Department of Management Studies

The student learner on the shelf: Practical activity and agency in higher education

Kirsi Korpiaho

Aalto University

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Kirsi Korpiaho

Aalto University
School of Business
Department of Management Studies

Main dissertation advisor
Professor Keijo Räsänen

Opponent
D.Ed. Annukka Jauhiainen, University of Turku, Finland

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Abstract

This PhD thesis examines business studying in higher education as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The purpose is to articulate, describe and understand the inevitably context-bound activity of studying and to support students in the search for personally meaningful agency. This is done by introducing a practice-theoretical approach, and especially the four-fold framework of practical activity, which includes tactical, political, moral, and personal dimensions. The framework is developed by the members of the Management Education Research Initiative (MERI)-research group in a local academic unit at the former Helsinki School of Economics, the present Aalto University School of Business. Thus, this thesis can be read as a series of studies of local developmental efforts conducted in a spirit of at-home ethnography, a participatory variation of organizational ethnography.

In addition to an introductory essay, this thesis contains a series of five studies that approaches studying and student agency from different angles. The first study introduces the traditional, revised and alternative forms of management education depicting the scene of the possible spaces for students. The second study describes undergraduate studying in the context of the institutionalized practice of examination, whereas the fourth study describes postgraduate studying in the midst of eruptions and discontinuities in changing practices of doctoral education. The third and the fifth study focus on developmental efforts that elaborate explicitly how student agency can be supported as a part of the official curriculum, whether in undergraduate or postgraduate education.

This thesis problematizes the research tradition of individualistic approaches in researching student studying and learning by showing the inseparableness of socio-cultural practices and participants' involvement in the making of business school experience. It contributes to the literature of management education, higher education and adult education by suggesting a more multicolored and nuanced understanding of business studying than suggested by mainstream researchers. It also presents practical examples of how to strengthen students' views of themselves as active subjects, and of how to support their search for a personally meaningful agency in undergraduate and/or postgraduate studying.

Keywords students, studying, learning, agency, practice, ethnography, higher education, business education, doctoral education

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Tiivistelmä

Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan kauppatieteiden opiskelua sosiaalis-kulttuurisena ilmiönä. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on käsitteellistää, kuvata ja ymmärtää opiskelu kontekstisidonnaisena toimintana sekä tukea opiskelijoita mielekkään toimijuuden rakentamisessa. Tämä tapahtuu tarkastelemalla opiskelua käytäntöteoreettisen tutkimusperinteen näkökulmasta sekä esittelemällä erityisen tavan ymmärtää opiskelu käytännöllisenä toimintana – pitäen sisällään toiminnan taktisen, poliittisen, moraalisen sekä henkilökohtaisen ulottuvuuden. Lähestymistapa on Helsingin kauppakorkeakoulussa, nykyisessä Aalto-yliopistossa, toimivan MERI -tutkijaryhmän kehittelemä. Tämä väitöskirja koostuu sarjasta tutkimuksia, jotka ovat syntyneet paikallisten kehittämispyrkimysten tuloksena. Tutkimukset on toteutettu ns. koti-etnografian hengessä, joka on osallistuvan tutkimuksen variaatio perinteisemmästä organisaatioetnografiasta.

Väitöskirja sisältää johdantoesseen lisäksi viisi erillistä osatutkimusta, jotka tarkastelevat opiskelua ja opiskelijoiden toimijuutta eri näkökulmista. Ensimmäinen tutkimus tuo näkyville perinteisen, muokatut ja vaihtoehtoiset muodot kauppatieteellisen koulutuksen toteuttamiselle ja kuvaa näin niitä mahdollisia toimijuuden tiloja, jotka opiskelijoille avautuvat. Toinen tutkimus kuvaa opiskelijoiden taktista taituruutta institutionalisoituneessa tenttikäytänteessä, kun taas neljäs tutkimus kuvaa jatko-opiskelijoiden tasapainoilua vaikeammin hahmottuvien ja alati muuttuvien käytänteiden välillä. Kolmas ja viides tutkimus puolestaan näyttävät, miten tuota erilaisten käytänteiden rajoittamaa toimijuutta voidaan pyrkiä vahvistamaan osana virallista koulutusohjelmaa.

Tämä väitöskirja kyseenalaistaa yksilö- ja oppimiskeskeisen lähestymistavan koulutuksen tutkimuksessa näyttämällä miten sosiaalis-kulttuuriset käytänteet ja toimijoiden osallistuminen ovat erottamattomasti sidoksissa toisiinsa. Tämä tutkimus osallistuu kauppatieteellistä koulutusta, korkeakoulutusta ja aikuiskasvatusta koskeviin tutkimuskeskusteluihin esittelemällä vaihtoehtoisen tavan opiskelun ja opiskelijoiden tutkimusperinteeseen. Tutkimus tarjoaa myös käytännön esimerkkejä maisteri- ja jatkokoulutustasolla tehdyistä kehittämistoimenpiteistä.

Avainsanat opiskelijat, opiskelu, oppiminen, toimijuus, käytänne, etnografia, yliopistokoulutus, kauppatieteellinen koulutus, jatkokoulutus

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It is often assumed that research work is a solitary and merely an intellectual effort. However, I have found this to be an inaccurate claim. During my years at Aalto University Business School, I have had the opportunity to participate in the establishment and development of the MERI (Management Education Research Initiative) research group The emergence of such a research group that crosses the borders of traditional management studies and draws inspiration from various research traditions, would not have been possible without the open-minded research community of Organization and Management. I am indebted to all of you for creating and sustaining such an inspiring and inclusive workplace where critical and alternative ideas are welcome.

Among the close colleagues of the MERI-group I have had the privilege to work with, I would first like to thank my doctoral thesis advisor, and co-author, Keijo Räsänen, who has supported me ever since the days of my master´s thesis. I appreciate the integrity, passion and sensitivity you show not only in research but also in education and development work that are, as you have showed me, central in creating a meaningful academic life. Without Hanna Päiviö, also a co-author, I would have never started this project. You made me see the meaning of socio-cultural worlds and practices in business education, and together we had courage to turn these issues into a research agenda. And without Susanna Kantelinen, another co-author, I would not believe in the individual subjects´ ability and power to challenge these socio-cultural practices as much as I do today. You are a living proof of that power. I would also like to thank Hans Mäntylä, with whom I have collaborated on diverse academic tasks, such as curriculum planning, development and teaching. I appreciate your respectful, reflective and human attitude towards other people and their daily endeavors.

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My warmest thanks go to my husband, Jussi, and to my children, Vilho, Valpuri and the unborn, who balance and complete my life in a priceless way. I am thankful to my parents, Liisa and Matti Korpiaho, who have raised me to appreciate critical thinking, open-mindedness and curiosity towards life. I am also indebted to my parents-in-law, Leena and Pentti Korkeaoja who have helped my family in many ways. I am lucky to have a wealth of dear relatives and friends outside of academia with whom to share the pressures and pleasures of life. It´s time to celebrate!

Helsinki, 23 March 2014
Kirsi Korpiaho

Contents

List of publications

This doctoral thesis consists of an introductory essay and of the following publications:

1. Korpiaho, K. & Päiviö, H. & Räsänen, K. (2007). Anglo-American forms of management education: A practice-theoretical perspective. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 23(1), 36-65. DOI:10.1016/j.scaman.2006.12.004

2. Korpiaho, K. (2005). Students' curriculums: What do students learn in a business school? In S. Gherardi & D. Nicolini (eds.), *The Passion for Learning and Knowing* (pp.221-241). Trento: University of Trento e-books. (http://eprints.biblio.unitn.it/828/2/Volume_I_02.pdf)

3. Korpiaho, K. (2007). Students as practitioners in academia - proficiency and reflectivity in study practices. *Journal of Organisational Transformation and Social Change,* 4(3), 249-262. DOI:10.1386/jots.4.3.249/1

4. Kantelinen, S. & Korpiaho, K. (2009). Doctoral students as participants in academia: The process of (un)becoming academics. An invited paper shared in the Public Seminar of the Oxford Learning Institute, University of Oxford, October 29.

5. Räsänen, K. & Korpiaho, K. (2011). Supporting doctoral students in their professional identity projects. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 33(1), 19-31. DOI:10.1080/0158037X.2010.515568

Beginning[1]

At the beginning of my studies in 1998, I considered myself fairly typical business student – a recent high school graduate coming from a middle-class family from the capital city region. I thought I was socio-culturally a right kind of person for studying business; I also had some preliminary understanding of the field. I was not the only business graduate in my family, nor was I the first one. My mother's parents were agricultural entrepreneurs, and my father´s parents ran a small grocery shop at their home, until the villagers´ poverty drove my kind-hearted grandfather to bankruptcy. I spent my summers in Ostrobothnia helping to look after cattle and playing table-tennis in an old storage hall. My father continued in retail working for a cooperative as an IT-manager, and my mother, a handwork teacher by profession, made a career as a supervisor in textile production.

However, especially in the first years of my undergraduate studies, I felt that various choices, passions, and desires were offered and had to be hailed and embraced in order for me to be recognized as a virtuous business student. Those temptations and pressures affected how I studied, what I aimed for, and how I justified my actions. I behaved just like my fellow students: wearing pearl earrings I looked for book summaries, thinking what my CV looked like. I was, however, restless and full of internal conflicts. At home, I had heard my mother telling stories of ill-managed work communities, disputes in the workplace, interventions, legal suits, and having to deal with one´s subordinates´ emotions as well as one´s own; and my father held forth on co-operatives as a way of doing business, and his self-made analyses of how societal circumstances shaped the business of co-operatives. I had heard colorful and complex stories, but, during the years in business school – with a few exceptions – I became competent in working with models and making calculations; optimizing production lines and timetables; I gained an understanding of how strategy directs, or should direct, action.

Getting my MSc with good grades after five years of studying, I felt I had learned more about being a competent student and being socialized into a management ethos than about thinking myself as a business practitioner of any sort. Later on, I realized that I had been exposed to mainstream business

1 Every chapter in this doctoral thesis begins with a diary-like story written in cursive fonts. These stories introduce a theme of each chapter from a personal point of view, and by doing so, they simultaneously illustrate my role in this research process as a writer and a researcher.

education, with its range of educational practices. This served as a spark to start a reading circle with like-minded women. We found an emerging stream of literature on management education studies, and particularly on critical management studies. Soon after, a research group called Management Education Research Initiative (MERI) was founded in our department in 2003. The purpose of the MERI-group was – and still is – to advance critical, alternative, understandings of business schools as sites of education and academic work. The group´s research focuses on education as experienced and accomplished by students, and on academic work as done by university staff. A major theme of the research project is the autonomous renewal of work practices. This thesis comprises provisions from that ten-year period – a series of studies that I have written either by myself or with colleagues in the research group.

