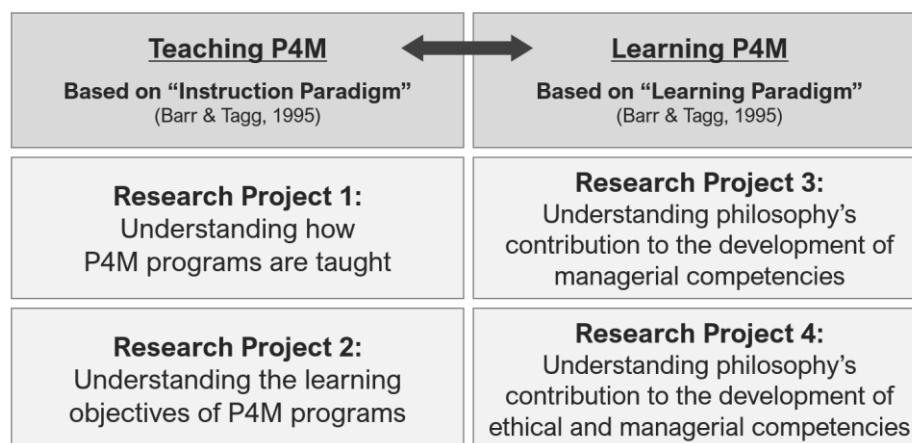


Figure 2 – Research Projects in Relation to Paradigms Source: Created by author

4.2 Methodology

All four studies conducted for this thesis employ a similar methodology. I chose to utilize qualitative research methods because they take into consideration subjectivity and complexity. They also capture tacit knowledge, leave room for interpretation and evaluate data within its context. This is important for social science research – particularly for HRM – which is nuanced and deals with a human element (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018; Azungah, 2018; Gummesson, 2006; Townsend et al., 2016). On the following page, Table 2 overviews the method adopted for each study including the data collection and transcript details.

	Manuscript	Methodology: Data, Collection, Analysis	Key Findings
1	Title: Undercover philosophy? Demystifying philosophy for management education Author: Aleksandra Jasinska <i>Published in 2025 in Journal of Management Development</i>	Data Type: Qualitative Sample: 62 P4M instructors Data Collection Method: Semi-Structured Interviews (between June 2022 and March 2023) 3411 minutes of interviews (56.8 hours), 512,832 words transcribed	- This paper defines P4M and identifies it as a subset of ML; - It maps P4M programs with a typology of 24 types of programs which can be divided into two groups: (i) traditional management courses that are based on philosophy (MP4M), and (ii) philosophy programs designed for management (PP4M); - This study reveals that P4M is often taught in an implicit manner indicating potential barriers to teaching P4M and further evidence for the existence of hidden curricula in ML.
2	Title: Philosophy or Philosophizing? The Learning Objectives of Philosophy Programs for Managers Author: Aleksandra Jasinska	Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis, manual	- This research identifies the intended LOs of P4M programs. They can be grouped into six categories: (i) personal development, (ii) brain training, (iii) interpretation and articulation, (iv) tolerance and acceptance of differences, (v) managerial competency development, and (vi) mystery; - This study reveals that P4M is often taught in an implicit manner indicating potential barriers to teaching P4M and further evidence for the existence of hidden curricula in ML.
3	Title: How Philosophy Can Contribute To Management Development: The Case of a Swiss Executive Training Program Authors: Éric Davoine and Aleksandra Jasinska	Data Type: Qualitative Sample: 15 managers Data Collection Method: Focus Groups, Semi-Structured Interviews 739 minutes of interviews (12.3 hours), 23,456 words transcribed (before) 94,688 words transcribed (after) Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis, manual	- This study confirms that P4M could develop management and leadership competencies including: (i) self-awareness, (ii) communication, (iii) conceptualization, (iv) problematization and (v) questioning; - It is the first study to capture managers' self-perceptions on how they were impacted by P4M and demonstrates how managers can translate philosophical practices to their work; - This study demonstrates a potential link between P4M training and authentic leadership.
4	Title: Bursting Bubbles: How Philosophical Practice Impacts Managerial Competencies and Ethical Development Authors: Aleksandra Jasinska, Sira Abenaza and Claudia Gimeno-Ruiz	Data Type: Qualitative Sample: 18 managers Data Collection Method: Semi-Structured Interviews (Two rounds of interviews: June 2022 and December 2022) 639 minutes of interviews (10.6 hours), 89,343 words transcribed Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis, manual	- This study revealed that philosophy can broadly contribute to three categories of competencies: (i) self-development, (ii) interpersonal competencies and (iii) the social responsibility of managers; - This is the first research that links P4M to emotional intelligence. It also strengthens evidence that philosophical practice could contribute to the development of wisdom.

Table 2 – Overview of Methodologies Employed Across Manuscripts Source: Created by author

In the forthcoming part, I will continue to describe my methodology including the sample, recruitment, data collection, and methods of analysis. I would like to mention that my data collection methods vaguely resemble the approaches employed by other ML and P4M scholars. For example, my first data collection approach bears resemblance to two studies conducted by Statler and Guillet De Monthoux (2015) and Brook and Pedler (2020); they also interviewed management instructors, but selected their sample to include instructors who employ humanities and action learning in business schools. Additionally, my fourth research project somewhat imitates a Finish study in its data collection process (Vehkalahti & Saarinen, 2017). Before proceeding, I wish to indicate that the methodology of my first paper will be slightly lengthier as it justifies some of the overall choices I made across research projects.

4.2.1 Methodology for Research Paper 1

When I reviewed literature about philosophy in ML, I realized how little was known about P4M in general. Papers about the matter were dispersed across a wide range of publications and did not seem to accord with one another. I also noticed some terminologies being used inconsistently to denote distinct ideas (e.g. Horikoshi, 2023; Windsor, 2015). Literature intersecting philosophy, management and learning was merely confusing so I decided to untangle it all in order to understand my contribution to this field. I wanted to start by examining the basics: what does this field consist of? How can philosophy be incorporated into ML? Thus, the objective of my first study became to outline philosophy in ML by mapping how philosophy is incorporated in business learning.

My eventual purpose was to create a typology that would identify different types of P4M programs. Other academics have previously created ML typologies; for example, Jansen et al. (2001) defined a MD typology, Aadland and Aaboen (2018) outlined a typology for ME in entrepreneurship, while Rungtusanatham et al. (2004) identified various types of online ME. The identification of programs variants within a similar genre helps recognize the range of ways a subject-matter could be approached. It also clarifies the differences between distinct forms of learning to be able to more effectively design and deliver courses (idem, 2004). This is why I decided to conduct a mapping exercise and to generate the first typology of P4M programs.

To achieve my objectives, I conducted qualitative research based on the interview method (Skinner et al., 2020). My sample consisted of 62 instructors who teach P4M across 22 countries as well as online. The countries concerned span across multiple continents and include: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland,

France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Monaco, Morocco, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. The sample mainly consisted of men (they represented 87% of participants) and the majority of them (almost 80%) teach P4M in academic settings. There were eight female participants of which six work as management educators in HEIs, one works as a management trainer for a private company and another works both as an independent trainer and university professor. In total, 51 of the sample participants are P4M educators in HEI settings, eight are P4M trainers in corporate settings and three of them perform both types of teaching on a regular basis. When I conducted my study, 53 of these instructors reported that they were actively working, seven were retired and two of them were semi-retired. All of the participants varied in age, seniority level and experience, but I did not take these factors into account in the analysis. Detailed participant characteristics are contained in Appendix C1.

To find these study participants, I leveraged two methods: (i) I conducted an extensive search via a mainstream web browser and (ii) I consulted the most implicated journal in P4M matters. First, I needed to find people who teach P4M. I started with a very basic approach to finding candidates; I simply used a search engine (www.google.com) to find names of people involved in this sort of teaching. I typed the key words 'philosophy + management course' which yielded 450,000,000 results. Due to this large number of outputs, I decided to only look through the first 30 pages of results to filter through links and identify names of people associated to courses. This was a very lengthy process, but it allowed me to get an overview of the programs that were offered and to collect an initial list of names. My original intention was to focus on Europe, but I ended up collecting a database that extended well beyond this region. Second, I referred to the *Philosophy of Management* journal. I decided to review the authors who contributed to the special issue about 'Teaching Philosophy to Managers' (Preston, 2009) and, in addition, I scanned the list of journal editors to identify potential P4M instructors. I reasoned that scholars who are interested in the intersect of philosophy and management might be involved in P4M. Thus, I read the profile of each editor and captured names of those who seemed to teach in this area based on their public biographies or publications.

By the end of this search process, I had collected 201 names. I then shortened the list to 163 names based on several exclusion factors; I dismissed those who had no available contact information or who were deceased. Between June 2022 and March 2023, I sent 163 invitation messages via LinkedIn and e-mail requesting time to schedule an interview. For various reasons outlined in Appendix A2, I ended up interviewing 62 individuals.

In order to amass data for my research, I conducted semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. These are one-to-one discussions in which an interview guide is employed, but does not have to be followed in an orderly fashion (Ramadhana & Chaveesuk, 2025). Researchers who employ this method “often have an initial question followed by probes” (Skinner et al., 2020, p. 107). According to the *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods on Human Resource Management*, semi-structured interviews are one of the most common research methods in HRM research, second only to the case study method (Townsend et al., 2016). This method was particularly relevant for my work since it is exploratory by nature, requiring a deeper level of insight. As per García-Horta and Guerra-Ramos (2009),

“when one is interested in focusing on what teachers think, perceive or believe, having conversations with a rationale, that is to say having an interview, is arguably the most suitable way to go about researching” (p.152).

Once I amassed data via interviews, I proceeded towards analyzing it using a thematic analysis. This is a qualitative research method that can be used to identify patterns in data sets. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), it consists of six stages: data familiarization, initial codes, theme identification, thematic review, theme naming and definition, and report production. That said, all the transcripts were read a first time, translated into English, and then transcription errors were corrected. Next, open codes were allocated to the data [full code list is available in Appendix D1]. A code is “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 4). The codes were assigned in an inductive manner meaning they were not based on any theoretical framework (Boyatzis, 1998). Additionally, the coding process was descriptive: “Descriptive Coding summarizes in a word or short phrase – most often as a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 20). Afterwards, initial themes were identified and redefined throughout the rereading of transcripts. A second researcher reviewed the themes. Lastly, themes were coined, defined and summarized in my paper “*Undercover philosophy? Demystifying philosophy for management education*” (Jasinska, 2025) [manuscript contained in Appendix A1].

The reader should note that the analysis was conducted in a manual manner. In other words, I did not use computer-assisted analysis software (CAQDAS) such as NVivo. Although such software can be very helpful, it also has its disadvantages (Cogin & Ng, 2016). In accordance with García-Horta & Guerra-Ramos (2009):

“computers are good at working with structure but so far they are not as good with content; therefore, software that can fully perform meaning making and interpretation has not been created” (p.152).

By employing this methodology, I was able to achieve my research objective. I was able to identify P4M as a subset of ML making it the first paper to clearly recognize philosophical instruction as a form of management education, training and development. I was also able to map the P4M field by outlining a program typology based on empirical work involving the aforementioned qualitative method with 62 instructors (Jasinska, 2025).

4.2.2 Methodology for Research Paper 2

My second empirical study sought to answer my second RQ: How can philosophy contribute to and be incorporated in ML programs? I investigated this matter by analyzing how philosophy *wishes* to impact ML rather than analyzing the *de facto* impact. This is because – as indicated in literature – the latter is difficult to assess (Podolny, 2009; Whetten, 2007). Thus, to answer my question, I considered the fact that program intents play a significant role in molding learning outcomes and focused my research on identifying the LOs of P4M programs. These were not previously studied and would enlighten researchers on the type of value of P4M seeks to deliver.

This project was based on the same database as the first one. Therefore, the sample and data collection process were identical to the previous study and can be consulted in the section above. The main differences lie in the research objectives – stated above – and data analysis.

To analyze my data, once again, I employed a thematic analysis using manual Descriptive Coding – also called ‘topic coding’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña, 2016). This resulted in a codebook summarized in the thematic framework in Appendix D2. There have been several iterations of this thematic framework. For instance, the first theme was added following rich conversations at the *Philosophy of Management Conference* in Oxford. I reviewed my themes with colleagues who helped me realize that ‘personal development’ was verbalized as a topic but not reflected in my findings.

Upon completing my analysis, I wrote a manuscript that was submitted to the *Journal of Management Education*. I chose this journal for – since its inception – it has provided important inputs to the ongoing debates about ML. For instance, Peter Vaill – one of the journal’s most prominent contributors – has fuelled discussions on the deficiencies of business schools (Dent

& Fearon, 2024; Vaill, 1981), while authors such as Norris (2022) have discussed alternative approaches towards manager learning. Yet, until now, only Statler and Guillet De Monthoux (2015) along with Rendtorff (2015) had spoken about philosophy in management curricula; I was motivated to reignite a conversation on P4M by responding to the journal's criticism and ideas about improving ML. My work presents the six main LOs of P4M programs as well as an inclination for managers to learn through philosophizing. The full paper is still under review but can be consulted in Appendix A3.

4.2.3 Methodology for Research Paper 3

This third paper examines the case of a philosophical training in Switzerland. This research project was a joint collaboration with my thesis supervisor Professor Dr. Éric Davoine; we agreed to work on it before I formally embarked on my doctoral journey. We sought to understand the experiences of managers who study P4M by analyzing a local case. That said, our goal was to approach this study from the aforementioned Learning Paradigm (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

The '*Cure de philosophie*' is a French-speaking FE program for executives in Fribourg, Switzerland. It launched in 2004 and there have been 14 program editions ever since. The program continues to run; there will be a fifteenth edition starting in September 2025. After several years of observing how executives responded and commented on their philosophical experiences, Professor Dr. Éric Davoine decided to conduct a formal study about the program's impact in 2008. He based his methodology on Grounded Theory – a qualitative research method that avoids the application of theoretical frameworks prior to analyzing data. It seeks to develop theories in an inductive manner and only then contrasts findings with literature (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). At the time, 25 executives participated in semi-structured interviews (Skinner et al., 2020). This led to the identification of four competencies which seemed to have been developed through this philosophical training: introspection, empathy, conceptualization and questioning. Thereafter, focus groups (Coule, 2013) were led and documented annually. The program instructors also collected more than 200 reflective program and module papers which provide insights on the impacts of P4M.

In 2022, I joined Professor Dr. Éric Davoine in studying this training program. We decided to conduct another series of semi-structured interviews. This time, 15 executives were interviewed on the basis of the four competencies identified in 2008; they were to explain how they were impacted by their training and to self-assess on the four key competencies like in

the studies led by Prof. Dr. Yves Chochard (Chochard, 2012; Chochard & Davoine, 2016). To collect more extensive data, we decided to adopt a 'before' and 'after' approach (the 'before' interviews took place in September 2022 while the 'after' interviews took place in March 2023). It follows the design of a Finish study; Vehkalahti and Saarinen (2017) also collected data from students before and after they took part in a philosophy program. This approach seemed appropriate for distinguishing learning expectations from actual outcomes.

When combining the interview data from 2008 and 2023, the sample ended up consisting of 40 managers with a gender split of 40% women, 60% men. At the time of the interviews, their ages ranged from 35 to 60 years of age and all the participants primarily lived in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Professionally speaking, the managers had extensive careers spanning across multiple sectors. They all spoke French and voluntarily registered for this program and this study. Appendix C2 contains sample description of the most recent sample.

To analyze data, we again used a thematic analysis on the basis of topic coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was done in a deductive manner – using Michel Tozzi's (2012) three competencies intended for pedagogical contexts; (i) problematization or philosophical questioning, (ii) knowledge of self and reflexivity, (iii) conceptualization. A code list is available in Appendix D3 while the thematic analysis is contained in Appendix E4.

The outcomes of this study confirm the four categories of competencies identified in 2008. Additionally, they help explain *how* participants noticed these competencies affect their work. This project also showed that the field of philosophy education can shed light on the ML field. Although the field of philosophy education rarely blends with P4M, there are some theories that have the potential of transferring from one field to the other – one of those theories being the competence-based approach to philosophy by Tozzi (2012). This manuscript will be submitted to the *International Journal of Training and Development* during the summer of 2025 and we are considering conducting further studies on the program in the near future.

4.2.4 Methodology for Research Paper 4

Subsequently, I would like to describe the methodology employed in my fourth paper. For context, this paper was written in collaboration with two researchers in Spain who are regularly involved in running P4M programs for both managers and management students. One of the co-authors is a professor at the ESADE Business and Law School in Barcelona Spain whom I met while completing my master degree. At the time, she facilitated a P4M program that I myself had participated. A few years later, when I began my doctoral studies, I reached out to

her on the same day she obtained funding to conduct a new philosophy program for executives. I was invited to investigate the impact of this project and perceived this as an invaluable opportunity to continue examining P4M from a Learning Paradigm (Barr & Tagg, 1995), based on a different case.

Once more, I conducted qualitative research on the basis of semi-structured interviews. Data collection was followed by a thematic analysis to scrutinize my data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Skinner et al., 2020). The inductive process resulted in a list of codes that can be used for analyzing future programs [view Appendix D4]. These enabled the generation of themes which were also reviewed by the second and third authors.

My fourth research project was based on a sample of 18 people – out of a total population of 20 individuals – who participated in a philosophy program in Spain. The sample emerged from two program ‘editions’ which are separate iterations of the same program (each iteration had identical LOs but independent participant sets). Ten of them took part in the first edition of the program whereas eight partook in the second edition. Two individuals did not want to be interviewed and therefore were excluded from the sample, hence explaining the difference between the population and sample size. Out of the two excluded managers, one did not want to participate due to lack of time and the other did not specify her reasons for not participating.

The demographics of this sample were evenly balanced between female and male participants amounting to nine individuals of each gender. All the individuals are managers who also graduated from the CEMS master program in Spain and are now pursuing professional careers across a range of sectors described in Appendix C3. All the managers work in Europe and represent at least 13 nationalities: Bulgaria, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, France, Finland, Russia, Turkey, Brazil, China, Mexico. Some have multiple nationalities but these are omitted from the sample table below to maintain their anonymity. To recruit this sample, the participants were informed of a forthcoming study on the first day of the program. They were invited to be involved in two rounds of interviews; at the beginning and at the end of the program. This is in line with other P4M research which also collected participant data at the beginning and end of a philosophical learning experience (e.g. Vehkalahti & Saarinen, 2017). In this project, no incentives were provided to participate. All those who were interested in participating were able to schedule time for an interview either during the in-person weekends or shortly afterwards via videoconferencing. All who agreed to participate were interviewed, resulting in 18 interviews which lasted an average of 35.49 minutes.

The analysis led me to identify several competencies in relation to philosophical learning. Some are novel findings, others confirm existing research. I also found a connection between P4M, emotional intelligence and the development of wisdom. The full manuscript is available in Appendix A4 entitled *“Bursting Bubbles: How Philosophical Practice Impacts Managerial Competencies and Ethical Development”*.

Chapter 4 outlines my research projects and methodology. In total, I wrote five manuscripts about P4M but included four in this dissertation (the empirical studies are contained in the main appendix while the conceptual paper is merely inserted for reference). After describing the publication status of each of these papers, I explained how my work analyzes P4M from two perspectives: an ‘instructional paradigm’ and ‘learning paradigm’ (Barr & Tagg, 1995). The majority of this chapter concentrates on the methodological aspects which are primarily qualitative, interview-based and based on a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña, 2016; Skinner et al., 2020). However, considering that each manuscript has a ‘methodology’ section, the purpose of this chapter was to mostly provide background information about my research journey and how it influenced the development of this thesis.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

I will devote this chapter to highlighting the ways in which my research projects [contained in Appendix A] contribute to literature – especially in connection to HRM and ML. I will begin by outlining my key findings and contributions which fuel the debate on teaching philosophy in business contexts. Then, I will discuss their implications on managers, philosophers, ML instructors, HRM professionals, researchers and society as a whole. Lastly, I will describe the limitations of my projects and some avenues for future research that could build on my work.

5.1 Key Findings and Contributions

In this part, I will summarize the key findings and contributions of my work which were briefly indicated in Table 2 of the previous chapter. In addition to assembling existing literature on managerial and philosophical learning – scattered across books and journals – my work addressed several important questions about the prominence and relevance of P4M. Thus, I would like to briefly recall my original RQs. My first question was ‘how can philosophy contribute to and be incorporated in ML programs?’. I was able to determine its contribution by interviewing P4M instructors and by studying how managers were impacted by training. The former allowed me to gain insight on how they *strive* to deliver value while the latter enabled me to identify some of philosophy’s actual areas of impact as reported by managers. I was also able to develop a typology containing the various ways philosophy is embedded in ML, thereby responding to the second part of my first RQ. The second question I posed was: ‘how can philosophical learning develop managerial competencies?’. Again, I found some indicative answers by interviewing executives who took part in two different programs and shared about their philosophical training experiences.

Regarding my key findings, firstly, my dissertation defined P4M, mapped the field with a typology of programs, and revealed the existence of hidden curricula in ML – indicating that it can be hard to detect philosophical learning in business. These contributions were mainly generated with my first publication dedicated to ‘demystifying’ philosophy in business learning (Jasinska, 2025). Secondly, my research identified the LOs of P4M and recognized a tendency to teach philosophy as a method, not as a subject matter. This is chiefly discussed in my second paper which, along with the first paper, contribute to understanding the instructional paradigm of P4M (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Thirdly, my research linked philosophy to the development of several managerial and leadership competencies based on empirical data collected for my third and fourth papers. Fourthly, my work showed how philosophy could help managers attain

emotional intelligence and wisdom through a particular form of philosophical practice that nourishes personal, professional and ethical development. My third and fourth manuscripts address Barr and Tagg's (1995) learning paradigm to conceptualize the potential impacts of P4M. Globally, my dissertation mainly contributes to advancing ML and HRD literature, but also builds on the fields of didactics, business ethics and wisdom studies. Next, I will detail the contributions in a more comprehensive manner.

To start, my work defined P4M as a sub-discipline of ML [view Figure 3] and clarified different ways of employing the term 'philosophy' within the management field. It made conceptual distinctions between commonly-used terminology and proposed 'philosophy *for* management' (P4M) as an appropriate way of speaking of philosophical learning aimed at managers and future managers. This supplies ML with formal nomenclature to describe philosophical education in business. It is an important contribution since, as mentioned at the start, various scholars discuss P4M but employ varying terminology to describe it (e.g. Horikoshi, 2023; Small, 2004a; Windsor, 2015), making it even harder to detect the scarce literature on P4M.

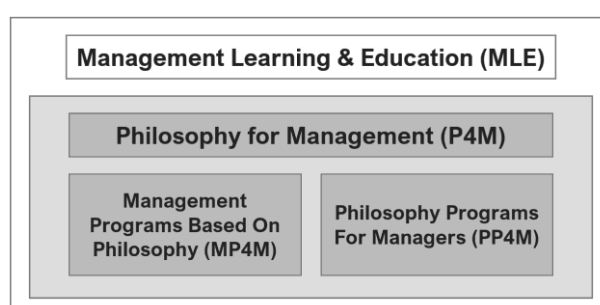


Figure 3 – Philosophy For Management Educational Landscape Source: Figure created by author

As mentioned, my research also mapped different types of P4M programs and classifies them into sub-categories, resulting in a typology containing 24 program types which, broadly, can be divided into two groups: (i) traditional management courses that are based on philosophy (MP4M), and (ii) philosophy programs designed for management (PP4M) [view Figure 4].

In generating this typology, my work illustrated the assortment of possible manners of incorporating philosophical learning into ML. It also inspired an original approach towards studying P4M which focuses not on what is conceptually possible, but on what is possible in practice thanks to a method that takes interest in what is effectively implemented across different geographical regions. My first study further revealed a tendency to teach philosophy in an implicit manner. The MP4M category of P4M indicated that many management instructors avoid referring to philosophy in their course titles and LOs. Though there are several reasons why they might opt for this 'undercover' approach, this practice makes it difficult to identify a

good number of P4M programs and opens up questions about the barriers and challenges towards teaching philosophy in management settings (Jasinska, 2025).

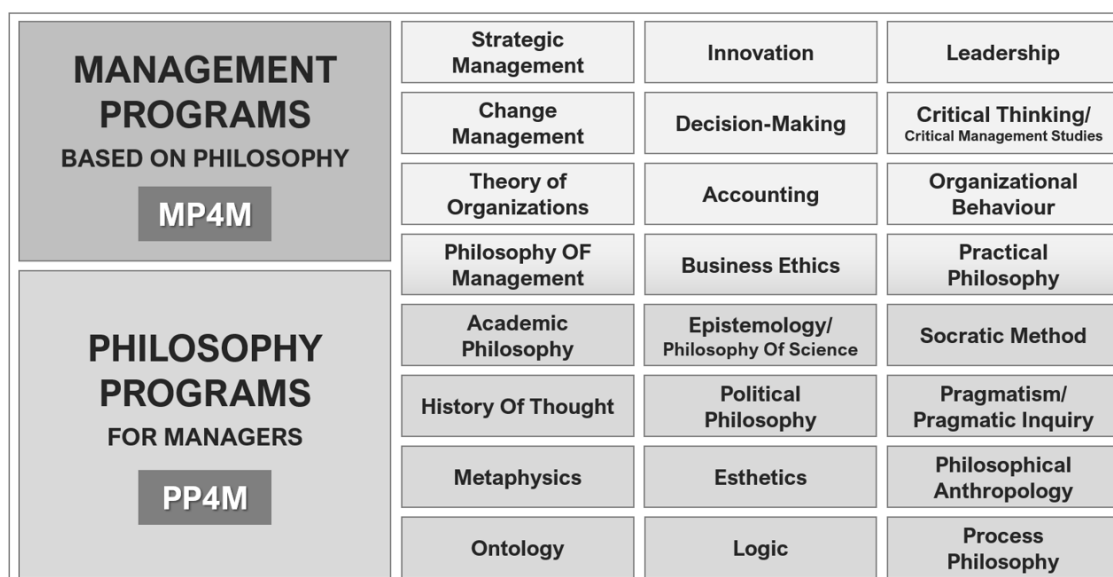


Figure 4 – Philosophy For Management Program Typology Source: Figure created by author

This dissertation further clarified the aims and objectives of philosophy in business. Interviews with 62 instructors allowed me to group the LOs of existing P4M programs into six categories: (i) personal development, (ii) brain training, (iii) interpretation and articulation, (iv) tolerance and acceptance of differences, (v) managerial competency development, and (vi) mystery [view Figure 5]. With the exception of the sixth LO – which reveals one of philosophy’s essential particularities – such aims align with the role and goals of ML. The ‘mystery’ that some programs strive towards does not oppose ML objectives – described in Chapter 1 and 2 – but also does not forcibly build on them. All of these LOs also point to the potential value of P4M and explain why managers and management instructors could or should take interest in this form of learning. This addresses some of the questions about the unknown value of P4M (Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023) and allegations about philosophy being useless (Segal & Bruce, 2017). It showcases concrete ways how P4M might align with ML objectives that have been suggested to build better programs in the future (Bilimoria, 2000; Paxton & Van Stralen, 2015).

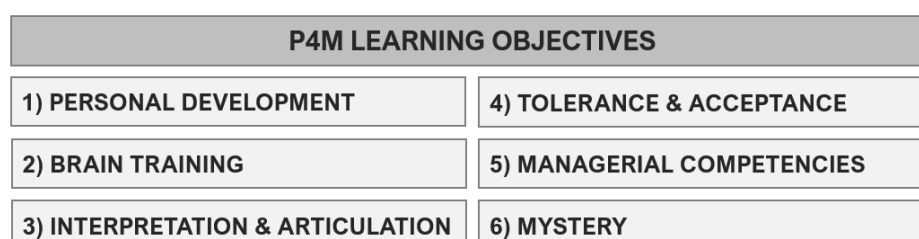


Figure 5 – Learning Objectives of P4M Programs Source: Created by author

My analysis also uncovered a tendency for philosophy to be taught as a method rather than as a discipline; I am the first scholar to identify such a pattern which I call ‘philosophizing’. Interestingly, the literature reviewed in Chapter 3 pointed to cynicism about philosophy being overly-abstract, theoretical and not practical enough for managers (e.g. De Borchgrave, 2006; Makinde, 1987). By demonstrating that P4M programs are mainly based on ‘philosophizing’, I show that philosophical instruction can be practical and actionable. Hopefully, this finding will encourage the destigmatization of philosophy as a ML tool.

To continue, my research specified how practicing managers could de facto benefit from partaking in philosophy programs. Based on focus groups and in-depth interviews with managers, I confirmed that P4M could develop management and leadership competencies including self-awareness, conceptualization, problematization and questioning – as identified in a former study (Davoine & Schumacher, 2009; Schumacher, 2009). This in turn could lead to more self-confidence, improved critical thinking, better communication and an ability to take perspective. It could also contribute to individual growth and cognitive ability which, altogether, could pave a path towards developing practical wisdom. Hence, philosophy delivers benefits on an individual and professional level which is necessary for attaining management and leadership competencies (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010). In particular, there is a potential connection between studying philosophy and cultivating authentic leadership (Goffee & Jones, 2015). This study also provides compelling empirically-based arguments for embedding P4M into ML which, again, addresses some of the concerns about there being no demonstrated results about its benefits (De Borchgrave, 2006; Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023).

Additionally, my fourth study indicated that a particular form of philosophizing could impact ethical thinking. By augmenting managers’ social awareness and responsibility – alongside of empathy – managers learned to think in new categories that consider ethical dimensions in decision-making. This helps explain how ethical development can occur through philosophical learning – many scholars discuss this ethical dimension but do not justify how it connects to P4M (Small, 2004b, 2004a; Zu, 2023). Also, when analyzing the impacts of partaking in philosophical practice, I identified an interesting link between philosophical learning and emotional intelligence. This is a unique contribution and strong selling point for P4M – especially taking into account the wide recognition across literature and management practice of emotional intelligence as a critical competency in business (e.g. Boyatzis et al., 2002). Additionally, my work indicates that philosophical training could contribute to the development of practical wisdom. Though the field of psychology has previously studied the philosophy’s link to wisdom (e.g. Schneider et al., 2023), it is a novel finding for management literature and

learning making it easier to recognize how P4M could supplement the needs of employers and when the human resources department could sign off on P4M activities (Sadler-Smith, 2009).

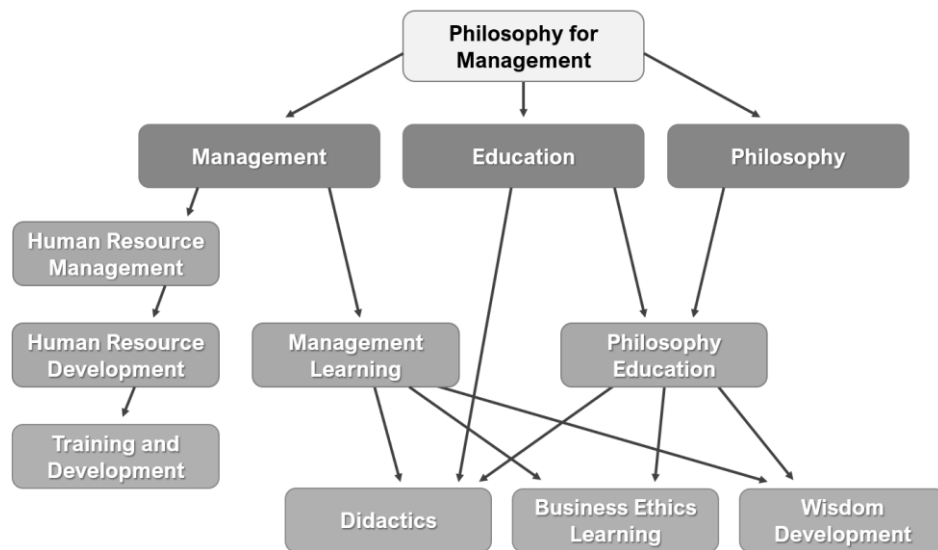


Figure 7 – Implications of Philosophy for Management Research Source: Created by author

This dissertation may especially interest management instructors who teach or train current or future managers. For professors and trainers alike, my work highlights the shortfalls of modern-day approaches to business instruction and presents them with a philosophy-based category for learning. Since academics and other ML instructors dedicate a significant portion of their professional activity to teaching and training, it is useful for them to consider large questions on how to undertake this work (Steyaert et al., 2016). Evaluating their didactic methods and instructional choices could influence the effectiveness of their practice (e.g. Shugan, 2006; Vollmer, 2021). Additionally, the ideas proposed have the potential to transform their day-to-day because such changes “affect the figure of the teacher and the teacher’s power and role within the classroom” (Roca, 2008, p. 614).

There are yet more implications on ML – by studying the intersection of management and philosophy, my research further provides insight on business ethics learning which is not only a sub-discipline of ML but also a branch of philosophy education that is of particular importance to management (Jasinska, 2024). In fact, it is the most prevalent form of P4M in both practice and research (Erkal & Vandekerckhove, 2021). Determining efficacious approaches towards teaching ethics has inestimable significance on those who are constantly confronted with ethical decision-making; and can, in turn, affect organizational repercussions on society (Procópio, 2019; Roca, 2008). By discussing business ethics learning founded on philosophy, my research supplies pertinent inputs for the field business ethics.

My research also fosters a link between business and the field of philosophy. Specifically, it has implications on philosophy education; it clarifies how philosophical learning translates to management settings and which didactics (e.g. philosophizing) concord with the way managers learn. It also serves as an illustrative guide towards setting up P4M programs – a list of LOs and of P4M typology inform philosophers on the role they could play in ML. Lastly, considering some of the prejudices and resistance that philosophers and managers have towards one another (De Borchgrave, 2006; Deslandes, 2016), these findings could help build bridges between philosophical and business worlds.

Advancing the ML discipline is particularly relevant because it affects the learning path of individuals who are likely to occupy management roles which – inherently – are positions of power and influence (Podolny, 2009). Managers' increasing power in society makes their education, training and development increasingly pertinent and of interest to all (Mena & Palazzo, 2012), as it could impact the human condition – not only through influencing the learner – but also by indirectly influencing the people who are impacted by a manager's decisions (Chia & Morgan, 1996). Considering that business is one of the most studied degrees in the world (Pierson, 1959; Spillane & Joullié, 2015), improving ML can help make strides towards transforming HE more broadly. Spillane and Joullié (2015) believe “the preparation of business students for citizenship is too serious a matter to be ignored much longer” (p.307) as ML research has wide implications.

By studying P4M from two different angles – an instructional and learning approach (Barr & Tagg, 1995) – I was able to contrast the type of impact philosophy intends to have with the impact it has in effect. The two paradigms complement one another and allow me to make important observations about P4M [view Figure 8]. Interestingly, as an example, five of the six LOs listed in paper two – personal development, brain training, interpretation, articulation, tolerance, acceptance and managerial competency – were directly or indirectly mentioned across the two cases studied in papers three and four. Although the sixth LO – ‘mystery’ – was not explicitly referred to in those studies, the data collected for study four can be analyzed to further examine the mysterious intent of P4M. Overall, the LOs and learning outcomes align on many levels and together compose the benefits of P4M teaching and learning.

