

Newsletter N°9

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Researchers observe the pedagogy of the Alternative Management Major

What's up...

Researchers observe the pedagogy of the Alternative Management Major
Latest AMO publications

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Since October, the Centre d'Innovation et de Recherche en Pédagogie de Paris (CIRPP) has been following the Alternative Management Major, in order to help it improve its pedagogical methods. François Fourcade, Scientific Director and professor at ESCP Europe, and Luca Paltrinieri, researcher in education who is also studying intercultural informal learning as it occurs in the Chaire Renault HEC-Polytechnique, presented us with their project and their interests in the major.

First of all, what is the CIRPP?

The CIRPP is a research laboratory within the Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris (CCIP) that focuses on supporting research in pedagogy. It is open to all professors from the CCIP and from other institutions. Its activities are organized into three themes:

supporting a selection of innovative pedagogical projects (such as the major)
organizing seminars and meetings around concrete pedagogical issues
facilitating research into pedagogy for business education

What are the dominant and the minority pedagogical practices? What are their consequences for the education of CCIP students? What kind of managers do we want to educate for the future? With which pedagogical approach do we want to educate them? These are some of the questions of the CIRPP.

Undoubtedly, capitalism and the business world face serious questions nowadays. This calls for a deep and complex reflection, as well as a strong capacity to implement projects. In particular, the CCIP and HEC aim at educating elite managers, who have to be prepared to answer pressing and unavoidable questions.

The CIRPP advocates a pedagogy that differs from the teacher/student model. Students have to be able to master their education and to collaborate with professors on such questions. This plays a key-role in the development of their critical thinking and their willingness to act on the world. Answering present challenges means not only being able to come up with new and unexpected solutions, but also having the technical and social skills to implement such solutions. Bringing such pedagogy to business school students is difficult partly because the French school system does not prepare them for such questioning and does not this sort of pedagogy.

What methods does the CIRPP use to study and observe the Alternative Management Major?

Starting in October 2011 and over a year's time, the CIRPP is going to observe and take part in the major thanks to a method called "action-research" in which studied actors participate in the construction of the solutions to their own problems. We meet actors of the major (students and professors) and we work with them to understand the difficulties they face. We participate in the activities of the major. After a certain

period and over the remainder of our research period, we conduct non-guided interviews with them to understand their lives and visions. Although this method takes time (our report will only be given in September 2012), it provides solutions directly to actors, by leading them to question their practices during the research process. This is a long-term process with immediate effects.

Why are you interested in the Alternative Management Major?

We want to support and take part in the pedagogical project of the major. We want to implement an assessment of the education system, in coherence with certain pedagogical aims and in collaboration with the team of the major.

We have observed that the major proposes a new and innovative format in business school education, designated around the term, “alternative”, built on strong ethical values and a real study of social economy. The pedagogical goal of the major is clear and it has an important role to play regarding the global critics of capitalism. Our first question is therefore: how can we help the major to develop and extend this goal through its pedagogical methods?

This question raises other issues, for instance: how to help students build their own education? How to make students develop their critical thinking towards business and to innovate as future managers? How can the major provide tools and answers to students facing global questions and issues? How does it teach them to react when confronted to such questions?

From a more conceptual point of view, we ask ourselves to what extent the major is a “solicitation structure” (*“structure de sollicitation”*, a concept by Florence Giust-Desprairies). Does the major help students confront new and critical reflections? Does it push them to implement a truly “alternative management” and to look for “alternate” business career? How do students react when faced with such a structure? What do they take from it? What do they make with it?

Of course, it is too soon to draw conclusions, but what are the first themes that you foresee?

One of the essential points of our research will be to understand the role of students in the major. It seems important to us to help them create their own professional project. Giving them time at the beginning of the year to do this helps them make independent choices concerning their education, and allows them to select the knowledge they want to gain during the year, in order to get the most out of it. Also, it is important to encourage students to understand what they are looking for in the major and what they want to do with it.

Another idea that is important to us is to support the teaching of social skills. Knowledge is important because it helps making choices, but social skills are essential in the business world. We believe that in order to teach such skills, the pedagogical structure of a class is at least as important as its content. A student who has spent a year collaborating with others every week will go on have much useful and enriching staff meetings. With the recent reemergence of interest in issues such as happiness in the workplace or suffering caused by stressful professional surroundings, it seems extremely important to educate future managers on how to form positive social relations and on how to respect the intelligence and the contribution of everyone in the workplace.

Latest AMO publications

Get informations from previous newsletters :

- [About reaserch papers made by Alternative Management students abroad](#)
- [About the future of Alternative Management students](#)

We invite you to discover the Observatory's latest publications. The themes dealt with are varied: sustainable neighborhoods, de-growth, fair trade, critique within the company...

Research papers

Thibault Asselot: The Debate on the “Triple Bottom Line”.

Camille Portejoie: Impact of the diverse visions of social entrepreneurship on resources-organizations practice.

Elise Juguet: Private Sector Development in sub-Saharan Africa: context, modalities and stakes.

Caroline Charhon: Chronicle of a failure foretold: the challenge of rural areas for micro-finance, through a case study in Ecuador.

Aurélie Gillon: Luxury and Sustainability: Cross-fertilization.

Csilla Narai : Stakeholder relations and development at social entrepreneurial ventures

Claire-Isabelle Roquebert : What is the link between Degrowth and Work?

Reports: HEC Alumni seminar

Nutriset : Fighting against malnutrition by Rémi Vallet

Respective contributions of public and private initiatives to urban areas by Anne Charpy

Diapalante means « mutual help » in wolof - by Claire Dehove

Essays

Frédéric Benhaim: Protecting biodiversity, satisfying the needs of human communities.

Literature reports

Domitille de la Morinerie: Fear and Money in Dubaï, by **Mike Davis**

Maëlle Gasc: All Men Are Brothers, by **Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi**

Margaux Vinez: Ecology, community and lifestyle, by **Arne Naess**

Raphaël Saillant: La Maison Nucingen, by **Honoré de Balzac**

Badis Boussouar: Translucent society – taking to an end the myth of a benevolent state, by **Augustin Landier and David Thesmar**

Aurélie Gillon: Eco-capitalism, sustainability model against the cynical model, by **Patrick d'Humières**

Rudy Guénaire: The Seven Day Weekend : Changing the Way Work Works, by **Ricardo Semler**

Camille Portejoie: Afterthoughts on Material Civilization and Capitalism, by **Fernand Braudel**

Guillaume de Montpeysson: Uncommon People – Resistance, Rebellion and Jazz, by **Eric Hobsbawm**