1. Introduction

> ”What would be a better example of a practical and efficient student than a totally performance oriented business candidate? This efficient performer would combine practicality with benefit maximizing behavior. The desire and thirst for power and money would drive him/her at a dizzying pace towards business life elites, whereas studying serves as a means – and a pit stop – on the way to getting there.” student c5

1.1 The old and new challenges of conceptualizing business studying

The excerpt above was written by one of our undergraduate business students during a course where students reflected on their studying in particular socio-cultural settings. Although this excerpt can be viewed as one individual´s ironic account of studying, it is not a unique story. Rather, the story of business students as practically and instrumentally oriented individuals who are more interested in self-advancement and career prospects than learning or intellectual challenges is recognized and depicted as a somewhat time-enduring, overarching characterization of business students both nationally (Nevgi 1998, Leppälä & Päiviö 2001, Päiviö 2008), as well as globally (Grey 2002, Engwall 2007, Korpiaho et al. 2007). Titles of studies like Watson (1996) “Motivation: That is Maslow, isn´t it?”, King (1995) “Learning? I´ve got no time for any of that...”, Beatty (2004) “Grades as money and the role of the market metaphor in management education” reveal how studying is about collecting credit points to earn qualifications (the pessimistic version) or learning management techniques perceived to be useful and immediately applicable (the optimistic version).

To assess such claims about business students, it would seem appropriate to look inside business schools, and to examine how prevailing practices are organized. Studying in a business school is not a boundless experience; rather, it is constrained by the landscapes of its own practices, which serve as a particular context for students to participate, learn, and know. Therefore, the critical gaze is not to be targeted at students only, but also at the prevailing bundles of practices that construct the business school experience (French & Grey 1996, Grey 2002, Pfeffer & Fong 2002, 2004). This experience is colored and shaped by expectations, demands, temptations and offerings from a

variety of practices and their practitioners (teachers, administrators, academic managers, fellow students), each promoting diverse notions of what forms or should form the business education experience, in terms of relevance, meaningfulness, effectiveness and efficiency. The unique composition of these practices then proposes either an implicit or explicit introduction to, or preparation for, particular forms of social life, appreciations and values (see Giroux 2002).

The special features of the practices of management education have to do with the long history of business schools serving business life (Kokko 2003, Engwall & Zamagni 1998, Engwall 2008, Kettunen 2013) and socializing students into managerial techniques and language (Willmott 1994, Grey & Mitev 1995). This coupling – when taken as unquestioned and unchallenged – has raised substantial criticism among researchers. Grey (2002, 502) writes: "Management education endorses both market relations and managerial dominance as normal and natural features of social organization. Management education offers an unacknowledged politicized account not only of management but also society." This means that the logic for action, discourses and values of market and managerial thought are advocated and supported through the contents of curricula, but more importantly, also in the way education is organized and performed[2]. According to Pfeffer and Fong (2004) it is precisely this combination of market-orientation linked with an absence of a professional ethos, which has caused students to pursue an instrumental and career-oriented approach to their studying.

Business schools´ role in enhancing instrumental and opportunistic approaches to studying presents long-standing concerns in management education (see Engwall 2007). However, along with changes in the field of higher education, such as the rise of a market-oriented ideology and academic capitalism, these problems have not disappeared but rather become more common, also in other higher education institutions (Slaughter & Leslie 1997, Currie & Vidovich 2000, Välimaa 2001, Giroux 2002, Slaughter & Rhoades 2004, Rinne & Koivula 2005, Mäntylä 2007, Rinne et al. 2012). The emergence of educational markets, i.e. the `marketization´ of educational products and services followed by a `commodification of education´, has created a situation where universities of today are situated in a competitive global market recruiting students and promoting their services. Simultaneously, these universities and academics themselves are under pressure for increased performance, outcomes and accountability. Researchers worry that by focusing on operating in a market, utilizing market mechanisms, and being excessively concerned over external accountability, the educational purpose of universities is obscured. For example, Gibbs (2001, 86) proposes

2 One example is how competition becomes produced as an essential part of the studying experience. A typical situation, also witnessed in my home business school, is that students compete against each other either as individuals or groups and their grades are listed on notice boards. There are also particular case competitions that are highly visible, and, the dean list for best performers, with grants and ceremonies. Beatty (2004) describes how different stakeholders of business education interpret grades as a currency that neatly quantifies learning, permitting market comparisons and exchange leading to problems of realizing the intrinsic nonmaterial goals of education, and cultivating the student-teacher relationship.

that these changes are altering what we may be led to expect from the experiences of higher learning, and thus threatening students with increased alienation from meaningful learning opportunies and professional development; particularly if, to satisfy an economic model of education, universities treat learners as objects of educational achievement to be counted, accredited and initiated into the performativity of credentialised society.

In current literature on changes in the higher education sector, students are frequently depicted as `consumers of educational commodities´ (Gibbs 2001, Molesworth et al. 2009), or `resources in universities´ production lines´ (Parker & Jary 1995, Barry et al. 2001), or even `pawns´ in a university game (Tight 2013). The rise of neoliberal views and academic capitalism has produced new understandings of students and their studying, cutting into their critique of current tendencies, but offering little for understanding education from within, i.e. from the viewpoint of its participants. These critical understandings can provide a starting point for those wanting to understand the conditions of studying in our current day universities, but they do not serve the students themselves in their search for more multi-dimensional studying. Nor do they serve those aiming to support students, or those interested in the development of education.

1.2 Consequences for studying and space for student agency

The representations of business studying and business education, which I introduced above, bring on various consequences for the students. First of all, if and when notions of studying depicted in research literature become reinforced and nurtured through various teaching and learning practices in the everyday life of business schools, then the space for different reiterations of studying and learning becomes significantly constricted.

And indeed, researchers in the field of management education have argued that business schools have lost their way in becoming too market-driven. In their aspiration to produce practically-oriented graduates, they focus too much on issues of efficiency and effectiveness, endorse instrumental adoptions of tools and techniques (Grey & Mitev 1995, Roberts 1996), and validate masculine ways of knowing and learning (Sinclair 1995[3], 1997, Marshall 1999). All this happens at the expense of other perspectives, such as developing and nurturing an environment that prompts intellectual curiosity, colloboration, imagination and creativity (see Starkey & Tempest 2009).

As most students embrace these presumptions of business education without questioning, there is a threat that students adopt and accept the market-oriented and managerial practices structuring their studying without considering the consequences on learning and professional development. According to Negvi and Komulainen (1993) nearly half of the business students state they are career-oriented people, to whom studying and good

3 By masculine ways of knowing and learning Sinclair (1995) refers to e.g. defenses against admissions of uncertainty and ignorance; learning by looking outwards instead of inwards; and knowing by analytical replication versus imaginative and emotional engagement.

grades are important in order to get a good position in the labor markets. Leppälä and Päiviö (2001) have also studied the moral order of business studying. Based on this study, Päiviö (2008, 65-66) writes: "The key to the master narrative lies in the relationship between business education and the labor market. The better this relationship functions, the more virtuous the studying of the ideal business student is. The ideal student judges every decision and act against the expectations of `the real, practical business life´, and not against the standards of the university world."

However, what is conceived and hailed as business students´ `practicality´ in management education, often merely concerns tactical or technical competence, at the cost of other aspects of practicality, such as political or moral concerns. This narrow view on practicality has raised concerns of business schools´ role in educating future managers and business practitioners, especially among management education researchers (Roberts 1996, Mintzberg & Gosling 2002, Beatty 2004, Mintzberg 2004). Therefore, views about studying matter more widely, for they are tightly entwined with the question of educating future business professionals. The same question of how the students´ relation to their studying becomes understood, conceptualized and supported in education, deals with the question of how their relation to other forms of practical activity becomes understood, especially to those performed later on in business life.

As a consequence, the culturally and socially shared and (re)produced views on business students´ studying – inevitably shallow and instrumental – and assumptions of the students´ aims, means and desires, paint a narrow picture of business studying. They flatten the understandings of the possibilities of business education, and constrict students´ spectrum of more multi-dimensional learning and professional development. Moreover, as Finnish studies show, there are – and have always been – students who do not endorse the usual views on business studying, who feel marginalized from the hegemony of business studying, or who are otherwise seeking for alternatives (Negvi 1998, Leppälä & Päiviö 2001, Kantelinen 2008, da Silva forthcoming). And even those that seem to swim like fish in the water (see Bourdieu 1990) in current business school surroundings would benefit from an education that would embrace more educational notions of business schools´ purposes. Such purposes include aiming to facilitate students´ growth as a person, educating reflective citizens and professionals, or simply giving them more control over their own lives.

Being an active participant in business education for nearly 15 years, I recognize and subscribe to these concerns: the socio-cultural contexts for business studying can be narrow and constricted. Therefore, I will join those researchers and educators in the field who call for and invite new openings and alternative approaches to conceptualizing business students and their studying. Next, I will do my share by introducing an original approach to conceptualize business students and their studying.

1.3 Addressing the problem: research questions and new proposals

In this thesis, I propose an alternative conceptualization of students and their studying. I conceive students as active subjects – as physically, emotionally and intellectually present – and their studying as a practical activity, with an extended view on practicality, comprising tactical, political, moral and personal dimensions. With these conceptualizations, my aim is, first, to advance a more nuanced understanding of student agency by characterizing the diverse forms of student agency, and describing student agency in a business school context. Second, I aim to bring a developmental aspect on how to strengthen students´ views about themselves as active subjects, and how to support their search for a personally meaningful agency in undergraduate and/or postgraduate studying.

The conceptualizations of students as active subjects, and their actions as practical activity, have been formed gradually by experimenting; by teaching and conducting research with close colleagues in the Management Education Research Initiative (MERI)-research group. The research group is located in a local academic unit at the former Helsinki School of Economics, the present Aalto University School of Business[4].

Thus, this thesis can be read as a series of studies of local developmental efforts. We, the members of research group, have felt a need to address and solve some of the problems mentioned above in our business school, and particularly in our own unit. Our efforts to better understand daily doings and concerns of particular practitioners have gradually ended up as a more general framework of a practical activity (Räsänen et al. 2005, Korpiaho 2007 et al., Räsänen & Korpiaho 2007, Kantelinen & Korpiaho 2009, Korpiaho & Mäntylä 2012, Räsänen & Trux 2012). The framework can be used either for articulating or for describing a particular practical activity, and it can be used as a resource for either individual or collaborative reflection concerning one´s own work.

Inspired by practice-theoretical studies (e.g. Nicolini et al. 2003, Schatzki 2001), the motive for outlining and developing this framework of practical activity derived from a need and desire to understand the everyday life of students and academic workers. Thus, the starting point was definitely `from within and below´ of those being studied, rather than `from outside and above´. Research interest has been directed to triggering critical dialogue or immanent critique (see Eikeland & Nicolini 2011) among diverse participants within business schools and universities. While the research work conducted

4 Founded in 1911, School of Business is the oldest and the most prominent business school in Finland. School of Business comprises departments of Economics, Accounting, Finance, Information and Service Economy, Marketing, Management and International Business Communication. It is a community of approximately 4000 students and 500 personnel. It is the first business school in the Nordic countries to have received all three labels of excellence from the world's leading business school accreditation bodies: AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS. It has a relative long history of aspiring to be highly recognised and appreciated business school within European Business School Rankings. This may be one of the reasons for the pressures and challenges concerning business education - regognized it other countries and depicted in the research literure - holding true also in our school.

in the MERI-group can resonate with a variety of stakeholders, my primary aim has been to do research for students and practitioners involved in issues of studying and education.