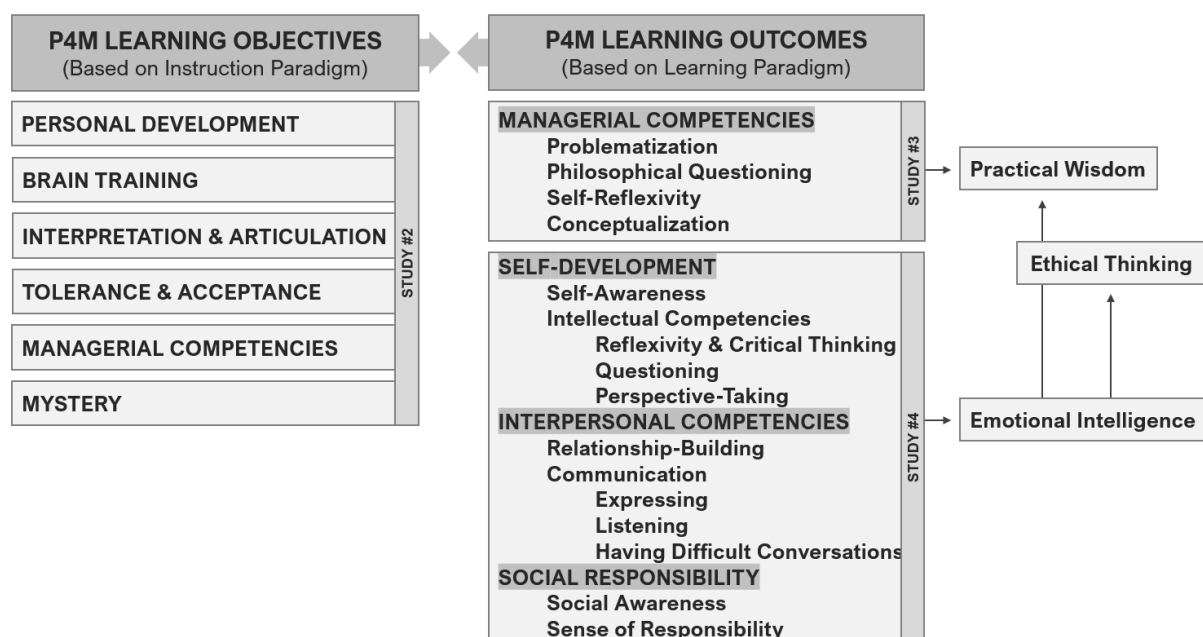


Figure 8 – The Benefits of Teaching and Learning P4M Source: Created by author

This body of work could impact managers on a personal level: “learning has the power to enable individuals and organizations to fulfil their personal and collective goals and ambitions” (Sadler-Smith, 2009, p. 2). Similarly, learning philosophy could transform managers by contributing to their well-being and flourishing [*eudaimonia*] (Saarinen, 2008; Tweedie, 2020; Vehkalahti & Saarinen, 2017). P4M could further enable managers to develop their own philosophies which, inevitably, would influence their work and choices. This again accords with human capital theory which – as explained in Chapter 1 – posits that employee investment is beneficial for organizational performance (Baruch, 2009; Noe, 2023; Torraco, 2016).

My work encourages deans and directors of ML institutions to consider changing business curricula. Admittedly, changing curricula is far from simple; it requires multi-stakeholder cooperation, time to see effects, and significant efforts that do not generate short-term impact on school rankings (Podolny, 2009). Yet, by publishing research on P4M, I can somewhat participate in the change management process by presenting a case for change and informing stakeholders of the effects of such decision.

All in all, my dissertation adds to the debate on whether philosophy is relevant to management. It provides arguments in favour of such learning and confirms the opinions of many academics who support P4M (e.g. Claes & Preston, 2009). Still, my work recognizes that P4M impacts vary according to the learner, LOs and didactic methods; these majorly impact outcomes and, therefore, must be considered when analyzing results (Byerly, 2019). They also influence the process of designing philosophical programs for managers.

5.3 Limitations

There are several limitations that must be taken into account. These predominantly stem from my methodological choices which affect my sample, data and results. To start, the sample used for my first two studies does not cover certain geographic regions such as Latin America and Asia. I cannot conclude why my methodology prevented the identification of instructors in certain parts of the world, but the ‘undercover’ teaching approach could have affected my ability to recognize a good number of P4M instructors. Additionally, a key-word search and reliance on an English-speaking editorial board could have skewed my sample towards including Anglo-Saxon and Western cultures. Admittedly, my initial aim was to focus on the European region so I had not intended to conduct a global study, but the international dimension of academia and journals led me shift my project scope beyond those borders.

Furthermore, it is important to note that my study samples could be systematically excluding ‘skeptics’ who might view P4M in a more critical manner. The individuals I interviewed are likely to view philosophy as positive or beneficial to some extent because: (1) the learners who participated in the Spanish and Swiss training had no obligation to engage with philosophy (they proactively signed up for the programs), and (2) the instructors in my sample teach P4M suggesting that they are supportive or – at the minimum – not opposed to such approach to ML. All this could have resulted in overly-positive results about the benefits of P4M. In the future, it would be interesting in interviewing instructors who were mandated to teach P4M or to study programs with captive audiences – such as undergraduate business students with mandatory philosophy modules in their cursus. This would perhaps shed light on more cynical views of philosophy. Nevertheless, my research does not focus on negative impact nor on the degree of impact, but rather on the type of positive impact philosophy could have or intends to have. The results provide an understanding of what philosophy could obtain with the right mindset while also indicating that such outcomes are not necessarily going to occur every time a manager engages with P4M.

My sample obtained also skews towards ME instructors (they represent almost 80% of the sample used in study one and two) and was less representative of the MTD portion of ML. Although professors are a significant P4M group, it would be interesting to contrast the differences between ME and MTD results to understand how the typology or LOs might differ depending on the type of learning.

Moreover, the case method employed for the third and fourth projects also has some drawbacks. One of the major concerns of the single-case approach is that each program has

idiosyncratic goals; the unique LOs and didactic strategies employed in each case inevitably influence learning outcomes and, hence, the results of my studies (Byerly, 2019; Cholbi, 2007). Therefore, these cannot be generalized to all P4M programs – they merely indicate what philosophy might obtain given particular circumstances. Another limitation of the case approach is the relatively small sample size – it is directly tied to the number of program participants which tends to be lower in executive learning.

Regarding data collection, interview timing also could have produced a bias; since discussions took place right after the programs finished, there is a risk that participants might have rated outcomes as more significant than they are in the long-term due to the ‘honeymoon effect’ (Campbell et al., 1970). This was not considered when designing the studies but, despite this effect, I was still able to identify the areas of competencies that were most impacted – providing insight into ‘what’ managers gain from P4M.

5.4 Future Research

Despite the limitations outlined in the previous section, this thesis sets ground for future research. I believe the databases I created can serve more studies or inspire other forms of fieldwork. Below I will highlight potential avenues for research that can be approached from Barr and Tagg’s (1995) two paradigms or other perspectives.

In order to build on the work I conducted from an Instructional Paradigm (Barr & Tagg, 1995), one potential area of study regards the methods of teaching philosophy to managers; investigating didactic strategies that are employed in P4M would provide more insight on the ways philosophical content could be delivered in business learning. Literature suggests using dialogue, journalling, arts-based methods, and other mechanisms (Bolten, 2001; Schultz & Quinn, 2014; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009) – but which ones are employed in current programs? Which ones are most effective and complementary with ML? Practically speaking, answers to these questions would provide guidelines to those wishing to merge both worlds. I believe such research was not possible sooner because the P4M field and its LOs were not yet identified whereas:

“decisions about content and methods of teaching are fundamentally dependent on the goals of teaching (and of learning), as defined, set, or strived for by the school, by the state, or by teachers and learners themselves” (Vollmer, 2021, p. 139).

Thus, this dissertation sets the stage for a more detailed didactics investigation which could serve as inspiration for management instructors while informing the research of ML scholars – and perhaps even those involved in philosophy education or education in general.

From a Learning Paradigm perspective (Barr & Tagg, 1995), this thesis examined only two P4M cases which incorporated precise objectives and didactic techniques. To continue exploring this field based on this paradigm, it would be useful to study other cases to compare how divergent LOs and didactics might influence learning outcomes. It would also be interesting to compare the results of programs that teach philosophy as a discipline versus those that teach philosophy as a method. Similarly, studying other aspects – whether the program length or number of participants – could help identify the circumstances needed to effectively educate, train and develop managers.

It is worth noting that this dissertation only scratches the surface of literature about wisdom. I believe there is a lot more work to be done to build connections between philosophical learning and wisdom – not just the practical type which is most frequently cited in journals (e.g. Small, 2004b), but also wisdom as broad notion and highly desirable managerial competency.

Another potential research area that could evolve from this work takes interest in the motivations of P4M instructors. When discussing the aims of philosophical instruction in business, many interviewees opened up about their personal reasons for getting involved in such work. I believe the data which was amassed could serve as a source of information about what motivates instructors to lead or initiate P4M programs. Likewise, managers' motives to participate in such learning would be interesting to research as it would explain what value they wish to derive from P4M.

In the future, I would also be curious to study intercultural perceptions of P4M and how initial education influences HEIs' friendliness towards philosophy. For example, if a manager studied philosophy in high school, how would this influence their P4M experience? Would this make them more receptive towards philosophical learning? Would it incline them to certain forms of P4M? How would this compare to a manager who never had contact with philosophy? Would a manager from England experience P4M differently from a manager from France? There is some indication that culture and initial learning could affect the experience of studying philosophy (Li, 2012; Li-Hua & Lu, 2014).

My manuscripts also contribute to showing that teaching philosophy to managers is a good idea. Therefore, why are there not more P4M programs? What barriers and challenges prevent the implementation of such learning? Despite findings demonstrating the benefits of P4M,

there are signs that other barriers exist preventing a wide implementation of philosophical learning in business. Studying those hurdles would enlighten deans, trainers, on the feasibility of programs. Perhaps there are some serious contentions that cause to decision-makers to disregard P4M – research on this matter is worth pursuing.

To sum up this section, the research conducted for this dissertation serves as a foundation for future research directions. There are many questions left to explore: what teaching and training methods are used to teach P4M? Who teaches P4M? Why do some P4M programs fail? What are the barriers to implementing P4M programs? I believe I only scratched the surface of this field and there are countless opportunities to continue developing knowledge on P4M.

5.5 Conclusion

To summarize, there are many reasons why business learning might strive towards incorporating philosophy. Nonetheless, until now, the barrier was that most of these arguments in favour of P4M were merely theoretical; few cases have demonstrated the true value of philosophy in business. One of the aims of this dissertation was to generate empirical evidence to verify the utility of P4M and its practical employment in programs across geographies. In doing so, I deciphered how P4M is defined and taught, what it strives towards, and identified the impact of philosophical learning on managers; thus building a better understanding of how P4M could add value to ML. In the end, my doctoral thesis mainly contributed to the field of management by taking particular interest in ML. My projects also contributed to HRM by taking interest in the development of human capital. In the future, my work could expand its footprint to other streams of research including didactics, business ethics and wisdom literature. Yet, for the time being, it provides valuable insights to professors and trainers who teach business programs and builds a case for managers to consider studying philosophy. With that, perhaps it will motivate deans, academics, managers alike to consider incorporating more philosophy in ML.

Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation by discussing its key findings and contributions on a practical and theoretical level – especially in connection to HRM and ML. It explains the implications and limitations of my studies, as well as potential avenues for future research.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Manuscripts Selected for Doctoral Thesis

Appendix A1 – First Manuscript for Doctoral Thesis: “Undercover Philosophy? Demystifying Philosophy for Management Education”

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to understand the types of philosophy programs that are taught to managers and management students around the world.

Design/ Methodology/ Approach – A thematic analysis was conducted based on semi-structured interviews with 62 professors and trainers who teach philosophy for management in 22 different countries.

Findings – The results reveal that there are at least 24 types of philosophy for management programs which fall into two broad categories: (1) traditional management courses that are based on philosophy (MP4M), and (2) philosophy programs designed for management (PP4M). Interestingly, many of these are taught in an ‘undercover’ manner which opens a discussion on the use of hidden curricula in philosophy for management.

Originality – This study contributes to demystifying the field of philosophy for management (P4M) as a subset of management learning and education (MLE). It is the first paper to coin the term ‘philosophy for management’ and to provide a typology of philosophy programs in business; based on empirical data from various geographies. Through mapping out the types of programs within the discipline, researchers and practitioners can reflect on how to approach business education from a philosophical angle. Ultimately, this study illustrates the diversity of ways that make it possible to integrate philosophy in management education.

Keywords: philosophy, management training, management development, business schools

Published as¹: Jasinska, A. (2025). Undercover philosophy? Demystifying philosophy for management education. *Journal of Management Development*, 44(3), 431-440. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-10-2024-0328>

¹ This is a pre-print version of a paper published in the *Journal of Management Development*

Introduction

Historically, philosophy influenced the development of a multitude of disciplines, such as law, politics, mathematics, and literature (Small, 2004). Management is no exception – countless philosophers have directly influenced the theories that are taught in today’s business programs (Fontrodona & Melé, 2002; Joullié & Spillane, 2015; Beltramini, 2018). For this reason, some would say that managers study aspects of philosophy through studying business but, in truth – in the majority of cases – the roots of business have long been forsaken (Hühn, 2015; Jasinska, 2024). As business schools started adopting a scientific paradigm based on empiricism or pragmatism (Woiceshyn, 1992), it became rare for MLE to refer back to the disciplines that shaped management into what it is today. Now – though it is still rare to incorporate philosophy into MLE – this practice is becoming more popular (Claes & Preston, 2009).

Despite the great differences between philosophy and management, there are many similarities that unite the two disciplines, and management literature often discusses philosophy (Small, 2004; Ledoux, 2012). For example, some papers investigate the ideas of specific philosophers and their input on management theory (Blok 2021; Joullié & Spillane, 2015). Other papers discuss philosophical services targeted at business people; such as philosophical consulting, mediation and counselling (Ledoux, 2012; Hategan, 2019). There is also a stream of literature that discusses philosophy in MLE where authors refer to several types of philosophy; logic, communities of inquiry, Socratic dialogue, epistemology and aesthetics as examples (Woiceshyn, 1992; Bolten, 2001; Small, 2004; De Monthoux, 2015; Tsahuridu, 2022). Yet, most frequently, MLE research discusses business ethics; which is a well-established – if not mainstream – form of philosophy in management education (Small, 2004a).

The word ‘philosophy’ is commonly used in the management field, but there is a lot of variability in how it is employed. Though often equated to business ethics, it is a much broader concept that can be defined etymologically as “the love and pursuit of wisdom” (Small, 2004) or as an “activity of questioning assumptions” (Segal, 2005, p.21). Windsor (2015) says that “philosophy is inquiry into knowledge, truth, meaning, right, and good as a basis for wisdom in practical judgment and action” (p.18). When defining the concept, others still look at its function; Ledoux (2012) describes philosophy as “an attempt to clarify our relation to the world and how to live accordingly, through a discursive and rational thought practice producing concepts” (p.8). Despite many efforts to provide definitions, there remains a lot of confusion around the word ‘philosophy’ in relation to management. Case, French and Simpson (2011)

complain that, due to vernacular language, “the classical meaning of philosophy has been diluted significantly, becoming little more than a synonym for ‘personal attitude’ or ‘preferred approach’” (p.4). In fact, philosophy is most commonly used alongside of the word ‘management’ to refer to a specific worldview or approach towards doing business. ‘Management philosophy’ and ‘business philosophy’ – synonymous with ‘philosophy of managers’ – designate the values, principles and beliefs that guide a manager’s or leader’s actions (Collins & Latemore, 2002).

The term ‘philosophy’ changes meanings across contexts or when paired with other nouns or prepositions; whether philosophy is *of*, *for* or *in* management completely transforms what is being discussed. For example, “the expression ‘philosophy of’ (for example) management suggests inquiry into the philosophical foundations of a discipline” (Windsor, 2015, p.17) – and ‘philosophy of management’ is in fact a sub-discipline of management that explores managerial concepts through a philosophical lens (Blok, 2021). However, ‘philosophy of *management*’ is not to be confounded with the ‘philosophy of *managers*’ which, as noted above, is another way of saying ‘management philosophy’.

Another concept – which is key for this paper – is ‘philosophy *for* managers’ (P4M). It is rarely used and can only be spotted in a handful of papers (e.g. Saarinen, 2008; Koslowski, 2010; Ledoux, 2012; Windsor, 2015). Generally, there have been few attempts to define what it means; Saarinen (2008) says it is applied philosophy, but Windsor (2015) has a slightly different approach that attributes a prescriptive dimension; he says ‘philosophy for managers’ instructs on ‘how to do business’. These definitions do not fully capture the meaning I attribute to P4M in this paper. Here, ‘philosophy for managers’ will be interchanged with ‘philosophy for management’; it means that the academic discipline of philosophy – or elements of it – is addressed and instructed to business people. In other words, when managers or management students are intentionally exposed to philosophy – and philosophy is tailored for them – I call this ‘philosophy for management’. It is a term I specifically propose for the field of management learning and education (MLE). I also employ the expression ‘philosophy *in* management *education*’ as a synonym of P4M.

Since years, many scholars advocate for philosophy in management education (e.g. Small, 2004), but literature does not reflect developments in this area. The entire field of P4M is under-researched and poorly understood – even when it comes to basics such as understanding the existing types of P4M programs. There are discussions about programs based on philosophy of science (Zald, 1996; Lamy, Bazin, Magne & Rappin, 2014), philosophy of management (Goldman, 2009), critical reflexivity (Cunliffe, 2004) or Socratic Dialogue (Bolten, 2001;

Tsahuridu, 2022), but only a small number of authors explain how P4M is taught. The majority of literature is prescriptive rather than representative of what current programs indeed contain. All this leads many to pose the following research question: what types of philosophy programs are taught to managers and management students? In this paper, I seek to attain more clarity about P4M in MLE.

Method

Sample & Procedures

There were 62 pedagogues included in this study who deliver P4M programs in 22 different countries. A few of them also offer online or 'blended' programs that alternate between online and in-person sessions (Matheos, Daniel & McCella, 2005). The sample consisted of 54 men and 8 women; 53 who were actively working, and 9 who were retired or semi-retired at the time of the interview. 51 out of 62 respondents are from university settings, whereas 11 come from the private sector.

To identify potential interviewees, I scanned the editors of the *Philosophy of Management* journal and used the key words 'philosophy' and 'management' on Google Search (a search engine) to identify potential educators of P4M (Philosophy of Management, 2024). This process resulted in a list of 201 names of people who fit the study. Secondly, 163 people were selected from the list based on their adherence to the following criteria: they were alive at the time of the study, appeared to teach P4M, had contact details available. Thirdly, individual customized e-mails were progressively sent out inviting them to participate in this study. I only retained the names of interviewees who self-identified as delivering P4M programs, and who were available to provide an interview.

Data Collection

Ultimately, I conducted 62 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with open-ended questions (Edwards & Skinner, 2009). Interviews were conducted between June 2022 and March 2023 and lasted between 30 to 120 minutes. I continued doing interviews until saturation was reached. With the help of Microsoft Teams' video-conferencing software, 51 discussions were conducted online, the rest were conducted in person. Microsoft Teams' automatic transcription function was used and I took notes in case of technological issues.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed via a thematic analysis which is a method of interpreting data by identifying recurrent patterns. The thematic analysis was conducted manually and in an inductive manner; permitting exploration and the extraction of themes directly from data. The process consisted of six phases: data familiarization, initial codes, theme identification, thematic review, theme naming and definition, and report production (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data familiarization consisted of reading interviews and verifying the validity of the transcripts. Then, initial codes were attributed line-by-line, and themes were identified after coding transcripts. These themes were refined in a recursive process before names and definitions were attributed. Finally, the section below reports on themes that were identified.

Results

Types of Philosophy for Management Programs

Generally, two overarching themes emerged from the analysis: (1) management programs based on philosophy (MP4M), and (2) philosophy programs designed for managers or management students (PP4M). Figure 1 maps the educational landscape of philosophy for management while Figure 2 plots a program typology outlining different categories of programs that were identified through this study.

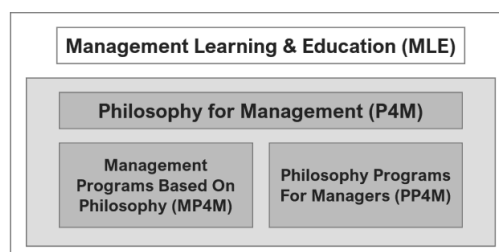


Figure 1 – Philosophy For Management Educational Landscape Source: Figure created by author

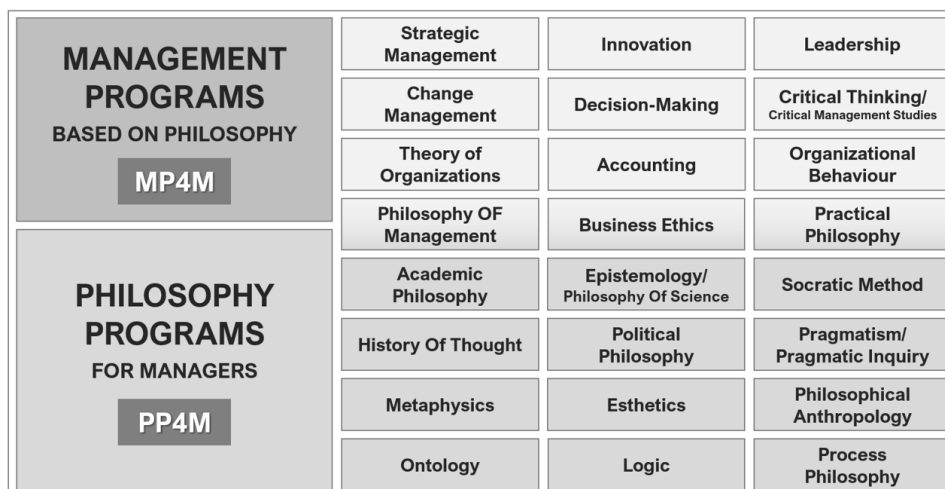


Figure 2 – Philosophy For Management Program Typology Source: Figure created by author

Management Programs Based On Philosophy (MP4M)

Firstly, this study revealed that many teach philosophy within the context of regular management courses. They teach typical business classes – such as Accounting, Change Management or Leadership – but base them on philosophy. One professor stated: “I’m teaching them management [...] and I make that quite clear to them. But philosophy is clearly embedded” (MU05). Another commented that their own background and affinity towards the subject resulted in making philosophy the basis of anything they taught: “even in those mainstream courses, because I’ve been teaching them, they always had a philosophical approach” (MU55).

Within this broader category of ‘management programs’, several types of courses were identified as being based on philosophy: (a) strategic management, (b) change management, (c) theory of organizations, (d) innovation, (e) decision-making, (f) accounting, (g) leadership, (h) critical thinking, (i) organizational behaviour, (j) philosophy of management, (k) business ethics, and (l) practical philosophy. It is important to note, however, that the former three (philosophy of management, business ethics and practical philosophy) intersect with the second broader category called ‘philosophy courses for management’ which will be described afterwards.

Strikingly, a great variety of business courses have a philosophical core. Some are typical business school courses, others are less commonly seen in management curricula. One of the respondents explained: “there is another class that I’ve taught to managers [...] called ‘Creative Thinking’, and that that was definitely strongly philosophical” (MU02). Someone else shared: “I’m also teaching ‘Leadership and Change’, so that is again a mainstream course where I still bring in some philosophical elements” (MU55). Some courses maintain a traditional structure, but integrate content that goes above and beyond business: “it’s a leadership course, but where I speak on slightly more philosophical questions” (MU29). This is even the case for courses that are not associated with the humanities: “in the accounting courses [...] I brought in some sort of basic critical thinking” (MU57). Another teacher shared: “I tried to introduce it into the regular Management Accounting course” (MU34). No matter how their class was called, these teachers described how it was based on philosophy: “as soon as I touch into general questions of innovation strategy, I tried to bring in over Heidegger and some more recent works” (MU20). There are all kinds of atypical course names in this field: ‘Business, Politics and Culture’ (MU08), ‘Principles of Business Administration’ (MU39), ‘Humanity and Management’ (MU06), ‘Organizational Change’ (MU50), ‘Organizational Theory’ (MU04), ‘Decision Making’ (MU02), ‘Foundations of Management Thought’ (MU54) and ‘Cultural

Management Control' (MU34). There was a lot of variety in the responses, but all the courses fell into the sub-categories listed previously. Among all these categories, the most common types of MP4M were in leadership, critical thinking, philosophy of management and business ethics.

Amid the commonly-taught management courses based on philosophy, business ethics takes the center stage; it is most often listed as part of a repertoire of courses taught by P4M pedagogues: "when I teach ethics, I do philosophy there too" (MU05). Some shared how they incorporate philosophy: "we have a Levinassian approach to business ethics" (FU01). Many insisted that ethics must strictly be taught from a philosophical angle; "it would make little sense to have a course on business ethics without philosophy" (MU08). Someone else commented: "in ethics it's easy – philosophy is integrated from the beginning to end" (MU04). This is especially the case for those who have an educational background in philosophy: "I know it's called 'Business Ethics' class but I'm a philosopher" (MU59). Interviews revealed that when teachers have the intellectual toolkit to treat business ethics as a philosophical subject matter, then it becomes the only acceptable approach towards teaching.

Philosophy Courses For Management (PP4M)

Secondly, another category of P4M is called 'Philosophy Programs for Management' (PP4M). These courses are primarily philosophical, but altered to fit a management audience; "there's a difference between being a philosopher or even a business ethicist versus being a manager who needs to understand what those philosophical ideas are and then apply them" (FU61). This type of course focuses on what the business world can learn from the philosophy world since philosophy is difficult to access without guidance.

Some dissect the brains of great thinkers: "what interests us is what happens in the philosophers' heads and what we can transmit directly to the manager" (MI36). Another echoed: "there is a bit about talking about how philosophers thought about the world, but the real thing was: okay, having talked about that, how does that allow us to think?" (MU15). Philosophical thinking seems to be of interest to pedagogues: "our goal is actually the inculcation of a of a critical mindset [...] you need to understand how the basic thought pattern of philosophy works" (MU21). Others still are about "taking concepts and making them applicable" (MI56).

Within the PP4M category, interviews revealed multiple sub-groups: (a) academic philosophy, (b) the history of thought, (c) metaphysics, (d) ontology, (e) epistemology and the philosophy of science, (f) political philosophy, (g) esthetics, (h) logic, (i) the Socratic method, (j)

philosophical anthropology, and (k) process philosophy. One professor stated: “I did applied process thought. I took process philosophy and I applied it in a very technical sense to topics in management” (MU15). Another shared: “[I teach] social anthropology from a very philosophical anthropological perspective” (MU41). Other philosophy courses for managers branched out to other areas still; esthetics (e.g. MU24), political philosophy (e.g. MU34), logic (e.g. MI36), and social ontology (e.g. MU60).

Among these categories, programs about the history of thought, the Socratic method, and epistemology were the most commonly cited in interviews. The latter seems to be especially popular for those teaching master or doctorate-level courses in university settings: “I used to offer PhD courses that got a lot into epistemology. So there I really involved a lot of philosophy” (MU20). On the other hand, the Socratic method is a popular educational approach in business: “maieutics applied to management aims to be the best technique” (MI36). Another commented: “typically I use a Socratic method in my teaching” (MU09). This approach seems to be especially popular in non-university settings, but remains prevalent across contexts. Moreover, the history of thought is commonly taught: “the course looks at history and at how management has been looked at over time” (FU03), and “you take advantage of the great thinkers, and the history of philosophical thought” (MU37). Some clarified which philosophical schools of thought were instructed: “stoicism in general is really a philosophy that is very suitable or very related to management” (MU29). Although some forms were discussed more than others, results reveal the great range of P4M programs through the typology.

Undercover Philosophy

In this study, a unique phenomenon was observed pertaining to the instruction of P4M. It appears that, in a large number of cases, philosophy is taught without being named or its pervasiveness is purposely understated. When this occurs, I call it ‘undercover philosophy’ which is the act of masking P4M as a different or secondary subject. Respondents discussed this on numerous occasions: “I do not tell students they are learning philosophy” (MU05). Someone else explained: “it doesn’t have the word philosophy in it, but clearly is” (MU02). Multiple interviewees deemed it unnecessary to reveal what their program was truly about: “not all of them have to have black and white written in the curriculum the part where it says ‘we’re teaching philosophy’” (MU39). Apparently, in many cases, philosophy seems to be delivered in an ‘undercover’ manner. However, this phenomenon was mainly observed in the MP4M category; with few occurrences in PP4M.

Discussion

In response to the initially posed research question – surrounding the types of philosophy programs found in MLE – I was able to map a program typology with 24 categories that paint a portrait of the P4M field. I also differentiated between MP4M and PP4M courses and identified a unique phenomenon called ‘undercover philosophy’. The great number of categories identified in this study was unexpected since literature does not describe so many forms of P4M. It was particularly surprising to uncover the great number of traditional business courses that pose as management classes, but instruct P4M. I could not have predicted that ‘accounting’ or ‘organizational behaviour’ courses would appear in the typology due to lacking literature about the integration of philosophy in such areas. I have now come to understand that many MP4M programs have flown under the radar until now due to the practice of undercover philosophy. Though ‘Organizational Theory’ and ‘Leadership’ courses have also often gone undetected as P4M, these were more likely to contain philosophical elements since the philosophical roots of leadership and management are often discussed in literature (e.g. Fontrodona & Melé, 2002; Joullié & Spillane, 2015), and there are examples in literature of such programs being taught philosophically (e.g. Cunliffe, 2009). Thus, classifying such programs as themes in the program typology was less surprising than inserting a category for ‘accounting’, still the prominence of such programs was unexpected.

Moreover, it was interesting to discover a whole set of courses that are not entitled ‘philosophy’ per se, but that classify as such. This discovery connects with a well-studied phenomenon called the ‘hidden curriculum’ (HC) – also called ‘implicit education’. In contrast to an ‘official curriculum’, the HC assumes that there are formal and informal learnings, and considers the tacit learning that takes place in education. Concretely, the HC accepts that there are explicit and implicit objectives in education; and the implicit ones are referred to as ‘hidden’. They can be intentionally or unintentionally omitted; HCs simply look at all that is informally taught in addition to what is said to be taught (Bergenhengouwen, 1987; Blasco, 2012; Oron Semper & Blasco, 2012).

In this case, is it not clear if philosophical teaching is hidden on purpose; what is merely observed is that business is announced on the menu, but instructors intend to teach philosophy. Additionally, programs are not necessarily focused on teaching management concepts; they may teach how to reason, how to question, or how to make decisions. Though the precise learning objectives of P4M were not examined in this study – nor did I analyze the reasons why some opt for implicit versus explicit approaches towards teaching philosophy – this study uncovers the frequent use of HCs in P4M; especially in MP4M. Some PP4M

programs include them too, but differently; they teach philosophy explicitly, but may include implicit elements. This aligns with Blasco (2012): “various dimensions of the formal curriculum convey implicit signals about what really matters at business schools” (p.374).

HCs have been previously reported in MLE in the context of responsible management education; otherwise, few have discussed them in MLE (Blasco, 2012; Høgdal, Rasche, Schoeneborn & Scotti, 2019). According to Blasco (2012), HCs send messages allowing educators to signal appropriate conduct; if I consider Mintzberg's (2004) view that management is a practice, HCs can serve MLE through instructing certain behaviours.

Moreover, literature contains some delicate traces of this ‘undercover’ teaching approach. For example, to overcome students’ impatience with philosophical questions, Nigel Laurie used a stoic approach to pose questions in a seemingly unphilosophical manner: “framing the matter in this broader context resonates with people as persons, leads to more fruitful conversations and takes people to different places” (Tсахуриду, 2022, p.475). Other than this testimony, research does not contain much evidence of HC in P4M – making this finding quite unique.

On another note, looking at the program typology, despite the clear categorization that was developed, programs are not so simple to categorize, and can fall under multiple categories. For example, a leadership class could instruct philosophy of management, whereas another might teach critical management. Alternatively, a decision-making class can make use of Socratic Dialogue, of logic or business ethics. This program typology is not intended to fix labels onto programs, but rather to indicate the range of P4M programs that exist in MLE.

Furthermore, three of the categories – philosophy of management, business ethics and practical philosophy – are on the intersect of both PP4M and MP4M and, therefore, cannot be clearly classified under either one of the general categories. Beltramini (2018) believes philosophy of management is a subfield of management, but he also says that it ‘borrows’ from philosophy. The same applies to business ethics; scholars attribute both philosophical and managerial roots to this field (Hühn, 2015; Jasinska, 2024). Thus, whether these types of programs are considered as management or philosophy is a complicated debate – dependent also on the method of instruction – explaining why they are categorized as being on the intersect of both aforementioned fields. What is vital is to remember is that the category does not matter so much – the typology points to the existence of certain forms of philosophy in MLE.

Results did not identify programs that integrated both MP4M and PP4M, but literature contains one example of a mixed approach. The Philosophy and Business Administration (FLØK) at

Denmark's Copenhagen Business School is "one of only a few examples in higher education worldwide of academic programmes that not only integrate elements of philosophy in teaching traditional business disciplines, but also teach philosophy as an academic discipline in a business school setting" (Johnsen, Thaning & Pederson, 2016, p.375). The reason why this program is able to make such a claim is because it contains a multitude of different courses within the program. Thus, the word 'program' is perhaps too broadly used in this study, but what is recommended is to investigate individual courses within the study program to understand how each module incorporates P4M.

This paper contributes to MLE in several ways: (i) it defines P4M as a subset of MLE, (ii) it differentiates MP4M from PP4M, (iii) it provides a typology containing 24 categories of P4M programs, and (iv) it recognizes the practice of 'undercover philosophy' indicating the use of hidden curricula. These findings shed light on the many philosophical approaches towards teaching business and gives insight on how philosophy can be embedded into MLE. Through mapping out P4M programs, business schools, professors and trainers can reflect on how to incorporate philosophy into their practice.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study concerns the sample. Some geographies are not part of the analysis (Asia and Latin America); from the few programs that were identified, potential interviewees were not available to participate in this study. Their exclusion from this research could have prevented the identification of further P4M categories. Moreover, the manner in which P4M educators were identified could have impacted the results; pedagogues self-identified as teaching P4M, but the extent to which this holds true cannot be verified except through participating in their courses. Lastly, identifying P4M is particularly challenging due to the prevalence of undercover philosophy. There might have been more relevant programs that were undetected due to a keyword search methodology that failed to consider hidden curricula. Still, the results unveil categories that have never been identified before and can serve as a skeleton for other scholars to build on with future studies.

Another limitation is the scope of this study. In this paper, I focused on demystifying "what types of philosophy programs are taught to managers and management students?", but many other questions remain: what are the learning objectives of P4M programs? how are they taught? who teaches such programs? Several questions also emerged from the results: why is MP4M instructed in an undercover manner? What are the most prevalent P4M programs in

each geographic region? Why is P4M underrepresented in some regions? The scope of this paper was too limited to explore these interrogations, but more research can be conducted in the future.

Lastly, it is to be noted that this study focused on P4M in MLE, but there is an ecosystem of P4M touchpoints that extend beyond education. Philosophical consulting services, journals, and corporate speakers (Hategan, 2019; Tsahuridu, 2022) are examples of P4M that could be considered in future typologies.

Conclusion

This paper maps out the field of philosophy for management as a sub-section of MLE. Following a qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews with professors and trainers, I was able to outline 24 types of P4M programs that exist around the globe. The program typology presented in Figure 2 aims to demystify the different ways of embedding philosophy into MLE, and showcases the diversity of ways of incorporating P4M into curricula. In 2004, Small called to “widen the scope and range of the philosophy being studied” (p.195) to extend beyond ethics and logic. Twenty years later, this appears to be the case. Though P4M is in no way a mainstream approach towards MLE, it reflects what is possible – especially for those looking to innovate.

Lots of research – supportive of P4M – has given management teachers the idea and appetite for teaching philosophy, yet literature fails to indicate how this can be achieved. Thanks to this study, there is a better understanding of how philosophy is integrated into business programs, and how pedagogues could integrate it into their own practice. It is a contribution to MLE field and a step towards demystifying P4M education.

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**Appendix A2 – Second Manuscript for Doctoral Thesis: “Philosophy or Philosophizing?
The Learning Objectives of Philosophy Programs for Managers”**

Abstract

Many scholars propose philosophy programs as an effective mode of training developing managers. However, it remains unclear *how* philosophy could add value to management learning. To better understand philosophy’s potential contribution to management education and development, this study investigates the learning objectives of over 60 programs across 22 countries. In a series of semi-structured interviews with professors and trainers who teach philosophy to managers, I discovered *why* and *how* philosophy programs are taught in business contexts. One of the key findings is that most educators avoid teaching ‘philosophy’ as a discipline, but rather teach ‘philosophizing’ as a method. I also identified six distinct categories which outline the learning objectives of philosophy for management programs. These include: personal development, brain training, interpretation and articulation, tolerance and acceptance of differences, managerial competency development, and mystery. This paper provides a better understanding of how philosophy aspires to add value to the field of management education and development. It also instructs pedagogues on how they can approach philosophical teaching in a manner that is relevant to managers.