The questions that I have been asking myself during the years of this research process are twofold. On the one hand, I have aimed to answer the theoretical question of *what the different forms of student agency are*, as well as the empirical question of *how student agency is manifested in a business school context*. But I have also been driven by a more developmental question of *how student agency can be strengthened*. These questions, which Kalleberg (1995) calls constative and constructive research questions (see also Räsänen & Mäntylä 2001), have endlessly offered me new interpretations and targets of study. But to be able to answer these questions has required dwelling on practice-theoretical approaches (Nicolini et al. 2003, Schatzki 2001) in order to get an in-depth understanding of studying as a practical activity.

Next I will better describe the following key conceptualizations of `studying as a practical activity´ (Section 1.3.1), `the four-fold framework of a practical activity´ (Section 1.3.2), and `student agency´ (Section 1.3.3).

1.3.1 Studying as a practical activity

In this thesis I draw on practice-theoretical approaches. These approaches hold a prominent place in the history of social sciences but in recent years, they have gained new momentum (Nicolini et al. 2003, Schatzki 2001). Studies inspired by these approaches highlight the significance of socio-cultural practices in constructing our everyday life, structuring our experiences, and even molding our identities. Studies show the socio-cultural character of everyday life around us, and pay attention to mundane human doings without forgetting wider social and political influences and pressures. Therefore, studying in a business school can be understood as a `practical activity´, referring to any social, habitual, emotional way of studying within a particular way of organizing bundles of practices. As practice-theoretical approaches highlight the relational, situational and social nature of doing and being in the world, these approaches thus differ from more traditional individual-centered social cognition perspectives (see also Fenwick 2000).

In traditional individual-centered perspectives the word `studying´ is usually linked to individuals´ cognitive operations such as acquiring knowledge, memorizing, or reading carefully. However, in this work, studying as practical activity – understood in terms of socio-cultural phenomenon – refers to *the world* of studying more broadly: it is what the students do in a business school. It involves getting to know the social and institutional milieu, planning timetables, calculating and optimizing time/work load ratios, dealing with peer pressures, working with others, competing and co-operating, doing course work, looking for materials, reading, writing, struggling with computers, looking for places to eat, participating in classroom practices, or avoiding them, feeling included/excluded within specific bundles of practices.

In society, established social practices comprise unique bundles of practices, which differentiate one form of social practice from another: for example,

vocational education differs from university education, and business education differs from medical education. These established forms of social practice consist of their own distinct bundles of practices, where individual practices like the practices of lecturing and examination hold their own place (Räsänen & Trux 2012). The practices of business education thus form a distinct context for studying that the students cannot ignore or dismiss. While studying consists of mundane doings, like fulfilling personal study plans, attending mass lectures and solving cases with peers, giving and receiving feedback etc., it does not happen in a vacuum. Rather, studying becomes constructed and shaped by students´ participation in diverse forms of teaching and learning practices, appraisal practices, and even surveillance and control practices.

While in individual-centered perspectices students´ learning and knowing are typically associated positively with individual growth, human potential and increase in skills, the practice-theoretical view suggests human knowing and learning to be understood more holistically, as co-constitution of various elements of thinking, doing and being, and the socio-cultural, material, bundles of practices (Gherardi et al. 1998, Nicolini et al. 2003). The consequences of such learning can be desirable, undesirable or even harmful depending on the situation and its stakeholders.

Therefore, my decision to concentrate primarily on studying, and only secondarily on learning, is a conscious choice. I do not consider learning as a separate activity, but rather integrated tightly into the everyday operations that students are trying to perform, master, or simply cope with, or even avoid as they are navigating through the bundles of diverse practices. Reckwitz (2002) emphasizes how every practice implies a particular mode of intentionality, i.e. a way of wanting or desiring certain things and avoiding others. Practices are not empty or neutral; rather, they consist of diverse expectations and suggestions of what to do, how to do it and why. Neither are they independent of those engaged in them. Students inhabit the practices, and the practices inhabit them. In the practice-theoretical view, the status of human beings as subjects, and their ability for agency, are bound to practices but not limited by them (Schatzki 2001, 11); there is always room for alternative reiterations, resistance or even reforms. Therefore, student agency and its strengthening become intriguing targets of inquiry.

1.3.2 The four-fold framework of a practical activity

As argued above, conceptualizing studying as a practical activity views it as a mundane, physical action within bundles of socio-cultural practices. In order to articulate, describe and understand that activity better I will now introduce the four-fold framework, developed in the MERI-group. This framework of practical activity has been developed to offer a heuristic tool to study and discuss participants' relationships to their daily goings, whether studying or working (Räsänen & Korpiaho 2007, Räsänen 2008, Räsänen & Korpiaho 2011). This emerging and developing framework can be used either in live situations (like in classroom exercises) or to facilitate research (Räsänen 2013b). The whole framework can be applied or only a part of it, meaning that

a researcher can choose to concentrate on some, but not all dimensions of practical activity. Figure 1 shows the framework in diagrammatic form.

As we can see from the figure, the four dimensions of a practical activity are: tactical (how to do this?), political (what to accomplish and achieve with this?), moral (why aim at these goals, and in this way?), and personal stance (who am I?). These dimensions capture different stances to an activity, and different modes of relating to it and interpreting it. The framework invites students, practitioners, and researchers to inquire into the tactics, politics, morals and subjects of their (or other people´s) work. Each issue investigates the same activity from a different stance. Equally, students and other workers can take different stances and form orientations depending on the situation and their immediate contexts. The same persons can alter stances as they move from one situation to another, or they can change their stance even within the same situation.

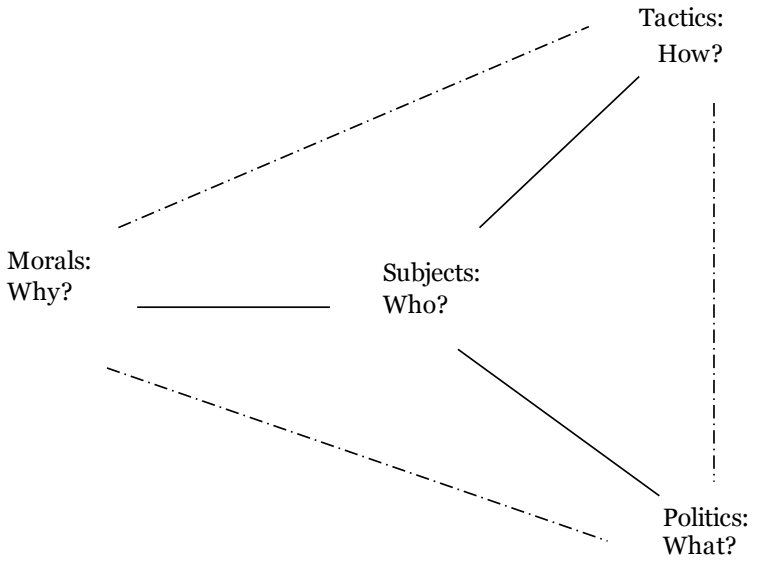

Figure 1. Framework of practical activity (see Räsänen & Korpiaho 2011, Räsänen & Trux 2012)

These stances are not to be used as a way to categorize students, as studies on learning styles and learning orientations often do (see Reynolds 1997). Instead, the purpose is to better understand and depict an inevitably context-bound activity, and to support students in the search for a personally meaningful relationship towards studying. In the tactical stance students relate towards surviving in their own way in a space owned by others (see de Certeau 1984). In the political stance students are concerned with the consequences of performing a particular task in view of its effects on their position in relevant fields (see Bourdieu 1990). In the moral stance students are concerned with the goods realized by performing a task and in a certain

way (see MacIntyre 1981). In the personal stance students are preoccupied with the issue of how to present a unique self that is still recognized and appreciated by others in the micro worlds of divergent practices (see Dreier 2003, 2009). A more detailed account of these dimensions is presented in Chapter three.

1.3.3 Definition of student agency

In the center of any practical activity there is a subject dealing with issues in the course of her or his mundane endeavors. Here, the subject is a physical actor who does, thinks, feels and experiences in the midst of diverse relations of practices, communities and other participants. The subject´s agency on the other hand, can be described as (a) subject´s consciousness of its own situation, (b) forms of purposefulness and intentionality that enable action, and (c) as a strength and ability to construct alternative interpretations and/or action. The power of agency arises from a subject´s conditioned space in the midst of bundles of practices: from exposure to practices, knowing them, acknowledging them, and mastering them to a different extent. As Fenwick (2006, 26) formulates, "Agency is articulated in the subject´s recognition of both the processes of its own constitution, and the resources within these processes through which alternate readings and constitutions are possible".

In this thesis, I see a subject´s agency as an awareness of its own situation, and a capability to create and act on alternative interpretations of one´s situation. However, this should not be taken as a token of subject´s autonomy; instead the subject is continually in the midst of socio-cultural-material practices and forces, and subject´s agency is recognising these forces and the possible (and limited) ways to influence them. As there is an obvious challenge – between a subjects´s capacity to reflect upon their own situation and practices and forces that constitute their situation – I would argue that, in most cases, this reflective work requires special support.

This support can be given by offering texts and articles that bring out alternative frameworks or concepts, or it can be facilitated through education by arranging room for collective discussions, peer learning and critical reflection. Smeyers and Burbules (2006) describe this latter mission as `education about a practice´, and not merely `into a practice´, which includes promoting a critical and reflective relation to practices in order to revitalize them and to enhance a more liberating relation to them.

I take the proposal of Smeyers and Burbules as a reminder that education is not about conforming to the current market-dominated logic, where students are conceived as either consumers of educational products or resources in universities´ production lines. Nor is it about liberating students from the forms of oppression that they may (or may not) agree to perceive as such. Rather, it is about offering them support and resources to gain more control of their own lives. The ability to understand and read the field one is involved in, to recognize the diverse bundles of practices, and to build a personal stance towards them, would be something worth supporting and rehearsing in current universities as well as in working life.

1.4 The plot in this thesis

Here I will present the plot in Part I in this research. In the first chapter, I have briefly introduced the long-standing challenges in business studying, and given a glimpse of new ones, and then, proposed a conceptualization of students as active participants, and their studying as a practical activity, i.e. as mundane navigation through diverse socio-cultural bundles of practices. I have put forward research questions concerning the different forms of agency, the manifestations of student agency in business school contexts, and ways of strengthening student agency. I understand subjects and their agency to be bound to practices, but not determined by practices. I have introduced the four-fold framework of practical activity that invites students, practitioners, and researchers to inquire into the tactics, politics, morals and subjects of their (or other people´s) work. Furthermore, I have suggested that this framework can be used to characterize student agency as well as to strengthen it – either by providing resources for research work or by proving a framework for reflection.

However, when dealing with the issue of studying, entwined with students´ learning and knowing, it is obvious that there is plenty of previous research conducted in a wide range of research fields. The second chapter will review these studies on student studying and learning in the fields of higher education, business education and adult education. These studies were not reviewed in the Introduction Chapter, for this thesis did not originate from dissatisfaction with previous research, but from dissatisfaction with a local situation. Therefore, studies of students studying and learning in other fields of research have provided me with inspiration and insights. Nevertheless, having familiarized myself with current research on student learning, I do see that there is room for critique and fresh approaches in to it.

As the second chapter reviews research ranging from an individualistic to socio-cultural approaches, it paves the way for a specific practice-theoretical approach to studying that our MERI-research group has developed. The third chapter elaborates on this understanding of studying as a practical activity, and presents the four-fold framework introducing the tactical, political, moral and the personal stance in greater detail. The practice-theoretical approach highlights the situated, embodied nature of studying within local socio-cultural contexts, which also sets challenges for the researcher: How to get close to the mundane doings and sayings of participants but not to get overwhelmed by the richness of everyday life?

In the fourth chapter, I explicate the choices I have made in order to research the phenomenon of studying from within. I describe how my research draws from organizational ethnography (Ybema et al. 2009) and especially from its participatory variation of at-home ethnography (Alvesson 2003, 2009, Mäntylä 2007). I study a cultural setting to which I have a "natural" access, and in which I participate as an active participant, more or less on equal terms with other participants. I show how I have combined fieldwork methods to generate materials, and open up the ways I have analyzed materials in each article.

In the fifth chapter, I introduce the aims and foci of five individual, interrelated studies, and discuss the main findings in regard to my research questions concerning student agency and the resourcing of it in the contexts of business studying. The first study is a review of diverse forms of management education, and the next two studies deal with undergraduate studying, while the last two concentrate on postgraduate studying. And in the sixth chapter, I finally discuss the main findings, contributions and implications of my research project.

But if a reader wishes just to get a brief overview of the enclosed studies in Part II, I will next present a short summary of the studies in this thesis.

1.5 Short overview to the enclosed studies

The second part of this research contains a series of five studies. These studies are individual but interrelated. While some studies, especially the first one, provide resources for anyone who wants to broaden their view on business education, the main motive for me to write these studies was to provide resources for students themselves to ponder on and maybe even question the uniqueness of their business school experience by showing its socio-cultural character (see the second and the fourth study). But there are also studies focusing on developmental efforts that elaborate explicitly how student agency can be supported in educational contexts, as a part of the official curriculum (see the third and fifth study). Here is a brief overview of the enclosed studies.

Through a review of three prominent management education journals, the first study "Anglo-American forms of management education: A practice-theoretical perspective" examines how teachers and researchers account for their work of educating future business practitioners. The four-fold framework of practical activity is applied as an analytical lens in order to show the richness and variation between the practitioners´ accounts. As a result, we describe seven different forms of organizing management education, i.e. the traditional form, three revised ones, and three alternative forms. The further we move from the traditional, the more demanding the process of education becomes, both for teachers and students. Therefore, by portraying the current forms of business education, we simultaneously depict the scene of the possible space for students, as well as the practical activity of students. The article suggests that better understanding of alternatives would diversify our thoughts on management education, its goals, means and morals, and especially our notions of teachers and students as active subjects.

In the second study "Students' curriculums: What do students learn in a business school?" I concentrate on one particular dimension of practical activity, i.e. students´ tactical surviving and maneuvering in the context of the institutionalized practice of examinations. I have used students´ discussions on Internet – their message exchanges – as naturally occurring material that pries open the logic of the practice of examinations from their point of view. The analysis of the discussion shows how the more proficient students effectively familiarize newcomers with the practice of taking exams, and how

students themselves reproduce what it means to master the practice of examinations and represent oneself as a competent business student. As a result, I propose a new term, `students´ curriculum´, as it suggests how the (undesirable) social reality of studying – at least from an educational point of view – is replicated and reproduced through students´ own actions.

In the third article "Students as practitioners in academia – proficiency and reflectivity in study practices" I describe a developmental effort to resource students´ studying. This effort was one particular course, `Professional Development´, planned and carried out by a senior colleague and me. The purpose of the course was to invite students to articulate and reflect on the tactics, politics and morals of their studying, and hence, support students in their search for a personally meaningful relationship towards studying. We assumed that if the students learned how to identify, describe and reflect on their studying, they would also be able to capitalize on those competencies in other forms of practical activity. The study highlights how crucial it is to broaden the horizon from which to explore practical activity: Raising questions that come not only from a tactical stance, but also from a political and a moral stance will expand students´ understanding of their own situation within a business school setting. It also gives a more holistic and richer picture of any form of practical activity situated in various workplaces, and thus supports the development of reflective practitioners.

The fourth study "Doctoral students as participants in academia: The process of (un)becoming academics" shifts attention to doctoral studies. Hence, it remarks that studying in a business school is not limited to undergraduate studying; rather, some students continue their business school experience with postgraduate studying. This study discusses how doctoral students are balancing between exposure, engagement and subjugation to contradictory practices – those cherishing autonomy and academic freedom, and those emphasizing efficiency and a more structured education – in their search for professional identities. As a result, we narrate six stories of postgraduate studying, consisting of different practice configurations and stances towards practices.

Finally, the last study "Supporting doctoral students in their professional identity projects" looks at how the framework of practical activity was used to facilitate doctoral students´ identity work in a new course. The course, targeted both at doctoral students and other academic workers, aimed to provide not only cultural resources for identity work but also a site for doing this work collaboratively and reflectively with peers. Participants were asked to reflect upon their own work by using the help of practice theorists (e.g. de Certeau on tactics, Bourdieu on politics, MacIntyre on morals, Harré on identity). Addressing these dimensions one by one helped to joint reflections from mundane, tactical considerations to the possibilities of political and moral action. There was an assumption that dealing with these issues even partially would help students to resolve the primary issue of who they might want to become as academic professionals. The study presents the course design and participants´ feedback on the course.

This short overview of the five studies gives some impression of the thesis at hand, but to be able to position this series of studies in the streams of research on students´ studying and learning, lets´ turn the page…

Studying and learning

It was a regular Thursday evening in 1999; I had a case group meeting with my peers in the students´ cafeteria at the Helsinki School of Economics. The cafeteria was just about to close, but we still managed to get our cups of coffee. The meeting was planned to be efficient, as we were all busy second year business students. We all had jobs in prominent companies, where we did the hours in order to gain much valued work experience. We had divided the work on our Harvard Business School -case in advance, based on our natural skills and aptitude: two of us were fluent in solving mathematical problems, one was interested in marketing theories, and I was keen to analyze organizational issues, and I also wrote the learning reflections for the group. We were only in our early twenties, dressed in straight trousers and presentable shirts and blouses, and just beginning to collect the pieces of our work together, when suddenly my friend put his hands on his chest and his face turned completely white. After a moment of painful silence, he recovered. Afterwards, I heard that he was diagnosed with a sudden attack of arrhythmia due to excessive stress.

I have carried this memory with me almost 15 years, and it still reminds me of the passion, commitment and determination – almost to the point of insanity – that we had as young business students. We had hardly got in to the business school, but our focus was already outwards and beyond: on becoming professionals and gaining positions in the labor market. I have wondered afterwards what it was that made us act as we did. In the time when we could have led a cheerful student life, we were anything but carefree, not to mention reckless or rebellious.

Was it because of our personal characteristics? Maybe we were just goal-oriented, determined, and ambitious? Or was it due to the business education curriculum, its exposed and hidden values, which we also tried to execute in our own lives? Or was it due to the business school culture, its history and ethos, which we just wanted to be part of and belong to?

2. Previous research on student studying and learning

The three main research fields discussed in this thesis are higher education, management education and learning, and finally, adult education. These fields consist of different key issues, approaches and research methods. Thus, within these fields I will focus on those streams of research which explicitly construct the phenomenon of studying and learning in higher education.

2.1 Relevant research fields

Higher education research

The field of higher education research covers a wide range of studies that concentrate on policy issues driven by practical concerns presenting an informative account of the situation witnessed in current higher education institutions (see Kuoppala et al. 2003, Teichler 2003, Brennan & Teichler 2008, Tight 2012 for a literature review). In particular, researchers in the critical stream (Parker & Jary 1995, Slaughter & Rhoades 2004, Mäntylä 2007) have pointed out some pain spots in developments in contemporary neo-liberal capitalism. However, with regard to studying in higher education, mainstream research emerges from administrative premises covering issues such as student selection, entry policies, retention, attrition, and the employment of graduates, with evident consequences to the ways in which students are defined and studying constructed (Kantelinen 2008). This stream of research offers a basis for policy making and has thus societal significance.

Nevertheless, there are streams in higher education research that deal explicitly with student learning and studying. A considerable stream focuses explicitly on learning styles and strategies, cognitive orientations and individual experiences (Haggis 2009). These studies stem mostly from psychological premises, as the lure of psychology for educational research has proved profound and persistent (Smeyers & Depaepe 2012). Other streams draw from background theories such as philosophy and social sciences. Science studies (Hess 1997, Knorr Cetina 1999) focus on the philosophical basis of scientific knowledge, as well as the diversity and special characteristics of various disciplines. Studies of disciplinary cultures (Clark 1987, Becher 1989, Ylijoki 2000, Becher & Trowler 2001), on the other hand, build on this

and discuss life inside universities and faculties, i.e. actual working or studying in different disciplinary contexts. They describe how studying, learning and knowing vary in different disciplines.

Management education and management learning research

Management studies can also be considered a field of discipline with its own traditions, contradictions and challenges that students face when they enter business school (French & Grey 1996, Grey 2002). Research on management education provides an elaborated view on the particularities of the content and delivery of management and organizational studies in business schools and universities (see Holman 2000, Beatty & Leigh 2010). One of the most distinctive features of the field is the assumption that education stands in a more or less functional relationship to management practice (French & Grey 1996, 3). This view is problematized by researchers in critical management education (Reynolds 1999a, Cunliffe et al. 2002, Perriton & Reynolds 2004). They see management education as a significant arena for the reproduction of management, and have thus placed management curricula under critical scrutiny. This has opened up new research possibilities and research questions, involving questions such as how different power relations, discourses and practices shape the studying and learning of students.

There is also a research stream of management learning which is interested in the study and critique of management education and development, and particularly in the learning processes of managers (Fox 1994a, 1994b, Burgoyne & Reynolds 1997). This research stream discusses the education of managers beyond classrooms, stretching its research focus on to studies of managerial work, management learning and development in different arenas, as well as organizational learning (Brown & Duguid 1991, Contu & Willmott 2003). Overall, the inherent interest of management education to produce `effective´ workforce – although `effective´ can mean efficient, reflective, or critical practitioners – connects the field to discussions within adult education research.