Keywords: management education; philosophy for managers; learning objectives

Status: under review for publication in: *Journal of Management Education* [submitted in February 2025, status from June 2025]

Introduction

Literature indicates that philosophy can be an effective mode of training and developing managers (Small, 2003; Saarinen, 2008; Goldman, 2009; Ledoux, 2012; Joullié, 2016; Joullié & Spillane, 2020). It can serve the attainment of various objectives: the improvement of decision-making (e.g. Laurie, 2001; Small, 2003; Roca, 2008), the enhancement of ethical thinking (e.g. Green, 2001; Small, 2003), the prompting of human flourishing (Saarinen, 2008), or the cultivation of wisdom (Small, 2012; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2016). Philosophy can also enable managers to unlearn (Harrison, Leitch & Chia, 2007) or to break out of their thinking patterns (De Monthoux, 2015). It is a way of learning to see things from new perspectives (Segal & Bruce, 2017) or in relation to a ‘bigger picture’ (Saarinen, 2008; Claes & Preston, 2009). Segal and Bruce (2017) explicated: “philosophy involves a journey – of leaving the familiarity of the cave through moments of disruption or “aporia”, embracing the strangeness of the unfamiliar world outside of the cave, as a basis upon which to gain perspective on the cave and on the universe in which the cave is situated” (p.122). Nonetheless, not everyone achieves such results through engaging with philosophy, and the value derived from philosophical learning may vary as per the learner, instructor, pedagogical approach or program length – among other variables.

Amidst the variables that most notably affect outcomes, learning objectives (LOs) play a critical role; they “communicate the knowledge and skills that instructors intend for students to acquire in a course” (Osueke et al., 2018). In other words, they are North stars that provide direction and clarify intent. Though literature outlines several examples of philosophy for management (P4M) programs – including their LOs (e.g. Antonacopoulou, 2010; Cunliffe, 2009; Goldman, 2009; Laurie, 1999) – what P4M programs generally strive for remains unclear, since these have never been contrasted and compared on a categorical level. Yet if LOs indicate targeted outcomes, studying them is relevant to understanding how P4M *wishes* to contribute to management learning. As part of an endeavour to clarify the pertinence of philosophy to management education and development (MED), this study investigated the LOs of over 60 programs from more than 20 countries around the world. More specifically, this paper investigates philosophy’s relevance to the business world by asking ‘how does P4M *strive* to contribute to MED?’. By demystifying the LOs of P4M, this paper seeks to better understand the educational value of philosophy and its potential contribution to MED.

Literature Review

Philosophy – A Practice or Discipline?

Philosophy commonly denotes an academic discipline or is associated with a mindset or approach towards thinking. However, there is an alternative understanding of this concept; philosophy can refer to a mode of reflection, to a method, to something that is ‘done’ (Greenwood et al., 2016; Saarinen, 2008). Chia and Morgan (1996) and Collins and Latemore (2002) are some of the only authors who make a distinction between philosophy as a practice and philosophy as a “set of beliefs” (p.56). When it is approached as a practice, it “involves the cultivation of an attitude” (Chia & Morgan, 1996, p.59). Lamy et al. (2014) give a taste of this philosophical attitude: “the task of the philosopher is to render uncertain what might seem clear, to question what is falsely presented as obvious and to do so while always deploying a solid and precise argumentation, always with a view to dismantling what stands in the way of real clarity” (p.157). Yes, philosophy as a practice is a less simplistic form of thinking that requires intellectual detours (Ledoux, 2012), but could it perhaps bring about advantages? Some view it as pertinent and believe that studying philosophy as a discipline is irrelevant to managers (Chia & Morgan, 1996; Collins & Latemore, 2002; Ledoux, 2012; Ryan, 2021). Contrastingly, there are those who highlight disciplinary knowledge as important sources of knowledge for business people (Spillane & Joullié, 2015) and “many philosophical works are highly relevant for managers” (Ledoux, 2012, p.19). The precious thinking philosophy proposes is viewed as pertinent; there are problems that have existed throughout centuries and thinkers who have thoroughly reflected on how to solve them, and studying their thought processes through academic philosophy is viewed as pertinent for today’s managers (e.g. Blok, 2020).

Philosophy for Management Programs

In some disciplines – such as political science, theology, law and psychology – philosophy occupies a central role in disciplinary learning. Some argue that this should also be the case for MED; since philosophy broadly underlies the management field (Joullié, 2016b; Koslowski, 2010). Yet others view philosophy as impractical or overly theoretical for managers (Collins & Latemore, 2002; Ryan, 2021; Segal, 2004) and place into question whether it belongs in a business curriculum. The debate on the usefulness and relevance of philosophy is two-sided in an educational arena that faces many trade-offs. In truth, its value is difficult to assess; how does one measure philosophical impact? In 2002, Collins and Latemore wrote a conceptual paper about the benefits of P4M and, in 2008, Saarinen proposed three ways in which

philosophy contributes to management. Then in 2012, Ledoux wrote about ‘why managers need philosophy’ and outlined the links between philosophy and management. These seminal papers include rich insights into P4M, but their ideas are based on the authors’ personal teaching experiences and cannot be generalized across programs. Claes and Preston (2009) attempted to approach matters in a more empirical manner; but they ended up concluding that “‘why teach philosophy to managers?’ was a particularly challenging question” (p.69) and shifted their research to simpler inquiries. It is certainly not easy to demonstrate the benefits of P4M; “one might be privately convinced that (theoretical) philosophy is helpful in management practice but proving this to someone else is no easy task” (Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023, p. 311).

What further complicates the evaluation of P4M is the number of ways in which it is taught. There are many schools of thought including critical management studies, epistemology, philosophy of management, and business ethics (Balsas & Silva, 2018; Greenwood et al., 2016; Small, 2004a), and there are even more teaching techniques like Socratic dialogue or reflexive learning (Antonacopoulou, 2010; Gosling & Mintzberg, 2004; Laurie, 1999). Within the Journal of Management Education (JME), Statler and Guillet De Monthoux (2015) previously discussed aesthetics, while Rendtorff (2015) described a case method approach towards P4M. Others scholars promote simple exercises or philosophical counselling (Collins & Latemore, 2002; Hategan & Hategan, 2021; Roca, 2008).

All the while, scholars and instructors make all sorts of claims about P4M – that it develops paradigmatic awareness, unlearning and contributes to wisdom and/ or practical wisdom (Hahn & Vignon, 2019; R. T. Harrison et al., 2007; Nonaka et al., 2014; Roca, 2008). Practical wisdom – also called *phronesis* – is “the ability to identify the salient features of complex and particular situations” (Roca, 2008, p. 610). It requires prudence and the exertion of good judgment (Hahn & Vignon, 2019). It is particularly accentuated in management literature since management is a practice and is, therefore, concerned with action (Mintzberg, 2008). P4M promises are often compared to MED objectives or aspire to reshape the role of MED (e.g. Roca, 2008). Yet little research investigates the explicit aims of P4M; Saarinen (2008) merely proclaims how “the goal of philosophy for managers is *not* to teach managers philosophy” (p.10).

In spite of the many advocates of P4M (Joullié, 2016a; Ledoux, 2012; Small, 2004a), literature contains only a few detailed cases of P4M programs. For example, Goldman (2009) outlines a bachelor course at the University of Johannesburg based on philosophy of management, Johnsen, Thaning and Pederson (2016) detail the Philosophy and Business Administration

(FLØK) at Copenhagen Business School, Cunliffe (2009) describes an executive development program about the Philosopher Leader at the University of Hull – approached from a critical studies perspective – whereas Collins and Latemore (2002) explain how they conducted a philosophical training for managers in Australia. These cases also outline program LOs. The South African program aims “to develop in graduates the conceptual and analytical thinking skills needed to meet the stringent demands of a developing economy” (Goldman, 2009, p.38). In contrast, the executive program strives for managers to investigate their leadership skills in a more critical and reflexive manner (Cunliffe, 2009). Lastly, the Australian program was to provide a space to philosophically reflect on the implications of their choices. Laurie (1999) also writes about LOs for Socratic dialogue philosophy programs based on his experience rather than a practical case. Among other objectives, he highlights the goal of moving beyond debate and discussion while enhancing communication skills. On another note, Antonacopoulou (2010) – who infuses philosophy into her teaching – describes a course on Critical Thinking as a means to “question, challenge and reflect on their perceptions and assumptions” (p.S11), whereas Hategan and Hategan (2021) look at philosophy programs as contributing to leadership development. The above examples provide interesting insights into what could be gained through P4M. Still, a handful of curricular objectives cannot be generalized and the LOs of P4M programs have never been researched.

The JME has previously been interested in outlining the LOs of all kinds of programs (e.g. Axley & McMahon, 2006; Manisaligil & Bilimoria, 2016; Paschall & Wüstenhagen, 2012), and has explored what managers can learn from other fields such as medicine and law (Theeke & Hall, 2022; Wright et al., 2016). Few, however, have inquired about the philosophical discipline and *how* it could contribute to management learning. To understand what managers might gain from philosophy this paper seeks to comprehend what are the LOs of P4M programs.

Method

Sample

This study involved 62 professors and instructors who teach philosophy for management programs across 22 countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Monaco, Morocco, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. Some study participants also teach online or alternate between online and in-person sessions. Among the sample, 53 instructors were working at the time of the interviews, 7 were retired and 2 were semi-retired. 51 participants were affiliated with a higher education institution while

11 were self-employed or affiliated with a business. The sample included 54 men and 8 women of varying ages and levels of experience.

The sample was selected based on the relevance and availability of study participants. Two methods were used to identify professors and trainers who teach P4M: (i) the key words 'philosophy + management course' were inputted into Google – a traditional search engine – and, (ii) I browsed the editors of the *Philosophy of Management* journal as well as contributors to the special issue about teaching philosophy to managers (Preston, 2009). This initial search resulted in a list of 201 names of which 163 were identified as prospective study participants based on the following factors: (i) they were involved in P4M, (ii) contact information was available, (iii) they were not deceased at the time of my search. From the list of 201 names, 1 person was deceased whereas 37 individuals did not have contact information available online. From the remaining list, 161 participants were contacted via e-mail and 2 participants were contacted by LinkedIn. I sent a generic message inviting each person to participate in an interview and sent 39 follow-up e-mails to those who did not respond after 2 weeks. In total, I received 3 e-mail delivery error notifications and 86 responded to my message. From those who responded, 8 people informed me they were not directly involved in P4M or did not think they can contribute to my research, 1 person told me they had no time to discuss, 2 recommended for me to read their research instead of calling, 3 scheduled a call but did not show up nor respond to follow up messages, 3 were not able to find a suitable time slot to call, and the remaining 7 people did not respond to my original nor follow-up e-mails. In the end, there was a total of 62 interviews resulting in a definitive sample of 62 P4M instructors.

Data Collection

Data collection took place between June 2022 and March 2023. A first round of interviews was conducted from June-August 2022, a second round was conducted from September-November 2022 for those who were not available during summer holidays, then a last round was conducted from January 2022-March 2023 until saturation was reached.

A qualitative research method was leveraged which consisted of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (Edwards & Skinner, 2009). This method was chosen to permit open answers and to avoid limiting the range of responses in a research field that is not yet well studied. It also enabled interviewees to steer the discussion in directions they perceived as relevant and made it possible for the interviewer to ask follow-up questions. Additionally, the semi-structured interview method was to allow more in-depth explanations of why certain

LOs were established and worded as they were written in a context where curricula are sometimes politicized (Adams, 2015).

The structured interview questions inquired about the instructors' involvement in P4M, learning objectives, themes, method of instruction, as well as the personal ambitions of instructors. Out of the 62 interviews, 48 interviews were in English, and 14 were in French. I am fluent in both these languages and wanted to make respondents comfortable by speaking their mother tongue whenever possible. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes and 2 hours depending on time availability and how much the interviewee wanted to share. 51 interviews were conducted online with the help of Microsoft Teams – a video conferencing software – whilst 11 interviews took place in person due to geographical proximity. I recorded the interviews, took notes, and downloaded transcripts through Microsoft Teams. Finally, an online translation tool (*DeepL*) was used to translate French transcripts and they were anonymized before the analysis.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was used to analyze data. Such method compares similarities between different interviews and detects patterns on the basis of qualitative data. This method was appropriate given the exploratory nature of this study; thematic analysis leaves room for nuance and interpretation. No software was used; the analysis was conducted manually. I employed an inductive and iterative approach towards generating themes which followed a six-step process coined by Braun and Clarke (2006): data familiarization, initial codes, search for themes, thematic review, defining and naming themes, and producing a report. In the phase of familiarization, all the transcripts were read a first time, translated into English, and translation/ transcription errors were corrected. Next, codes were allocated to the data in an inductive manner; meaning they were not based on any theoretical framework [view codes in table 1]. Afterwards, initial themes were identified and redefined throughout the rereading of transcripts. A second researcher reviewed the themes. Lastly, themes were coined, defined and summarized in this report.

THEME	CODES
Personal Development	individual development, growth, learning, character, personality, identity, human flourishing, learning to live well
Mental Gymnastics	brain training, thinking, critical thinking, inquiring, questioning, challenging, conceptualizing, analyzing, reflecting, practicing creativity, stretching mind, intellectual competencies, deep thinking
Interpretation and Articulation	communication skills, rhetoric, clarity, interpretation, articulation, formulation, expression, vocabulary, precision, argumentation, justification
Tolerance and Acceptance	tolerance, acceptance, openness, perspective-taking, understanding reasons, empathy
Managerial Competency Development	professional development, leadership skills, decision-making, problem-solving, ethical thinking, philosophical foundations
Mystery	no objective, exploration space, non-utilitarian development, experience
Philosophizing	philosophy, philosophizing

Table 2 – Thematic Framework For Data Analysis

Results

The results of this study outline the LOs of philosophy for management programs. They can be grouped into six different themes: (1) Personal Development, (2) Mental Gymnastics, (3) Interpretation and Articulation, (4) Tolerance and Acceptance, (5) Managerial Competency Development, and (6) Mystery. This study also revealed that P4M programs rarely strive to teach ‘philosophy’ – instead, they are concerned with teaching managers to ‘philosophize’ which will be further explained in the section below.

The Learning Objectives of Philosophy for Management

1. Personal Development

To begin, the outcomes of this study reveal that philosophy for business can be a tool for personal development. In other words, some P4M programs aim to contribute to the overall growth of managers: “what we are doing is very much focused on the individual’s development” (MI42). Professors discussed personality and character building. More concretely, they described their programs as developing “competences of the character” (MU37) and the entirety of “the spirit, the soul and the body” (MI23). One respondent went as far as describing philosophy courses as “a popular self-help realm” (MU43). They were also presented as a pathway towards flourishing: “wisdom is insight for living well. Who doesn’t want that? Philosophy is really all about how to live well” (MI40). This view was shared by others: “[philosophy can] make sure that we become more than what we are as a person and as a collaborator” (MI36). Since the manager is, first and foremost, a human being, many instructors believe individual maturity impacts the professional role. On that note, one

professor shared that – to change how organizations function – change needs to begin with those who run organizations: “the development of the personalities and individuals is as much important as the development of the firm. You know, both should be connected – you cannot have a new culture of leadership when you are not ready to change yourself and find new ways of looking at the world or people” (MU58). In these ways, studying philosophy is used for the personal development of managers.

2. Mental Gymnastics

Findings indicate that another common goal of philosophy for management is to ‘train the brain’ of managers. In other words, philosophy is a sort of mental gymnastics that trains minds to inquire, question, challenge, confront, criticize, conceptualize, reflect and think about ways to solve problems. A management trainer shared his vision: “very few have this ability to think deeper and to have this habit of being tired from thinking. That is something that philosophy has historically also achieved. It is when you think you could think so hard that your brain just hurts” (MI42).

Brain training through philosophy can also be a way to practice creativity, and to get managers to step out of their automatic thinking patterns: “the main objective of the course, from my point of view, is to get them to think differently” (FU22). Ultimately, the goal is not to learn theories or to find solutions to management challenges, but to stretch the mind in all kinds of directions: “a lot of the challenge, a lot of the fun, is that you’re thinking on such an abstract level” (MU60). Someone else stated: “we think so much that we even think about thinking and we think about thinking of thinking” (MI44).

Critical thinking is also a form of mental gymnastics that is practiced with philosophy. A few respondents commented that, in the case of managers, “what they really lack is a skill to advance in critical thinking” (MU16). P4M programs try to help with “introducing this sort of critical dialogue” (MU57). A professor shared: “what I want to invite students to do is to join me in a journey of questioning and realizing that the question is more important than the answer” (MU59). Many others reiterated this objective; “we are bothered by questions we cannot answer” (MI44), and: “we cannot answer the question. We might be able to raise the question or perhaps we could just clear the ground in preparation for the question that’s yet to be raised” (MU08). An interviewee explained: “someone said to me, did you ever get the answer you were seeking? And here’s the key to philosophy. It’s nothing but questions” (FI28). Though the practice of asking questions is a common form of training the brain, there is more to it. P4M courses seek to “take apart, to analyze the basis of a number of ideas” (MU02). They

contribute to “intellectual rigour” (MU57) and also allow managers to explore theories in-depth, thus “seeing which are the hidden contradictions that can be present in an opinion or in a theory, and from there, constructing something different” (MI13). Rather than acting on instinct, you “give the students the opportunity not to be driven by their thoughts, to actively use their capacity to think” (MI15). This is something managers are interested in: “they are interested in being deep thinkers” (MI56). Indeed, numerous respondents commented on the importance of “intellectual competencies” (MU37) within the management profession and referred to ‘brain training’ as a key learning target for P4M.

3. Interpretation and Articulation

Results indicate that some philosophy programs aspire to improve communication skills; they help managers to articulate with precision, by teaching them to interpret their thoughts and grasp conceptual differences. One instructor discusses the function of P4M as follows: “philosophy gives you some basic structures of thinking and understanding things” (MU58). Philosophy helps make sense of what is contained in one’s mind and is about “giving them [managers] the opportunity and the power to understand and own their own ideas” (MU15). It is used “to clarify what do I think about the world that surrounds me” (MU39). Through reflection and exchanging with others, such courses “get them [managers] to think about their own view, be critical of their own view of what businesses and what people are, and get them to be cognizant of their assumptions” (MU19). Awareness of why one thinks what they think makes managers more able to interpret thoughts, and it also contributes to the “ability to express their ethical viewpoint” (MI42) or other views they hold. Philosophy is also used to examine one’s logic. Generally, “it could be so easy to slip into reasoning mistakes” (MU60), but this tool allows more rigour in thinking.

On the other hand, P4M teaches managers to refine vocabulary and make distinctions between concepts. It contributes to “the clarification of concepts and words” (MU29) and makes you “more precise in what you say, more coherent and more consistent” (MI44). Many speak without examining definitions: “there are a lot of butchered words or distortions of language which make misunderstandings or creates efficiencies” (MU29). Educators push managers to be more picky about the words and expressions they choose. They also teach them to say what they mean to say; whether orally or otherwise. For example, “you teach people [...] how to write more clearly” (MU19). A pedagogue commented: “as long as we still think in words, we need to understand what we’re talking about” (MU33) since “the limits of our language limit our world” (MU15). With programs of this nature, you “will be able to improve your rhetoric”

(MI44); “one thing is the technique, another thing is the content you would like to communicate” (MU37). Philosophy for management aids with “analysis, assessment and argument” (MI40). In summary, P4M can help managers connect dots, clarify, formulate, summarize, convey and justify their thoughts and opinions; making them better communicators.

4. Tolerance and Acceptance

The findings show that P4M seeks to make people more tolerant and acceptant of differences; it pushes managers to consider diverse perspectives and to explore the reasoning behind diverging opinions. In fact, philosophy contributes to “showing that there’s a different disciplinary perspective on things” (MU20) and “you need always have to be open for this exploration of new directions in which things can go” (MU20). One professor stated that “the most important thing is that they should be exposed to the diversity of different perspectives” (MU48). By exploring the variety of opinions that exist, they can see that their own view is not the only view that should be considered: “the important thing is to show them that there are many ways of reflecting on these things” (MU58). More concretely, philosophy can enable managers to “understand the reasons being given by the opposing side” (MU02). All the while, pedagogues “encourage people to reflect on their values in a structured way” (MU57) so to contrast what they think with what others think. Ultimately, “philosophical theoretical training enables you to look at a problem from multiple perspectives and also hopefully to sometimes put yourself into the shoes of those you interact with” (MU50). This permits more awareness of the ways issues can be tackled.

5. Managerial Competency Development

Moreover, results revealed another LO category tied to professional enablement, meaning that philosophy for managements seeks to boost workplace performance. More specifically, it can help managers to become better managers, by teaching them to be more competent in their roles. One instructor stated: “I see my role as being equipping them primarily with what they need to succeed in values terms when they transition into a workplace [...] you have little prospect of turning them into philosophers. What you can do is help them make better choices” (MI42). Indeed, philosophy is there to gear business people; to “deal with complex problems and complex settings” (MU58) and to navigate ambiguity. It teaches how to make good decisions despite missing information: “you are learning to be comfortable with the absence of knowledge, you’re learning to be comfortable with uncertainty” (MU60). P4M programs often target specific competencies such as “decision-making skills” (MU02) or “problem

solving” (MU20). There is a lot to be gained; “philosophers are real good on analysis: analyzing complicated situations, complicated ideas, complicated opportunities, complicated threats and challenges and crises” (MI40).

Philosophy also improves management practice through revealing its foundations; it provides “knowledge as to where the traditions came from” (MU54) and efforts are made in “trying to unearth the philosophical roots of business and economics” (MU12). A professor shared that P4M “opened their eyes to a whole new way of thinking. Some students told me that they never knew you could think about management in that way” (MU21). Sometimes it appears like the world of management has its own sets of issues, but there are some shared human struggles that are common to all: “business leaders like to think that their problems are special and, really, they are not. They are pretty common. There is only so many things that can go wrong within a company and, chances are, it’s the same things over and over again” (MI56). Another professor reacted similarly: “1000 years ago or 2000 years ago – there was a person who was asking himself or herself or herself the same questions” (MU58). P4M is about showing managers how others have thought through the problems they are dealing with today.

There is another critical management skill that philosophy programs strive to develop; ethical thinking. “We are trying to help them to develop a kind of ability to reflect and to speak about ethical problems” (MU58). Professor MU05 emphasized: “we forgot that what managers do is mainly deal with ethics on a daily basis”. P4M touch on “the notion of the other” (MU62), “integrity” (MU33) and “responsible decision making” (MU58) to ignite ethical thinking. They also raise big questions such as: “how do I want to act, how do I want to behave?” (MU39) and “what is the right way to act?” (MU59). A management trainer discussed the value of such content: “managers would benefit from just thinking about values and ethics a bit more and being more reflective and contemplative” (MI56).

6. Mystery

Finally, the last LO that emerged from this study is quite specific to philosophy; many philosophy for management programs strive towards nothing more than ‘mystery’. They are an experience that promises nothing, but provides managers with a space to think, explore, and engage with ideas. One study participant stated: “the most important things in life are useless. Like literally useless. They serve no purpose beyond their own purpose, and the advantages that they bring might not be visible to you, you won’t see them, you won’t be able to grasp them. They are mysterious” (MU05). When engaging with philosophy, managers have to “just put away the question of ‘what can I do with that on Monday?’” (MI44). There is no

utilitarian aspect to this discipline; it is to be done for the sake of it. The goal is “simply make people think” (MI13) and to provide an appropriate context for doing so; “philosophy is such a wonderful space of thinking and exploring” (MU58). Several participants shared how nothing should be expected from philosophy: “I think that the point of teaching philosophy should be teaching philosophy and not with a view to results” (MU16). It can be viewed as “kind of unnecessary in the sense that I don’t think philosophy has any special claim” (MU57). Yet, the goal of not having a goal does not mean there is no impact. A management trainer captured this in his own words: “philosophy does not want anything. She does nothing, does not want to do anything, but it might do something individually” (MI44). There could be some sort of a positive benefit or outcome in taking philosophy for management courses, but there is no certainty of what that outcome might be. This is why the goal of such programs can be a question mark – or rather – a mystery for all.

Philosophizing Instead of Philosophy

Intriguingly, this study reveals that P4M does not aim to teach philosophy. Rather, philosophy is used as a tool to teach managers how to ‘philosophize’ – to think in a philosophical manner. Many educators discussed this in the interviews: “I think what I do is I provide them with a conceptual toolkit and techniques to use in their own reflection” (MU33). Another professor commented: “I think in a management school it is more important to teach philosophic thinking than philosophy per se” (FU22). It appears that P4M programs are not usually taught as traditional philosophy courses: “we were practicing philosophy. We were doing it. We were not talking about it. We were not discussing the intellectual history of ideas [...] We were actually giving them the opportunity to do philosophy. That is the key, because they need to be able to practice philosophy in their management world, in the world of the organization they lead” (MU15).

One of the self-employed trainers commented that clients did not show interest towards traditional philosophy programs: “businesses really were not interested in the latter. They were not interested in hiring firms to come in and do workshops on Aristotle or Plato” (MI56). Many others agreed that philosophy as a discipline offers limited value to practicing managers; “I am more interested in their learning philosophizing as a method than philosophy” (MU60). The P4M trainers were concerned about the type of thinking they were developing in managers: “for us, the our, our goal is actually the inculcation of a of a critical mindset which is part and parcel of philosophizing” (MU21). The tendency to adopt “philosophy in the sense of an

approach, not in the sense of a discipline” (MU04) was the predominant approach discovered in the findings.

Of course, it must be said that teaching philosophy is a pathway towards philosophizing; “I do not think you can have the one without the other. I think philosophizing is a function of philosophy” (MU21). Several educators shared similar thinking: “you cannot disconnect one from the other. In my view is very important to teach philosophy and at the same time to philosophize” (MU41). Study participant MU15 explained how he incorporates both in this program: “there is a bit about talking about how philosophers thought about the world, but the real thing is: okay, having talked about that, how does that allow us to think?”. Though philosophy is necessary, still, philosophy is not an objective in itself. In sum, this study reveals that P4M programs typically strive to teach ‘philosophizing’ as a method rather than ‘philosophy’ as a discipline – making P4M programs different from traditional philosophy programs.

Discussion

This study aimed to understand how philosophy aspires to contribute to MED. To address this, I was able to trace six themes that describe the pedagogical intents of philosophy in business education, and I was also able to observe a tendency to teach philosophy as a method rather than as an academic discipline.

The latter finding reveals a precious insight about the added value of philosophy in the context of MED. Literature defends the utility of both ‘philosophy’ and ‘philosophizing’ and does not currently present evidence that favours one philosophical approach over the other. A few authors discuss the concept of philosophizing as being beneficial. For example, Greenwood et al. (2016) discuss the use of ‘philosophical reflection’ – despite there being skeptics who frown upon anyone wishing to ‘apply’ philosophy, Likewise, Ledoux (2012) makes mention of ‘practical philosophy’ as a business-relevant philosophical activity, whereas Balsas and Silva (2018) allude to ‘philosophy of management’ as being a form of ‘philosophizing’. Nevertheless, scholars have not yet addressed the differences between ‘philosophy’ and ‘philosophizing’ in MED and the results of this study are the first to reveal a general preference for the use of philosophizing in P4M. This study revealed that ‘philosophizing’ is more common – or perhaps even more appropriate – for MED. Similarly to practical wisdom in contrast to wisdom, philosophizing is perceived as a more practical approach towards management learning. It seeks to inculcate a way of thinking and being rather than mere knowledge (Mintzberg, 2008;

Roca, 2008) which is important since “technical knowledge does not age well and tends to be industry-specific” (Joullié & Spillane, 2015, p.317).

P4M programs are reportedly used to achieve six different types of LOs: personal development, brain training, interpretation and articulation, tolerance and acceptance, management skill training, and mystery. The majority of the above-mentioned themes align with the LOs of MED which traditionally seeks to educate and equip managers for the business world (Spillane & Joullié, 2015).

First of all, ‘personal development’ is often discussed in literature as being essential for MED for the sake of forming leaders (Hategan & Hategan, 2021), and “executive education is inextricably linked to personal growth” (Harrison et al., 2007, p. 339). Thus, many scholars promote ‘holistic’ teaching approaches – which they sometimes refer to as ‘whole-person development’ – and believe that management education should aim at human flourishing (Antonacopoulou & FitzGerald, 1996; McKenna & Biloslavo, 2011; Waddock & Lozano, 2013; Ardelt, 2018). Borgo (2007) contends: “ultimately, learning is not a matter of what one knows, but who one becomes” (p.62). The first philosophers – who trained leaders such as Alexander The Great – also placed emphasis on their overall development (Collins & Latemore, 2002; S. Wilson et al., 2022). In other words, personal development and management learning go hand-in-hand and can be achieved through P4M.

To continue, mental gymnastics was identified as a relevant contribution to MED. This LO has been previously discussed by Small (2004) who suggested logic courses to enhance managers’ thinking processes, and Saarinen (2008) who said: “philosophy for managers seeks to strengthen the art of thinking and the instrument of reason in managers” (p.4). Key management activities – whether decision-making or problem-solving – require the capacity to think. Yet philosophy takes things further; Luc de Brabandere believes it can be a tool for rigour where numbers are not available, enabling thorough reasoning (Auger, 2021). Harrison et al. (2007) explain why training the brain is important: “the emotional cost and consequence of a managerial decision, not just the decision-making activity, must be the focus of learning. This “agonizing” must be felt by students of management to truly appreciate managerial dilemmas and predicaments” (p.340). This agonizing can also be experienced in the process of ‘unlearning’ which, according Harrison et al. (2007), is enabled through P4M. Rather than merely absorbing and spitting knowledge, managers need to exercise judgment and learn how to think; Chia and Holt (2008) believe this is achievable through philosophy which practices abstract thinking. Ledoux (2012) also recognizes questioning and criticism as functions of philosophy that flex managers’ minds, whereas Joullié and Spillane (2015) believe that “course

in philosophy is always a course in critical thinking” (p.312). The critical management studies movement aligns with this perspective and opt for a skeptic mindset to train the brain in this direction (Greenwood et al., 2016). Generally, P4M can be used as a form of mental gymnastics and literature confirms its importance for the development of managerial thinking.

Next, the ability to better interpret and articulate one’s thoughts and the world around them is one of the aims I uncovered for P4M. This resonates with Ledoux (2012) who said that “philosophy is an attempt to clarify our relation to the world” (p.12). Philosophy’s role is to provide opportunities to methodologically breakdown and digest information. Harrison et al. (2007) also believe that the “real value [of MED] to the practitioner is to offer fresh insights and radical alternatives to problems through novel interpretations that are often counterintuitive to received wisdom and best practice” (p.341). This, in turn, helps managers articulate what they truly think, which a skill that Dehler and Welsh (2014) connect to integrative learning. Though many business schools offer ‘communication’ courses – such as writing, presenting or story-telling courses (Hinwood, 2022; Rennie et al., 2018; Sharp & Brumberger, 2013) – these mainly focus on improving managers’ ability to express themselves. Yes, managers learn to be articulate, but they do not necessarily obtain tools to communicate precisely what they wish to communicate (Chia & Holt, 2008). This requires reflexivity which is “awareness of your own state of mind and emotions, and of your prejudices and preferences” (Gosling & Mintzberg, 2004). Philosophy is concerned with grasping concepts and making sense of ideas while also learning rhetoric and communication (Collins & Latemore, 2002; Spillane & Joullié, 2015). Ledoux (2012) suggests that it seeks “to create representations of the world and meaning for their organisation” (p.12). This idea of clarifying and sense-making ties in with this theme and philosophy’s function in the process of interpretation, articulation and communication.

On another note, as per the results of this study, P4M strives to develop openness and tolerance by exposing business people to diverse perspectives. P4M is seen as a “platform for a true exchange of views” (Ledoux, 2012, p. 18) enabling managers to perceive ideas from new angles. This connects to Harrison et al. (2007)’s work on paradigmatic awareness which talks about the “loosening-up of dominant paradigms of thought” (p.333) through the aforementioned process of unlearning. Paradigmatic awareness enlarges a manager’s horizons and openness to alternative presuppositions. In fact, according to Tsoukas and Chia (2011), “true insight and understanding are only achieved not by avoiding contrary or vastly alien viewpoints, but by confronting them [...] this is the true task of philosophical inquiry” (p.6). Collins and Latemore (2002) also comment on the matter: “one of the great benefits of philosophy thus comes from the attempt to enter the mindset of another person or age. In

today's organization surely a similar endeavour – to understand one's clients, partners and colleagues – is central?" (p.56). This further links to the idea of perspective-taking which is "the active cognitive process of imagining the world from another's vantage point or imagining oneself in another's shoes to understand their visual viewpoint, thoughts, motivations, intentions, and/or emotions" (Ku et al., 2015, p. 79). Similarly, Datar et al. (2011) believe management education needs to increase "thinking about issues from diverse, shifting angles to frame problems holistically" (p.457), and Collins and Latemore (2002) argue that flexible thinking is necessary to adapt to learning organizations. Further, Hołub and Duchliński (2016) believe philosophical education contributes to mind 'plasticity' to push managers to be more creative. On another note, literature sometimes discusses perspective-taking and paradigmatic examination in the context of Socratic philosophy (Segal, 2004; Tsahuridu, 2023), hinting that LOs could be influenced by pedagogical choices.

This study also links philosophy programs to managerial skill development. This finding was the least surprising since literature already suggests philosophy as a means for improving decision-making, conceptual thinking, ethics, and other management competencies (e.g. Laurie & Cherry, 2001; Small, 2004; Woiceshyn, 1992); either as standalone or mutually-reinforcing competencies. For example, philosophical practice can fuel practical wisdom, moral imagination and ethical thinking (Roca, 2008). Yet it is important to note that some P4M scholars perceive philosophy as having traditional MED LOs; it is a business-relevant course like any other. In line with Plato's writings about 'philosopher kings', some consider philosophy as instrumental to leadership development; as in Ancient Greece, where philosophy was used to train young aristocrats who were to take on leadership positions (Collins & Latemore, 2002; Koslowski, 2010; Small, 2004a). Additionally, considering that most management theories stem from philosophy – since it predates and bedrocks the management field – some would argue that teaching philosophy from a business angle is equivalent to teaching management. To some, this is the only correct way of teaching management since philosophy unveils the roots of the concepts that are taught (Joullié, 2016b; Koslowski, 2010; Spillane & Joullié, 2015). This study confirms that P4M can seek to build traditional management knowledge and skills in a more profound and holistic manner.

Lastly, a remarkable finding from this study is that some P4M programs enigmatically strive towards 'mystery'. Literature contains an example that verifies this occurrence; Vehkalahti and Saarinen (2017) describe their philosophical lectures in Finland as not striving towards any specific pedagogical objectives. They explain: "in sharp contrast to traditional pedagogy, LPL does not target towards explicit learning goals" (p.2). Since the instructors cannot be sure how

students will benefit from their program, they do not plan or promise outcomes of any sort. Nonetheless, the idea of not having any traditional LO is rare in management education. Business people are all about targets and goal-setting – how could they sign up for programs that do not aim for anything? Though the absence of LOs is unusual in business, it is not particularly startling in a philosophical context. After all, “[philosophy] is not concerned with being useful” (Ledoux, 2012, p.18) and Saarinen (2008) points out the ‘mysterious flame’ ignited with philosophy. This revitalizes some of the criticism oriented towards philosophy; P4M skeptics complain that philosophy is useless and complicated (Segal, 2004). Yet, uselessness ought not to be confused with aimlessness; educators agree that philosophy provides value. Though, similarly to Claes and Preston (2009), many cannot pinpoint its exact contribution, they agree that “managers can somehow benefit from studying philosophy” (p.69). This study reveals that instructors believe there is something to be gained from P4M; they are simply uncertain of what that ‘something’ might be, and despite not knowing, continue to expose managers to philosophical experiences. Perhaps what philosophy proposes is idiosyncratic to each learner. Perhaps its mysterious value can develop that which requires uncertainty. For example, negative capabilities – as defined by John Keats – are skills to confront mystery, noise and doubt. “Leaders may require negative capability in order to contain those aspects of a situation that are themselves ‘negative’, such as not knowing what to do, not having adequate resources, and not trusting or being trusted” (Simpson et al., 2002, p. 1210). “While much of current professional philosophy focuses upon the certain, philosophy for managers directs attention to contributing in the presence of the uncertain” (Saarinen, 2008, p.5). Philosophy is not black and white (Ledoux, 2012) and permits development beyond anything that is set in stone.