Adult education research

The field of adult education research fluently crosses the borders of learning in educational institutions and learning in work organizations, including research areas such as adults as learners, continuing education, life-long learning, changes in working life and the labor markets, learning at work, and professional development (Jarvis 1995, Salo 2006, Collin & Paloniemi 2007). Despite this diversity, researchers in adult education share an interest in adult learners, the many formal and informal contexts where learning occurs, and in those societal prerequisites, conditions, and powers that enable and constrain learning (Pantzar 2007, 44). As these interests resonate with those of management education and learning, there are research streams where these two fields intersect (see Tight 2000).

Especially studies of adult learning and teaching – comprising topics such as action learning (Marquardt & Waddill 2004), experiential learning (Fenwick 2000, Malinen 2000), and critical reflection (Brookfield 1995, Mezirow 1998)

– are closely attached to management learning. Studies of adult educational curricula, which assume that learning does not happen only formally in classrooms, but also informally through engagement in various tasks, practices and communities, also share an interest in discussions of situated learning (Lave & Wenger 1991), learning at work (Boud & Garrick 1999), and communities of practice (Wenger 1998). However, in questions of power, adult education researchers have much insight about power mechanisms, like issues of access and participation, especially in relation to social differences. These issues are actually at the center of adult education research. The contribution of adult education research is, according to Tight (2000, 103), a more radical and political perspective to management learning. And indeed, the most radical stream in adult education sees studying and learning as developing an awareness of power relations oppressing subjects, cultivating new perspectives and realizing emancipation (Giroux 1981).

2.2 Approaches to studying

As the different fields embrace the issues of studying and learning from their own premises, the current research enters and travels in multiple fields and draws from various discussions in the search for what shapes studying and student agency in contemporary universities and business schools. Next, I am going to present some key approaches to studying within the major discussions referred to above (see Figure 2).

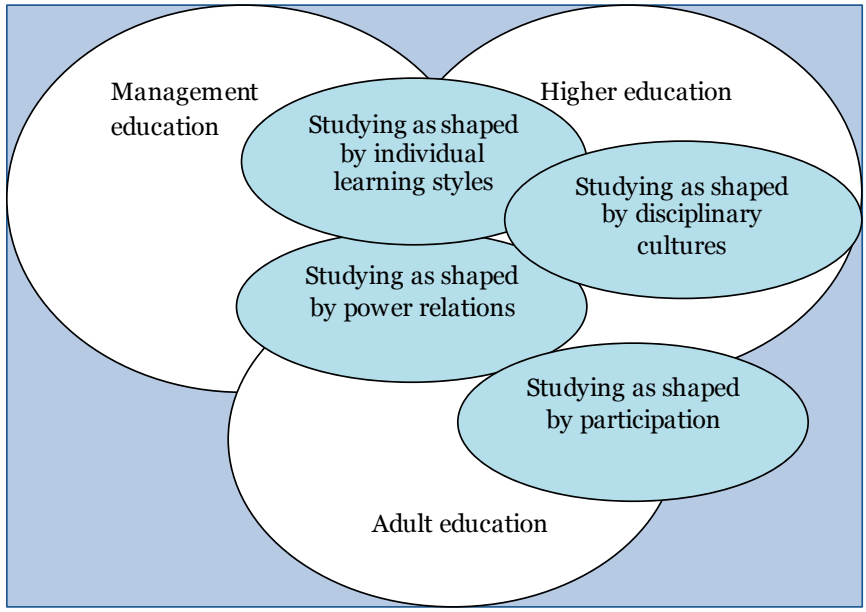

Figure 2. Approaches to studying in different fields of research

2.2.1 Studying as shaped by individual learning styles

The widely known and often referred studies on student learning are studies on learning styles. This stream of studies gained ground in the 1960´s and 1970´s, and has been developing ever since. A variety of ways have emerged (experimental, psychometric, phenomenographical) to explore the differences between how people learn, sometimes in terms of more or less stable personality characteristics and sometimes in terms of conscious preferences influenced by contextual factors (Reynolds 1997, 116). As Haggis (2009) points out, there has been a forty decade long reliance on researching individuals' behavior or attitudes in the quest for achieving better learning or better education.

In management education, the `learning style´ approach developed by Kolb (1984) and Honey and Mumford (1992) has been the most influential one. Learning styles specifically deal with characteristic styles of learning. Kolb (1984) proposes a theory of experiential learning that involves four principal stages: concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Kolb (1984, 67) defines learning styles as "generalized differences in learning orientations based on the degree to which people emphasize the four modes of the learning process as measured by a self-report test". The four learning styles are diverging, assimilating, converging and accommodating. Reynolds (1997, 118) points out that the idea of learning styles is intuitively appealing to professional and vocational developers because it serves well the need that people have to be able to recognize their unique ways of learning and to appreciate their own abilities. However, research on learning styles has received lots of criticism. It is, for example, accused of being simplifying and reductionist by viewing the learner as fundamentally autonomous from his or her surroundings, thus downgrading the relevance of social contexts (Reynolds 1997, Fenwick 2000).

In higher education research, work on learning styles is slightly different. There is a difference in the nature and quality of engagement people show in their relation to whatever it is they are intending to learn. Furthermore, the difference in engagement can be a consequence of a conscious choice. Pask´s (1976) research on how university students performed academic tasks led him to identify a holistic, serialistic, and a versatile learning strategy, i.e. an ability to use either a holistic or a serialistic strategy when necessary. Marton and Säljö (1976), in their turn, proposed the concepts of deep and surface-level understanding, later referred to as approaches. A further approach was identified as a strategic approach. Students who adopt this latter approach were described as using learning approaches that they believe will help them pass exams and attain their goals (Ramsden 1981). Furthermore, Biggs (1979) named students´ study orientations as internalizing (intrinsic learning), utilizing (extrinsic learning), and achieving (referring to the use of appropriate orientation in diverse situations).

All these strategies, approaches or orientations build on cognitive and motivational components. A student´s choice of preferred style to study depends on several variables, like emotions, workloads, teacher support and

learning environments. Researchers in this tradition are interested in investigating the relationship between psychological and pedagogical factors and learning outcomes (Entwistle 1991, Entwistle & Peterson 2004, Heikkilä & Lonka 2006). These studies show that contextual factors do matter, and thus this stream of research has proved, as Mann (2008, 27) points out: "(...) how students´ approach to learning and studying, and hence their experience of learning, emerges out of an interaction between the students´ own psychological context and the particular pedagogic context they are in."

Although the meaning of context and diverse situations of students have attracted more interest, the cultural and social practices that forcefully shape studying and construct the institutional and educational contexts have not been taken into account. Haggis (2009, 377-378) writes: "In response to the repeated finding that large numbers of students appear not to be taking a deep approach, the question implied by the research seems to be `why so many students take a surface approach to learning?´ Despite nearly 40 years of concentrated research activity, this question appears to remain still largely unanswered. One explanation for the weak understanding of the logic of studying can be found from the research approaches used." She then continues (p. 388): "The field of higher education has arguably focused most of its efforts until very recently upon attempting to shore up uncertainties in relation to knowledge of students as `other´ and has not been particularly good at examining its own cultures and ways of being." Next, I present how the research on disciplinary cultures has tried to tackle this challenge.

2.2.2 Studying as shaped by disciplinary cultures

The significance of context is highlighted in the tradition of disciplinary culture studies. Studying, knowing and learning can have different forms depending not only on individual learning styles or strategies but also on the context in which the student is a participant. The main and most obvious context for studying is the subject matter with its requirements, knowledge, methods, values and social life, and the disciplinary unit providing teaching in that subject. A disciplinary culture approach suggests that a university comprises heterogeneous small worlds inside of it (Clark 1987).

These small worlds are called disciplinary cultures with their own characteristics and distinctions. The differences were first classified under broad groupings by Biglan (1973) and Kolb (1981). Biglan divides disciplines under headings of hard pure (e.g. natural sciences), soft pure (e.g. humanities), hard applied (e.g. technologies) and soft applied (e.g. social sciences) depending on the subject-matter of research, while Kolb divides them with the preferred learning style of intellectual enquiry under the labels of abstract reflective (hard-pure), concrete reflective (soft pure), abstract active (hard applied), concrete active (soft applied). Building on that work, Becher (1989, 1994) remarks that disciplines do not just consist of cognitive elements, but also of social and cultural features with their own traditions, norms, values, interaction styles and pedagogies. He calls them academic tribes, each with their own territories and borders, pecking orders, elites, and

gatekeepers. Huber (1990, 243) claims that disciplinary communities also have their own attitudes towards political and social issues, ranging from left to right.

The extent of research showing differences within disciplinary cultures is enormous (Hativa & Marincovich 1995, Neumann 2001, Neumann et al. 2002). University students need to understand the specific characteristics of each major and minor they take, which in turn guides their way of studying. Students are central to the notion of disciplinary cultures for two reasons: Firstly, because of reproduction of disciplines through formal teaching and learning, and secondly, because recruitment to the disciplines begins with them. Huber´s (1990) work on disciplinary cultures and social reproduction is interesting, as he shows how certain students are more likely to be recruited into particular disciplines depending on their social background and habitus. He sees (p. 241) socialization "as the development of basic dispositions to act which are specific for a given group". Recruitment serves as the starting point to the membership, but as Ylijoki (2000, 340) reminds us, students have to be socialized into both the cognitive and social elements of a particular disciplinary culture in order to be accepted into the tribe. This membership has to be earned; it then constitutes a student´s social identity in the academic world.

Student membership is enacted through virtuous studying, performing the right values, appreciations, and ambitions nurtured in specific cultures. Ylijoki (2000, 341) proposes that the core of disciplinary culture can be conceptualized as a moral order. The moral order constitutes the main distinctions concerning the vices and virtues of the local culture: what is considered to be good, right, desirable and valued as opposed to what is regarded as bad, wrong, avoidable and despised (Harré 1983, 244-246.) Leppälä and Päiviö (2001) have also used the concept of moral order to describe studying in a business school. They show how the virtues of studying vary across sub-disciplines, for example, Economics, Finance, and Organization studies and Management. Therefore, they suggest that business education does not comprise a monolithic whole, but instead comprises several tribes inhabiting different territories.

Criticism towards this research on disciplinary cultures arises mainly from its focus on academia. Huber (1990, 242) maintains: "The same concept of culture that is such an efficient eye-opener for research (and learning) as a social process, then entails the danger of looking at this social process only within the disciplines or at most the academic cosmos as if it were a self-sufficient and self-explanatory cycle. In such a perspective the epistemological characteristics of the domains of knowledge are seen as the causes of the disciplinary cultures which cultivate them, and influences from a wider social context are treated rather as subsidiary variables." These influences from wider contexts – such as alliances between education, working life and society – are better approached by critical cultural theorists. I will next discuss the perspective of critical cultural theorists in greater detail.

2.2.3 Studying as shaped by power relations

From a critical cultural perspective, the issues of power and power relations are addressed as key concerns. The advocates of the perspective pay attention to the pivotal role of structural, cultural, and institutional hierarchies, as well as to differences in the shaping of studying and learning in universities. Therefore, the critical cultural perspective suggests how social relationships, discourses and practices governing studying and learning can be analyzed from several viewpoints, such as, from a historical, political, cultural, feminist and a colonialist point of view. The field is diverse and complex, having its own history, trends and controversies.

Early advocates of this perspective (Bowles & Gintis 1976, Willis 1977) have showed a connection between educating for a capitalist society and social inequality. Here, education plays an ideological role in reproducing a culture that accepts as natural the existing social framework. Selection to university education is seen as a means of sustaining inequalities in the educational system and the advantage of one class over another in their access to power, prestige and life chances. For instance, Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) have identified the way education can play a part in the production of the cultural capital on which middle-class young people can draw to successfully enter the labor market and the social networks of the rich and powerful. Bourdieu´s concept of cultural capital (e.g. 1977) can be used to analyze mechanisms of power that are hidden or unrecognized, but acted upon by the subjects of power. Some writers call this the hidden curriculum of higher education (Margolis 2001). Ehrensal (2001), for example, has described how management education works as cultural and social domination where business students are trained to act as `capitalism´s foot soldiers´.

The more optimistic critical researchers, such as Giroux (1981) and Giroux and McLaren (1987), point out that a curriculum consists of discourses and practices that may embody the elements of domination or liberation. Instead of a deterministic view of curriculum as an ideology machine, it is better conceptualized as a terrain of contestation. As Aronowitz (1981, 3) explains, education may work as an effort to transmit cultural tradition and ideology as knowledges of hegemonic groups of society. Yet there is the possibility that the conditions of learning – the classroom, textbooks, and other spaces where people try to gain power through understanding – may be counterhegemonic. Therefore, many representatives of the critical cultural approach put considerable weight on educational efforts, curricula and pedagogy in order to create change. This has led to a rise of critical pedagogy in education (Luke & Gore 1992), and critical management education (Perriton & Reynolds 2004).

The critical management education perspective implies that management education has a significant societal role in reproducing prevailing understandings of business life and its actors (e.g. Grey 2002). Several researchers (Alvesson & Willmott 1992, 1996, Prasad & Caprioni 1997, Frost 1997) have been interested in denaturalizing discursive practices constituting the `reality´ of business life and `truthfulness´ of knowledge. Critical researchers have noted that the prevailing discourses of management and

business promote rational aspects of business life, salute managerial views and advance technocratic thinking and acting. These discourses are (re)produced in various textbooks (Cameron et al. 2003, Gilbert 2003, Mir 2003), in case materials (Swiercz & Ross 2003) and in other teaching and learning practices. They also usually validate and value the masculine ways of thinking and acting, and thus routinely silence and discount the contribution of other voices (Sinclair 1995, 1997, Marshall 1999).

Despite the rise of a critical management education, the studying and learning of most business students is shaped by an exposure to mainstream management education offering a site for socialization into the prevailing moral order of business life. As Grey (2002, 499) writes: "The point is less the skills and knowledge it imparts and more its capacity to develop a certain kind of person deemed to be suitable for managerial work and enculturated into some version of managerial values. Indeed, it might be that the very willingness to undertake ME stands as a proxy (to employers) for a certain sort of orientation toward the world and commitment to its reproduction: a demonstration of being `the right kind of person´." However, there are also those who are uncomfortable with these assumptions or who feel otherwise marginalized from the hegemonic culture of education. While the notion of social difference is celebrated in adult education (Mezirow 1991, Welton 1995), in the studies of management education it has been less visible, with a few exceptions.

Research on social differences clarifies how relations of domination subordinate subjects marked by gender, ethnicity, race, class or sexuality and many other markers of difference. For example, Nevgi (1998) shows how female students´ expectations and study motivation decreases during education. Sinclair (1997), in turn, reveals areas of tension in the women´s experience of the classroom and describes the impact of female and male bodies in (disembodied) management education (2005). Simpson (2000) concludes that men are winners in management education in terms of career advancement and salary levels. While gender is an acknowledged marker of difference, other markers prevail as well. Class, for example, is one of the silenced topics in management education (McDowell 2006). Furthermore, Reynolds and Trehan (2003) found differences such as professional, social or academic background, ways of working together and public-private boundaries that shape students´ experiences of studying.

Criticism towards the critical cultural approach concerns especially its gloomy picture in relation to cultural and social practices constructing active subjects. Overemphasizing the concepts of domination, subordination and social differences can lead to an unfruitful starting point for those developing the education. Fenwick (2005) has even pointed out some ethical dilemmas in exercising critical management education. Fenwick (2000, 260-261) refers to Sumara et al. (1997), who eschew entirely what they name as traditional perspectives on domination and oppression as perpetuating negative views of power. They claim that there exist theories of learning that place much greater emphasis on mutual affect, collectivity, and co-emergence, which transcend

the limitations and self-perpetuated negative circles created by `power vs. resistance´ -based critical thinking.

2.2.4 Studying as shaped by participation

An alternative view is proposed by those researchers emphasizing students´ participation in diverse contexts, integrating learning into various forms of practical activity. This participation approach avoids associating learning automatically with teaching, classroom struggles, and conflicts. Instead, it connects students learning to their participation across the system, highlighting the social processes and practices underlying any (meaningful) learning (Young 1998, 179). Following this argument, students are seen as active subjects working, learning and knowing through their participation in various bundles of practices sustained and reproduced through different communities. Some researchers emphasize students´ participation in diverse communities of practice, while others stress the involvement in particular socio-cultural work practices.

The best known representatives of this approach are Lave and Wenger (1991), who present learning as a social phenomenon. Learning is understood as being in the world and becoming a legitimate member of that world through enculturation. For Lave and Wenger, the social world becomes sustained and reproduced through gradually growing participation in communities of practice from legitimate peripheral participation to full engagement in the sociocultural practices of community. Wenger (1998) then continued with the ideas of communities of practice suggesting that as communities of practices can be formal or informal, they are better defined by their members' mutual engagement in negotiated practices, shared repertoires of stories, concepts and discourses, as well as their willingness to belong to and maintain a community. The idea of communities of practice has gained much popularity among organization researchers, due to its considerations on how communities of practices construct their members´ skills, knowhow and identities in different work contexts (Gherardi & Nicolini 2000, Brown & Duguid 1991, 2001, Stehlik & Carden 2005, Fuller et al. 2005).

It is tempting to link up work organizations and educational institutions, and to conceptualize students as participants in different communities of practice, for the paths students take from entry to graduation concerns their personal development and identity construction in specific contexts in a reciprocal way. As O´Donell & Tobbell (2007, 315) suggest: "Success in an education system can be thought of as full participation – that is, individuals adopt and perform the valued practices of that community and in so doing contribute their own experience and modify practice and shift values". While there is plenty of research on postgraduate studying (Janson & Howard 2004, Pyhältö et al. 2009, Pilbeam & Denyer 2009), the challenges arise with undergraduate studying: Can the elements of mutuality, shared negotiations and coherence (see Wenger 1998) be sufficiently realized among the masses of students with diverse preferences regarding to timetables, study rhythms, levels of engagement and aspirations?

The spread of the concept of communities of practice has received a lot of criticism (Gherardi et al. 1998, Brown & Duguid 2001, Contu & Willmott 2003, Herbert 2005, Roberts 2006). This criticism has concerned both the definition of community, as well theoretical concerns, such as lack of the notions of power and politics. For instance, Contu and Willmott (2003, 287) maintain that: "Different sets of practices, located in different space-time contexts, are recognized to generate different and competing conceptions of degree of consensus, diversity, and conflict amongst those who identify themselves, or are identified by others, as `communities´". People sharing the same physical location or professional profile might then carry totally different notions of good work, competence or expertise depending on the practices they are exposed to and embraced with. Thus, critics have highlighted the primacy of concentrating on practices over communities, as the engagement in practices is seen to be a source of varying knowledge claims and competences.

Indeed, some researchers have been inclined to stress the other side of participation, i.e. developing professional knowledge and knowhow through participation in situated work practices. This view of students as participants in work practices stresses the actual practices the students are involved in rather than communities as such. These researchers concentrate on how actual practices and daily routines form and construct student learning and students´ sense of themselves (McAlpine et al. 2009). Some researchers (e.g. Lee & Boud 2008) frame the whole doctoral education as a set of diverse practices, while others concentrate on particular practices, such as supervision (Lee 2008) or assessment practices (Aittola 2008). Practices are seen to include strong inducements for how things are to be performed and mastered. Changes in practices have consequences for academic agency and identity formation (see Henkel 2004, Henkel 2005, Barnett & Napoli 2008). Therefore issues of power and politics are visibly present. For example, Katila and Meriläinen (2002) describe how they, as two postgraduate students, were being positioned, and their identities constructed, by gendered practices in academia and how they were themselves participants in (re)producing these gendered practices.

2.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed diverse approaches to student studying and learning. I started from individualistic approaches of learning styles and orientations, and then moved on to cultural approaches, to cultural-critical approaches, and finally I presented participation approaches that stress students´ involvement across diverse contexts.

I began with individualistic approaches because I aspired to show developments in the tradition of researching student learning and studying, although there are several problems with individualistic approaches. Firstly, as individualistic approaches view learners as quite autonomous from their surroundings, they ignore the processes and practices that have shaped individuals and their backgrounds as well as the educational processes and

practices that continue doing so (Reynolds 1997). Secondly, by focusing solely on individuals these approaches disregard socially and culturally mediated phenomena like socialization, peer pressures, competition, alienating experiences, optimizing time/work load ratios, emotional control/performance, compliance, consumption and reproduction, identity work, inclusion and exclusion, which are central in any studying experience (Mann 2008). And thirdly, as these issues are left in the shadow, the educational practices shaping and reproducing them stay unproblematized and unaddressed. This has a narrowing effect on what is recognized and defined as the needs of renewal and targets of development work in education. Because my aim in this thesis is to describe the socio-cultural worlds of studying and the possibilities of developing education, I take this critique seriously.

Therefore, I have gained valuable insights from other three approaches that depict the world of studying and learning from a more socio-cultural starting point. The disciplinary cultural approach has convinced me how business education can be considered its own socio-cultural whole with its local moral orders, and variations in it (Ylijoki 2000, Leppälä & Päiviö 2001). The cultural-critical view reminds me that the inclusion of power and politics is essential, for educational practices always contain an introduction to and preparation for particular forms of social life, appreciations and values (Giroux 2002), and that business education has proved to represent a special case in this sense (French & Grey 1996). And finally, the participation view stresses the significance of active participants in diverse communities of practices and work practices in the construction of students´ learning and studying. Furthermore, the participation approach suggests that learning is tightly integrated with participants´ everyday doings and sayings, and thus it should not be treated as a phenomenon separate from students´ practical activity.

The insight of conceiving learning as something that happens together and simultaneously with our mundane endeavors with diverse others, practices, and communities, has led me to think that instead of concentrating on student learning in a business school it may be more fruitful to look more broadly at the practical activity of studying. I became curious about students´ mundane doings and sayings in a business school and the actual practices they become engaged in during the course of their studying. I revised my research focus accordingly, and while this may seem like a minor shift, it makes room for new interpretations of studying and student agency in a business school.