In this study though some programs strived towards multiple LOs, none of them strived towards all of them since ‘mystery’ is as a standalone objective that cannot be obtained conjunctly with any other LO. Overall, the findings from this study contribute to MED in various ways: (i) they outline the intended aims of existing P4M programs, (ii) they highlight the relative importance of philosophizing over philosophy, and (iii) they identify philosophy’s potential contribution to management learning.

Conclusion

This paper investigates philosophy’s potential contributions to the management field from the lens of MED. By exploring the aims and purposes of P4M programs, I was able to identify the LOs the of philosophical learning. Most commonly, they aim to contribute to a manager’s

overall professional and individual growth, to the development of their thinking, to the articulation of ideas, self-expression, and to other ways of seeing the world. Lastly, they can strive towards no objective at all; since many defend philosophy as not aiming to achieve anything in particular. This study contributes to MED literature through outlining the educational value of philosophy for business. It makes an important distinction between teaching philosophy and philosophizing, and contrasts different LOs of P4M programs which have never been examined before this study. This paper can serve as a basis for further studies about P4M while also providing inspiration for management professors and trainers who wish to philosophize with business people.

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Appendix A3 – Third Manuscript for Doctoral Thesis: “How Philosophy Can Contribute To Management Development: An Exploratory Case Study On Executive Education”

Abstract

Management learning (ML), whether at an undergraduate, graduate or executive level, is regularly criticized for its technical, scientific and prescriptive excesses. Thus, many authors recommend a different kind of curriculum which integrates courses in literature, history, and the human sciences into management programs, in order to move away from the purely normative framework of managerial theories and to better prepare managers for the complexity of the environment, strategic decisions and interactions at work. More specifically, some of these authors recommend philosophy – a discipline which was traditionally considered as a key element in training young Athenian aristocrats – to initiate managers to a practice of reflection on fundamental questions and to develop wisdom; the learning objective (LO), etymologically and historically, of philosophical education. There are a number of theoretical contributions on what philosophy could bring to managers, but rare are contributions dealing more pragmatically with the content, objectives and didactic methods of philosophy courses for managers. Research is broadly lacking on how philosophy courses impact learning and development processes of managers and how managers transfer knowledge and competencies from these programs into the workplace. For this reason, one of the aims of this paper is to study empirically the learning impact and competencies developed by 40 former participants of a Swiss philosophy program for senior managers. We look at the learning intentions of the program, based on the LOs of classical philosophy, and then analyze interviews detailing how former participants transferred the course content into their workplaces. This study uncovers how philosophy competencies translate into management and leadership competencies. More specifically it identifies how knowledge of self, conceptualization, problematization contribute to ML.

Keywords: Management Development; Management Education; Philosophy for Management; Transfer of Executive Education; Leadership Competencies; Wisdom

Status: to be submitted to: *International Journal of Training and Development* [submission planned in October 2025]

1. Introduction

Management learning (ML), whether at an undergraduate, graduate or executive level, is regularly criticized for its technical, scientific and prescriptive excesses; one of the most famous critiques being Mintzberg's '*Managers not MBAs*' (2004). Thus, many authors recommend a different kind of curriculum which integrates courses in literature, history and the human sciences into management programs (e.g. Antonacopoulou, 2010; Guillet de Monthoux, 2015), in order to move away from the purely normative framework of managerial theories and to better prepare managers for the complexity of the environment, strategic decisions and interactions at work (e.g. Friedland, 2012; Ledoux, 2012). More specifically, some of these authors (e.g. Guillet de Monthoux, 2015; Deslandes, 2016; Joullié, 2016) recommend philosophy – a discipline which was traditionally considered as a key element in training young Athenian aristocrats – to initiate managers to a practice of reflection on fundamental questions and to develop wisdom; the objective, etymologically and historically, of philosophical education. There are a number of theoretical contributions on what philosophy could bring to managers, and rarer contributions dealing more pragmatically with the content, objectives and didactic methods of philosophy courses for managers. There are fewer contributions on how philosophy courses impact learning and development processes of managers and how managers transfer knowledge and competencies from these courses in the workplace.

For this reason, one of the aims of this paper is to study empirically the learning impact and competencies developed by 40 former participants of a Swiss philosophy program for senior managers. We look at the intentions of the program, based on the learning objectives (LOs) of classical philosophy, and then analyze interviews detailing how former participants transferred the course content into their workplaces. In doing so, this study uncovers how philosophy competencies translate into management and leadership competencies.

In the first section of this article, we present the main arguments in favor of teaching philosophy to managers, as well as some criticisms. We then present the characteristics of the studied program, and the three main skill and knowledge development objectives (knowledge of self, conceptualization, problematization) aimed by the program coordinators. We then present the methodological aspects of our study, based on the analysis of 40 transcribed interviews, 6 focus groups and numerous other documentary sources. Finally, we present the results of our analysis on how former participants perceive the managerial competencies associated with the three main philosophy training objectives in terms of managerial skill development. A last section discusses the contributions and the limitations of our study.

2. Philosophy Training for Managers?

The benefits of philosophy education vary according to numerous variables such as how it is taught, to whom, and for how long. They are tied to LOs which can lead learners to different results. To begin, although being knowledgeable in philosophy can be beneficial for managers (Joullié, 2016), “the goal of philosophy for managers is *not* to teach managers philosophy” (Saarinen, 2008, p.10). It may appear counter-intuitive, but various scholars agree that studying the discipline itself is of little interest in comparison to learning how to conduct philosophical thinking (Chia & Morgan, 1996; Collins & Latemore, 2002; Ledoux, 2012). Rather, managers can use philosophy for building “spaces for reflection and learning, processes for dialogue, tools for thinking” (Laurie, 2001, p.3). Traditionally and etymologically this aligns with the main objective of philosophy education which is to simply develop a love for wisdom (e.g. Small, 2004; Segal, 2005; Saarinen, 2008; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2011; Klikauer, 2013).

Wise leadership is one of the longstanding, often implicit, aims of philosophy in management programs (McKenna, Rooney & Boal, 2009), and it is often claimed that a love for wisdom can serve as a pathway towards acquiring wisdom (e.g. Small, 2004). Although “wisdom has lost credibility and prestige relative to science, rationalism and method in modern times” (Rooney & McKenna, 2007, p.118), it remains a most highly regarded and desired trait in leadership. Wise leaders would be considered to have “excellent judgment, insightfulness and character” (McKenna, Rooney & Boal, 2009, p.178). McKenna, Rooney & Boal (2009) goes as far as to argue that the competency of leaders should be evaluated on how wise they are. Philosophy “can shed new light into issues which we typically think are exclusive to organization and management studies” (Balsas & Silva, 2018, p.365). It can initiate managers to the practice of reflection on fundamental questions, like ethical issues. “Philosophical reflection can help managers understand that, contrary to what some organisations’ ethical charters or codes of conducts might lead them to believe, there are often no clear-cut answers to the many ethical problems they face. To be conscious of this is crucial to the taking of lucid decisions” (Ledoux, 2012, p.16). Yet, reflection alone is not sufficient; it does not necessarily lead to action and, thus, some question its use (Antonacopoulou, 2010). Practical philosophy – also called *phronesis* or practical wisdom – is encouraged by many as a way to pair reflection with outcomes: “practical wisdom is tacit knowledge acquired from experience that enables people to make prudent judgments and take actions based on the actual situation, guided by values and morals” (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2011, p.4). Linking philosophy with leadership is not new: “Plato founded the Academy to create leaders within the Greek city states. Aristotle was the teacher of Alexander the Great. Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor, wrote on Stoic

philosophy and Confucius sought to influence the leaders of China” (Collins & Latemore, 2002, p.55).

On another note, many agree that philosophy for managers can develop key management competencies such as critical thinking (e.g. Small, 2004; Braun, 2004; Cuseo, 2007; Podolny, 2009; Antonacopoulou, 2010), moral reasoning (e.g. Podolny, 2009), conceptual thinking (e.g. Woiceshyn, 1992; Laurie, 2001), communication competencies (e.g. Laurie, 2001; Ledoux, 2012), decision-making (e.g. Laurie, 2001), self-reflection (e.g. Claes & Preston, 2009), and further the ability to “learn from experience” (Collins & Latemore, 2002, p.57). “The idea that by engaging with philosophical concepts, businesses foster a more reflective, ethical, and innovative environment that promotes critical thinking, long-term vision, and nuanced understanding of complex issues, must handle unavoidable suspicions and disappointments” (Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023, p.312). Saarinen (2008) believes philosophy sharpens managers’ ability to reason: “philosophy for managers seeks to strengthen the art of thinking and the instrument of reason in managers. Thus, “philosophy can help managers take decisions when confronted with dilemmas” (Ledoux, 2012, p.15), especially when faced with complexity: “while much of current professional philosophy focuses upon the certain, philosophy for managers directs attention to contributing in the presence of the uncertain” (Saarinen, 2008, p.5). The ideas of great philosophers can also aid by serving as guidelines to managers faced with ethical decisions (Green, 2001). Philosophy in this case remain non-prescriptive – it guides not how one ought to act, but how one ought to think about acting. Claes and Preston (2009) believe it makes managers more responsible.

For these reasons, some management scholars recommend philosophy education in order to move away from the normative frameworks of management theories, and to better prepare managers for the complexity of the environment, strategic decisions and interactions at work (e.g. Chia, Harrison & Leitch, 2007; Guillet de Monthoux, 2015). Some of the authors cited in this section offer and run philosophy programs, courses or workshops for managers (e.g. Ledoux, 2012; Deslandes, 2016; Ongaro, 2019; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2016), sometimes even in renowned business schools. Yet there is little evaluation of these programs, at least not in the form of published studies on the reception by managers, and little is known on the management and leadership competencies developed or impacted by these programs.

3. An Explorative Case Study

This study investigates a Swiss executive education program on philosophy for senior managers, delivered since almost twenty years. We are interested in identifying the competencies developed by the participants of this philosophy program. First, however, we will clarify the program's characteristics in terms of target audience, teaching methods and objectives. In this section, we also present the collected database and our analysis approach. The data collection and analysis has been carried out by two researchers: one of the authors is one of the four founders and organizers of the program, with experience in facilitating and evaluating executive leadership training programs; the other is an external researcher with experience in analyzing other philosophical programs for managers.

Program Features

To present the specific features of the program, an analysis of the brochures and course documents was carried out, and several individual interviews were held with the program coordinators, in addition to a team meeting with the four coordinators discussing the program feature overview [see Table 3]. The program was launched in 2004 by a professor of philosophical anthropology, another professor of human rights philosophy, as well as two management professors with educational backgrounds in philosophy and social sciences. All four coordinators had previous experiences in executive education and shared the conviction that there was a demand among Swiss managers for philosophy courses. The program was aimed at experienced managers with university education and willingness to step back and read classical philosophical texts.

Since its launch, the program has consisted of eight two-day thematic modules. The choice of topics corresponds to philosophical questions associated with managerial practice, and is also linked to the expertise and research projects of the program's designers which includes: ethics, temporality, the meaning of work, image and communication, authority and power, among other subjects. Each module includes interventions from external contributors, including philosophers, sociologists, psychiatrists, anthropologists, artists and practitioners, who provide specific insights into a given topic. The module topics have changed very little over the past 20 years, though some content, speakers and methods may have been modified. The program as a whole has remained relatively stable over the period, and the table details the main structure. The only major change in the program was that, from 2009 onwards, each participant was required to produce a 15-20 page papers on a personal theme, and a module was added to train elements of rhetoric in addition to presenting individual papers. Additionally, the

participants have to write summary papers at the end of each module. None of this work is graded. However, validation by the instructors (for each module and for the dissertation) is required to obtain the final certificate.

Modules		Didactic Methods	Philosophical Authors	Other Non-Philosophical Content
1	Power and leadership	Thematic summary, comments on readings, discussions	Plato, Kant, Machiavelli, Marx, Sophists	Intervention by a political leader on the exercise of power
2	Capital is a capital notion	Thematic summary, comments on readings, organizational case studies	Aristotle, Bourdieu	Sociology, Political science, contributions from practitioners
3	Another approach towards time management	Thematic summary, comments on readings, organizational case studies	Aristotle, Plato, Bergson, Bachelard, Ricoeur, Eliade, Proust	Cultural anthropology, sociology of work, artist interventions (music, poetry)
4	Richness and poverty	Thematic summary, comments on readings, discussions	Aristotle, Machiavelli, Kant	Anthropology, intervention by an association director
5	Meaning of work	Thematic summary, comments on readings, discussions, video cases	Aristotle, Plato, Kant, Marx, Arendt	Psychodynamics of work
6	Otherness	Thematic summary, comments on readings, role plays	Sartre, Aristotle, Levinas, Ricoeur, Marcel, Caillois	Cultural anthropology, intervention from a psychiatrist
7	Reputation and image	Thematic summary, comments on readings, discussions, experiential games	Levinas, Nietzsche	Interventions by artists and journalists
8	Business ethics	Thematic summary, comments on readings, discussions, video cases	Kant, Ricoeur, Aristote, Saint Thomas of Aquinas	Theology, intervention by a priest with financial experience
9	Preparing personal papers	Presentations of participants, inputs on method, discussions	Depends on presentation topics and participant choices	Personal topics strongly embedded in own management practice

Table 1 – Curriculum of the program: “Cure of philosophy – Philosophy for managers”

With the exception of the ninth module, each module can be followed independently from the rest of the program. After a few years, a transversal didactic approach was designed. The four coordinators agreed on three main LOs for the philosophy program, inspired by the French expert in philosophy didactics Michel Tozzi (1995, 2020), as well as some philosophical

thematic knowledge. The thematic module approach is a type of philosophical knowledge approach (Ongaro, 2019; Tozzi, 2020) where the main concepts, questionings, doctrines, existing debates and contributions of major authors are synthesized and overviewed. Some key classical texts are read and commented on in-depth. Each module integrates several external speakers, practitioners or experts from other disciplines, as well as case studies or experiential games with time for discussion. Participants are asked to write a paper on each module, setting out what they have learned and how what they have read resonates with their professional practice. Apart from the module specific philosophical knowledge, three other LOs have been considered by the coordinators as key competencies: developing a *knowledge of self* (reflexivity about own values, attitudes and principles of action; getting a better understanding of myself as a subject of action); developing the ability of *conceptualization* (the ability of defining a notion in comprehension, to start from its representation and to elaborate concepts notably with the help of conceptual distinctions (Tozzi, 2020, p. 91) and developing an ability of *problematization* (the ability to question the meaning of something or the truth of a statement, or to doubt about one's opinions and prejudices (Tozzi, 2020, p. 90).

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4. Methodology

Our empirical study aimed to explore how these three LOs transfer into the workplace. More precisely, we investigate how program participants describe the program's impact on their work and analyze the competencies they claim to have developed via philosophy. We used a variety of sources. The position of the one of the co-authors as one of the program founders and coordinators requires a high degree of reflexivity and transparency in the methodological approach (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). Due to his role in the program, the first author runs the risk of taking elements from the data for granted. The exchange with a co-author made it possible to view the data from different perspectives, considering that the co-author carried out a systematic study on philosophy programs for managers in Europe and North America, and conducted around sixty interviews between 2021 and 2023 with heads of philosophy programs for managers. This data will not directly be used in our analysis but was useful to change perspectives and reflect on program characteristics.

We collected 40 transcribed individual interviews with former participants, the results of 6 end-of-program focus groups and over 200 participant papers. The interviews with former participants were conducted over three periods. The first series of 25 interviews was conducted in 2008 and in 2015 and was purely exploratory in nature. At the time, the program was still in its infancy, and the coordinators were keen to assess its impact. The aim of these interviews was to assess the program's contributions and explore the competencies participants were developing. These initial interviews gave rise to a categorization of competencies that was mobilized for a second series of 15 semi-structured interviews in 2023 around these categories. The 40 participants are representative of our program audiences: 40% women, 60% men, between 35 and 60 years old, with management experience in private companies, public administrations or medical and social institutions. There were several HR managers and several business consultants and professionals in management positions (architects, dentists, lawyers...). The forty interviews were conducted by an independent research assistant trained in research, and the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Since 2015, we have carried out focus group discussions with the participants at the end of each program, which is the subject of formalized documents. The last focus group took place in 2023. In addition to these documents, we also have over 200 papers from the thematic modules temporality and otherness, as well as evaluation reports for each module since 2004.

In this article, we analyze only the 40 interviews and 6 focus group meeting minutes using a thematic analysis method (King & Brooks, 2018). We compared the categories initially identified in 2009 with the literature and other programs, and carried out a content analysis, that we present in the following section. The first stage of analysis focuses on problematization or philosophical questioning, which seems to be a crucial element of philosophical training. We asked how participants define it and how they practice it in their day-to-day managerial life? The second stage of analysis concerns knowledge of Self and reflexivity: how do participants link reflexivity with management and leadership competencies? Finally, the third phase of analysis concerns the practice of conceptualization, which is rarely explicitly presented in other philosophy programs for managers, but which emerged repeatedly in interviews with our participants as a key theme, linked with other management subthemes like communication.

5. Results

5.1. Problematization or philosophical questioning

The first LO of the program is the development of philosophical competencies to manage the process of problematization also called philosophical questioning. Philosophy is often associated with systematic, critical questioning, on big, fundamental questions, what some of the aforementioned authors call reflexivity or philosophizing. In classical philosophy classes, according to Tozzi (2020):

“[problematization] contains the ability to question the meaning of something (“Is life worth living?”) or the truth of a statement (“Are things the way they appear to us?”). Also this process involves the ability to doubt or to question one’s opinions (“I believe in ghosts, but am I right?”), which are often prejudices (statements made before they have even been thought through), and to consider them as hypotheses rather than theses” (p.91).

In their interviews, former participants associate problematization and philosophical questioning with different subthemes that reflect specific practices or competencies they use in their work life.

The first subtheme emerging from the interviews is the development of new questioning routines on organizational practices and narratives. Many former participants insist on the fact that “the course led (them) to reinforce (their) questioning” (M, Strategic Manager, Hospice). Some participants mentioned that they were rather avoiding asking questions in meetings in

their organizations, and after having participated to the course, they say they feel themselves more capable, or more legitimate to ask questions in meetings or in interactions with colleagues, subordinates or supervisors. As one focus group participant put it: “Before, I was afraid of looking stupid by asking questions, but now I dare”. This new questioning routine is associated with two other sub-themes: questioning can be a tool for gathering information, and questioning can also be a tool for systematic doubting, a tool for reflexivity.

Questioning as an information-gathering tool involves asking questions to clarify a situation, a context, or even different representations of the same situation. It helps build a more complete representation of a problem to be solved. It also makes it possible to build a shared representation of a problem. It therefore facilitates decision-making processes:

“[Thanks to prior critical questioning], I’m able to make more autonomous decisions in the sense of... better analyzing, better criticizing, self-criticizing, more critical, so by being more critical we become more impervious to these snowball effects, or fads” (M, Manager of a nursing department, Hospital)

“That’s one thing we’ve kind of forgotten in our society at the moment: to question ourselves and ask questions, and not just exchange opinions. And then I don’t listen to the other person and because I only have one thing, I only have one desire, and that’s to express my opinion” (M, HR Director, State)

“I’ve had long, fruitful discussions with the police commander that we’d never had before, and we’ve been working together for 6 or 7 years [...] I think we’ve never been so good at targeting problems. We also challenge each other to see if the problems he, as a police commander, identifies are also at my level” (M, Attorney General, Public Ministry).

But philosophical questioning, that of problematization, is also considered by the participants to be more fundamental, a practice of critical questioning or critical thinking, a systematic questioning:

“We question our ways of doing things: what does that lead to? Why do we need to do it? And then, I think philosophy is at a higher level. We’re not questioning the process, we’re questioning the why” (M, Attorney General, Public Ministry).

The problematization technique also means questioning the formulation and presuppositions of the problem. It's a systematic search for the assumptions underlying the understanding of a problem:

"I question the question. Something I didn't do before. It's a good tip we got in that philosophy course: question the question, and it's true that I wasn't questioning the question. I was focusing on the answer. And questioning the question takes us much deeper into the question before giving the answer." (M, Marketing Consultant)

For the participants, the problematization exercise enables them to develop questioning routines that range from the simple control of information to the more radical questioning of action principles. Some participants refer to coaching, whose practice is also inextricably linked to a toolbox of questions, which vary according to the conceptual framework of the chosen method. Some authors are quick to point out the kinship of executive coaching with Athenian didactics and Socratic maieutics. However, the originality of the philosophical questioning described by program participants lies in the fact that it emerges not in dialogue with an individual coach, but in the development of a personal reflection exercise with a classic text, or in a collective discussion with other participants.

5.2. Self-reflexivity

Questioning is a fundamental element in the practice of reflexivity, as it also enables a change of perspective, the consideration of dilemmas and paradoxes, and the inclusion of a dialectical dimension in the formulation of theses. Thus, another learning element of the philosophical approach is to present fields of tension, for example work as a source of freedom and as a constraint, time as subjective time and as metric time, alterity as adversary and as partner in interaction, ethics of principle and ethics of responsibility. Some participants recall having been astonished to see two great classic authors take divergent positions on the meaning of work or otherness, quite simply because they formulate different hypotheses, and formulate the question with different concepts and different interpretations, thus bringing different answers to it.

"I think there's one thing that's important, that philosophy also brings, and that's dialectic. In a company, I think managing paradoxes is one of the major difficulties a manager can encounter. In other words, at any given moment, a

manager has to reconcile different aspects, different things. Quite simply, when we talk about efficiency and the watchmaker's gesture, for example, there can be two things to reconcile" (M, PhD in Physics, Training Director of a watchmaking brand)

From these fields of tension, and these shifts in perspective, will emerge an awareness of possible choices of principles of action, priorities and values. This awareness of the principles of action and the possibility of changing perspective will have two consequences for participants: deeper self-reflection and greater openness to different positions.

The participants were fairly unanimous in their view that the training enabled them to develop "a better understanding of (themselves), (their) values, (their) functioning". This strengthening of self-awareness is a theme that emerges in almost all the interviews. This self-awareness touches on aspects of personality, but also behavior in their private and professional lives. Some make clear references to their behavior in professional interactions or to questions of responsibility in decision-making.

"I have this personal questioning. When I have to intervene somewhere, or I evaluate a mandate, or I evaluate an activity, etcetera, it's to ask myself the question: does this correspond to me? does this, what can I contribute? how can I do it? A slightly more critical view of oneself, to say: 'can I do this?'" (M, Director, Labour Union).

"Yes, but in a sense of being clearer with the weaknesses too. On the contrary, it's about being more comfortable and clearer with my limits and accepting them. (...) if I take the example of the end justifying the means, I think that now I know consciously when I'm putting the end first. It doesn't make me feel uncomfortable anymore, even though I still do it sometimes. So maybe it's a better awareness, in the sense that sometimes I decide to do it and say to myself, 'I think it's worth it'" (W, IT expert, CEO).

In many interviews, this self-awareness is linked to another theme, or two other sub-themes, namely self-confidence and the ability to explain to others the reasons for one's actions or one's principles of action. We were quite surprised to see this notion of self-confidence linked to self-awareness emerge in so many interviews:

“I think that by making me more aware of myself, of my role, I’m also giving myself more self-confidence, enabling me perhaps to assert myself more as I am, with my faults and my qualities” (M, Team Manager, Public Finance).

“I think I can say that the philosophy treatment legitimized certain things for me, and clearly gave me confidence in my convictions or beliefs” (M, School Director).

“It gives you more confidence to assert your ideas. Especially at times when, for example, I’m having to deal with redundancy issues: what support, what confidence, what arguments am I going to use? And that helps a lot with awareness and confidence-building” (M, CEO).

A number of interviews also mention a greater ability to communicate on the foundations for decisions and priorities. Seeking the meaning of an action or decision for oneself also means developing elements of meaning to explain to others, in a sense-making action: “if we become aware of the need to give meaning to what we do, we have to accept the principle that people also need to have meaning” (M, Head of Department, Education Administration) .

An unexpected consequence of self-reflexivity is openness to other points of view, and acceptance of other ways of looking at a situation. Several participants emphasized this ability to change perspective and question the priorities and values of their work partners.

“When you know yourself better, I have the impression that you can understand that others don’t act like you do, and that you have to try to understand why certain people have certain attitudes and behave in a certain way” (M, Head of Department, Education Administration).

“It’s true that we sometimes tend to judge and make value judgments about people or actions. And that makes it easier to analyze, to at least understand the reasons that may lead a person to do something or to opt for one choice rather than another” (M, PhD in Engineering, Director in engineering and manufacturing company).

What we find in the participants’ comments on the consequences of practicing reflexivity is first and foremost the development of self-reflection, values and principles of action, a theme potentially associated with greater self-confidence and a greater ability to accept differences.

5.3. Conceptualization

The third LO of the philosophy program is relatively little discussed explicitly in the literature on philosophy training for managers, and concerns what Tozzi (2020, p. 91) calls the competency of conceptualization: it involves the ability to define and clarify a notion in comprehension, notably by distinguishing this concept from others, for example distinguishing the concept of truth from the concept of reality. Conceptualization is an exercise in semantics in which all facets of the definition of a notion are taken into consideration, as well as its different contexts of use, etymology, synonyms, antonyms and more or less equivalent translations in other languages. Through its thematic structure, the ‘philosophy cure’ training program regularly invites participants to define and conceptualize the polysemic notions of each module (time, capital, power, leadership, work, motivation...), with speakers presenting different definitions and different forms of conceptualization of these notions by different classical authors. In addition, the final paper that each student is required to write at the end of the program must include an exercise in conceptualizing the various notions used by the student in his or her personal work.

This recurring element of training has resulted in increasing attention being paid to the words used in professional life: time, capital, power, leadership, work, motivation are also everyday management words, whose polysemy is often underestimated: “I discovered the meaning of words and their power, especially when you give them a clear meaning” (participant in focus group 2023). Our interviewees associate conceptualization with two practices in their work context: the first one is interrogating systematically the words used at work by them or by the others; the second one is choosing words for a clearer communication.

“Very often, when I’m told things that surprise me, I want to delve into etymology: I’m surprised by what I’m told, I want to understand it properly, is it right, is it a misunderstanding of the terms, what is it that surprises me?” (M, Engineer, Technical Director).

The regular exercise in conceptualization seems to have resulted in an increased effort to think about common words in professional communication in a more precise way, taking the trouble to choose them and making the choices explicit. This reflection on communication is also accompanied by an abandonment of notions from a corporate language deemed vague in favor of notions whose meaning is made explicit and reformulated with alternatives.

“I’m careful to reformulate regularly. And then I’m also careful to ask other people to reformulate for me, so I know if they’ve understood” (W, Sales Manager).

“Referring to etymology, to the history of words, to the meanings they’ve had... it really touched me, because all of a sudden, it brings out meanings we didn’t expect. I’ve worked a lot on that, with my limited resources, but I’m developing it by reading a bit at the moment. I think it makes for a more relevant and convincing discourse, without necessarily needing to look for very rational arguments, because all of a sudden, you manage to get a new meaning out of people, one that everyone feels, and that means you don’t need to explain for a long time. When we understand situations and problems better, we’ll soon all be thinking more or less the same thing” (M, IT specialist, CEO).

Finally, the philosophical practice of conceptualization in the program modules seems to lead to an awareness of the polysemy of certain key words, i.e. of their multiple meanings and interpretations, and of the need to make common meanings explicit for more effective communication.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

Our study contributes to the literature on the place of philosophy in management education in a number of ways. Firstly, it is the first empirical study to be carried out with participants of a philosophy program. Although many program leaders have written about their experience of teaching philosophy to managers (Laurie, 2001; Saarinen, 2008), or about the LOs of their programs (Ongaro, 2019), this is the first study to capture participants’ perceptions on how they were impacted by philosophy. Moreover the study explores how program participants – managers – transfer or translate philosophical techniques or processes (Tozzi, 2020) in their work process, i.e. how they give sense to these techniques and processes with their own words. Our study is facilitated by considering philosophy with Tozzi’s competency-based approach focusing on techniques and processes of the philosophizing process (conceptualization, problematization, dialectical argumentation). This approach allows a transversal and pragmatist perspective on the philosophy as discipline by looking at the philosophizing practice, independently from theoretical frameworks and disciplinary debates on what philosophy should be.

A second notable contribution observed in this study is the more precise understanding of the impacts of philosophy, and its relevance for developing management and leadership competencies. Using philosophy as a thinking tool, or ‘philosophizing’, should enable managers to question and reflect on the assumptions that form the basis of their thinking (Collins & Latermore, 2002), but it has been generally noted that managers show little interest towards philosophy (e.g. Klikauer, 2013; Deslandes, 2016). Philosophy can be reproached with being inherently abstract, i.e. focusing on metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical inquiries often results in intellectual exercises detached from everyday experiences and concerns (Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023, p.312). Besides, questioning taken-for-granted systems can be perceived as threatening and needless, especially when one’s career is dependent on the current system (Cunliffe, 2009). Many management scholars vouch for integrating such discipline in business school education (Claes and Preston, 2009) and they usually posit that philosophy education can better prepare managers for the complexity of the environment, strategic decisions and interactions at work (e.g. Chia, Harrison & Leitch, 2007; Guillet de Monthoux, 2015). Our results bring evidence validating the assumptions of these authors, considering the contributions of philosophy program as growing in self-knowledge (Brendel, 2014) or cultivating authentic leadership (Begley, 2006). Our study shows also how philosophy education can concretely prepare managers for decisions and interactions in a complex environment: by questioning representations and practices in a systematic way, by interrogating assumptions and convictions of decision makers and by changing perspectives, and by reflecting on words and formulations in the daily communication. Some of the impacts expressed by participants might sound like the recommendations (see for example Goffee and Jones, 2015; Stolzhus, 2008) of coaching handbooks (on the usefulness of dialogue or questioning practice) or leadership books on “authentic leadership” (on reflecting and communicating on your values and subtext with interaction partners), with the major difference that no behavioral recommendations has been formulated during the program regarding work situations.

A main limitation of this study is that it focused on just one philosophy program that has specific learning goals. For example, the practice of conceptualization seems to have a non-negligible impact on the competencies developed by managers, particularly on communication. Surprisingly, the literature we present in the first section deals little or peripherally with this importance of conceptualization (Ledoux, 2012). This is undoubtedly due to the characteristics of the program, particularly its thematic structure, which invites conceptualization. Nevertheless, our study offers promising research avenues. For example, it can help examine

common features of philosophy programs worldwide with a competency-based approach, it can help evaluate the impacts of participants in a systematic way, or it can help develop curricula for business schools and universities. Most of all, it contributes to the debate on whether philosophy should be seriously considered as relevant for ML.

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Appendix A4 – Fourth Manuscript for Doctoral Thesis: “Bursting Bubbles: How Philosophical Practice Impacts Managerial and Ethical Development”

Abstract

This paper explains how a European executive program impacted the personal, professional and ethical development of managers. In 2022, a new philosophy program was launched by a philosophical institution; aiming to develop more competent and responsible leaders. Executives were invited to engage in dialogues with people at risk of social exclusion to philosophize on matters such as identity, fear, happiness, love, migration, responsibility, democracy and civic engagement. Though conventional management topics were not addressed in this 12-week program, results show that managerial competencies were developed through engaging with philosophy. The combination of Socratic and Levinassian philosophical approaches embedded into this learning experiment made the program unique in its kind and meriting further study. Thus, we interviewed 18 program participants from the first two editions of the program and examined how the project impacted managers. We discovered that the program increased their willingness to engage in social issues and made them more concerned about the world and communities they live in. We also learned that this philosophical experience enabled managers to develop key managerial competencies including self-awareness, independent thinking, relationship-building, communication, questioning and a sense of responsibility. These competencies connect to emotional intelligence as well as wisdom and constitute a useful toolkit for any practicing manager while further build a case for why executives should engage in philosophical practice.

Keywords: Business Ethics and Ethics Education, Leadership Development, Curriculum Design and Pedagogy

Status: under review for publication in: *Philosophy of Management* journal [submitted in April 2025, status from June 2025]

Teaching Philosophy to Managers

There are quite a few proponents of Socratic dialogue (SD) in management learning (ML); especially in the *Philosophy of Management* journal (Bennett et al., 2015; Bolten, 2001; Brinkmann et al., 2016; Kessels, 2001; N. Laurie, 2001; Morrell, 2004). Bolten (2001) believes that such method could develop managers' ethical competencies whereas Brinkmann, Lindemann and Sims (2016) promote its use for voicing moral concerns. It may also have other benefits; perhaps it can help clarify one's values (Abenoza & Lozano, 2024), facilitate knowledge sharing (Remenyi & Griffiths, 2009), and promote creativity (Stenning et al., 2016). It has been recommended for workplaces and management activities such as corporate compliance (Rusch, 2018). The dialogue process enables intense and enlightening sessions that certainly could benefit managers (Tsahuridu, 2023). Interestingly, a SD project involving law students, judges and penitentiary inmates revealed how philosophy could impact legal professionals; it increased their sense of professional responsibility and understanding of the social impact of their work. They also discovered the power of listening and overcoming prejudices (Abenoza & Arjona, 2017). Such results build a case for engaging with philosophy, but few have measured the effects of SD in business. Here we hypothesize that such method could bring about similar results – notably a change in the managers' sense of social responsibility – but evidence is missing.

In 2009, inspired by a workshop in Oxford, the *Philosophy of Management* journal launched a special issue about teaching philosophy to managers. This volume featured six papers; each focused on philosophical approaches towards business learning (Preston, 2009). For example, Goldman (2009) discussed the challenges of teaching philosophy to management students, Hitchin and Maksymiw (2009) delineated a critical approach towards learning, and Trezise and Biesta (2009) spoke of ethical development through philosophical training. In that same issue, Claes and Preston (2009) attempted to understand why teaching philosophy might be of use to managers. This led them to conclude that such question is overly complicated to answer in one paper, but surely “managers can somehow benefit from studying philosophy” (p.69). Still, *how* they might benefit remains unclear and, ensuing this special issue, few papers in the *Philosophy of Management* journal have investigated this matter in an empirical manner.

Although there are quite a few proponents of SD in management education, most scholarly discussions on this matter occur outside of business journals. Philosophy is gaining traction in management communities (e.g. Claes & Preston, 2009), but only certain types of philosophy

are associated with management learning (ML). Levinassian and Socratic methods are included on that list and have also been discussed in *Philosophy of Management*.

Firstly, Levinassian principles are mainly recommended for ethical development (Tajalli & Segal, 2019; Trezise & Biesta, 2009). They are based on the ideas of a 20th-century philosopher who believed humans are not born as moral beings and need to be exposed to suffering for an ethical sense to awaken within them (Trezise & Biesta, 2009). Levinas became known as the “philosopher of the face”, and was determined that being in the presence of one ‘Other’ was the beginning of all ethical reasoning, because “the gaze of the other unleashes something in us that cannot be unleashed by ourselves” (Segal, 2004, p. 191), and so, ethical development must necessarily be relational (Tajalli & Segal, 2019). Levinas’ understanding of ethical development implies that ethics cannot be developed by studying theoretical concepts or principles, given that it requires recognizing the humanity and the pain in the gaze of a fellow human being (Levinas, 1969). Meeting the face of another human in pain compels us to recognize our responsibility, because “the human face is that which demands anew that we justify and explain ourselves, that we give an account of our values and of how we apply them in practical situations” (Perpich, 2012, p. 93). This seeds ethical behaviour, leading to more responsible conduct. Trezise and Biesta (2009) believe in this method because it weighs importance on teaching ethical behaviour as opposed to teaching ethical principles: “ethics does not consist of the application of ethical knowledge, but that we rather should look for the opportunities for ‘being ethical’ in human and educational encounters and experiences” (p.53). Nevertheless, this statement is theoretical; there is no proof that Levinassian philosophy can lead to behavioural change among managers.

Secondly, SD is one of the most commonly discussed philosophical approaches in ML. This form of dialogue stems from Ancient Greece when Socrates himself philosophized with the managers of his time. The method was further developed by philosophers Nelson and Heckmann (Bennett et al., 2015) and continues to be used across a variety of contexts. It consists of a mode of questioning that seeks to peel the layers of an issue: “the purpose is to assist the individual in reasoning his or her way to the solution to a problem scenario” (Peterson, 2009, p. 103). The method consists of a role play; one person is ‘Socrates’ – the person who asks questions – and one person is the ‘citizen’ – the one who responds to them. Each person takes turns being ‘Socrates’ and acting as a ‘spiritual midwife’ that helps in the process of giving birth to ideas (Altorf, 2019). Ultimately, SD is “an exchange of thoughts with the goal of finding an answer to a particular question” (Bolten, 2001, p. 25). Contrarily to

popular belief, dialogue is nor a debate, nor a discussion. Debates and discussions aim to convince others of your opinion, whereas dialogues intend to understand other points of view (Bolten, 2001). They can highlight ‘incoherences’ or thinking gaps that people are not aware of or have not yet identified. In doing so, this method has the potential to address our world’s widespread ‘state of moral confusion’ (Morrell, 2004) and the moral muteness of managers (Brinkmann et al., 2016).

Despite missing answers to this question, many continue to promote philosophical training in business (e.g. Jasinska, 2024; Saarinen, 2008; Small, 2004). Some believe it can impact managerial practice and organizational leadership (Cunliffe, 2009; Platts & Harris, 2011). Others believe it can perhaps develop managerial competencies such as conceptual thinking, critical thinking, introspection, empathy, conceptualization and questioning skills (Davoine & Schumacher, 2009; Small, 2004; Woiceshyn, 1992). Other scholars discuss philosophy’s role in teaching ethics (Hühn, 2015; Small, 2004a). Nonetheless, the exact impact philosophy has on managers remains unclear (Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023) and more research is needed to justify why such subject matter adds value to business. That said, the goal of this study is to better understand how philosophy could contribute to management development. By interviewing managers who took part in a 12-week philosophical experience, this paper seeks to document the case of ‘Project Bubbles’ and how it contributed to executive development.

A Case Study: Project Bubbles

Project Bubbles is a 12-week executive program launched in 2022 as a didactic experiment led by the SD Institute in Spain. The program began with an in-person experience, but the majority of the ensuing sessions were conducted online via video conferencing. Thus far, there have been two editions of the program since it launched in 2022, amounting to 38 participants in total. The entire program was led by a team of two facilitators with academic backgrounds in both management and philosophy. Their role throughout the sessions was to facilitate SD by acting as ‘spiritual midwives’ who help in the process of giving birth to ideas (Altorf, 2016).

Program Objectives

To surmount social barriers, to break prejudices, and to help managers relate to people from different backgrounds. To share, to listen, and to acknowledge other ways of thinking. To raise awareness about the world’s most pressing social issues through meeting people who are facing them. To help managers become more ethical and competent leaders by introducing

them to a culture of dialogue. It goes without saying that the program in question has ambitious objectives.

The program assumes that people everywhere orbit towards social groups they relate to, and opportunities to engage in deep and meaningful dialogues with outsiders seem rare – perhaps even risky should they lead to conflict or confrontation. This is seen as problematic: “living in social tribes – or isolated bubbles of sameness – prevents us from understanding those who are different from us. From our echo chambers we can only see others through the preconceptions we have about them, which only reinforces our tendency to judge from afar” (reference withheld for review). This is why the program is called “Project Bubbles” – it was designed to break these so-called social ‘bubbles’ by creating spaces of dialogue to shed some light on others’ realities.

Bubbles departs from the assumption that democracy is at risk due to a crisis in education, and that it can only be improved by reintroducing three capabilities: the ability to develop critical thinking, the ability to transcend national loyalties and confront international problems as “citizens of the world,” and the ability to compassionately imagine the difficulties others face (Nussbaum, 2010). Using the Socratic Method combined with a Levinassian approach, the program seeks to foster critical thinking while at the same time raising a sense of “global citizenship” by allowing participants from different countries to realize that they are much more alike than they initially expected. At the same time, after hearing firsthand experiences of suffering from their classmates, managers develop a sense of compassion for them. This happens because, as Nussbaum (2013) puts it, we do not usually care about total strangers, we tend to be compassionate only towards those that we know (or those whose lives we can conceive or imagine). This reinforced sense of compassion is what can make those participating in this experience more responsible managers and citizens, thus allowing for both ethical development of business organizations and stronger democracies.

In other words, the program strives to help managers become socially responsible, which is essential given that business organizations are a fundamental element of the social fabric. Businesses have become “the most powerful institution on the planet”, and so, they must take “responsibility for the whole” (Harman, 1990, p. 12). For managers to have more responsible practices, understanding the impact their practices have in society and especially on those at the margins is key: this understanding entails thinking, not in managerial terms, but in ethical terms. Thus, the focus of the program is in developing the ethical thinking that manifests in

better managerial practices, rather than a more traditional approach that targets managerial techniques or practices themselves.

Philosophical Approach

It is important to understand the two philosophical schools of thought that underpin the program in question. The first approach is the traditional SD Method which, as described earlier, originated from Ancient Greece and was later developed by Nelson and Heckmann (Bennett, Anderson & Sice, 2015). It is an interactive process that works as follows: “[it] begins with an individual posing an initial question, followed then by further questions in response to the answers received to the initial question. The process consists of a back and forth movement between proposals and counter proposals, in an effort to elicit more focused ideas centering on a general concept” (Peterson, 2009, p. 103). Moreover, the second main philosophical pillar of this pedagogical experience is the work of Emmanuel Levinas. As explained previously, for Levinas, the in-person encounter with people living at the margins is essential to develop ethical thinking. Project Bubbles was essentially conceived to provide opportunities to meet ‘the Other’.

In fact, at its core, project Bubbles seeks to create a space for very diverse people to gather in joint philosophical reflection using the Socratic Method. This method demands a relationship of equality amongst those who participate, a horizontality also found at the core of Levinas’ principles of ethical development. Levinas’ conception of the Other is not just a being whose vulnerability, poverty, mortality, weakness, and exposedness places one in a relation of responsibility; the Other is also a being who, in their turn, is responsible as well. This understanding of mutual responsibility places one’s actions into question and demands a justification from both ends (Larios, 2019). This is why Levinas asks, “where can I be chosen, if not from among other chosen ones, among equals?” (Levinas, 1969, p. 279). That said, project Bubbles put a lot of emphasis on creating – as much as was possible – a condition of equality amongst all participants. To that end, a non-hierarchical setting was orchestrated for, otherwise, unlikely encounters. The participants of the program were, in equal numbers, people at risk of social exclusion and business managers. In summary, the overall idea of the program was to give managers and people at risk of social exclusion a chance to engage in SD.

Program Participants

To carry out this teaching method, the program recruited two categories of participants:

- Group 1 consisted of young multi-lingual executives with international backgrounds who graduated from top-ranked business schools with dual master degrees. These professionals occupy leadership positions and/ or work in highly influential organizations in Europe such as Google, McKinsey, Nike, Procter & Gamble, H&M and Beiersdorf. Their educational and professional backgrounds enable them to pursue attractive career opportunities and to potentially rise in the rankings of their organizations. Interestingly, this group of participants had previously participated in a philosophy course in their graduate studies and were taught by the same professor who led this program.
- Group 2 represents the other half of the program participants. These people are considered to be ‘at risk of social exclusion’ meaning they are associated with challenging social circumstances of various sorts. For example, many of them are refugees or migrants from countries such as Nigeria, Venezuela, Romania, Russia, and Nicaragua among other places. All of them are victims of critical social issues and experienced challenging walks of life before ending up in Western Europe. They are culturally, socio-economically, educationally and ideologically different from the group of executives. None of them have a background in philosophy nor have previously partaken in a post-secondary philosophical course, but it was hypothesized that philosophy would help them grow some competencies – different from those prescribed to group 1. The program would also provide them with a chance to share, feel heard, respected and accepted, despite of past experiences of social rejection which typically characterize members of this group.

All in all, though there were two distinct groups of program participants, the groups were not formally disclosed to participants nor was anyone labelled based on the group they were recruited for. The groups were needed for the sake of recruiting even numbers of participants for both groups. Moreover, the facilitators took into account who belonged to which group to match participants from both groups for activities, following Levinas’ premisses for ethical development. On a superficial level, it was not apparent whether someone represented group 1 or group 2 which allowed managers to discover the different life paths of people without having the initial prejudice or stigma of talking to “marginalized” people. The only distinction which was verbalized to ensure dialogues would take place with mixed pairs was that there were people who had previously taken a philosophy class and people who had not taken one

before. This allowed managers to confront new worlds in their dialogues and to get exposed to new ideas and realities that they might have not engaged with in the past.

The method of recruiting Project Bubbles participants is noteworthy; all the executives are business school alumni from the ESADE CEMS program in Spain and they previously engaged in a SD course with the main facilitator of Project Bubbles. The professor sent out 153 personalized invitations on LinkedIn to students she had previously taught; 4 of them did not respond, 58 responded that they were either not available or interested in participating, whereas 91 indicated interest in the program. The final participants were chosen on a 'first come first served' basis.

Didactic Strategy

To achieve the program objectives, unconventional didactic strategies were employed resulting in an experiential learning experience rather than traditional course. The project involved no lectures, no assignments, no testing, and no fixed learning objectives – just dialogue sessions, always in English. During the dialogues, participants were seated in alternating positions (every manager sat between two people from a vulnerable background). In line with Levinas' premises, dialogue exercises in pairs and breakout groups were often proposed, and the facilitators made sure to mix both groups of participants. To ensure the conditions for open dialogue were met, the facilitators provided a philosophical introduction to the method, as well as ground rules for such dialogues (these included, amongst others: no interruptions, respectful interventions, active listening, egalitarian participation, etc.).

Interestingly, rather than tackling conventional management topics, dialogue partners touched upon some of life's biggest questions: *Who are you? What does love mean to you? What do you fear? What is justice? What is responsibility?* The choice to address managers' humanity beyond their managerial competencies was deliberate: issues of ethics concern the person behind the managerial role they occupy. Thus, the SDs focused on a different side of their existence, often forgotten in their workplaces: "managers are human beings and should be approached as such" (Saarinen, 2008, p. 3). Evidently, this is not a typical executive management program about conventional management topics; instead, it is a philosophy course designed for managers which takes into account their position of power and impact while also considering their essential human nature. Though the participants might sometimes touch upon their managerial experiences as they explore these various themes in the program, management is not at the heart of dialogues.

Methodology

Sample & Recruitment

The study sample consists of a total of 18 program participants from across the two editions of the program. This included nine female and nine male. 10 of them participated in the first edition of the project and 8 participated in the second. The managers in the sample represented at least 13 nationalities – mainly from Europe – including Bulgaria, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, France, Finland, Russia, Turkey, Brazil, China, Mexico. However, all of them work in Europe (in the Netherlands, UK, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Denmark, Finland) with the exception of one ‘nomadic’ manager who regularly moves countries. All of the managers are alumni of the CEMS master program. The sample is outlined in Table I below.

n = 18	Edition 1 (April-June 2022)		Edition 2 (September-December 2022)		TOTAL
	Number of Interviews	Number of Program Participants	Number of Interviews	Number of Program Participants	
Managers	10	11	8	9	18 managers

Table I – Number of Participants and One-To-One Interviews Conducted

To recruit this sample, an independent researcher (the first author) attended the program to inform all participants of the study. Those who were interested in participating were able to schedule time for an interview during the in-person weekends or they were able to schedule a call within a month after the experience. All who agreed to participate were interviewed, resulting in 18 interviews in total. Two participants chose not to participate; one due to scheduling time constraints and another for undisclosed reasons.

Data Collection & Analysis

This study is based on a thematic analysis approach that utilizes qualitative data retrieved from semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of the program (Skinner et al., 2020). In the interviews, participants were asked about their philosophical experience and how the program impacted them in general. Then, they were asked about several competencies which were identified through the literature review. For example, we asked about ethical thinking, conceptual thinking, critical thinking, introspection, empathy, conceptualization and questioning skills (Woiceshyn, 1992; Small, 2004; Davoine & Schumacher, 2009; Hühn, 2015). They were asked to describe whether those competencies improved through the program and to give examples of when they noticed a change in those

competencies. They were also asked if they noticed any other competencies improve or develop through this philosophical experience.

Thereafter, a thematic analysis was used to analyze data. This is a qualitative research method that is used to organize data; permitting the identification of patterns which are referred to as ‘themes’. The analysis was performed manually and inductively in a series of six steps. It began with data familiarization where transcripts were thoroughly reviewed. Then, the next stage involved the generation of initial codes, where a first series of codes was assigned inductively. Codes such as ‘empathy’, ‘listening’, ‘tolerance’, and ‘questioning’ were marked across transcripts. Next, themes were investigated to categorize the codes, and then these themes were reviewed. Afterwards, the themes were defined and named, resulting in three primary categories. Finally, the process ended with the production of this report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes
1. Self-Development	1.1 Self-Awareness	self-reflection, introspection, identity, professional role, knowing self, blind spots, values, priorities, self-confidence, authenticity
	1.2 Intellectual Competencies	reflection, reflexivity, questioning, finding answers, clarifying thoughts, critical thinking, perspective-taking
2. Interpersonal Competencies	2.1. Relationship-Building	connecting, sharing, relating, empathy, sympathy, human nature, openness, acceptance, tolerance, diversity, respect
	2.2. Communication Competencies	expressing, listening, being present, accepting silence, having difficult conversations, address issues, dialogue
3. Social Responsibility	3.1 Social Awareness	social issues, contrasting experiences, exposure to suffering, breaking prejudices, eye-opening exchanges, awareness of social bubbles, divergent realities, recognizing privilege, relativizing, gratefulness
	3.2 Sense of Responsibility	civic engagement, motivation to act, social engagement, desire social change, inspiration to contribute

Table II – Themes and Codes For Thematic Analysis

Source: Created by authors

Results

In response to the question “how can philosophy contribute to the development of managers?”, three major themes were identified in the analysis: (1) self-development, (2) social skills and (3) social responsibility. As outlined in Table III, each of these themes has sub-categories which will be described in this section.

Theme	Sub-Theme
1. Self-Development	1.1 Self-Awareness: 1.1.1. Identity 1.1.2. Values & Priorities 1.1.3. Self-Confidence & Authenticity
	1.2 Intellectual Competencies: 1.2.1. Reflection & Reflexivity 1.2.2. Questioning & Critical Thinking 1.2.3 Perspective-Taking
2. Interpersonal Competencies	2.1. Relationship-Building: 2.1.1. Connecting & Relating 2.1.2. Empathy 2.1.3. Openness & Tolerance
	2.2. Communication Competencies: 2.2.1. Expressing 2.2.2. Listening 2.2.3. Having Difficult Conversations
3. Social Responsibility	3.1. Social Awareness
	3.2. Sense of Responsibility

Table III – The Areas of Impact of Philosophy on Managers

1. Self-Development

This study reveals that philosophy could contribute to managers' self-development. The program impacted managers' self-awareness and intellectual competencies which will be elaborated on below.

1.1. Self-Awareness

One of the competencies that was developed in this program is self-awareness; this is the capacity for self-examination which allows one to question their view of the world and to be aware of the limitations and biases that underlie them. It is a reflective capacity that includes examining one's own behaviours and learning styles (Schwandt, 2005). Managers repeatedly reported growing in this area: "[this program] definitely helped me self-reflect and make the time for that" (Participant F1-MM). Participant A1-FM said philosophy "flexes the muscle of self-awareness" while participant C1-FM discussed "getting to know myself more" and "trying to understand what motivates my action". Dialoguing contributed to this process of self-awareness; through having to articulate answers to questions, executives realized the limits of what they knew about themselves. Participant F1-MM admitted: "we think we know who we are until we discuss it". Participant D1-FM remarked how hearing other people's reflections provokes self-reflection: "when listening to the other, you also think about yourself". Through

engaging in countless dialogues, managers uncovered people's thinking and could think in new categories: "I notice more things in me and other people" (Participant C1-FM). Managers also became aware of their blind spots; "listening to others made me realize how little I knew about myself". (Participant H1-MM). More concretely, managers became more self-aware of their identity, values, priorities, confidence and authenticity.

To start, in the dialogues about identity, many executives struggled to define themselves without alluding to their work. The people at risk of social exclusion would point this out to them, and managers noticed how differently they described their identities. Since a manager's work occupies such a big part of their life, their professional role tends to overtake self-perception: "a lot of people think your career defines you – probably especially in this context of highly ambitious people who define themselves by their career. Asking questions about 'who you are' makes you put this in perspective" (Participant A1-FM). Another manager – who struggled to distinguish her private identity from her professional identity – claimed she was able to reflect on how to distinguish those two realms: "I had a lot of introspection on my personal and professional role in society" (Participant A2-FM). Participant B1-FM had a similar experience: "[dialoguing] gave me a new perspective on my life overall and it initiated a process of thinking with regards to different aspects of life, whether it's my own job or whether it's happiness or whether it's other people". Some executives also learned about themselves by realizing how they are perceived by others. Participant E2-MM shared that it was especially valuable to discover how he was viewed by people from outside his 'bubble': "I became more self-aware of what others might think of me".

Additionally, one more important facet of self-awareness is the examination of one's values and priorities. Participant B1-FM shared that it has been a long time since she introspected what matters to her: "throughout my studies in business, I think I lost touch a little bit". Participant L1-FX had a similar experience: "many times we complicate our lives with a lot of courses, a lot of masters and complicated things". Philosophical dialogue enabled these managers to step away from their day-to-day and to ask what matters to them. Through engaging in philosophical dialogues on existential questions, they were able to rethink what is important to them: "[this program] helped me reevaluate certain things in my life such as what makes me happy" (Participant G2-MM). Participant F2-MM explained that the program "made me more sure of my convictions", while Participant C1-FM shared: "[I could] examine a bit more of my life [...] I saw some changes also on how I approach different things in my life". Axiological questions shed light on what is important; they helped managers to relativize, recognize what they value

and identify priorities. By zooming out on ‘the big picture’, they were able to realize if they were prioritizing those priorities. This pushed some to drastic conclusions: “this program inspired me to quit my job; it put things in perspective” (Participant J1-MM).

On another note, executives reported that increased self-awareness also contributed to a gain in self-confidence and authenticity. “I feel more confident somehow” (Participant F2-MM). Participant H2-MM explained: “I realized I can also be myself with people who are not in my bubble in my community”. By knowing themselves better, managers can be more true to who they are: “this experience has helped me in the process of looking for a new job because – when you become more aware of who you are – you become more confident in yourself and in your abilities” (Participant A2-FM). Participant C1-FM confessed: “I’m less superficial when I encounter someone” whereas Participant F2-MM said: “[I am] more comfortable with who I am”.

1.2. Intellectual Competencies

Findings reveal that this philosophy program helped managers develop intellectual competencies meaning an improved general cognitive ability. They acknowledged being more reflective, reflexive, critical, better at questioning and better trained at taking perspectives.

Firstly, the program gave managers time and space for reflection and reflexivity. “Reflection is often seen as a systematic thought process concerned with simplifying experience [...] reflexivity means complexifying thinking or experience by exposing contradictions, doubts, dilemmas, and possibilities” (Cunliffe, 2009, p. 38). Since every session covered an existential question or theme, managers were forced to deliberate topics that are rarely discussed in business. Participant G2-MM said he had the “chance to think about things I don’t think about”, and Participant F1-MM said: “it helped me reflect on some important topics”. Indeed, the topics incorporated in this program – such as love, meaning, democracy – are not necessarily touched upon with great depth in people’s daily lives. Rare are occasions to ponder those big life questions which were constantly explored in Project Bubbles. “It was one of the courses where you really were able or pushed or encouraged to reflect. And not in just like mundane topics, but literally about your life and about yourself, which was extremely powerful and valuable” (Participant H1-MM). Many noted a change in how much time they spend thinking after the program: “I catch myself thinking and reflecting a lot [...] it’s something that happens a lot more than beforehand” (Participant B1-FM). Through engaging with philosophy, managers also had the chance to clarify their thoughts and to form opinions on different

matters: “I got to have new ideas for myself. I had new thoughts about the topics” (Participant H2-MM).

One executive described the benefit of thinking with others: “for me, most of your reflection will happen when engaging with someone else. And then noticing ‘oh, I hadn’t considered that’ or ‘oh, I can add that to what I was already thinking’” (Participant G1-MM). Another participant described this as a co-construction process: “what I experienced it is more building on opinions and thoughts which I find quite empowering. It creates nice ideas an ‘aha moments’” (Participant H2-MM). Participant B1-FM summarized as follows: “I really don’t want to stop doing these SDs, as I said many times, because I found them so inspiring and I think it’s important to reflect on one’s own life continuously and have different perspectives and ways of seeing it”.

Secondly, another competency that managers developed is the ability to question and think critically. According to Baker and Gilkey (2020), “good questions help focus attention on what is really important” (p.632) and this program helped managers uncover the “power of asking questions” (Participant H2-MM). In fact, SD taught managers how to use a philosophical method to rigorously ask questions. Participant B2-FM stated: “it’s not that I didn’t ask questions before, but now they were different”. The technique provides direction and structure: “it helped me a lot [...] asking the right questions” (Participant F1-MM). SDe also teaches that answers can be found within you. Rather than relying on outside opinions, people can search within them: “I realized you can find solutions yourself by having people ask the right questions” (Participant B1-FM). Participant J1-MM commented: “maybe engaging even more in these kind of SDs will also give me some answers that I have for myself”. Many realized the utility of questioning for confronting some of their beliefs and for gaining clarity in their minds. Additionally, managers discovered that not all questions have answers: “normally, when I ask a question I expect an answer, but here, I realized I didn’t have to give one” (Participant A2-FM). They became more comfortable with leaving some things unresolved: “you do not always need to have an answer. It’s okay to have questions. And it’s okay to park the questions – it’s very normal” (Participant H2-MM).

Interviews revealed that one can critically assess their beliefs by hearing what types of questions are raised by others: “the questions he asked me were completely outside of the questions I thought would be needed to understand who I am” (Participant D1-FM). What can

be asked about a topic is not obvious or the same for everyone; new questions open new answers and insights about a matter. Participant B1-FM echoed this statement: “I thought I know what she’ll ask me and then I had to switch my attention to something else explored”. Managers discovered that questioning is very contextual: “I learned that the question changes with who you are asking questions to” (Participant E2-MM). By being interrogated, executives needed to explain their reasoning and rationale for thinking the way they do. Participant A2-FM said it very directly: “I got to practice some critical thinking”. It pushed her and many others to assess their logic and worldviews. Ultimately, philosophical practice contributed to developing the skill of critical thinking and questioning: “my ability to ask questions increased but still a long journey to reach the level I want to reach” (Interview C2-FM).

Thirdly, philosophy explores topics from diverse standpoints and was found to help managers exercise perspective-taking. This skill consists of considering another’s view and examining matters from various angles. Participant C1-FM said: “[it] really helped me to get away from my usual way of thinking”. Participant D2-FM described her experience: “we shared valuable points of view and ideas that led to other thoughts”. Being exposed to others’ thinking and the thoughts of philosophers also helps figure out one’s own opinion: “it gives you a different perspective, a different angle, and something to reflect upon that you don’t necessarily have in mind before” (Participant I1-MM).

Participant H1-MM described the benefits of this experience: “I think philosophy is so powerful because it’s not just one theory that is given and that’s the thing you should believe or go with, but because it offers so many different angles to the same situation that are not mutually exclusive [...] both things make sense from a different point of view for different situation”. One key variable that permitted the development of this competency was having contact with non-managers: “no matter if you’re working in the supermarket, if you’re a painter whatsoever, it’s good that you meet other people and get another perspective just to become more open” (Participant I1-MM). Participant H2-MM shared: “I got inputs from new people, new communities that I’m not directly linked to. People from different age groups and different generation that are in different jobs, living in different countries”. Many managers highlighted this in interviews: “I think it’s crucial to have very different people with different perspectives and backgrounds and histories to get new perspectives” (Participant B1-FM).

2. Interpersonal Competencies

The development of interpersonal competencies is another key theme that was identified in this study. More specifically, managers claimed to have improved relationship-building and communication skills.

2.1. Relationship-Building

Building relationships is a managerial skill needed for teamwork, dealing with clients, negotiating, and managing people. According to Mintzberg (1973), managers spend significant amount of time developing interpersonal relationships. In this program, managers noted improvement in their ability to connect, relate and empathize with others. They also noted more openness and tolerance enabled through philosophical dialogue with strangers.

To begin, managers practiced relating and connecting with people who they knew little about and shared little in common with. “The setting that was created to engage with people that you’ve never met before from very different backgrounds in a very, very deep and personal level” (Participant H1-MM). Participant J1-MM pointed out: “not always you are talking with people from other backgrounds”. When assigned a dialogue partner, you are forced to find a way to relate to the other, even if you do not share much in common. “My comfort talking to strangers and people who struggle has improved” (Participant B2-FM). Participant B1-FM stated: “the fears you have about approaching people, about talking to people, are not really what’s going to happen”. The latter manager added that many executives will benefit from this exercise at work: “[it is] especially good for people that are going to manage other people”. Participant C1-FM said “I would see it helping managers that engage in conversation with various stakeholders”.

Participant D1-FM discussed how this program allowed her to relive something that was lost after the pandemic: a deep connection with other human beings. After a long period of isolation in her home country and after losing the habit of interacting with people on a regular basis, it was even more apparent to her how dialogue fosters a meaningful connection. Participant G1-MM said: “you really connect with someone and go deep”. You speak about private and personal topics and, through dialoguing, managers felt they were able to share who they really are all while getting to know others in depth. One manager shared: “I realized that I work with so many people but I never take the time to ask who they are. I am way more connected to my dialogue partner after 15 minutes only because I took the time to ask her” (Participant I1-MM). Another participant (G1-MM) made a rich analogy: “it’s like if you’re watching a YouTube video and then you go into the ‘watch quicker’. It’s the same how the relationship is formed in a way.

Like it puts you very quickly into something very important and you skip a little bit [...] the chit-chat, the small talk”. Managers realized that you can build deep relationships through getting down to the core of what matters to people. It appeared like a super-power: “after that I was trying to go deep with every conversation I would have – with friends and with my mom” (Participant G1-MM).

This ability to connect quickly through dialogue is complemented with philosophical content which aims to study and understand human nature: “it helped me learn about other people” (Participant F1-MM). Participant H1-MM concluded: “whoever I talked to, you felt like we’re all really the same” (Participant H1-MM). He also concluded that if you go deep into topics, you can find a connection to anyone: you would have never realized that there is any difference in our socioeconomic background of the people because we engaged on a level that was completely disregarding that”. Many others reported feeling deeply connected to others: “you really get to know the people throughout the project. On the last weekend, it was the feeling of meeting up with an old friend” (Participant B2-FM). Some also alluded to forming relationships on a group level. Participant B1-FM expressed: “I really really felt connected to everyone [...] everyone you saw, they were directly hugging each other and you directly felt so strong as a group”. Participant I1-MM also described a “being together feeling, this group dynamic”. This indicates that a program of such nature could perhaps contribute to team building or bonding in addition to individual relationship-building.

Adjacently, findings point that managers developed empathy throughout the course of this program: “I try to put myself more into their shoes” (Participant B1-FM). Participant C1-FM stated: “I am definitely more sensitive to others” whereas Participant D2-FM said: “I got to empathize with people who suffer”. Another manager commented: “I am more conscious and thoughtful when I interact with groups who are not really connected to my communities” (Participant H2-MM). Participant B1-FM stated: “I really try to kind of understand what is really the reasoning for some reactions for example, and I think that stems a little bit also from this course”. Generally, empathy was reported as a key competence developed through philosophical dialogue: “If there’s one thing I take out of this program, it is empathy [...] the more people I talked to, I think every time you build up more empathy, because I think what it felt like for me was throwing your biases overboard. Like you actually engage a lot deeper with the other person and create empathy. I allowed myself to be more empathetic with people. It’s a huge take-away” (Participant H1-MM).

Managers shared that this new level of empathy affects them on a day-to-day basis: “what I do a lot now is if I just walk on the streets thinking about what kind of life has this person, or what are they thinking? what are their problems? And so on. So I’m way more looking outside of my own life. I think that’s the biggest impact it had ” (Participant B1-FM). Participant C1-FM shared a similar approach: “before the courses, I was just ignoring their situation. I was just focusing on my personal perception [...] it’s annoying when someone asks you for something like money while you are outside the supermarket [...] now, I feel like I can understand their position and be less selfish on this”. The program revealed to managers that everyone is united by the same human nature: “you realize like regardless of where people are from what they went through, what’s their background, what happened in their life, that we are all the same” (Participant H1-MM).

Next, this philosophy program allowed managers to become more open and tolerant to diversity in thinking. Participant F1-MM said “it really opened my mind to some things”. Philosophy indeed ‘opens minds’ and the Socratic method helps understand ‘why’ people think what they think. “I was very curious to learn more about the people that were around me and kind of to understand where they’re coming from” (Participant H1-MM). Participant E2-MM expressed: “I could understand why people have the opinion they have”. Another manager (Participant H2-MM) shared his progression: “I also struggled from my personal experience to talk to people who oppose my values and morals. Not being tolerant to open up and give them a chance in the end [...] I realized that people with different opinions also have a thinking pattern and reasoning behind it”. True openness can also result in a changed mind or opinion. For example, Participant G1-MM admitted: “my perception of these topics has changed”.

Moreover, this program developed openness and tolerance by allowing managers to break out of their usual thinking patterns and to overcome some of their prejudices. “I felt that I was a lot more biased than I thought I would be, and that evolved with the more people I talked to” (Participant H1-MM). Participant A2-FM had a similar experience: “I realized how close minded I was. I lived in India, the US, all sorts of places so I always thought I’m super open minded, but I’m not. I felt a bit reborn. The world is much bigger than my small self”. Participant A1-FM shared how she benefitted from SD: “you get to know people and you learn more and you broaden that perspective beyond first impression”. Several participants identified some preconceived ideas that shifted for them throughout the project: “I had a different definition of what vulnerable people are. I thought people who have nothing are vulnerable, but I was wrong” (Participant F2-MM). Another executive stated: “homeless people; I was expecting

them to be kind of different” (Participant F1-MM). Factors such as clothing (Participant H1-MM), appearance (Participant B1-FM; Participant H1-MM), command of English and ability to express themselves (Participant A1-FM) led to stereotyping; but managers became aware of this tendency as they progressed in the course. “[This program] really helped me to get away from my usual way of thinking” (Participant C1-FM). Participant H1-MM explained how he learned to avoid judgment and stopped placing people into boxes without getting to know them; “I definitely feel that there is a deeper impact on the way I approach new situations, different people, new people with a lot less prejudice and bias than before and that’s definitely a change in mindset”. Participant G1-MM observed “it’s so difficult to break from bubbles right? And these type of exercise are really helpful for that”. “You have to go in with a very open mind and completely disregard what you see to hear” (Participant H1-MM).

2.2. Communication Competencies

Communication is one of the key competencies that was reportedly developed in Project Bubbles. Good communication is characterized by the ability to clearly transmit and receives messages; and therefore requires both expression and listening. The philosophical program aided managers in these areas, especially in expressing, listening and in conducting difficult conversations.

To begin, the program participants – managers and non-managers alike – described an improvement in their ability to express themselves: “I was able to share things I’ve never shared with anyone” (Participant T2-FM). A context that promotes dialogue made it possible to express opinions or to verbalize thoughts or feelings that are rarely discussed. Participant H2-MM said: “upon seeing others opening up, I felt ready to open up”. Participant B8-MM said: “at the time, I was not aware that I opened up so much”. Being in a context with strangers also helped practice expressing: “speaking to people you don’t previously know is better because you don’t care what they think about your opinion, so that helps” (Participant F2-MM). Moreover, managers knew they would not have to defend themselves or debate to persuade others of what they are expressing: “usually we’re just trying to win arguments. Now we had the opportunity to dialogue and share our way of thinking” (Participant H2-MM).

To continue, our findings reveal that SD helped executives to develop their ability to listen: “this program impacted me first and foremost in active listening” (Participant A2-FM). Many others made the same comment: “it helped me with listening” (Participant F1-MM). Participant H2-MM stated: “[listening] is something I wanted to improve, and SD gave me the platform to work

on that skill". Participant A2-FM explained what it means to execute this: "listening also meant being present, paying attention". Another manager said that it consists of: "just asking the Socratic questions and seeing what people would come to without me imposing my own views on them" (Participant A1-FM). Participant E2-MM shared that it is not easy to practice listening: "finding someone who actually wants to dialogue, who wants to listen to you, is rare". Through philosophy, managers discovered a new technique to really hear what others are trying to convey: "I learned how important it is to actively listen and try to understand people who might have prejudices or you think you don't share a lot with" (Participant H2-MM).

In the process of listening, executives also discovered that silence is acceptable when communicating with others: "I discovered the power of silence. To give others the space to let them be silent" (Participant H2-MM). Another manager commented: "Silence was also a learning for me. Silence is also fine to be there. It's not always needed to give a comment" (Participant H2-MM). Participant D1-FM explained how this very practically impacts behaviour: "since silence is okay, you're not thinking already of the next question. You're going to wait to ask the other question". Participant D2-FM noticed a comparable mindset shift: "I saw the power of listening [...] before this program, I was not listening; I was preparing my answer before the other one finished". Participant H2-MM noticed a behavioural change: "I gave space to listen to people".

This program generally motivated many executives to further practice listening after the project: "just having conversations with people and really trying to be the active listener" (Participant A1-FM). Some discussed the impact it had at work: "after the first weekend I started to notice I had to listen more to my employees" (Participant F2-MM). According to Participant A2-FM: "I improved my leadership ability because by active listening and not expecting for the person answer, you can guide a conversation and make others grow". Overall, all managers in this study admitted to improving in this communication area: "[I] became better listener" (Participant F2-MM).

Moreover, the managers practiced having difficult conversations with others: "during the course we had different people to talk to about hard topics" (Participant E2-MM). The executives realized that it is possible to be in harmony despite expressing divergent views: "there were no conflicts, but there were some moments when people were disagreeing. But I found that was a positive outcome. I felt it was a respectful atmosphere and environment to exchange" (Participant H2-MM). Reaching concurrence is not required for exchanging ideas:

“we don’t need to agree on anything to be civilized and to have nice dialogues” (Participant F2-MM). This participant also noticed how this helps him run his business: “for me I think one of the biggest learnings is that we don’t have to agree on everything to get along. By practicing having difficult conversations, it helps me have difficult conversations with providers and suppliers”. Participant E2-MM also improved his ability to have uncomfortable conversations in the workplace: “I had to talk to my business partner about fundraising and cutting down on costs, and I found I was a lot more capable of talking about things that are hard to talk about”. Participant B2-FM was able to practice this skill in her private life: “I saw myself using SD when I had a personal problem to solve at home and I had to rethink my point of view”. Another executive shared that the method has benefitted her outside the program: “I have been trying to bring the type of dialogue we were having into my interactions” (Participant A1-FM).

One manager (Participant C1-FM) shared that she is more likely to address issues even if it appears confrontational: “when you’re taking a beer with friends, if they say something I feel is not aligned with my values in the sense that I feel like they make comments that I perceive as maybe racist or I perceive as targeting some type of people, now, I engage in a conversation in the sense that I try to explain why I feel the comments is offensive and try to share how people can feel and this kind of stuff that before I was not doing”. Another participant stated: “you allow yourself to bring up stuff you wouldn’t say in a normal conversation”.

3. Social Responsibility

Based on our findings, philosophy can contribute to managers’ social responsibility. Through raising social awareness and a sense of responsibility, they become more conscious of their society and how their influence.

3.1. Social Awareness

Through engaging in philosophical dialogue with people who did not share their background, managers were exposed to others’ thoughts, concerns and issues and made aware of their social realities. In this way, they reported a heightened social awareness. Participant A1-FM stated: “there was definitely things that I wasn’t aware of until the course”. Our findings reveal that most managers claimed to be surprised by the type of challenges some face: “I heard stories about people having visa paper problems. This was so new to me but made me realize what are some struggles people face” (Participant A2-FM). Another shared: “I say I learned a lot in the sense of what actually the daily problems of those people are [...] you see that actually people can’t pay their bills” (Participant H1-MM). The Levinassian and Socratic methods

combined permitted executives to “understand better other people’s realities” (Participant C1-FM). Managers quickly realized they were living in a ‘bubble’ and had never heard of the realities some face day-by-day. Some reported being particularly shocked by dialogues about happiness. Someone shared that happiness consists in ‘waking up alive in the morning’ in a conflict-struck country. Someone else said happiness comes after dying because the goal of life is to go to heaven. These dialogues were “very eye opening” (Participant D2-FM) and shed light on completely different worldviews and realities. Participant I1-MM pointed out: “we learned a lot about contrasts [...] especially for managers who live a super privileged life, have been travelling everywhere and now are working in big corporations”.