Looking at students´ everyday doings in a business school has made me more conscious of the term `learning´. I have started to question whether it is the most accurate and subtle term to describe the everyday endeavors of students: Are we assuming too much from the practical activity if we accept the hypothesis of learning as a starting point? And on other hand, are we assuming too little from business school settings and its many contexts? My decision to primarily focus on studying and only secondarily on learning derives directly from these uncertainties. Furthermore, approaching students´ daily actions as navigation in bundles of socio-cultural practices has many

benefits. It highlights issues that are not only individual but also collective and societal, such as how the subtle or more radical changes in practices, and shifts in prevailing ideologies, shape students´ studying and agency, and their notions of themselves as participants in business education.

Next, I will present in more detail the practice-theoretical approach to studying and learning, and my conceptualization of it, i.e. studying as a practical activity.

Practices

I completed my master´s degree in 2003, but enthusiasm towards doing research and the pleasure of being in control of my own learning process, kept me at the department. I was excited to venture into different discussions; I devoured feminist research, technology research, narrative research, business education and higher education research. I felt free. Time didn't have a linear goal-oriented meaning and I hadn't committed myself to writing a doctoral thesis on any specific topic. After all, I wasn't yet officially a doctoral student. I fell in love with the idea that I could build my own bookshelf – renegotiate myself and my relationship with the world – and find something new and reinterpret the old.

However, a couple of years later, when I was already quite familiar with the academic world – its lures, expectations and demands – I found myself wrestling with the practices of doctoral education. In 2007 I wrote:

"A new year begins with an email that urges me to fill out a follow-up form of my doctoral studies. I have to report on how many articles I have published in international journals, how many conferences I have participated in, how many international courses I have attended and how much time I have spent abroad. (Sigh!) To leave this form blank means running the danger of becoming subject to administrative measures and losing one's status as a doctoral student: either being closed off from the Doctoral Program or being transferred to the domain of 'further education'. This is clearly stated in the email I received. Therefore, I dutifully open up a form that, for administrative reasons, strives to control and monitor my learning process… But why does this seemingly routine procedure evoke such strong feelings in me? I feel inadequacy, shame and guilt because apparently I have not done everything that `an ideal´ doctoral student should have done. I experience the enquiry as an implicit demand to study more ambitiously, but instead of making me act accordingly, it freezes me."

The set of practices I encountered as a doctoral student were different from those I had learned as an undergraduate. But their power was equally effective.

3. A practice-theoretical perspective on studying

In this thesis, I approach studying as a practical activity, as participation in socially and culturally produced and sustained bundles of practices. First, I present some general characteristics of practice-theoretical approaches and then I introduce a particular way of understanding studying as a practical activity and conceptualizing student agency.

3.1 Characteristics of a practice-theoretical approach

I have chosen to use a distinctive vocabulary drawn from practice-based studies because the language and approaches we apply are much more than linguistic choices. They are descriptive frameworks to interpret the world around us; they open up, invite or discount and ignore certain ways of appreciating and analyzing social phenomena. Researchers´ choices intertwined with knowledge production are not insignificant, politically irrelevant or morally empty. As Reckwitz (2002, 257) writes: "(...) social theories provide us with a certain way of defining our position as human beings in a social world, which inevitably implies a political and ethical dimension." Consequently, it is not insignificant what stances we choose, how we approach studying and student agency – whether in undergraduate or postgraduate education – and what we believe is changeable.

A practice-theoretical perspective feels attractive to me because it is interested in everyday life and work, i.e. what people do and think on a daily basis. It offers words and conceptual tools to comprehend the mundane operations and concerns of students subjected to bundles of practices located in business schools and universities. A practice-theoretical perspective provides resources – theories, concepts and linguistic means – to concentrate on the versatility of studying and diverse forms of student agency. The focus is on the making and remaking of the student world. Relevant issues from the practice-theoretical perspective are for example, how practices construct studying and scope for student agency, and on the other hand, how students themselves, through their everyday doings, participate in that construction: How do they sustain, resist or reiterate the prevailing circumstances, and under what conditions?

Although turning attention to the `making of the world´ is central to practice-theoretical approaches, there is no simple way to characterize the field in general terms. Nicolini et al. (2003, 27) write: "The ontology envisaged by a practice-based approach and vocabulary is relational, constructive, heterogeneous and situated. From a practice perspective, the world appears to be relationally constituted, a seamless web of heterogeneous elements kept together and perpetuated by active processes of ordering and sense making." Within practice-theoretical approaches, learning and knowing are always viewed as social accomplishments tightly integrated with everyday doings. As practice-theoretical approaches highlight the relational, situational and social nature of doing and being in the world, the approaches then differ from more traditional individual-centered social cognition perspectives (see Fenwick 2000).

Practice-theoretical perspectives have gained much attention in recent years. Corradi et al. (2010) have even used the term `bandwagon´ to illustrate the popularity of the approach and its many usages. In addition, researches like Geiger (2009), Schatzki (2005, 2001), Nicolini et al. (2003) and Reckwitz (2002) have tried to structure the field of practice-theoretical studies. There are different interests and emphases among researchers that use practice-theoretical approaches. The interests range from the changes in practice through time (e.g. cultural and historical activity theory), the role of the material world and artifacts (e.g. actor network theory), knowledge production and learning in practices (e.g. social learning theory), interaction between participants (e.g. ethnomethodology), the role of subjects (e.g. studies on agency and subjectivity), language as form of social practice (e.g. critical discourse analysis), to the gendering effect of practices (e.g. feminist studies).

My own thinking has been mostly inspired by discussions of social learning theory (see previous chapter: studying shaped by participation). However, this PhD thesis does not present any specific approach mentioned above. We, the researchers in MERI-research group, have been inspired by diverse texts and thoughts proposed within the field of practice-theories.

3.2 Studying within the framework of practical activity

Next, I will present a particular practice-theoretical approach to studying by introducing a framework of practical activity. The members of the MERI-research group have participated in the development and discussion of that framework from different angles, which has led to specification of some concepts (Räsänen et al. 2005, Korpiaho 2007 et al., Räsänen & Korpiaho 2007, Kantelinen & Korpiaho 2009, Korpiaho & Mäntylä 2012, Räsänen & Trux 2012). The approach has altered through its usage and thus can be seen as an emerging and evolving framework. This approach offers a way to examine and research practical activity through participants' involvement in differing practices.

Some key definitions: social practice, practices, practical activity

In this research, I differentiate the terms social practice, practices and practical activity. In society, different forms of established social practices comprise unique bundles of practices, which differentiate one form of social practice from another. For example, vocational education differs from university education; business education differs from medical education. These established forms of social practice comprise their own distinct organization of bundles of practices, where individual practices, like the practice of lecturing or holding examinations, have their own place (Räsänen & Trux 2012).

Individual practices give structure and meaning to human activity, for instance the practice of thesis writing is different from other forms of scholarly writing. Individual practices contain both explicit elements like written instructions, tools, codes and procedures, as well as implicit elements like subtle clues, shared understandings and unarticulated relationships (Wenger 1998). The way a particular practice, such as the practice of examination, is defined in study guidance books, diverges from the lived experience of students, but nevertheless they are both parts of the same practice (Korpiaho 2005). Practices offer a way to understand the world around us; they persuade, lead and compel practical activity into certain directions. But they are also time-dependent; they have a history and a present, and there might be inconstancies, breakdowns and changes on the way (Nicolini et. al. 2003). Practices are dependent on the social processes that sustain, reiterate or renew them, i.e. they depend on the everyday doings and sayings of those engaged.

Studying as a practical activity is navigating through the bundles of these individual practices. It is about learning and knowing the practices, whether they are explicitly framed or tacitly approved (Korpiaho 2005, Kantelinen & Korpiaho 2009). It is about exposing oneself to the power of practices and gaining strength from them; balancing between exposure, submission and mastery. The bundles of practices in business education form a distinct context for studying that the students cannot ignore or dismiss. The practice-theoretical view suggests that human knowing and learning are understood as developing through participation in context-specific practices (Lave & Wenger 1991, Wenger 1998). Studying consists of mundane doings, for example, fulfilling personal study plans, attending mass lectures and solving cases with peers, giving and receiving feedback etc. In other words: studying consists of participation in surveillance and control practices, diverse forms of teaching and learning practices, and evaluation and appraisal practices.

Looked at from the outside, practices may seem to have a life of their own, for practices do include strong inducements for how things are to be performed and mastered, what to aspire and why (Gherardi et al. 1998, Salminen-Karlsson 2006). However, understanding human activity requires the viewpoint of a subject. Even in the midst of the most normative and coercive practices there is a subject who is trying to make it, who is struggling through the practices, who enjoys, avoids, or resists them. A subject, who gets excited, determined, persistent, perplexed, tried, or exhausted. In a practice-theoretical view, the status of human beings as subjects and agents are bound

to practices, but not defined by them (Schatzki 2001, 11). However, the challenge is how to describe, understand and discuss students´ endeavors in the middle of multiple and diverse bundles of practices.

The framework of practical activity

I have argued above that studying as a practical activity can be considered a mundane, physical activity within bundles of socio-cultural practices. In order to articulate, describe and understand that activity better I introduce the four-fold framework. The four-fold framework of practical activity was developed to offer a heuristic tool to study and discuss participants' relationships to their daily doings, in this particular case studying. In the framework there are four issues, four orientations and their concretizations (see Table 1). We, the members of the group, have read particular practice theorists and used their texts as a resource for further elaboration of each orientation. These practice theorists have offered us inspiration and fostered our academic imagination.

Here, I repeat the main points of the framework before elaborating it in greater detail. The four orientations to practical activity are: tactical (how to do this?), political (what to accomplish and achieve in this?), moral (why to aim at these goals, and in this way?), and personal stance (who am I?). These orientations capture different stances to an activity, and different modes of relating to it and interpreting it. The framework invites students, practitioners, and researchers to inquire into the tactics, politics, morals and subjects of their (or other people´s) work. Each issue investigates same activity from a specific stance. Equally students and diverse practitioners can take different stances depending on the situation and their immediate contexts. The same people can alter stances as they move from one situation to another, or they can change their stance even within the same situation.

Issue	Orientation	Concretization	Practice Theorists
How?	Tactical	Means	Certeau (Goffman)
What?	Political	Goals	Bourdieu (Foucault)
Why?	Moral	Motives, justifications	MacIntyre (Taylor)
Who?	Personal	Identity	Holland et al, Dreier (Harré)

Table 1. A framework of practical activity (Räsänen & Korpiaho 2011, Räsänen & Trux 2012)

These four issues call for different solutions to students´ everyday doings, and different ways to orient oneself to situated contexts, i.e. bundles of practices. Students face these issues in their encounters with diverse practices and conditions, each issue representing a different stance to practical activity. In short this could mean the following: From the tactical stance one relates towards surviving in one's own way in a space owned by others (e.g. de Certeau 1984). In the political stance one is concerned with the consequences of performing a particular task as to its effects on one's position in relevant fields (e.g. Bourdieu 1990). In the moral stance one is concerned with the goods realized in performing a task and in a certain way (e.g. MacIntyre 1981). In the personal stance one is preoccupied with the issue of how to construct a unique

self that is still recognized and appreciated by others in the micro worlds of differing practices (e.g. Dreier 2003, 2009).