It also made them curious to learn more about those realities: “because of the dialogues, I started researching about the history of Nicaragua” (Participant D1-FM). Participant B1-FM shared “what I do a lot now is if I just walk on the streets thinking about what kind of life has this person, or what are they thinking? what are their problems? And so on”. Generally, the program pushed managers to think about important issues that sometimes appear far removed from them: “it helped me learn also about the social topics we talked about, because it’s not something I think about that much in my daily life” (Participant F1-MM). Participant I1-MM commented: “the stories they were telling, at least for me, were totally different and new, and seemed more interesting than hearing about another burnout, being stressed at work, or trying to build up a company”. Another manager expressed: “[it] was really surprising and eye opening. The life they are living was kind of alien to me” (Participant J1-MM). It contributed to having “an even deeper understanding of the issues and challenges of certain groups of people” (Participant H1-MM).

Hearing about the hardships of life through dialogue makes managers relativize the weight of some of their own life experiences and makes them more grateful for their privileges: “even though my life is also not like always perfect [...] I see that there are people that have it more difficult than I do” (Participant J1-MM). Participant F2-MM stated: “there are some stories that you hear and you think ‘wow, this person had a tough life’” (Participant F2-MM). Participant F1-MM concluded “I’m privileged in many ways in comparison to those people”. Such realizations helped managers develop a sense of appreciation for what they have: “I think I am now more grateful” (Participant D2-FM). “We explored topics like happiness and fear and, really diving in these topics, we realized how lucky we are” (Participant A2-FM). Participant J1-MM summarized it as follows: “now I conclude that I am more grateful about certain parts of my life”.

3.2. Sense Of Responsibility

Our results reveal a heightened sense of responsibility among managers which involves desiring duty or accountability for social matters and striving towards ethical action. Managers reported that this project contributed to an unprecedented civic engagement: “[this experience] reinforced my sense of duty as a citizen and shaken me to have a need for a more active role” (Participant D2-FM). Participant A1-FM shared how the program impacted her choices: “I’m actually voting this year for the first time [...] partly, it’s actually due to the course”. Another participant (Participant B1-FM) explained that she is more oriented towards others: “I’m way more looking outside of my own life. I think that’s the biggest impact it had”. There was a clear mindset shift among many managers: “I am thinking about the world how it could be instead of how it is” (Participant F2-MM). Participant A2-FM realized in the program how even little choices affect the world: “in one of the dialogues, we recognized that decisions you make influence other people’s lives so you need to be aware of those key consequences”.

The managers also recounted being inspired by some of the community service described by people at risk: “they’re so engaged with these type of actions like working with organizations and NGOs” (Participant G1-MM). The stories and examples they encountered motivated more righteous behaviours: “we had a Christmas charity event at my job two weeks ago and, in the office, we had some disabled children visiting, and I talked to them. Before, I wouldn’t go to talk to them – I would feel more scared and uncomfortable” (Participant B2-FM). Participant I1-MM expressed his desire for impact: “I had always desired to do more and to engage socially and to do civic engagement. And this course motivated me to consider what I can do to pursue this desire”. Many other managers shared a similar ambition: “civic duty engagements – it’s something I keep telling myself that would be nice to do something in this area” (Participant F1-MM).

Discussion

This paper sought to address how philosophy could contribute to the development of managers through examining the case of a philosophical program based on Socratic and Levinassian methods. Our findings revealed that this type of philosophical training could advance three main areas: (1) self-development, (2) interpersonal competencies and (3) social responsibility. Self-development includes self-awareness and intellectual competencies, interpersonal competencies encompass relationship-building and communication, while social responsibility integrates social awareness and a sense of responsibility.

Many of the competencies that were developed are tied to the learning objectives of the program. For example 'acknowledging other ways of thinking' ties to the competency of perspective-taking. Based on the results of another SD project, it was initially hypothesized that managers would develop social awareness, listening and responsibility through philosophy. This hypothesis proved to be valid, and there are additional competencies that were developed in addition to those which were predicted: intellectual skills, relationship-building, communication, openness, tolerance, and empathy.

Going back to the three main areas of impact, these will be further discussed below. Firstly, regarding self-development, this area of growth comes as no surprise since, traditionally, philosophical education seeks to develop 'the whole-person'. Since Ancient Greek times, philosophers were placed in charge of forming leaders and philosophy education was perceived as fully formational (e.g. Collins & Latemore, 2002). Individual development is very much aligned with the goals of management development; for example, Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2010) believe that business education should serve as identity workspaces whereas McKenna and Biloslavo (2011) proposed that "the driving force for business education should be 'human flourishing'" (p.692). Literature is coherent with our study which identified self-awareness as an area of growth. Self-awareness includes knowing one's identity, being able to identify values and priorities, as well as building confidence and authenticity. This finding echoes the work of Davoine and Schumacher (2009) who analyzed the effects of another philosophical program, and confirms the work of Tozzi (2020) who studies the learning objectives of philosophy. Other scholars mention self-reflection (Claes & Preston, 2009) and the ability to "learn from experience" (Collins & Latemore, 2002, p.57). Thus, we are not surprised to uncover self-awareness as one of the developed competencies.

Furthermore, intellectual skills also fall under self-development. These include reflection, reflexivity and critical thinking; which are consistently reported in literature as being linked to philosophy (e.g. Antonacopoulou, 2010; N. M. Cuseo, 2007; Braun, 2004; Podolny, 2009; Small, 2004). It also encompasses questioning which Davoine and Schumacher (2009) have previously tied to philosophical training. Interestingly, Baker and Gilkey (2020), believe questioning skills can positively impact relationship-building, leadership and responsibility; since these competencies have also been identified in this study, perhaps there is a correlation that could be examined in future research. The unusual finding here is 'perspective-taking' which is "the active cognitive process of imagining the world from another's vantage point or imagining oneself in another's shoes to understand their visual viewpoint, thoughts,

motivations, intentions, and/or emotions” (Ku et al., 2015, p. 79). According to Rendtorff (2017): “it may be of high relevance to identify philosophical standpoints that despite conflicting fundamentals may arrive at conclusions acceptable to everyone”. This competence is of great benefit to managers and has not been previously documented as one of the impacts of philosophical learning. The interactions they had with people of very different life experiences and life perspectives was likely a contributing factor to the emergence of this competence.

Secondly, this study attests that philosophy can contribute to interpersonal skill development; more specifically, to communication and relationship-building. Our research highlighted three of the five managerial interpersonal skills proposed by Beenen and Pichler (2016): self-management, communication, support, motivation and managing conflict. Though our original hypothesis did not consider improvement in communication – only in the area of listening – authors such as Laurie (2001) and Ledoux (2012) both discuss communication skills as being developed through philosophy. What was particularly interesting in our study is that, in addition to improved listening and expression, managers improved their ability to have difficult conversations. There is no literature on this area of development, but this finding makes sense in light of the nature of dialoguing. Through having had learned SD, managers have the tools to confront uncomfortable subjects. They also feel more at ease to address difficult topics due to having had practiced this skill in their philosophy training. We consider this as an original finding since our study is the first to identify such competency in relation to philosophy.

Additionally, improved relationship-building is another unique outcome of this study; such managerial skill has not been previously attributed to philosophical learning, but is crucial to managers. For example, literature highlights the importance of networking (Porter et al., 2023). We discovered that philosophy can elevate the way business people relate and connect with others; through philosophical practice – and by tackling fundamental questions about life – they can surpass superficiality and engage on a deeper and more meaningful level. This aids with relationship-building on an individual level, but can also contribute to team building. Communication skills such as listening have also been tied to relationship-building (Baker & Gilkey, 2020) and, thus, interpersonal skills build on one another. Next, this program built on empathy which is to “be aware of and understand how others feel” (Orme & Ashton, 2003, p. 188). According to Collins and Latemore (2002): “one of the great benefits of philosophy thus comes from the attempt to enter the mindset of another person or age” (p.56). Indeed, most management programs place emphasis on individualism (Samnøy et al., 2024), whereas

philosophy pushes managers to consider the 'other' in addition to the 'self'. Since project bubbles places a special accent on the 'other', it is unsurprising to attach the program to empathy development. However, this finding is not specific to this program; Statler and Guillet De Monthoux (2015) believe arts-based methods in general can contribute to empathy development whereas Davoine and Schumacher (2009) provide evidence linking philosophy training to empathy.

Thirdly, it is unsurprising to see a link between philosophy and social responsibility since several scholars report on this link; philosophy can contribute to moral reasoning and can make managers more responsible (Claes and Preston, 2009; Podolny, 2009; Eabrasu & Lamy, 2023). In our study, social responsibility consists of enhanced social awareness and responsible thinking. Social awareness likely emerged due to the didactic strategy employed in this program; exposure to people experiencing a range of social issues made managers more aware of existing issues. Thus, we cannot conclude whether social awareness can be connected to philosophical training in general or whether it is merely an effect of this program. However, we can conclude that a Levinassian approach can contribute to this effect. In this study we also learned that managers desire to do good and to act as responsible citizens through having had engaged with philosophical discourse. It is important to note that there is no research on this matter; this study is the first to point to such outcome. Still, ethics is a branch of philosophy (Woiceshyn, 1992), and ethical thinking has often been tied to a sense of responsibility. This research shows how philosophical training contributes to managerial responsibility which can lead to ethical conduct.

Generally, the outcomes of this study align with Goleman (2007)'s theory on emotional intelligence (EI). He outlined four components of EI: self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness and relationship management. In our study, managers directly discussed three EI components (self-awareness, social awareness and relationship management). Moreover, if we investigate the three competencies linked to social awareness – empathy, organizational awareness and service – we notice that the first one, empathy, was identified in our findings. This said, our results suggest that philosophical practice could perhaps contribute to the development of EI. Though some studies connect EI to wisdom (Ardelt, 2025; Schneider et al., 2023), this study is the first to associate EI to philosophy for management. ML literature also identifies other training methods that could improve such competency – such as executive coaching (Grant, 2007). This is particularly relevant considering demonstrations about executive coaching originating from the Socratic method (Hategan & Hategan, 2021). This

further links philosophical practice to EI development in managers. Additionally, literature connects EI to ethics (Angelidis & Ibrahim, 2011; Orme & Ashton, 2003) which makes us even more confident in saying that this program could have contributed to the ethical development of managers. Interestingly, “only fifteen programs were found in a global search of the literature by the Consortium on Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations to improve emotional intelligence” (Boyatzis, 2008, p. 10), making this an interesting finding and argument for potentially embedding philosophical instruction in management.

Some of the limitations of this study include the relatively small sample size that is based on one unique case study with a specific set of teaching methods. The results would have certainly been different if a different philosophy program were analyzed or if this program leveraged only one out of the two philosophical approaches that are embedded. This said, these results cannot be generalized to other philosophy programs for managers. Still, they are valuable in providing insight into how philosophy could potentially benefit the business world.

Conclusion

In summary, this research examines how philosophy training can impact the development of managers. Our study reveals that philosophy can broadly contribute to their (1) self-development, (2) interpersonal competencies development and (3) social responsibility. For example, it can help managers improve their relationship-building skills, listening skills, and ability to maneuver difficult conversations. These outcomes point to a potential link between philosophy and ethical development. They also link philosophy to emotional intelligence as theorized by Goleman (2011); making this the first study to provide empirical evidence that connects philosophical training to emotional intelligence. Finally, the results of this study provide more clarity on how philosophy can contribute to management development. Most of all, they contribute to literature on ML and education by further building a case in favour of teaching philosophy to managers.

Declarations:

Funding: No funding was received for conducting this study.

Conflicts of interest/Competing interests: The authors have no relevant financial interests to disclose, even though Author B and Author C are facilitators for the program that is studied.

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Appendix B – “Conceptual Paper: Bring Back Philosophy: The Roots Of Both Business And Ethics”

Abstract

Managers face increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous situations, that are more and more challenging to navigate. Ethical decision-making has become particularly complicated considering that codes, frameworks and protocols have proven deficient in resolving moral dilemmas. Managers' unpreparedness to handle such challenges reflects the ineffectiveness of business ethics education; calling for new approaches towards training managers. This paper makes a case for transforming business ethics education by taking it back to its roots. This implies the re-incorporation of its foundational discipline: philosophy. Philosophy offers a rigorous approach for decision-making which helps managers face the unknown. It helps them analyze situations from different perspectives, reconsider how things are done, and examine the underlying premises of their thinking. It can strengthen one of the most central managerial competencies: the ability to reason, especially ethically. As the foundational discipline of business, ethics, and their intersect, philosophy is uniquely positioned to elevate business ethics education for managers at all levels. It can help current and future managers to reflect more deeply and critically on the ethical issues they face.

Keywords

Business ethics, ethical development, humanities, leadership and management development, philosophical foundations of management, philosophy

Published as²: Jasinska, A. (2023). Bring Back Philosophy: The Roots of Both Business and Ethics. *Journal of Human Values*, 30(1), 26-31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09716858231215665>

² This is a pre-print version of a paper published in a special issue of the *Journal of Human Values*

Introduction

Though it has become common practice to teach business ethics to managers and management students (Small, 2004a), it remains uncommon practice to embed philosophy into business programs; it is rarely taught as a standalone subject, and is largely omitted from ethics courses. Indeed, what we see in ethics programs has “little to do with philosophy” (Ledoux, 2012, p. 12). Instead, there seems to be a “takeover of a philosophical discipline by non-philosophers” (Seele, 2016, p. 86) causing concern that business ethics is becoming anti-philosophical (Hühn, 2015). Moreover, (Ghoshal, 2005) believes that management is plagued with false underlying premises, whereas (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011) argue that “most management theories are unable to capture the logic of practice because they are developed within the framework of scientific rationality” (p.338). Business ethics is not exempt from any of this: “the assumptions that underpin a particular way of understanding and teaching business ethics will actually prevent us from understanding some issues as moral matters” (Trezise & Biesta, 2009, p. 46). All this contributes to the growing criticisms and concerns about business ethics education (e.g. Podolny, 2009; Woiceshyn, 1992) and encourages us to think about better ways to teach this field.

As a way to address conjectures and false assumptions in ethical decision making, this paper makes a case for bringing philosophy back to business. Many advocate for a philosophical approach towards the ethical development of managers (e.g. Collins & Latemore, 2002; Faldetta et al., 2022; Friedland, 2016; Goldman, 2009; Morris, 2013; Saarinen, 2008; Woiceshyn, 1992), and there certainly are many advantages to adopting such lens (Claes & Preston, 2009; Small, 2004a). In fact, what philosophy can offer is distinct from all other disciplines (e.g. Fontrodona & Melé, 2002) because of how it relates to both ‘business’ and ‘ethics’. Though the objective of this paper is not to provide an exhaustive list of reasons explaining how philosophy could contribute to managerial ethics, it highlights the discipline’s relevance and recommends philosophy as a potential remedy for some of the shortcomings of business ethics education.

The Link Between Philosophy and Business Ethics

Interestingly, philosophy has a unique relation to the fields of business, ethics, and business ethics; ethics and management both stem from philosophy (Joullié, 2016a; Luetge, 2013), as does the field of business ethics (Spillane & Joullié, 2015) yet – at the same time – business ethics is both a subset of ethics (Vogel, 1991) and a branch of management education (Trezise & Biesta, 2009). “Business schools thus find themselves in a rather awkward position: do they

teach ethics as if it were just another vocational tool, like marketing or accounting? Or do they teach it in its true form, as an attempt to understand the nature and application of the greater good?” (Friedland, 2009, para. 4). We argue that the role of business ethics is not just to teach concepts, but to aid the ethical development of current or future managers; “do we want our students to know moral theory or to act morally?” (Trezise & Biesta, 2009, p. 49). “Business ethics is more than the application of general ethical theories to cases or issues in business” (De George, 1986, p. 423). “Inserting a few ethics courses into the curricula is likely to be ineffective” (Woiceshyn, 1992, p. 80) and some are “concerned about the dangers of compartmentalization of business ethics” (Morrell, 2004, p. 385). The field is often ‘instrumentalized’ in management (Ledoux, 2012) and the philosophical foundations of management and ethics are not properly taught (Windsor, 2015). Even though some disciplinary sub-themes like logic and ethics might occasionally appear in business curricula (Small, 2004a), these are just fragments of philosophy (Windsor, 2015) and “often miss a deeper philosophical reflection” (Faldetta et al., 2022, p. 2). What is needed is a more comprehensive approach; full-fledged philosophy courses in business schools and management development programs.

Philosophy As An Approach To Business Ethics

However, not everyone agrees that business ethics should pursue a philosophical direction; this “return to the roots” may be perceived as ‘too theoretical’ and an unnecessary trade-off for theory instead of practice (Collins & Latemore, 2002). Perhaps managers would not get much done if they started thinking instead of acting: “to be philosophical when we should be “efficient” or practical would be self-destructive” (Segal, 2004, p. 10). Additionally, engaging with philosophy is rather difficult, unpleasant and leaves people feeling confused (Bolten, 2001). It can even seem as though management and philosophy have contradictory objectives: “the *raison d’être* of management is performance while philosophy pursues the truth” (Ledoux, 2012, p. 17). No wonder managers tend to demonstrate little interest towards philosophy (Deslandes, 2016). Yet (Goldman, 2009) attests that students recognize the value of philosophy once they engage in a course on the matter. Despite some skepticism, there appears to be a “philosophy boom in management” (Claes & Preston, 2009, p. 69) and an emerging field of ‘philosophy of management’ (e.g. Small, 2004a). There is an entire journal devoted to the matter and, within that ‘Philosophy of Management’ journal, ethics is the most popular subset of philosophy (Erkal & Vandekerckhove, 2021). Scholars continue to defend philosophical approaches towards business ethics (e.g. Berkey, 2022) and (Seele, 2016) goes as far as

recommending to start a new field called 'philosophical business ethics'. Such idea could certainly benefit managers in numerous ways.

One of the main benefits of philosophy is its ability to support the ethical development and decision-making of current and future managers. It encourages them to question their usual way of doing things and to put their practices into perspective by understanding "the frameworks in which we carry out our day-to-day activities in the workplace" (Segal, 2004, p. 21). It is a tool that can be beneficial at all levels of management; from junior positions requiring micro decision-making to C-level positions defining large-scale repercussions such as a company's direction. "Philosophy helps managers make decisions when confronted with dilemmas" (Ledoux, 2012, p. 15) and can clarify ethical assumptions ignored or misunderstood by students and managers (De George, 1986). It is thought-provoking (Goldman, 2009) and "seeks to strengthen the art of thinking and the instrument of reason in managers" (Saarinen, 2008, p. 5). Since it has become very complex to navigate ethical decision-making in increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) conditions (Bennis & Nanus, 2007), managers can turn to philosophy to confront the unknown (Saarinen, 2008). It serves as a tool for rigour when numbers are not available (Auger, 2021) making it especially relevant to managers whom need to consider uncountable variables – so high in multitude that they cannot be computed into a simplistic formula or framework for ethical decision-making. "Philosophical reflection can help managers understand that, contrary to what some organizations' ethical charters or codes of conducts might lead them to believe, there are often no clear-cut answers to the many ethical problems they face" (Ledoux, 2012, p. 16). Furthermore, it pushes people to think outside of themselves; "one of the great benefits of philosophy thus comes from the attempt to enter the mindset of another person or age" (Collins & Latemore, 2002, p. 56). This is helpful for managers in particular who, in a globalized world, need to consider increasingly diverse cultural backgrounds and value sets in their ethical decision-making (Ledoux, 2012).

Other than ethical development, the exact contributions of philosophy-based business ethics programs are not yet fully understood. "The trouble is, deans who experiment with new courses can influence rankings only in the long run" (Podolny, 2009, p. 64) and there is a lack of studies explaining the impact of such business ethics programs. Some suggest that they could aid the development of managerial competencies such as critical thinking (Small, 2004a), introspection, empathy, conceptualization and questioning competencies (Davoine & Schumacher, 2009). It "supports people's development of their own personal philosophies and empowers them to reach their highest human aspirations and ideals" (Brendel, 2014, para. 4).

Philosophy can also shed light on the meaning of business vocabulary employed in management contexts (De George, 1986) and, overall, “philosophical skills, an understanding of philosophical principles or exposure to philosophical discussion can contribute to improved management practice” (Platts & Harris, 2011, p. 19). Yet the exact impact depends on a variety of factors such as the pedagogical methods employed (Ledoux, 2012), the type of management audience being addressed (Claes & Preston, 2009) and the kind of philosophy that is embedded into the program.

How Philosophy Can Be Incorporated Into Business Ethics

All kinds of philosophical paradigms and theories exist (Faldetta et al., 2022) and there are many ways to incorporate philosophy into business ethics. Often, scholars draw ideas from specific philosophers who concretely pronounce themselves on a select or range of business ethics topics (Blok, 2020). For example, (Deslandes, 2012) looks at the Socratic care-of-self ethic, (Trezise & Biesta, 2009) draw from Levinas, (Small, 2004a) looks at Plato’s Theory of Justice and (Fontrodona & Melé, 2002) draw from Aquinas and Pope John Paul II. Many support teaching the ideas of ancient philosophers (e.g. Brendel, 2014), especially as a way to ‘build on the shoulders’ of giants. Why start from scratch or reinvent the wheel, if some of history’s top thinkers have already laid out the foundations for most ethical matters?

Another approach towards embedding philosophy into business ethics is through thinking tools or methods which we will here call ‘philosophizing’. Philosophizing is a mode of inquiry (Beltramini, 2019). It is “reflecting, questioning and recognizing presuppositions that are governing one’s life, one’s work and one’s society” (Collins & Latemore, 2002, p. 57). Philosophizing is considered indispensable to the practice of management (Segal & Bruce, 2017). (Friedland, 2016, p. 201) outlines four philosophical forms of investigation: (1) Deduction, (2) Induction, (3) Grounding Prescriptive Claims and Ideals, (4) Conceptual Clarification and Interpretive Exposition. On another hand, (Nash, 1981) suggests “a set of 12 questions that draw on traditional philosophical frameworks but that avoid the level of abstraction normally associated with formal moral reasoning”. Others yet propose Levinassian approaches for teaching business ethics (Trezise & Biesta, 2009). Most commonly however, professors and academics endorse the Socratic Dialogue Method as a greatly beneficial ‘philosophizing’ tool for business ethics (Bolten, 2001; Morrell, 2004).

Other than the teaching of philosophical ideas and the practice of philosophizing, there are many other ways of incorporating philosophy into business ethics. A historical approach can

be implemented to understand the evolution of thought and how society has come to think as it thinks (Small, 2004a) or investigative methods can be used to dissect words and their meaning (De George, 1986). There are countless ways to accord a place for philosophy in business ethics and to make it a tool or method for the ethical development of managers

Conclusion

To summarize, philosophy is not only the history and origin of management, ethics and business ethics; it can also become the future of these three fields. It has the potential to elevate business ethics by allowing managers and management students to comprehend the underlying ideas and principles of ethical decision-making. Philosophy lays foundations for management, ethics and their intersect and, thus, we believe that business ethics programs are called to be philosophical. Adam Smith himself was a philosopher (Hühn, 2015) and by understanding his mind – and that of countless other philosophers – we can educate managers to think more deeply, critically and, most of all, ethically.

Though other disciplines, such as sociology (Brinkmann et al., 2016) or anthropology (Beltramini, 2019), can also be incorporated into business ethics, none of these fields can replace the value brought by philosophy. Philosophy's unique relation to business ethics – and the fact that it is 'mother of all knowledge' (Friedland, 2012) – leads us to believe that it could contribute in an idiosyncratic manner. It is a response to failing approaches towards the ethical development of managers and should be considered as a critical component of business ethics programs. These are some of the reasons why business ethics should go back to its roots and reintroduce philosophy.

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Appendix C – Sample Descriptions

Appendix C1 – Sample Descriptions for Studies 1 and 2: Instructors of P4M Programs

Interviewee	Region	Gender	Type of P4M Instructor
FU 1	Europe	Female	University professor and independent trainer
MU 2	Europe	Male	University professor
FU 3	Africa	Female	University professor
MU 4	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 5	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 6	Europe	Male	University professor
MI 7	Europe	Male	Independent trainer
MU 8	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 9	Oceania	Male	University professor
MU 10	Europe	Male	University professor
FU 11	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 12	Europe	Male	University professor
MI 13	Europe	Male	Independent trainer
MU 14	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 15	Oceania	Male	University professor
MU 16	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 17	Europe	Male	University professor
MI 18	North America	Male	University professor
MU 19	North America	Male	University professor
MU 20	Africa	Male	University professor
MU 21	Africa	Male	University professor
FU 22	Oceania	Female	University professor
MI 23	Africa	Male	Independent trainer
MU 24	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 25	North America	Male	University professor
MU 26	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 27	Europe	Male	University professor
FI 28	North America	Female	Independent trainer
MU 29	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 30	North America	Male	University professor
FU 31	Europe	Female	University professor
MU 32	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 33	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 34	Europe	Male	University professor
FU 35	Europe	Male	University professor
MI 36	Europe	Male	Independent trainer
MU 37	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 38	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 39	Europe	Male	University professor
MI 40	North America	Male	University professor and independent trainer
MU 41	Europe	Male	University professor
MI 42	Europe	Male	Independent trainer
MU 43	Europe	Male	University professor
MI 44	Europe	Male	University professor and independent trainer
MU 45	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 46	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 47	Europe	Male	University professor
MU 48	Europe	Male	University professor
FU 49	Europe	Female	University professor

MU	50	Europe	Male	University professor
MU	51	Oceania	Male	University professor
MU	52	Europe	Male	University professor
FI	53	Europe	Female	Independent trainer
MU	54	Oceania	Male	University professor
MU	55	Europe	Male	University professor
MI	56	North America	Male	Independent trainer
MU	57	Oceania	Male	University professor
MU	58	Europe	Male	University professor
MU	59	Europe	Male	University professor
MU	60	North America	Male	University professor
FU	61	North America	Female	University professor
MU	62	North America	Male	University professor

Appendix C2 – Sample Descriptions for Study 3: Manager Participants in the ‘Cure de philosophie’ Training Program in Fribourg, Switzerland

Manager	Gender	Industry
MM01	Male	Public Sector
MM02	Male	Healthcare
MM03	Male	Public Sector
MM04	Male	Union
MM05	Male	Consulting & Coaching
MM06	Male	Healthcare
MM07	Male	Public Sector
MM08	Male	Healthcare
FM09	Female	Automotive
FM10	Female	Non-Profit
FM11	Female	Consulting & Coaching
FM12	Female	Healthcare
FM13	Female	Media
FM14	Female	Healthcare
FM15	Female	Consulting & Coaching
FM16	Female	Healthcare

Note: This sample description contains anonymized participant characteristics of managers interviewed before (September 2022) and after (March 2023) the ‘Cure de philosophie’ philosophy program.

Appendix C3 – Sample Description for Study 4: Manager Participants in the ‘Project Bubbles’ Training Program in Barcelona, Spain

Manager	Program Edition	Gender	Industry	Company Size
A1-FM	1 (April-June 2022)	Female	Pharmaceuticals	Multinational
B1-FM	1 (April-June 2022)	Female	Consulting	Multinational
C1-FM	1 (April-June 2022)	Female	Banking	Multinational
D1-FM	1 (April-June 2022)	Female	IT Industry	Start-Up
E1-FM	1 (April-June 2022)	Female	Consulting	Start-Up
F1-MM	1 (April-June 2022)	Male	IT Industry	Start-Up
G1-MM	1 (April-June 2022)	Male	IT Industry	Start-Up
H1-MM	1 (April-June 2022)	Male	IT Industry	Multinational
I1-MM	1 (April-June 2022)	Male	Consumer Goods	Multinational
J1-MM	1 (April-June 2022)	Male	IT Industry	Start-Up
A2-FM	2 (Sept.-Dec 2022)	Female	Consultancy	Small
B2-FM	2 (Sept.-Dec 2022)	Female	Consultancy	Medium-Size Firm
C2-FM	2 (Sept.-Dec 2022)	Female	Academia	Large
D2-FM	2 (Sept.-Dec 2022)	Female	Consumer Goods	Multinational
E2-MM	2 (Sept.-Dec 2022)	Male	IT Industry	Start-Up
F2-MM	2 (Sept.-Dec 2022)	Male	Food Industry	Start-Up
G2-MM	2 (Sept.-Dec 2022)	Male	Sporting Goods	Multinational
H2-MM	2 (Sept.-Dec 2022)	Male	Fashion	Multinational

Note: This sample description contains anonymized participant characteristics of managers interviewed in the first edition (June 2022) and second edition (December 2022) of the ‘Project Bubbles’ philosophy program.

Appendix D – Thematic Frameworks for Empirical Analyses

Appendix D1 – Thematic Framework – Study 1

THEME	CODES
Management Programs	strategic management, innovation, leadership, change management, decision-making, critical thinking, critical management studies, theory of organizations, accounting, organizational behaviour
Philosophy and Management Programs	philosophy of management, business ethics, practical philosophy
Philosophy Programs	academic philosophy, epistemology, philosophy of science, Socratic method, maieutic, history of thought, pragmatism, pragmatic inquiry, metaphysics, esthetics, philosophical anthropology, ontology, logic, process philosophy
Undercover philosophy	unofficial, not named, vague course name, presented differently

Appendix D2 – Thematic Framework – Study 2

THEME	CODES
Personal Development	individual development, growth, learning, character, personality, identity, human flourishing, learning to live well
Mental Gymnastics	brain training, thinking, critical thinking, inquiring, questioning, challenging, conceptualizing, analyzing, reflecting, practicing creativity, stretching mind, intellectual competencies, deep thinking
Interpretation and Articulation	communication skills, rhetoric, clarity, interpretation, articulation, formulation, expression, vocabulary, precision, argumentation, justification
Tolerance and Acceptance	tolerance, acceptance, openness, perspective-taking, understanding reasons, empathy
Managerial Competency Development	professional development, leadership skills, decision-making, problem-solving, ethical thinking, philosophical foundations
Mystery	no objective, exploration space, non-utilitarian development, experience
Philosophizing	philosophy, philosophizing

Appendix D3 – Thematic Framework – Study 3

Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes
Reflexivity & Self-Knowledge	Self-reflexivity	self-reflection, self-management, knowing-why, identifying priorities
	Confidence & authenticity	awareness of values, principles of action, self-expression, sincerity, honesty, validation of convictions, understanding self
	Openness	listening, tolerance, acceptance of diverse views, empathy
Questioning & Problematization	Critical thinking & investigative mindset	systematic questioning, stepping back, reflecting, interrogating the status quo, critical thinking
	Framing challenges	asking the right questions, formulating problems, identifying decision variables
	Considering complexity	not simplifying, avoiding shortcuts, heuristics, abstract thinking,
	Relating & relativizing	forming links, connecting, understanding, prioritizing, weighing options
	Putting in perspective	investigating different angles, grasping reality
Conceptualization	Clarifying	creating order, explaining, decluttering mind
	Interrogating vocabulary	questioning words, choosing precise vocabulary, defining words, meaning of words
	Communicating & Argumenting	expressing, justifying, finding words

Appendix D4 – Thematic Framework with Codebook for Study 4

Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes
Self-Development	Self-Awareness	self-reflection, introspection, identity, professional role, knowing self, blind spots, values, priorities, self-confidence, authenticity
	Intellectual Competencies	reflection, reflexivity, questioning, finding answers, clarifying thoughts, critical thinking, perspective-taking
Interpersonal Competencies	Relationship-Building	connecting, sharing, relating, empathy, sympathy, human nature, openness, acceptance, tolerance, diversity, respect
	Communication Competencies	expressing, listening, being present, accepting silence, having difficult conversations, address issues, dialogue
Social Responsibility	Social Awareness	social issues, contrasting experiences, exposure to suffering, breaking prejudices, eye-opening exchanges, awareness of social bubbles, divergent realities, recognizing privilege, relativizing, gratefulness
	Sense of Responsibility	civic engagement, motivation to act, social engagement, desire social change, inspiration to contribute

Appendix E – Thematic Analysis

Appendix E1 – Thematic Analysis Categories with Sample Quotes – Study 1

1	MANAGEMENT COURSES BASED ON PHILOSOPHY
	“I’m teaching them management, that’s what I’m teaching them and I make that quite clear to them. But philosophy is clearly embedded” (MU05) “even in those mainstream courses, because I’ve been teaching them, they always had a philosophical approach” (MU55)
1.1	Strategic Management
	“as soon as I touch into like general questions of innovation strategy, I tried to bring in over Heidegger and some more recent works” (MU20)
1.2	Innovation
	“There is another class that I’ve taught to managers [...] called ‘Creative Thinking’ and that that was definitely strongly philosophical” (MU02) “I have to teach an entrepreneurship and innovation program, but I am a philosopher so it’s just another chance for me to get philosophical” (MU59)
1.3	Leadership
	“It’s a leadership course, but where I speak on slightly more philosophical questions” (MU29) “In the leadership class we do philosophical thinking about leadership really from the ground up, really doing it philosophically and thinking about what the concepts are” (MU60)
1.4	Change-Management
	“I’m teaching the organizational change course, but it’s interlinked with the diversity management course” (MU50) “I’m also teaching leadership and change. So that’s is again a mainstream course where I still bring in some philosophical elements” (MU55)
1.5	Decision-Making
	“‘Decision Making’ or ‘How to Think’ is one of the new ones coming” (MU02) “The decision-making seminar is basically a philosophy class on logic” (MU34)
1.6	Critical Thinking/ Critical Management Studies
	“critical management studies, which, you know, involves reading philosophy, social theory, Marxist theory to analyze what goes on in organizations” (MU08) “The masters module is more, as I said, critical management studies orientated” (MU21)
1.7	Theory of Organizations
	“it’s a course on Theory of Organizations” (MU04) “in the Organizational Theory course, the course remains very philosophical” (MU04) “they have a separate module on organizational theory” (MU05) “I’m teaching a course which is called principles of Business administration” (MU39)
1.8	Accounting
	“I was in charge of coordinating and designing the Management Accounting course at this age and Cultural Management Control course and I tried to introduce, particularly epistemology and philosophy of knowledge” (MU34) “I tried to introduce it into the regular Management Accounting course” (MU34) “there’s kind of a capstone unit in the accounting courses which is meant to be kind of bringing all the different parts together. And I brought in some sort of basic critical thinking skills”(MU57)
1.9	Organizational Behaviour
	“I lead the module on organizational behaviour with a colleague. And that module is kind of 50/50 [...] I teach the stuff on sociology and philosophy” (MU05)

		• “and then organisational behaviour” (MI56)
	1.10	Philosophy of Management
		• “part of the course is focused on philosophy of management” (FU03) • “the purpose I taught philosophy of management was to was to give the students the opportunity not to be driven by their thoughts, to actively use their capacity to think” (MI15) • “I try to rethink the company but basically from the philosophical perspective” (MU37) • “So what we are doing or what I am doing is philosophy of management. And this is a huge difference. I'm trying to find out what management actually is, how it works. I'm looking into the ‘what’” (MI44) • “sometimes I teach philosophy of management” (MU51)
	1.11	Business Ethics
		• “we have a Levinassian approach to business ethics” (FU01) • “I was asked to whether I would be willing to teach business ethics to business students and I said yeah” (MU02) • “I have a class called ‘Business Ethics’” (FI28) • “I teach business ethics, with a strong focus on virtue ethics “ (MU30) • “I know it's called ‘Business Ethics’ class, but I'm a philosopher” (MU59)
	1.12	Practical Philosophy
		• “In all cases, I would make clear that the mother that spawned all these children is ultimately practical philosophy” (MU16) • “I teach practical philosophy. There's a difference between being a philosopher or even a business ethicist versus being a manager who needs to understand, you know, what those philosophical ideas are and then apply them” (FU61)
2	PHILOSOPHY COURSES FOR MANAGERS	
		• “the subject of philosophy for managers has become more mainstream” (MU29) • “What interests us is what happens in the philosophers' heads and what we can transmit directly to the manager” (MI36) • “we're trying to help management to use philosophy” (MU58)
	2.1	Philosophy (Academic Discipline)
		• “We start off by looking at what philosophy is and the basic building blocks of philosophy. You know: logic, aesthetics, metaphysics, these types of things and explaining what philosophical thinking is all about. But it's a very high level birds eye view” (MU21)
	2.2	Epistemology/ Philosophy of Science
		• “I used to offer PhD courses that got a lot into epistemology. So there I really like involved a lot of philosophy” (MU20) • “we're both bringing you know unconventional ideas to the teaching of philosophy of science” (FU22) • “if you deal with knowledge then it's easy to make this leap towards epistemology” (MU48) • “I've been teaching philosophy of science, but on masters level and on PhD level. So that was obviously very much focused on particular philosophers of science” (MU55) • “some of the history of different sort of epistemic traditions without making it sound too grandiose” (MU57) • “I don't care whether they know when Kant lived. I really don't care. But I want them to understand how he saw certain epistemological problems and problems of truth and perception. You know, that's a lot more important than they know certain book titles or I don't know, years. I don't care about that” (MU58)
	2.3	Socratic Method/ Pragmatic Inquiry
		• “Our whole methodology is based on Socratic Dialogue” (FU01) • “the course is quite Socratic” (MU02) • “a lot of Socratic Method” (MU04) • “typically I use, I suppose, broadly a Socratic method in my teaching” (MU09)

		• “They are sitting in a circle. The method is drawn from the Socratic epistemology” (MU25) • “There was a course about dialogue” (MU34) • “maieutics applied to management, aims to be the best technique” (MI36)
2.4	History of Thought	
		• “I’m going to talk about philosophy, I’m going to talk about the great philosophers. We’re going to do a week of Plato and then a week of Aristotle” (MU12) • “there is a bit about talking about how philosophers thought about the world, but the real thing was: okay, having talked about that, how does that allow us to think?” (MU15) • “I expose them to a lot of history” (MU21) • “stoicism is a philosophy of managers since the main Stoic philosophers were politicians and economic decision-makers. So stoicism in general is really a philosophy that is very suitable or very related to management” (MU29) • “what interests us is what happens in the philosophers’ heads and what we can transmit directly to the manager” (MI36)
2.5	Political Philosophy	
		• “I used to teach more political philosophy but now no” (FU1) • “Political philosophy is also very important because understanding the mechanisms of power and is very important for the effectiveness of inquiries” (MU34)
2.6	Philosophical Anthropology	
		• “the political philosophy course is also very important because understanding the mechanisms of power is very important for the effectiveness of inquiries” (MU34) • “I was teaching anthropology students. I give a course on anthropology, philosophical anthropology. It is mainly in philosophy, but it’s not philosophy” (MU37) • “I have been teaching business ethics, anthropology, philosophical anthropology and the doctoral program” (MU37) • “I taught social anthropology several years in the in the university [...] from a very philosophical perspective” (MU41) • “social anthropology from a very philosophical anthropological perspective. And this is the main topic for managers” (MU41)
2.7	Metaphysics	
		• “I teach metaphysics, these kinds of things” (MU37) • “what we now call science comes from philosophy. Philosophy is the first scientific approach to reality which is why I spend so much time teaching it” (MU41) • “Philosophy deals with reality, you know, and so you are pointing to the reality, not to theories” (MU41)
2.8	Esthetics	
		• “a kind of philosophy of work and aesthetics” (MU06) • “I teach esthetics in a course called Business Philosophy” (MU24) • “I introduce esthetics [...] I myself entered philosophy through ethics” (MU24)
2.9	Process Philosophy	
		• “So what I did with philosophy of management was I did applied process thought. I took process philosophy and I applied it in a very technical sense to topics in management and the wider social sciences. That’s why you see things about trust, where you see things about organization, where you see things about management” (MU15) • “this is the niche area that about 10 years ago I decided this is where I’m going to start focusing on because I felt this is this brings together a lot aspects. there’s a philosophical side to it and, you know, it brings together a lot of disciplines into one sort of overarching umbrella” (MU21)
2.10	Ontology	
		• “I talk about social ontology and the ontology of rights and responsibilities and the ontological priority and which one comes first” (MU60)
2.11	Logic	

		• “logic is one of the more important courses I teach. Logical arguments allows you to formulate deductive arguments; so that what makes sense in and of itself without empirical evidence” (MU2) • “there is philosophy that is very technical, comes more from logic and mathematics. Managers only need the basics, but it’s still a logics course” (MU33) • “We mostly teach about logic. The logical inference is simply the presupposition. How do we arrive in a verbatim, to find the presupposition and to make sure that our interlocutor takes into account this famous presupposition” (MI36) • “it has a little bit of formal logic”(MU57)
3	UNDERCOVER PHILOSOPHY	
		• “I do not tell students they are learning philosophy. No, only in the ethics class. I still have the feeling that that would scare them, because there is lots of prejudice towards philosophy” (MU05) • “some of them kept an idea of what philosophy is, which is something very abstract, theoretical, far from their experience, and so on. So if you use the label philosophy for those students – not all of them, but for those students – it can be anti-pedagogical, I would say” (MU34) • “In the leadership course, I’m not sure that I said the word philosophy” (MU39) • “I might tell them that we might enter some philosophical aspects or discuss them. But it’s not that I go into the classroom and say ‘let’s do some philosophy’. That’s not the case” (MU39) • “If you tell people you’re a philosopher, is everybody going to run in the opposite direction” (MI40) • “my strategy is not to mention from the very beginning the word philosophy, but at the at the end they realize that I have taught philosophy from the very beginning. But when I speak to people that are not philosophers, it’s very common that they have the idea that philosophy is a collection of opinions, so you are expressing an opinion” (MU41) • “I’m trying not to say anymore than I’m a philosopher because this makes some people nervous” (MI44)

Appendix E2 – Thematic Analysis Categories with Sample Quotes – Study 2

1	Learning Objectives of Philosophy For Management	
	1.2	Personal Development: Encourages managers to grow as individuals
		• “Yes, we want to talk about the spirit, the soul and the body without any problem because there, we are in something that is more comprehensive” (MI23) • “We think that this is really the best way to increase ourselves, to make sure that we become more than what we are as a person and as a collaborator” (MI36) • “It also grows competences of the character” (MU37) • “it's certainly not the case that all of them are managers or will become managers [...] I think that is important also in terms of my teaching that I don't teach with the idea, okay, you want to become a manager, what are the skills you need in order to become a manager? So this kind of this training mindset” (MU55)
	1.3	Brain Training: Trains minds to inquire, question, challenge, confront, criticize, conceptualize, solve problems & practice creativity
		• “take apart, to analyze the basis of a number of ideas” (MU02) • “seeing which are the hidden contradictions that can be present in an opinion or in a theory, and from there, constructing something different” (MI13) • “we are bothered by questions we cannot answer” (MI44) • “we can't answer the question. We might be able to raise the question or perhaps we could just clear the ground in preparation for the question that's yet to be raised” (MU08) • “someone said to me, did you ever get the answer you were seeking? And here's the key to philosophy. It's nothing but questions” (FI28) • “I want to invite students to do is to join me in a journey of questioning and realizing that the question is more important than the answer” (MU59)
	1.4	Interpretation & Articulation: Helps managers to connect dots, clarify, formulate, articulate, convey and justify their own thoughts and opinions
		• “giving them the opportunity and the power to own their own ideas” (MU15) • “get them to think about their own view, be critical of their own view of what businesses and what people are and get them to be cognizant of their assumptions” (MU19) • “the clarification of concepts and words” (MU29) • “ability to express their ethical viewpoint” (MI42) • “more precise in what you say, more coherent and more consistent [...] you will be able to improve your rhetoric” (MI44) • “encourage people to reflect on their values in a structured way” (MU57)
	1.5	Tolerance & Acceptance: Pushes managers to consider diverse perspectives and to considering other perspectives, and to be open to being wrong
		• “the ability to change your mind is very important” (MU02) • “understand the reasons being given by the opposing side” (MU02) • “showing that there's a different disciplinary perspective on things” (MU20) • “you need always have to be open for this exploration of new directions in which things can go”(MU20) • “the most important thing is that they should be exposed to the diversity of different perspectives” (MU48) • “philosophical theoretical training enables you to look at a problem from multiple perspectives and also hopefully to sometimes put yourself into the shoes of those you interact with” (MU50) • “admitting that they have been wrong, you know that they made mistakes, that they have to learn, that they have to develop” (MU58)
	1.6	Managerial Competencies: Improves management practice through rethinking management, discovering its foundations, reflecting on approach towards work
		• “I see my role as being equipping them primarily with what they need to succeed in values terms when they transition into a workplace [...] you have little prospect of

		turning them into philosophers. What you can do is help them make better choices” (MI42) • “trying to unearth the philosophical roots of business & economics” (MU12) • “knowledge as to where the traditions came from” (MU54) • “you’re learning to be comfortable with the absence of knowledge, you’re learning to be comfortable with uncertainty and you’re willing to invite any sort of input at all that might provide illumination” (MU60) • “1000 years ago or 2000 years ago – there was a person who was asking himself or herself or herself the same questions” (MU58) • “this method reminds them that each employee is human” (FU1)
	1.7	Mystery: An experience that promises nothing, but provides managers with a space to think, explore, and engage with ideas
		• “the most important things in life are useless. Like literally useless. They serve no purpose beyond their own purpose, and the advantages that they bring might not be visible to you, you won’t see them, you won’t be able to grasp them. They are mysterious” (MU05) • “I think that the point of teaching philosophy should be teaching philosophy and not with a view to results” (MU16) • “just put away the question of ‘what can I do with that on Monday?’” (MI44) • “philosophy does not want anything. She does nothing, does not want to do anything, but it might do something individually” (MI44) • “simply make people think” (MI13) • “philosophy is such a wonderful space of thinking and exploring” (MU58)
2	Philosophy or Philosophizing	
		• “the question is not so much when was a specific idea developed, but rather in how far does a specific position tell me something in order to reflect on what I’m doing, so this is why maybe philosophizing is more important than teaching the history of philosophy” (MU48) • “Philosophy in the sense of an approach, not in the sense of a discipline” (MU04) • “trying to inspire & motivate them to philosophize” (MU58) • “So yes, there is a bit about talking about how philosophers thought about the world. But the real thing was, okay, having talked about that, how does that allow us to think?” (MU15) • “I think in a management school it’s more important to teach philosophic thinking than philosophy per se” (FU22) • “I’m more interested in their learning philosophizing as a method than philosophy” (MU60) • “I think what I do is I provide them with a conceptual toolkit and techniques to use it in their own reflection” (MU33)

Appendix E3 – Thematic Analysis Categories with Sample Quotes – Study 3

1	Reflexivity & Self-Knowledge	
	1.1	Self-reflexivity
		• “de mieux définir ses valeurs aussi” (FM15) • “j’ai une conscience de soi plus précise” (FM10) • “ça fait écho à effectivement des points dans le cadre de mon activité professionnelle : des questions éthiques, des questions de choix, des questions de responsabilité, des questions de différences. C’est quasiment quotidiennement que je suis confrontée à ce genre de de problématique avec des choix à faire et des positionnements ” (FM14) • « on va vers une meilleure compréhension, une nécessité de se comprendre, de savoir pourquoi on réagit, il y a beaucoup d’auto-analyse” (MM04) • “se connaître mieux, soi-même, et ses réflexes et ses valeurs et ses manières d’aborder les choses pour mieux pouvoir juger, évaluer, comprendre ce que l’autre nous amène, l’accueillir ou le réfuter” (MM04) • “ je sens que je travaille sur moi-même ” (MM07) • “j’ai eu plusieurs commentaires parce qu’en fait j’ai radicalement changé ma vie depuis [...] j’ai fait une dépression il y a 4 ans en arrière sévère et il y a eu tout un travail, c’est comme je le disais dans mon dans voyage vers soi, y a eu un travail de déconstruction et de reconstruction. J’ai aussi beaucoup changé physiquement, j’ai perdu 20 kilos. Enfin, il y a eu beaucoup de choses qui ont changé” (FM15) • “faire le point sur soi-même” (FM15) • “Je crois une meilleure conscience de moi-même, c’est-à-dire je me connais mieux” (FM15) • “c’est le fait de d’apprendre à se connaître soi-même quoi. Connais-toi toi-même de Socrate, puis après devenir qui on est” (FM15) • “d’avoir ces moments où on est seul face à soi-même” (FM15) • “j’ai pas l’impression non plus de me connaître hyper bien puis de me comprendre tout le temps en toutes circonstances mais mieux, oui, ça c’est sûr ” (MM01) • “Je vais conscientiser mon propre rôle différemment. Donc, j’ai une conscience de moi plus aiguë” (MM03) • “j’ai une conscience de soi plus précise” (FM10) • « j’ai pu expérimenter, ce qui m’a apporté à quelque part une meilleure connaissance de soi” (FM15) • “plus d’introspection en amont, plus de réflexion en amont” (MM04) • « pour moi, c’était plutôt une sorte de récapitulation de tout un parcours de vie” (FM10) • « “J’ai eu une ou deux petites prises de conscience [...] des choses que je m’étais jamais dites ” (MM05) • “on peut être soi-même et se connaître soi-même qu’à travers les autres [...] j’ai l’impression de l’avoir vraiment conscientisé ou formalisé dans ma tête que très récemment” (MM03) • “les autres sont là pour nous aider à nous révéler nous-mêmes et puis à mieux nous comprendre soi-même” (MM03) • « la philosophie pourrait apporter un plus à sa raison d’être déjà par rapport à soi-même, à son propre questionnement. ” (FM15)
	1.2	Confidence & authenticity
		• “je pense que oui, la cure de philosophie m’a permis de me développer, de mieux me connaître, d’avoir plus confiance en moi et que tout cela va avoir petit à petit des impacts sur ma communication, sur mon assurance, etcetera” (MM03) • « de la confiance et de l’affirmation de moi et de comme je suis qui va me permettre d’être meilleur” (MM03) • “en sortant de cette formation, je suis prêt à aller encore un pas plus loin, donc là voilà, c’est pour ça que je me dis plus confiant” (MM01) • “Peut être me permettre de gagner un peu confiance en moi parce que mon style de management jusque là il était basé sur qui je suis, donc plutôt peut être lors de l’intuitif.

		Là ça peut être donne une certaine assise et puis à terme ça va me permettre de donner un peu confiance en moi” (MM03) • “ça me fait gagner confiance en moi parce que je pense que voilà ma manière de voir les choses, d'appréhender les choses elle est pas ni plus juste finalement, ni plus fausse surtout que celle des tops managers ambitieux qui ont fait des MBA et des je sais pas quoi” (MM03) • “je me suis pas révélé, je me suis pas découvert. Par contre peut être je me suis affirmé” (MM03) • “Je pense que en me donnant plus conscience de moi, de mon rôle, me donnant aussi plus confiance en moi en me permettant peut être de plus m'affirmer comme je suis avec mes défauts et mes qualités” (MM03) • “j'ai vu souvent toutes ces histoires de posture en management où on apprend à avoir une posture de leader [...] on nous apprend comme si en fait il suffisait de s'abandonner soi-même pour rentrer dans une autre posture. Quelqu'un comme Nietzsche par exemple nous explique que c'est pas possible. Et puis que c'est que en étant soi-même, qu'on peut qu'on peut arriver à faire quelque chose ” (MM03) • “[la cure] m'a montré que finalement ma manière d'être et de faire avait une certaine logique a un certain bon sens et une certaine assise, même académique ou logique” (MM03) • “de mieux définir ses valeurs aussi” (FM15) • “D'avoir suivi cette formation m'amène à toujours à revenir aux fondamentaux et à revenir aux valeurs fondamentales” (MM04) • “cette cure elle est là aussi pour me faire un peu ma mise au point quoi. Elle me sert de mise au point et de dire des d'identifier les choses importantes, moins importantes, prioritaires” (MM07) • “Mais par exemple découvrir Hannah Arendt qui, elle, par contre, a vraiment une vision des choses qui peut déjà se rapproche à la mienne et qui l'exprime ouvertement” (FM09) • “C'est cette interrogation personnelle. Lorsque je dois intervenir quelque part ou j'évalue un mandat, ou j'évalue une activité, etcetera, c'est de se poser la question : est ce que ça me correspond? est ce que ça, qu'est ce que je peux apporter? comment est ce que je peux faire ? Une vision un peu plus critique de soi aussi pour dire est-ce que je peux ? ” (MM04) • “Je pense qu'on arrive à peut être à faire des choix de vie plus éclairés quoi plus qui nous correspondent à qui on est, parce qu'on se connaît mieux” (FM15)
1.3	Openness	
		• “la philosophie permet justement de prendre du recul. On devrait l'enseigner dans les écoles de management. Et pourquoi ? Parce que justement on va vers une meilleure compréhension, une nécessité de se comprendre, de savoir pourquoi on réagit, il y a beaucoup d'auto-analyse, mais il y a aussi cette nécessité de de mieux écouter l'autre” (MM04) • “se connaître mieux, soi-même, et ses réflexes et ses valeurs et ses manières d'aborder les choses pour mieux pouvoir juger, évaluer, comprendre ce que l'autre nous amène, l'accueillir ou le réfuter” (MM04) • “je pouvais avoir l'impression parfois d'être dans le monde du management, d'être un peu extraterrestre si on veut bien. Parce que on rencontre des gens quand même qui sont très ambitieux qui sont persuadés qu'ils ont les réponses à tout, qui savent que comme ils font c'est juste qu'ils sont très très sur d'eux et qui catégorisent très rapidement les gens. Lui il est bon, lui il est pas bon. Et puis qui ont ce sentiment de maîtrise absolue. Alors que voilà, moi je suis persuadé que je suis plutôt quelqu'un qui sait pas, qui doit apprendre, qui doit s'appuyer sur l'expertise des autres” (MM03) • “j'ai l'impression de voir les rails chez les autres personnes et que du coup je les vois chez moi aussi. Mais c'est presque plus parce que je les vois chez les autres ” (MM05) • “Le but [...] c'est de se situer vis-à-vis de ce qui est dit, de l'écouter, d'être capable d'admettre ou de pas admettre, mais de savoir pourquoi” (MM04) • “ça permet d'ouvrir sa réflexion et d'ouvrir son esprit” (FM09)

		• “quand j'ai un conflit avec mon collègue, c'est quelles valeurs qui sont touchées et qu'est ce qui fait écho ” (FM14) • « ça permettait de confronter ma perception et celle du présentateur” (MM04) • “Mais en fait, c'est là que j'ai découvert qu'on pouvait avoir des points de vue qui pouvaient différer malgré que ce soit amené dans un cadre scolaire” (FM09) • “ça m'a ouvert l'esprit, ça ‘widens my horizons’. Ça élargit” (MM05) • “C'est une chose qu'on a un peu oubliée dans nos notre société en ce moment, se questionner et questionner, et pas faire que des échanges de d'opinions quoi. Et puis j'écoute pas l'autre et parce que j'ai qu'une chose, j'ai qu'une envie, c'est de dire mon opinion” (MM07) • “On n'était pas tout à fait d'accord sur un certain nombre de choses, mais c'est pas dramatique. Au contraire faut jamais ce craindre” (MM04) • “c'est d'être beaucoup plus serein dans les désaccords” (FM15) • “[l'empathie] résulte obligatoirement du fait de prendre en considération ce que l'autre veut amener” (MM04) • “plus ouverte” (FM09) • “plus à l'aise dans accueillir les différences là où elles sont et puis moins vouloir les annuler ou les réduire, voilà vivre avec [...] et puis le tolérance, résilience” (FM14) • “aussi peut-être une plus grande tolérance” (FM15) • “une certaine forme de d'acceptation” (FM15) • “Je gère mieux les désaccords, sachant que je vais essayer de comprendre, poser des questions, interroger, questionner, développer des arguments entendre les arguments de l'autre [...] Enfin, dans mes arguments, la recherche de solutions, je dirais. Peut-être collective si on arrive à un accord. Ou alors d'être d'accord d'être en désaccord, mais dans le respect” (FM15)
2	Questioning & Problematization	
2.1	Critical thinking & investigative mindset	
		• “Par exemple une RH va me dire ‘ah mais bon celui-là franchement je sais pas ce que je vais faire avec’ et puis peut être là je dirais ‘mais comment ça se fait ? Pourquoi cette personne là plus qu'une autre ? Parce que pour moi il y a peut être quelque chose chez elle que le comportement d'autres personnes déclenche mais qu'elle a pas forcément identifié consciemment donc il m'énervé mais sans avoir peut être le pourquoi en fait cette personne puis avoir identifié le pourquoi. Donc c'est vrai que là ça peut m'amener peut être à poser une question” (MM05) • “poser des questions; elles ont un impact pur le fonctionnement de l'institution” (MM02) • “alors cette formation-là m'a amené à renforcer ces questionnements” (MM02) • “ est beaucoup plus capable de questionner ” (MM02) • “on questionne nos façons de faire : qu'est-ce que ça amène ? Pourquoi est-ce qu'on a besoin de le faire ? Et puis, je pense que la philosophie, elle se place à un niveau plus haut. On n'est pas dans le questionnement du processus, mais on est dans le questionnement du pourquoi ” (MM01) • « se reposer un certain nombre de questions que je ne faisais pas avant” (MM04) • “compétences de réflexion sur les processus” (MM01) • “on travaille sur la problématique du travail ” (MM02) • “c'est le l'esprit analytique [...] je pense que là il y a une progression ” (MM04) • “c'est une capacité à affronter” (MM07) • « il y a cette nécessité de confronter, de rechercher de la structuration [...] je pense plus la méthode de penser qui peut être intéressante” (MM04) • “la compétence philosophique finalement, c'est de faire ça un peu au quotidien. C'est-à-dire, dès qu'on pose un problème, d'abord de définir les mots qu'on utilise, les concepts qu'on utilise, sans non plus tout transformer en débats sans fin. La difficulté, des fois elle est là” (MM03) • “on questionne nos façons de faire : qu'est-ce que ça amène ? Pourquoi est-ce qu'on a besoin de le faire ? Et puis, je pense que la philosophie, elle se place à un niveau plus

		haut. On n'est pas dans le questionnement du processus, mais on est dans le questionnement du pourquoi ” (MM01) • “je me suis dit ‘ouais, ça vaut quand même la peine de creuser un petit peu cet aspect’ ” (MM01) • “poser des questions; elles ont un impact pur le fonctionnement de l'institution” (MM02) • “alors cette formation-là m'a amené à renforcer ces questionnements” (MM02) • “ est beaucoup plus capable de questionner ” (MM02) • “La formation a répondu à mes attentes parce que elle a forcé à se poser toute une série de questions [...] parfois sur des choses qui semblent évidentes et qu'on questionne plus” (MM03) • “faire un pas de recul, s'interroger sur des notions qui sont des notions qui sont en sous-jacent d'à peu près toutes nos décisions et donc de pouvoir travailler intellectuellement sur ça” (MM04) • “y a un peu plus de travail en amont parce que je me pose ce genre de question, peut être plus que je ne le faisais” (MM04) • “Je continue à penser que dans toutes ces formations qui existent en management, on se pose pas la question sur qu'est ce que c'est finalement que l'autorité c'est vraiment problématique” (MM03) • “J'ai développé alors peut être un peu plus de d'esprit critique mais vis-à-vis de moi même” (MM05) • “Le fait de développer ce sens critique. À savoir d'écouter, d'argumenter si vous voulez, c'est comme si on construisait quelque chose. Pas à pas dans le raisonnement” (FM15) • “À l'heure actuelle, tout le monde n'a que le mot éthique en bouche. Mais qu'est ce que ça veut dire l'éthique ? Et si on se pose pas cette question, chacun a son éthique et chacun vous redira que pour être éthique il faut ça, mais c'est pas forcément la même éthique que l'autre. Et donc il faut trouver, il faut travailler, il faut trouver ces chemins de l'éthique qui ne sont pas par définition universelle” (MM04) • “Je pense que, en matière d'esprit critique, on progresse” (MM04) • “ça force d'aller voir de droite et de gauche et de développer cet esprit critique” (MM07) • « réfléchissez, pourquoi est ce que vous faites ? Il y a des trucs qui font simplement parce qu'on leur a dit ça, il faut le faire” (MM01) • “l'esprit critique; ça s'est vraisemblablement amélioré simplement parce que, comme j'ai plus de points de référence, c'est plus facile de pouvoir critiquer dans le sens de pouvoir dire des choses de plusieurs manières différentes ou de plusieurs angles de points de vue différents” (MM05) • “Mais en ce moment, l'esprit critique, je le mets le plus en place et envers moi-même” (MM07) • “Le fait de développer ce sens critique. À savoir d'écouter, d'argumenter si vous voulez, c'est comme si on construisait quelque chose. Pas à pas dans le raisonnement” (FM15)
	2.2	Framing Challenges
		• “si le problème est bien posé et que les définitions sont claires pour tout le monde, ça éviterait que on palabre tous pendant des heures sur un truc qu'on pense tous à quelque chose de différent” (MM03) • “si on perd entre guillemets 10 minutes ou un quart d'heure en début pour se mettre d'accord sur la définition du problème qu'on le voit tous pareil, je pense qu'après on est aussi plus efficace” (MM03) • “sur mon écrit, ça va m'aider à poser une problématique” (MM07) • “Pour poser bien le problème et pas directement entrer dans une vision solution ” (FM14) • “j'ai eu des longues fructueuses discussions avec le commandant de la police qu'on avait jamais eu avant puis ça fait quand même 6 ou 7 ans qu'on travaille ensemble [...] je crois qu'on avait jamais été aussi bon au niveau de cibler les problèmes.

		Et puis de aussi de se challenger l'un l'autre pour voir si les problèmes que lui, comme commandant de police, identifie aussi à mon niveau" (MM01) • "si le problème est bien posé et que les définitions sont claires pour tout le monde, ça éviterait que on palabre tous pendant des heures sur un truc qu'on pense tous à quelque chose de différent" (MM03) • "si on perd entre guillemets 10 minutes ou un quart d'heure en début pour se mettre d'accord sur la définition du problème qu'on le voit tous pareil, je pense qu'après on est aussi plus efficace" (MM03) • "j'ai eu des longues fructueuses discussions avec le commandant de la police qu'on avait jamais eu avant puis ça fait quand même 6 ou 7 ans qu'on travaille ensemble [...] je crois qu'on avait jamais été aussi bon au niveau de cibler les problèmes. Et puis de aussi de se challenger l'un l'autre pour voir si les problèmes que lui, comme commandant de police, identifie aussi à mon niveau" (MM01) • "c'est de se dire mais qu'est-ce que j'en retire de tout ça, qu'est-ce que j'en fais ? " (FM15)
	2.3	Considering complexity
		• "c'est vraiment d'être conscient des dimensions, des choses qui se passent autour de vous" (FM09) • "la pensée complexe ou la pensée en situation complexe" (MM01) • « apprendre à construire sa pensée et puis à pas non plus s'enfermer dans des schémas" (MM01) • "pour mieux souligner les perplexités des problèmes qui se posent à nous pour mieux souger les options qui se posent à nous pour mieux poser les conséquences" (MM02) • "J'essaie d'être le plus méta et micro " (FM14) • "la mise en réseau de pensées complexes [...] peut-être qu'il y a une possibilité de mieux prendre en compte certains aspects de la complexité que j'ignorais" (MM01) • "ça me permet aussi de faire des liens" (MM05) • "ça m'a permis aussi de de faire beaucoup de liens avec tous les écrits avec chez lequel j'ai pu m'entourer" (FM15) • "et la philosophie m'aide certainement à contenir mon naturel orienté solution assez rapide pour régler" (FM14) • "L'exercice de d'analyse, de mise à distance et de contextualisation et d'analyse des problèmes. C'est la problématisation on va dire" (MM03) • "on a un job un peu compliqué " (MM07) • "c'est peut être cette distance supplémentaire, cette raison de se poser un certain nombre de questions, d'aller directement au vif du sujet au fond, mais en faisant un peu de travail préparatoire " (MM04) • "on a souvent terminé les modules qu'on a eus avec plus de questions que de réponses et, pour moi, je pense, c'est plutôt un bon signe" (MM03) • "on en sort sans avoir réussi à répondre à la question, et ça, j'ai trouvé vraiment intéressant" (MM01) • "à l'encontre de ces de ces recettes toutes prêtes" (MM03) • "Il faut faire très très attention aux premières intentions, premières remarques, aux premières préjugés, aux premières conclusions, qui pourraient être trop hâtives et qui, sans cette prise de recul, et bien on va se tromper. Situation qui a l'air, elle a l'air verte, mais en fait elle est jaune" (MM07) • "Le réflexe plus conscient de limiter le processus action-réaction [...] ça ressemble ne pas répondre dans les 24 h à un courrier qui est dérangeant ou complexe. Je suis assez réactive de me dire, okay, maintenant il faut que je réponde. Mais je vais pas l'envoyer je me donne 2 3 jours pour pouvoir le relire à tête reposée" (FM14) • "j'écoute ce qu'il me dit, j'écoute les autres arguments. Donc, vraiment ce temps de non jugement. Pas juger tout de suite, mais de comprendre qui t'es" (FM15)
	2.4	Relating & relativizing
		• "moins définitif dans ses jugements et ses avis. On relativise un peu plus. La philosophie aide à ça, mais il y a beaucoup de facteurs autres" (MM04)

		• « Ça m'amène à peut être relativiser un peu plus certaines choses alors que auparavant j'étais peut être plus affirmatif » (MM04) • “relativiser, pour moi, c'est mettre en relation avec d'autres éléments, c'est pas amoindrir, c'est mettre en relation ce qui veut dire que au lieu de dire je dis ça, boum, j'aurais tendance à dire ‘attendez, j'ai eu entendu ça, j'ai entendu ça, j'ai entendu ça, je comprends les positions de ceci, en conséquence je dis ça” (MM04)
2.5	Putting in perspective	
		• “j'ai l'impression de pouvoir voir les choses de plusieurs points de vue différents” (MM05) • “des angles de vision auxquels j'avais pas forcément pensé ou que j'avais un peu oublié” (FM10) • “ces questions [...] il y a des mecs qui se sont posés il y a 2500 ans quoi, donc je suis pas tout seul. Et puis il y a déjà des gens qui y ont réfléchi, donc si je lis les choses qu'ils ont réfléchi, puis que j'y réfléchi, moi, du coup, je peux aussi avancer en réflexion” (MM05) • “Elle a aussi montré, la diversité des regards et la valeur de cette diversité des regards” (MM02) • “d'avoir ses repères différents” (MM02) • « d'avoir des visions de gens de la vente, des visions du milieu du droit, des visions du milieu social, ça c'est vraiment très riche, puis c'est j'ai beaucoup apprécié ” (FM14) • “J'ai ouvert des discussions sur plein de points de vue beaucoup plus larges que ce que je l'ai dans mon dans mon quotidien avec mon entourage ” (FM09) • “Les sujets qui étaient abordés élargissaient mon horizon de penser ” (FM09) • “Juste un moment pour se rendre compte en fait de ces différents types de pensées” (FM09) • “Je pense que ça peut amener quelque chose [...] cette façon de réfléchir un peu différemment” (MM01) • “On a essayé de trouver justement des manières de faire différentes, de revoir les processus, etcetera” (MM07) • “ça a ravivé ma créativité. Ça m'a vraiment reboosté sur ce côté-là. Ça m'a redonné la joie de la créativité [...] parce que quelque part, c'est toujours la même chose quand on se laisse guider, quand on se laisse surprendre, quand on se laisse emmener ailleurs; ça relance la créativité. Partir en voyage dans un pays où on n'est jamais allé a relancé la créativité. Rencontrer des gens qui ont vécu des expériences qui pour vous sont complètement exotiques, ça relance la créativité ” (FM10) • “[la créativité] peut-être un peu parce que finalement, la créativité, elle souvent, elle augmente aussi un peu avec, si on augmente le champ de ses connaissances” (FM12) • “je vais pas me faire arrêter par mes croyances. Donc, la recherche de solutions de choses. Peut-être dans le questionnement, aller plus loin dans. En fait de pas se limiter” (FM15) • “il y a 1000 manières de répondre” (FM14) • “j'ai l'impression de pouvoir voir les choses de plusieurs points de vue différents, donc de pouvoir des poser des questions d'un type un peu différent” (MM05) • “je prends un exemple: si j'écris sur un problème, je sais pas qui peut être un problème de société ou un problème, un problème plus politique, c'est d'essayer de mieux comprendre les arguments de l'autre, pourquoi est ce que ce sujet vient sur la table? Pourquoi est ce qu'il l'amène, qu'est ce qui est recherché en posant ce sujet sur la table? Quels effets directs, indirects, concrets, immédiatement durables ou à long terme sans rechercher ? ” (MM04) • “confronter ça à d'autres avis ” (FM15)
3	Conceptualization	
3.1	Clarifying	
		• « apprendre à construire sa pensée et puis à pas non plus s'enfermer dans des schémas” (MM01) • “je suis arrivé là-bas avec [...] la tempête dans la tête. Et puis certains modules ont franchement abordé de front ces questions là” (MM01)

		• “Je vous disais que c'était un peu le chaos dans ma tête avant de commencer ce cours. Organiser le chaos en quelque chose de compréhensible, je pense que ça, c'est peut être une compétence avec laquelle je ressors qui en tout cas a été renforcée après la philosophie.” (MM01) • “J'ai obtenu beaucoup de choses qui m'ont permis de clarifier” (FM15) • “la meilleure façon de clarifier peut-être un sujet ou une donnée complexe avec l'avis de de plusieurs personnes” (FM15) • “en approche philosophique finalement, on trouve les mêmes choses : la thèse, l'antithèse” (MM03) • “ça revient probablement de tout un tas de choses différentes qui se à un moment donné se cristallisent. C'est comme je vous dis, à un moment donné vous avez des tas d'idées qui flottent et à un moment donné, comme la peintre là qui a l'idée de 'ah je fais comme ça pour montrer que ce type c'est comme ça de son point de vue” (FM10) • “c'est un peu ça, c'est qu'au fond, il y avait tout un tas de choses qui flottaient dans l'air. Vous avez 2, 3 idées et tout à coup, ça devient un vrai projet” (FM10) • “Peut-être que tu gagneras encore aussi un petit peu en termes décisions ” (MM02)
	3.2	Interrogating vocabulary
		• “communication de se poser la question, quel est l'émetteur? [...] Quelle est sa thèse ? Parce que il y a pas des météorites neutres [...] on peut pas être neutre totalement. On est toujours oblitéré par un certain nombre de de présupposés, de préacquis de parcours de vie” (MM04) • “on n'a pas la même compréhension des mots” (FM14) • “On préparait un conseil de fondation avec mon président et puis je trouvais qu'il tournait un peu autour du pot. Il ne met pas vraiment les enjeux et puis à un moment donné je lui dis, est ce que je peux me permettre de de reformuler un peu différemment ? Est ce que c'est bien là que vous souhaitez aller avec ces deux questions un peu fermées ? [...] Mais lui, il arrivait pas à me le formuler sur ce sens-là” (FM14) • “ plus d'attention dans l'interaction avec l'autre de lui demander mais pour toi qu'est-ce que tu entends par ce mot ? Donc lui demander qu'il me donne un peu sa représentation pour que pour qu'on soit sûr qu'on se comprend ou qu'on soit plus clair ” (FM14) • “Une clarté dans la communication dans ma manière de m'exprimer, notamment par l'importance du sens des mots” (FM15) • « c'est pas parce que c'est écrit dans le dictionnaire que c'est forcément ça et que automatiquement ça va être interprété de cette manière là” (FM09) • “on n'a pas la même compréhension des mots” (FM14) • “On préparait un conseil de fondation avec mon président et puis je trouvais qu'il tournait un peu autour du pot. Il ne met pas vraiment les enjeux et puis à un moment donné je lui dis, est ce que je peux me permettre de de reformuler un peu différemment ? Est ce que c'est bien là que vous souhaitez aller avec ces deux questions un peu fermées ? [...] Mais lui, il arrivait pas à me le formuler sur ce sens-là” (FM14) • “Une clarté dans la communication dans ma manière de m'exprimer, notamment par l'importance du sens des mots” (FM15) • “j'arrivais à choisir mes mots à voilà donc j'ai vraiment ressenti ça” (FM09) • “c'est effectivement sur le fond des mots” (MM02) • “on a quand même dessiné des mots qui peuvent paraître assez banals, le temps, la confiance. C'est quand même hyper intéressant de voir en partant de mots justement” (MM02) • “langage général, je pense que chaque fois ça a été l'ouverture de choses qui peuvent paraître connues” (MM02) • “Maintenant on parle de termes qui sont des termes courants” (MM02) • “Étant peut-être attentif à la diversité des sens ” (MM02) • “ça m'a permis de mettre des mots” (MM03)

		• “j’ai pu améliorer ou expérimenter ou des fois mettre des mots sur des choses que je faisais intuitivement sans forcément les nommer” (MM03) • “J’ai étoffé mon vocabulaire” (FM09) • “ces mots qu’on n’utilise pas souvent et qui nous font réfléchir des choses” (FM09) • “On sait ce que c’est, mais on doit quand même réfléchir à ce que c’est, du coup ça étoffé mon vocabulaire d’entendre beaucoup plus de mots comme ceci” (FM09) • “j’ai découvert [...] la réelle signification des mots, donc, des mots qu’on n’utilise pas dans le quotidien qui, en fait, ont de telles différences d’interprétation que c’est compliqué de venir sur des termes d’autorité ou de pouvoir par exemple. Et de dire, okay, ça veut dire ça, c’est pas parce que c’est écrit dans le dictionnaire que c’est ça, que c’est forcément ça et que automatiquement ça va être interprété de cette manière là” (FM09) • “ayant une plus grande connaissance des différences de signification des mots, • je fais plus attention aux mots que j’utilise clairement et après je me dis ‘ah ce mot là, il veut dire ça, mais en même temps, est-ce que c’est vraiment ça?’” (FM09) • “C’est tellement difficile à faire comprendre justement. Ben ce qui m’a fallu quand même un certain temps à comprendre par rapport à ces mots que c’est quasiment impossible d’expliquer ça en une discussion à quelqu’un” (FM09) • “ça a été pour moi comme une sorte de mise en mots de ce que j’étais en train de vivre” (FM10) • “Si j’arrive à expliquer pourquoi je prends ce type de décision, où je réagis de cette manière ou avec la direction, on oriente plutôt vers cette direction-là, la prise en charge, les réponses. Donc on a des arguments, des mots” (FM14) • “de mieux définir ses valeurs aussi” (FM15)
	3.3	Communicating & Argumenting
		• “je pense que mon message petit à petit va aussi gagner en clarté et en compréhension et donc en termes de communication globale et générale, je serai à terme mieux compris” (MM03) • « pouvoir l’exprimer plus clairement” (FM10) • “m’astreindre à rédiger, à rechercher, à réfléchir aussi sur ce qui avait été dit et pourquoi et comment je le voyais” (MM04) • “y a aussi un truc que j’ai trouvé qui était fort, c’est le sens des mots. Ça, j’ai trouvé que c’était aussi vraiment important [...] que signifie les mots que nous utilisons vraiment [...] la puissance du verbe, du mot, qu’on utilise, qui va façonner aussi. Comment on s’exprime et comment on va se faire comprendre ” (FM15) • “ j’arrive à parler de droits sans donner l’impression que je parle de droit ” (MM01) • “je pense que mon message petit à petit va aussi gagner en clarté et en compréhension et donc en termes de communication globale et générale, je serai à terme mieux compris” (MM03) • « ça me permet en fait de mieux maîtriser justement ce que je fais, ce que je dis et de la manière dont je l’amène” (FM09) • “c’était au fond comment elle arrivait à synthétiser [...] elle a fait une synthèse pratique, concrète, utilisable dans la vie réelle. Et ça, je trouvais magique. Parce qu’au fond, c’est bien de faire des jolis théories et d’avoir plein de théories dans la tête. Mais dans la vraie vie, on doit vivre avec un corps, dans un espace, dans un temps, dans un lieu donné” (FM10) • “On était quand même tous les directeurs et directrices de quelque chose, quelle que soit la le titre exact de chacun [...] Et donc il faut avoir un côté super pragmatique aussi, être capable de vulgariser des choses complexes dans des choses simples” (FM10) • “il faut arriver à expliquer qu’est-ce que c’est un autiste en 30 secondes et il faut-il faut arriver à mettre le doigt sur qu’est-ce que la personne a pas compris dans la réalité du comportement de son fils ou de l’élève” (FM10) • “des fois j’arrivais à expliquer des choses aux gens qu’ils avaient pas compris avec le prof. Parce que comme moi j’ai déjà digéré pas mal de philo, j’arrivais à simplement

		dire mais en fait tu vois, il met beaucoup de mots pour dire mais en fait il veut dire ça.” (FM10) • “c’est un peu mettre en d’autres mots ce que la personne raconte. Donc un peu de la communication et peut-être l’écoute aussi” (FM10) • “Une clarté dans la communication dans ma manière de m’exprimer, notamment par l’importance du sens des mots” (FM15) • “J’arrive mieux à dire non, mais avec les formes” (FM15) • “Ma rhétorique parce que y a pas pendant les cours parce que pendant les cours, j’ai jamais été très très à l’aise pour parler en général, ça a toujours été comme ça” (FM09) • “j’ai quand même aussi travaillé sur s’exprimer au sein du groupe [...] j’ai essayé d’intervenir à chaque fois, ce que je fais peut-être pas avec aisance, sauf quand c’est dans un cadre très formel” (FM12) • “j’ai cité un ou deux auteurs en n’étant pas d’accord avec eux et en disant enfin pourquoi j’étais pas d’accord avec eux en fait” (MM05) • “ça m’a conforté sur la nécessité d’avoir un certain raisonnement” (MM07) • “ça renforce mon idée de poser mes thèses, antithèses, synthèses” (MM07) • “c’était aussi de penser de manière rationnelle avec des arguments, d’entendre aussi la personne qui j’ai en face ou autre personne qui ont des éclairages différents, des avis différents” (FM15) • “L’idée de travailler sur une énigme pour travailler sur les explications ” (MM02)
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Appendix E4 – Thematic Analysis Categories with Sample Quotes – Study 4

1	Self-Development: growth and progress undertaken by an individual on a personal level which does not necessarily influence the individual on a professional level	
	1.1	Self-Awareness: the capacity for self-examination and reflection which allows one to question their view of the world, to be aware of the limitations and biases that underlie them and to examine one's own behaviours and learning styles
		• “There was definitely things that I wasn't aware of until the course” (Participant A1-FM) • “It flexes the muscle of self-awareness. I don't know that I participated for long enough to say that now I'm even more self aware, but I was definitely using that skill during the course, more so than I would have if I wasn't participating” (Participant A1-FM) • “I thought I had all the right answers but it's not at all true” (Participant A2-FM) • “I notice more things in me and other people” (Participant C1-FM) • “also trying to understand what motivates my action” (Participant C1-FM) • “when listening to the other, you also think about yourself” (Participant D1-FM) • “my self-awareness increased and I became more self-aware of what others might think of me” (Participant E2-MM) • “We think we know who we are until we discuss it” (Participant F1-MM) • “definitely helped me self-reflect and make the time for that” (Participant F1-MM) • “Listening to others made me realize how little I knew about myself” (Participant H1-MM) • “self-evaluation” (Participant N1-MX)
		1.1.1 Identity
		• “A lot of people think your career defines you – probably especially in this context of highly ambitious people who define themselves by their career. Asking questions about ‘who you are’ makes you put this in perspective” (Participant A1-FM) • “I had a lot of introspection on my personal and professional role in society” (Participant A2-FM) • “getting to know myself more” (Participant C1-FM) • “more comfortable with who I am the decisions I have to make with not knowing things but still making decisions about things” (Participant F2-MM) • “I improved and developed my character further” (Participant H2-MM) • “My expectations were to understand myself a little better because you know, sometimes I am even confusing myself! And I managed to do this in throughout the program” (Participant J1-MM). • “I realized at the end of that maybe I already knew the answer to who I am. But why did I not say this answer at the beginning?” (Participant K1-FX)
		1.1.2 Values & Priorities
		• “throughout my studies in business, I think I lost touch a little bit” (Participant B1-FM) • “I had some moments of wisdom or ‘aha moments’” (Participant B1-FM) • “it gave me a new perspective on my life overall” (Participant B1-FM) • “Examine a bit more of my life” (Participant C1-FM) • “also trying to understand what motivates my action” (Participant C1-FM) • “Made me more sure of my convictions” (Participant F2-MM) • “Helped me reevaluate certain things in my life such as what makes me happy” (Participant G2-MM) • “it's very easy to get caught up in the hamster wheel and kind of lose track of the things that once were important for you or that you were thinking about a lot once upon a time [...] I have the chance to reconnect the things that are really important to me” (Participant H1-MM)

		• “good opportunity to reconnect a bit” (Participant H1-MM) • “Ability to step back from my own opinions” (Participant H2-MM) • “This program inspired me to quit my job, it put things in perspective” (Participant J1-MM) • “many times we complicate our lives with a lot of courses, a lot of masters and kind of complicated things. And you will when you see many times we just need to see things” (Participant L1-FX)
		1.1.3 Self-Confidence & Authenticity
		• “this experience has helped me in the process of looking for a new job because when you become more aware of who you are you become more confident in yourself and in your abilities” (Participant A2-FM) • “I’m less superficial when I encounter someone” (Participant C1-FM) • “I got reaffirmation of something that brought me doubt” (Participant D2-FM) • “you get to be confident about your opinion and how you express yourself [...] you can say what you want to say” (Participant E2-MM) • “more confident somehow” (Participant F2-MM) • “I feel more confident somehow to not know the answers to everything” (Participant F2-MM) • “I realized I can also be myself with people who are not in my bubble in my community” (Participant H2-MM) • “me opening up so much helped them. This gave me a lot of confidence” (Participant H2-MM)
	1.2	Intellectual Competencies: an improved general cognitive ability
		• “Doing dialogue on these topics like love and fear which was more profound on an intellectual level” (Participant F1-MM) • “think deep” (Participant N1-MX)
		1.2.1 Reflection & Reflexivity
		• “I find myself taking more time to think” (Participant A2-FM) • “this is a space where we are with an open heart” (Participant B1-FM) • “I catch myself thinking and reflecting a lot [...] it’s something that happens a lot more than beforehand” (Participant B1-FM) • “I really don’t want to stop doing these Socratic dialogues, as I said many times, because I found them so inspiring and I think it’s important to reflect on one’s own life continuously and have different perspectives and ways of seeing it” (Participant B1-FM) • “I had some moments of, let’s say, wisdom or ‘aha moments’” (Participant B1-FM) • “it gave me a new perspective on my life overall and it initiated a process of thinking with regards to different aspects of life, whether it’s my own job or whether it’s happiness or whether it’s other people” (Participant B1-FM) • “I hoped to get some answers on like life questions I had [...] Now, I have answers to questions I was asking myself and that I’m not more confused” (Participant B1-FM) • “I found it very relaxing because it was really a moment to think about things without stress” (Participant C1-FM) • “really taking the time to reflect on things we do not reflect on” (Participant C1-FM) • “it helped me reflect on some important topics” (Participant F1-MM) • “triggered some thinking in myself as well and made me reflect” (Participant F1-MM) • “Thinking about the world how it could be instead of how it is” (Participant F2-MM) • “for me, most of your reflection will happen when engaging with someone else. And then noticing ‘oh, I hadn’t considered that’ or ‘oh, I can add that to what I was already thinking’” (Participant G1-MM)

		• “Chance to think about things I don’t think about” (Participant G2-MM) • “It was one of the courses where you really were able or pushed or encouraged to reflect. And not in just like mundane topics, but literally about your life and about yourself, which was extremely powerful and valuable” (Participant H1-MM) • “I need some time now to get back and reflect and think and just like not talk to anyone” (Participant H1-MM) • “what I experienced it is more building on opinions and thoughts which I find quite empowering. It creates nice ideas an ‘aha moments’” (Participant H2-MM) • “I got to have new ideas for myself. I had new thoughts about the topics” (Participant H2-MM) • “it gives you a different perspective, a different angle, and something to reflect upon that you don’t necessarily have in mind before” (Participant I1-MM) • “Maybe engaging even more in these kind of Socratic dialogues will also give me some answers that I have for myself” (Participant J1-MM)
		1.2.2 Questioning & Critical Thinking
		• “I got to practice some critical thinking” (Participant A2-FM) • “Normally, when I ask a question I expect an answer, but here, I realized I didn’t have to give one” (Participant A2-FM) • “I realized you can find solutions yourself by having people ask the right questions” (Participant B1-FM) • “It’s not that I didn’t ask questions before, but now they were different” (Participant B2-FM) • “my ability to ask questions increased but still a long journey to reach the level I want to reach” (Interview C2-FM) • “The questions he asked me were completely outside of the questions I thought would be needed to understand who I am” (Participant D1-FM) • “I learned that the question changes with who you are asking questions to” (Participant E2-MM) • “It helped me a lot [...] asking the right questions” (Participant F1-MM) • “it’s not that I didn’t ask questions before, but now they were different”. The technique provides direction and structure: “it helped me a lot [...] asking the right questions” (Participant F1-MM) • “I need to find an answer to all these questions that are raised in the course” (Participant G1-MM) • “you’re asked all these questions and at the same time she’s not answering, which makes it difficult, right?” (Participant G1-MM) • “You do not always need to have an answer. Its okay to have questions. And its okay to park the questions. It’s very normal” (Participant H2-MM) • “Power of asking questions” (Participant H2-MM) • “When I talked about love, the person I was asking questions to started to cry so apparently I asked good questions” (Participant J1-MM) • “I think it teaches me to do the right questions” (Participant K1-FX) • “The project of Socratic dialogue project like obliged people to be creative and they would just be surprised at how creative they can be within the exercise” (Participant N1-MX)
		1.2.3 Perspective-Taking
		• “it’s with people from the community with different perspective” (Participant A1-FM) • “We were taking different perspectives of some problems” (Participant A2-FM)

		• “I wanted to have some new inspiration and like thoughts other than just being stuck in in work and have work-related thoughts” (Participant B1-FM) • “It gave me a new perspective on my life overall. And it initiated a process of thinking, let’s say with regards to different aspects of life, whether it’s my own job, or whether it’s happiness or whether it’s other people” (Participant B1-FM) • “I think it’s crucial to have very different people with different perspectives and backgrounds and histories to get new perspectives” (Participant B1-FM) • “it gave me a new perspective on my life overall and it initiated a process of thinking with regards to different aspects of life, whether it’s my own job or whether it’s happiness or whether it’s other people” (Participant B1-FM) • “I looked forward to talking about more personal topics like for example happiness, or fear and so on, but with people from very different backgrounds” (Participant B1-FM) • “In our group we found out that people find happiness from different sources. Someone said it is better to weep in a BMW than on a bicycle, but then someone said they love biking more than driving” (Participant B1-FM) • “I really don’t want to stop doing these Socratic dialogues, as I said many times, because I found them so inspiring and I think it’s important to reflect on one’s own life continuously and have different perspectives and ways of seeing it” (Participant B1-FM) • “I saw myself using Socratic Dialogue when I had a personal problem to solve at home and I had to rethink my point of view” (Participant B2-FM) • “we shared valuable points of view and ideas that led to other thoughts” (Participant D2-FM) • “also you get to know new views on these topics” (Participant F1-MM) • “You realize there is a view of identity that they give you but there’s not just one view of identity” (Participant F2-MM) • “They say every opinion matters but does it? On every topic?” (Participant F2-MM) • “I had a different definition of what vulnerable people are. I thought people who have nothing are vulnerable. These people have stuff. So my definition of vulnerable was put into perspective” (Participant F2-MM) • “Having different opinions is nice” (Participant F2-MM) • “seeing people who come from a different background, who will not just say same thing over and over” (Participant G1-MM) • “I wanted to see how those topics would be influenced by all those people with other backgrounds” (Participant G1-MM) • “My perception of these topics has changed” (Participant G1-MM) • “I guess everyone has their group of friends but my group of friends are much more similar to me than they are to many people that were participants in the course, right? How do you break from that? And because I think there’s actually so much value from hearing from other people’s backgrounds” (Participant G1-MM) • “I was very curious to learn more about the people that were around me and kind of to understand where they’re coming from” (Participant H1-MM) • “Created new ideas for myself and had new thoughts about the topics” (Participant H2-MM) • “I got inputs from new people, new communities that I’m not directly linked to. People from different age groups and different generation that are in different jobs, living in different countries” (Participant H2-MM) • “I realized that people with different opinions also have a thinking pattern and reasoning behind it. And I think that’s crucial to keep in mind. There’s not a lot of
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		people who are trying to be mean. Its because of an experience or different information that there is a discrepancy” (Participant H2-MM) • “Usually we’re just trying to win arguments. Now we had the opportunity to dialogue and share our way of thinking” (Participant H2-MM) • “No matter if you’re working in the supermarket, if you’re a painter whatsoever, it’s good that you meet other people and get another perspective just to become more open” (Participant I1-MM) • “Out of the box thinking” (Participant K1-FX) • “So during the other part of the program, I saw things from another perspective” (Participant N1-MX) • “You just really let people talk. You just see things from different perspectives” (Participant N1-MX)
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2	Interpersonal Competencies: ability to relate to others, develop relationships, communicate	
	2.1	Relationship-Building: managerial skill needed for teamwork, dealing with clients, negotiating, and managing people
		• “You really get to know the people throughout the project. On the last weekend, it was the feeling of meeting up with an old friend” (Participant B2-FM) • “It helped me learn about other people” (Participant F1-MM) • “hopefully not the last time I see a lot of those people” (Participant H1-MM) • “I was super interested in getting to know the people better” (Participant I1-MM) • “It was nice to meet 20-25 new people that I never talked to before” (Participant I1-MM) • “I think everyone should do a project like this by going out of his own bubble. And meeting other people and dialoguing with them” (Participant I1-MM)
		2.1.1 Connecting & Relating
		• “Everyone you saw, they were directly hugging each other and you directly feel felt like so strong as a group. So that was a really cool feeling and it stayed like this throughout the whole weekend. So I really, really felt connected to everyone” (Participant B1-FM) • “My comfort talking to strangers and people who struggle has improved” (Participant B2-FM) • “I really, really felt connected to everyone. And as I said, there was kind of my fear right, that there were smaller groups afterwards and maybe like some people being super close friends and others not. But I didn’t have the feeling that this was the case” (Participant C1-FM) • “I was able to meet people outside of my bubble” (Participant D2-FM) • “at some point you have a really good dialogue. That’s just so fantastic because those are the you know moments in your life that you really connect with someone and go deep” (Participant G1-MM) • “It’s like if you’re watching a YouTube video and then you go into the ‘watch quicker’. It’s the same how the relationship is formed in a way like it puts you very quickly into something very important and you skip a little bit the ‘what’s the name of this’, like the chit-chat the, you know, the small talk” (Participant G1-MM) • “Fascinating to see that by spending four days, we manage to get to know each other on this level” (Participant G2-MM) • “although we met for 72 hours, meeting everyone again was like meeting old friends again – which was amazing” (Participant H1-MM) • “I was very eager to meet new people with very, very interesting stories” (Participant H1-MM)

		• “it’s cool to actually hang out with these people because on my normal life I wouldn’t do it” (Participant I1-MM) • “it was like a big group of friends just having fun together” (Participant I1-MM) • “It was nice. I mean you like the people, you established a relationship, so it’s good to see them [...] It was nice. Being together feeling, this group dynamic, so it was positive, and a cool experience” (Participant I1-MM) • “I realized that I work with so many people but I never take the time to ask who they are. I am way more connected to my dialogue partner after 15 minutes only because I took the time to ask her” (Participant I1-MM) • “you like the people, you established a relationship, so it’s good to see them” (Participant I1-MM) • “not always you are talking with people from other backgrounds” (Participant J1-MM) • “I really like the idea to talk to people that are... That I wouldn’t talk in normal life so often” (Participant J1-MM) • “you connect because you’re talking about topics that are quite sensitive and sometimes personal” (Participant K1-FX) • “you’re not feeling so alone. Because many times, even if you are an active person, you feel very alone” (Participant L1-FX) • “I feel like I have family here” (Participant Q2-FX) • “I almost didn’t go [to the program]. I would have missed the chance to connect with people” (Participant S2-MM)
		2.1.2 Empathy
		• “I think with every kind of or with most kinds of interactions with people I try to put myself more into their shoes. For example, if it’s like a discussion with my boyfriend or something, I really try to think about what kind of situation he is in. But it’s something that applies not only to my personal relationship, but I would say with regards to everyone currently that I really try to kind of understand what is really the reasoning for some reactions for example, and I think that stems a little bit also from this course” (Participant B1-FM) • “you have to take these kind of courses just to be able to show empathy to people because otherwise I personally don’t think that they’re going to be good managers if they’re not able to do that” (Participant B1-FM) • “‘Mariana’s mom’ was a response given over and over again. When I asked others when they realized their empathy increased, they pointed to this exact moment” (Participant B2-FM) • “I am definitely more sensitive to others” (Participant C1-FM) • “I got to empathize with people who suffer” (Participant D2-FM) • “Helped me get more opinions. What I mean that is that I could understand why people have the opinion they have” (Participant E2-MM) • “There are some stories that you hear and you think ‘wow this person had a tough life’. And that makes you have more empathy somehow” (Participant F2-MM) • “you actually engage a lot deeper with the other person and create empathy” (Participant H1-MM) • “if there’s one thing I can pick up out of it is empathy. And I feel that I enter a lot of encounters with people in daily life, in work, in, in every interaction I have I feel that I am more empathetic and in the sense that I put my biases to the side and try to go into conversations even more unbiased than before. That’s my biggest take away” (Participant H1-MM) • “If there’s one thing I take out of this program, it is empathy” (Participant H1-MM)

		• “Essentially, we’re all the same and it triggered in myself like an empathy that I probably didn’t exercise before” (Participant H1-MM) • “I realized that people with different opinions also have a thinking pattern and reasoning behind it. And I think that’s crucial to keep in mind. There’s not a lot of people who are trying to be mean. Its because of an experience or different information that there is a discrepancy” (Participant H2-MM) • “learnt to be much more patient and have more empathy with everyone” (Participant L1-FX)
		2.1.3 Openness & Tolerance
		• “after you finish university, and I mean the more you progress with your careers, you go more and more into a bubble, because you always get closer to people similar to you that have done a lot of life choices that are the same as the one you’ve done. So the more you progress, the more I feel you get in a bubble so I was also happy a bit to interact a bit more with the reality of other people” (Participant C1-FM) • “Be more open with other people. I feel like I’m much more open to new people and I’m less superficial when I encounter someone” (Participant C1-FM) • “it really opened my mind to some things” (Participant F1-MM) • “I was keeping an open mind” (Participant F1-MM) • “You have to go in with a very open mind and completely disregard what you see to hear” (Participant H1-MM) • “opens people’s minds” (Participant H1-MM) • “I also struggled from my personal experience to talk to people who oppose my values and morals. Not being tolerant to open up and give them a chance in the end. That was also one of the keys of this experience” (Participant H2-MM) • “No matter if you’re working in the supermarket, if you’re a painter whatsoever, it’s good that you meet other people and get another perspective just to become more open” (Participant I1-MM) • “We don’t need to agree on anything to be civilized and to have nice dialogues” (Participant F2-MM) • “I’m not very open person, but I think now I’m more and with more logic” (Participant L1-FX)
	2.2	Communication Competencies: ability to clearly transmit and receives messages; and therefore requires both expression and listening
		• “we have to communicate no matter what the discipline. Dialogue is beneficial for everyone” (Participant A1-FM) • “I think it was really helpful for me in terms of communication style” (Participant C1-FM) • “I tend to interrupt a lot. When I arrived here and saw how [the facilitators] are listening to every word you are saying, it struck me. I found myself trying to replicate that more. It is definitely a conscious effort I am making” (Interview D2-FM)
		2.2.1 Expressing
		• “just asking the Socratic questions and seeing what people would come to without me imposing my own views on them” (Participant A1-FM) • “I was taught to answer questions in a concise manners, but I don’t actually need to do that. I realized I can take time to just express what I want to express” (Participant A2-FM) • “At the time, I was not aware that I opened up so much” (Participant B2-MM) • “I learned how to develop arguments to explain what I think” (Participant E2-MM)

		• “Speaking to people you don’t previously know is better because you don’t care what they think about your opinion, so that helps” (Participant F2-MM) • “upon seeing others opening up, I felt ready to open up” (Participant H2-MM) • “I realized I can also be myself with people who are not in my bubble in my community” (Participant H2-MM) • “You allow yourself to bring up stuff you wouldn’t say in a normal conversation” (Participant R2-MX) • “I was able to share things I’ve never shared with anyone” (Participant T2-FM)
		2.2.2 Listening
		• “just having conversations with people and really trying to be the active listener” (Participant A1-FM) • “This program impacted me first and foremost in active listening” (Participant A2-FM) • “Listening also meant being present, paying attention” (Participant A2-FM) • “since silence is okay, you’re not thinking already of the next question. You’re going to wait to ask the other question” (Participant D1-FM) • “Before this program, I was not listening; I was preparing my answer before the other one finished” (Participant D2-FM) • “I saw the power of listening” (Participant D2-FM) • “It helped me with listening” (Participant F1-MM) • “I became a better listener” (Participant F2-MM) • “After the first weekend I started to notice I had to listen more to my employees” (Participant F2-MM) • “I learned how important it is to actively listen and try to understand people who might have prejudices or you think you don’t share a lot with or don’t have things in common” (Participant H2-MM) • “I gave space to listen to people” (Participant H2-MM) • “[listening] is something I wanted to improve and Socratic Dialogue gave me the platform to work on that skill” (Participant H2-MM) • “Silence was also a learning for me. Silence is also fine to be there. It’s not always needed to give a comment” (Participant H2-MM) • “I discovered the power of silence. To give others the space to let them be silent” (Participant H2-MM) • “it actually taught me to listen to people” (Participant K1-FX) • “I always speak out when anywhere and I speak out. But, in this program, I learned something. I learned how to be silent. And that’s what I needed. I saw people being quiet who had something to say. And we just kept quiet [...] And I kept learning from that. I had a lot of things to say because when somebody says something, I just want to express how I feel about it or maybe ask some questions [...] I saw the discipline of people who managed to respect people and gave them the opportunity to ask [...] The program did not help me become more expressive. I’m already expressive. Step back before being expressive, and I needed that” (Participant N1-MX)
		2.2.3 Having Difficult Conversations
		• “It was amazing to talk about love, freedom, power, the meaning of life... We rarely open such topics on a regular basis because they’re complicated” (Participant A2-FM) • “When you’re taking a beer with friends, if they say something, I feel is not aligned with my values in the sense that I feel like they make comments that I perceive as maybe racist or I perceive as targeting some type of people, now, I engage in a conversation in the sense that I try to explain why I feel the comments is offensive and try to share how people can feel and this kind of stuff that before I was not doing” (Participant C1-FM)

		• “I would see dialogue helping me and other managers engage in conversation with various stakeholders” (Participant C1-FM) • “There were a lot of the hard topics to discuss” (Participant E2-MM) • “During the course we had different people to talk to about hard topics” (Participant E2-MM) • “I had to talk to my business partner about fundraising and cutting down on costs, and I found I was a lot more capable of talking about things that are hard to talk about” (Participant E2-MM) • “For me I think one of the biggest learnings is that we don’t have to agree on everything to get along. By practicing having difficult conversations it helps me have difficult conversations with providers and suppliers” (Participant F2-MM) • “There were no conflicts, but there were some moments when people were disagreeing. But I found that was a positive outcome. I felt it was a respectful atmosphere and environment to exchange” (Participant H2-MM) • “sometimes it was just painful and not as nice [...] it always depended a bit, like on the people with whom I was talking to” (Participant I1-MM)
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3	Social Responsibility: the ability to recognize and to willingly engage on social issues	
	3.1	Social Awareness: knowledge and understanding about the thoughts, concerns and issues of people from divergent social realities
		• “There was definitely things that I wasn’t aware of until the course” (Participant A1-FM) • “I heard stories about people having visa paper problems. This was so new to me but made me realize what are some struggles people face” (Participant A2-FM) • “I didn’t expect in the beginning that we were talking about broader society topics, problems in society. That was something that I was made aware of a little bit later. But it was so important” (Participant B1-FM) • “what I do a lot now is if I just walk on the streets thinking about what kind of life has this person, or what are they thinking? what are their problems? And so on. So I’m way more looking outside of my own life. I think that’s the biggest impact it had ” (Participant B1-FM) • “after you finish university, and I mean the more you progress with your careers, you go more and more into a bubble, because you always get closer to people similar to you that have done a lot of life choices that are the same as the one you’ve done. So the more you progress, the more I feel you get in a bubble so I was also happy a bit to interact a bit more with the reality of other people” (Participant C1-FM) • “becoming more connected with people, understand better other people’s realities” (Participant C1-FM) • “before the courses, I was just ignoring their situation, you know. So I was just focusing on my personal perception [...] it’s annoying when someone asks you for something like money while you are outside the supermarket [...] now I feel like I can understand their position and be less selfish on this” (Participant C1-FM) • “I was aware of some issues, but I was feeling detached from them” (Participant C1-FM) • “also a bit of awareness of course on some issues that I was aware with, but I felt they were so far away from me. So now I’m more interesting to hearing people’s stories. So when I hear something on TV, I get more connected with it” (Participant C1-FM) • “Because of the dialogues, I started researching about the history of Nicaragua” (Participant D1-FM)

		• “Others who are struggling a bit more in their lives had issues that came up which was also very eye opening for me” (Participant D2-FM) • “when they said like homeless people and stuff, I was wondering like where would they get these people from?” (Participant F1-MM) • “I wasn’t super aware of the difference between the two groups and I guess I kind of started then realizing there is a difference. I’m privileged in many ways in comparison to those people” (Participant F1-MM) • “I started realizing, by talking to the people that our situations are different, and even though like some of the other participants were like working in jobs, studying, they kind of come from a different background and in many ways you know still fighting to get to a stable situation” (Participant F1-MM) • “It helped me learn also about the social topics we talked about, because it’s not something I think about that much in my daily life” (Participant F1-MM) • “There are some stories that you hear and you think ‘wow, this person had a tough life’” (Participant F2-MM) • Noticing strengths of a different type of person: “they’re so engaged with these type of actions like working with organizations and NGOs” (Participant G1-MM) • “I’m able to connect the dots a little bit better as before – this may sound super naive from my side – but it was like it was the economic problem and then there was the migration problem. And then there was the finding a job problem and, now, I feel I’m better at interconnecting, in being the interconnections between all of them and how people’s struggles usually come from a bit of everything” (Participant G1-MM) • “I say I learned a lot in the sense of what actually the daily problems of those people are. [...] you see that actually people can’t pay their bills because they don’t know how to manage energy consumption, because at home, energy is just something you tap from somewhere and nobody cares. Yeah, new insights in a sense” (Participant H1-MM) • “I was very eager to meet new people with very, very interesting stories” (Participant H1-MM) • “an even deeper understanding of the issues and challenges of certain groups of people. That is very positive” (Participant H1-MM) • “Does it make many wiser to solve the world’s problems? Maybe a little bit. At least I know where to start” (Participant H1-MM) • “I am more conscious and thoughtful when I interact with groups who are not really connected to my communities” (Participant H2-MM) • “one person was sharing that they never had contact with gay people also thinking rather negatively about the whole thing. And me opening up so much helped them so much” (Participant H2-MM) • “the stories they were telling, at least for me, were totally different and new, and seemed more interesting than hearing about another burnout, being stressed at work, to trying to build up a company” (Participant I1-MM) • “we learned a lot about contrasts [...] especially for managers who live a super privileged life, have been travelling everywhere and now are working in big corporation or even in startups [...] I think we are still young, we still need to learn a lot. So this was good” (Participant I1-MM) • “[the managers] were super structured, almost a bit boring and bringing all back to work and then the others seemed super chaotic, super difficult to understand” (Participant I1-MM)
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		• “When we had to come up with an idea for a project, it was super easy. I had so many new ideas based on all the social issues we talked about” (Interview J1-MM) • “Talking to the other ten people was really surprising and eye opening. The life they are living was kind of alien to me sometimes” (Participant J1-MM) • “I just wanted to meet new people, understand their point of views, understand their lives and now I conclude that I am more grateful about certain parts of my life” (Participant J1-MM) • “even though my life is also not like always perfect [...] I see that there are people that have it more difficult than I do. So this was kind of an impact that the program had” (Participant J1-MM) • “It also is like an exercise of caring about ourselves when we do the Socratic dialogue [...] if we care about ourselves, we will do things to not harm ourselves either, and another person” (Participant L1-FX)
	3.2	Sense of Responsibility: involves desiring duty or accountability for social matters and striving towards ethical action
		• “I’ve always felt very guilty of not emphasizing or using my right to vote because I’ve been quite detached from Bulgaria and didn’t really believe in the political system. So I’m actually voting this year for the first time even though I’m 29. And that’s like horrible that I haven’t done it for the past 10 years, but I think this new decision is partly actually due to the course” (Participant A1-FM) • “in one of the dialogues, we recognized that decisions you make influence other people’s lives so you need to be aware of those key consequences” (Participant A2-FM) • “it can actually bring a change to society, so it’s something purposeful” (Participant B1-FM) • “We had a Christmas charity event at my job two weeks ago and in the office we had some disabled children visiting, and I talked to them. Before, I wouldn’t go to talk to them – I would feel more scared and uncomfortable. My comfort talking to strangers and people who struggle has improved” (Participant B2-FM) • “What I’ve noticed is that maybe sometimes if someone was making a comment I did not agree with that maybe for certain category, maybe before the course I was like ignoring it, instead now even if I know I will end up in a unpleasant conversation, I always signal that. I mean I disagree and I don’t find it correct. And this kind of stuff, you know? So I put more effort in making my points on things I agree with” (Participant C1-FM) • “When you’re taking a beer with friends, if they say something, I feel is not aligned with my values in the sense that I feel like they make comments that I perceive as maybe racist or I perceive as targeting some type of people, now, I engage in a conversation in the sense that I try to explain why I feel the comments is offensive and try to share how people can feel and this kind of stuff that before I was not doing” (Participant C1-FM) • “It has definitely made me talk to people who are different than me, that have reinforced my sense of duty as a citizen and shaken me to have a need for a more active role” (Participant D2-FM) • “it’s something I’m not that involved in. Civic duty engagements – it’s something I keep telling myself that would be nice to do something in this area. So this would be like one avenue to explore that” (Participant F1-MM) • “It’s okay for me to care about myself and my family. That is an important contribution to society” (Participant F2-MM)

		• “Knowing Jerry, he’s doing a re-education, he’s trying to become an engineer working on web development [...] if it doesn’t come to fruition, I could help Jerry on the way to get a prototype out of the door with the with the people that I know, the network that I have, the company I work in. It’s also nice because I can support Jerry in the journey because I can get in subject matter experts that he probably wouldn’t have the chance to talk to... with people from I don’t know Google talking about UX and that stuff [...] if it doesn’t come to fruition the project, the process towards it will already be helpful for at least Jerry, right and if that’s one person I can help with that’s a good start” (Participant H1-MM) • “I also struggled from my personal experience to talk to people who oppose my values and morals. Not being tolerant to open up and give them a chance in the end. That was also one of the keys; this information sharing or lack of information sharing can lead to inequality. By sharing more when your part may be from a smaller bubble, you manage to connect also different bubbles and find overlaps with people from other bubbles which in the end reduces inequality and strengthens democracy” (Participant H2-MM) • “I had always desired to do more and to engage socially and to do civic engagement. And this course motivated me to consider what I can do to pursue this desire” (Participant I1-MM) • “it would be nice to actually increase our civic engagement rather than just writing something on a post-it” (Participant I1-MM) • “we can have different bubbles and we know we can try to improve the bubble we have or not. Or we can change and go to another bubble to get another view of the of the reality” (Participant L1-FX) • “if you keep going on and on, like if you keep doing it in different places and making it widespread, it can change the world gradually, change what people think and change some understandings people have” (Participant N1-MX) • “Imagine we try to do more things. That reminded us how creative we can be in solving some world problems” (Participant N1-MX) • “I was kind of pushing it too far. You know, let’s change the world. Let’s change the world” (Participant N1-MX) • “What I was thinking of like expanding this thing, making it go wild. How can we make this thing reach more people?” (Participant N1-MX)
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