We have referred to specific practice-theorists as an example of what kind of concerns each stance might entail. However, the framework is not exhaustive, but rather constantly evolving. Next, I will elaborate in more detail what these stances might mean for the studying activity. A reader should keep in mind that these illustrations are intended to present the richness of a practical activity, and to exemplify how the ideas of particular practice-theorists can be applied[5].

3.3 Four stances to studying

Students participate in multiple bundles of practices that construct their knowing and learning, guiding them sometimes in divergent directions. While navigating through these bundles, and balancing between exposure, submission and mastery of individual practices, students are expected to resolve the practical issues of their everyday doings: how to do? (tactical stance), what to achieve and accomplish? (political stance), and why? (moral stance). Also, who am I and who do I become (personal stance) if I do this, with these means, goals and motives. These issues present diverse stances in the practical activity of studying. Next, I elaborate on what these stances might mean in studying in a business school, and later on I address the issue of agency, which has a focal role in any practical activity.

3.3.1 Tactical stance – How to perform?

Most students live their lives and study without further considerations about the nature of practices constructing their studying, whether market-oriented, managerial, or gendered practices. The mundane interests of these students lie in catching the bus in the morning, sitting through lectures, deciding between lunch places and looking for functioning computers, i.e. surviving on a daily basis. Their timetables are filled with daily routines, to-do lists and things to master. For an outsider, some of the students´ doings may seem as diligent and well-justified, while others might come across as random and impatient flying around the campus.

Nevertheless, many of those doings (whether reasonable or not) are guided and structured by practices that fill the studying space with visible and invisible codes of conduct. Practices are loaded with concerns for how to do things, what to achieve and why. It might feel easy to let practices lead and carry you – just go along with the flow – but sometimes practices can feel oppressive or too constricting. Practices may fill corridors, classrooms, and lounges in a way that would seem to smother the student agency. For example, lecturing as a teaching practice – pouring knowledge into students´ heads –

5 To use the academic production of particular practice theorists as an inspiration means that their concepts and ideas are applied in a heuristic way, although they do not themselves use the same words that we do. For example, Bourdieu uses the concepts of field and habitus, where I rather use the concepts of bundles of practices and participants.

disregards the student´s ability for active knowledge construction, and downgrades their past experiences, bodily feelings, and emotions. Especially in the face of the most institutionalized practices (like examinations) students might feel themselves powerless and incapable of changing the prevailing circumstances.

Acknowledging the power of practices in organizing daily operations does not mean that students or other participants are totally governed by them. Students, like any participants in practices, are creative and resourceful; they can employ a variety of tactics, and invent new ones on the way. Certeau´s (1984) definition of `tactics´ helps to understand human possibilities to tackle their everyday life. His point is that, in certain practices, everyday life for most people is rather about `making do´ than anything else. In a space owned by others, people can only use the space and the resources provided in one's own way, taking advantage of the situation. The definition of tactic encompasses its `weak´ nature in that it is not planned or strategized; rather, it seizes the moment when it comes, and is materialized in it. There is nothing to be learned or gained. Certeau (1984, xix) says in the introduction to his book of The Practice of Everyday Life: "(…) a tactic depends on time – it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized `on the wing´. Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into `opportunities´."

Certeau´s world is a world of others; it highlights the agency of the weak. He suggests that people are creative in that they give meanings and exploit tactics in everyday situations. In the student´s world, this means tricks and manoeuvres they perform. A surprising encountering in a cafeteria with a peer student can lead to sharing notes and deepening understanding of a complex phenomenon. Or in a slowly progressing lecture, a student can use her/his time to finish assignments for another course etc. The opportunity comes more or less unexpected, but when it comes, it can be utilized – in a style to be decided by the actor. Certeau (1984, xix) continues: "The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other´s place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. It has at its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its own advantages, prepare its expansion, and secure independence with respect to circumstances."

In most cases, pursuing the tactical stance in studying means that students need to learn to survive in sets of practices generally designed by others. But sometimes, as Anderson (2008, 261) reminds us, peoples´ tactical moves, manoeuvres, and modes of conduct can also be seen as a form of resistance, for "these everyday, and often concealed forms of resistance may be safer than overt acts of protest and refusal". Students´ `unintelligible´ actions may be their way to express discontentment towards dissatisfying, suspicious or undesirable educational practices. It is likely that resistance occurs through tactical manoeuvring as most students can only make choices with regard to the issue of how to study without being able to alter the educational practices of management education in terms of their political appreciations or cherished

values. Sometimes a student may feel his or her tactics - whether conformable or confrontational - do not `work´ in given contexts. In the case of feeling `like a fish out of water´, there may be a mismatch between the habitus and the field, and in the opposite case, there might be an especially good fit, as being tactically skillful requires a good `feel for the game´. Consequently, efficient tactics are not available for everyone.

3.3.2 Political stance – What to achieve and accomplish?

Pierre Bourdieu (e.g. 1977, 1990) views social agents´ acts as a sort of game, having a `feel for the game´ and being `in the game´. For him, there is a degree of space to play with, and in this space individuals´ strategies are employed. In Bourdieu´s frame, life is about the economy of positioning into social fields, meaning that individuals and groups can try to improve their position in certain fields within severe limits, such as habitus and accessible forms of capital. Individuals and groups seek to enhance their positioning by employing different strategies, which are the result of combining practical sense and commonly accepted ways of manoeuvring as opposed to conscious objectives. These strategies do different work, as Grenfell and James (1998, 22) remark: "Some strategies operate to maintain or improve positioning in the symbolic field by increasing capital. Other strategies convert one form of capital to another; again to improve on personal worth through social valuing." Education is a good example of a field where people can, through their participation, gain and increase their possession of different forms of capital.

Studying in a business school offers a wide range of choices for what to achieve and what to accomplish. Business students can try to achieve a certain position in desired fields, be they local fields (e.g. trying to modify the local studying culture), higher education fields (e.g. contributing to student union services), academic fields (e.g. familiarizing oneself with disciplinary knowledge and communities), or business fields (e.g. aspiring for a certain position among business practitioners). These aspirations can then shape the daily doings of students. Furthermore, there is a wide horizon even within the chosen fields. Students aspiring to be, for example, HR practitioners will have to position themselves between feminine notions of being a personnel expert and masculine notions of being `a man of action´ in realizing company strategies (see Berglund & Kallifatides 2003). The questions that follow, then, are: What may one want to accomplish in a desired position, and what might be possible?

Referring to Bourdieu's game metaphor, Grenfell and James (1998, 25) highlight that it appears as if everything is free to play, everything is negotiable. They note that if it were not, the `rules´ of the games themselves would not be accepted. In the fields of business education, everyone plays, but differential structures and practices ensure that not everyone is equal. Grenfell and James point out (p. 23) that this concept of misrecognition is essential in Bourdieu's thinking, as it refers to the way that the generating structures of fields are not consciously acknowledged in terms of the social differentiation they perpetuate, often in the name of democracy and equality. Thus, it is quite

clear that people are not free agents. Although Bourdieu´s thinking can be read as deterministic, it is argued that the self is something bound by social conditions rather than determined by them. As Dillabough (2004, 498) writes: "He [Bourdieu] does not, for example, reject the importance of viewing the self as both actor and subject in the shaping of culture and the embodiment of those social practices that lead to both inequality and subversion. Rather, he [Bourdieu] endows subjects with the capacity to act in the social world without claiming a totalizing agency or an illusory, essentialist notion of freedom."

Bourdieu´s thinking has inspired many to research modes of domination, problems of subordination, differentiation and hierarchy. There lies a possibility that practical activity can be conscious and target-oriented (although it is also often unconscious and resting on the feel for the game), indicating that practices structuring the field and the habitus can also change over time. Although Bourdieu´s work is helpful in imagining what the political stance might mean for studying, it does not open up the moral dimension of practical activity. The moral issues are considered important as giving meaning to our actions as human beings, and thus supporting the view of humans as active agents (Taylor 1989, also Weir 2009).

3.3.3 Moral stance – Why do this?

In the course of everyday life tactical issues of making do, and also political ones of achieving and accomplishing can be raised and considered, but moral issues are often left unaddressed. This is especially true in management education, where the moral domain of knowing and learning is replaced by the dominance of technical rationality (Roberts 1996). However, there has to be a meaning for why we do things in certain ways, why we choose to pursue certain things, and why we feel our actions are justified. As Räsänen & Trux (2012, 162) write: "Being tactically skillful or politically-oriented does not help if the purpose of our everyday doings is missing".

Looking for a purpose and justification for our practical activity does not require dwelling on moral philosophy; rather, it is sufficient take a closer look at our everyday sayings and doings. Researchers such as MacIntyre (1981), Taylor (1989) and Hansen (1998) suggest that morals are located in the forms of social practices themselves. Thus, a moral stance to practical activity implies that there are `goods´ to be found and gained for those engaging in a practice. In his book After Virtue (1981) Macintyre divides goods into internal and external goods, where internal goods are those that can be achieved through rehearsing virtues in a particular practice, whereas external goods (like money, reputation, status), can be obtained otherwise, i.e. taking an instrumental stance towards the practices.

A definition of virtues embraces the nature and distinctness of specific practices as well as participants´ involvement in them. MacIntyre argues for three moves in developing his argument on becoming a virtuous agent. Nixon (2004, 118) summarizes these moves firstly by proposing that people become virtuous through the practice of virtue. Virtue is seen as a quality or a disposition acquired, which enables us to accomplish certain `goods´ which

are inherent to certain forms of social practice. And through that accomplishment our dispositions are strengthened. Considering students´ daily doings, an instrumental approach to taking exams may result in credits and fast graduation, but exercising virtues such as challenging one´s own beliefs and questioning hegemonic truth claims may lead to internal goods such as intrinsically rewarding learning, personal growth or change of outlook.

Secondly, people grow in virtue as they perceive their own actions, and also those of others, in narrative form. As Nixon (ibid., 118) summarizes: "Intentionality and purposefulness are what give our actions meaning and moral import. If we extract those actions from the context within which agents construct their intentions and purposes, then the action becomes unintelligible and meaningless." This means that the moral stance is embedded in the practical activity of participants, and cannot be evaluated or judged from outside by others without knowing the circumstances of the participants. This naturally makes the judgment of peoples´ actions more complicated. Halliday and Hager (2002) continue the argument by pointing out that sometimes judgments may appear to be concerned with the achievement of external goods but that such goods may be instrumental in achieving some other good within a practice or enabling participation in some other practice through which internal goods can be realized. In the student world for example, superficial and credit seeking studying may enable simultaneous working in other forms of social practices, for instance, in student union services, voluntary communities, another work organization etc. Therefore the moral stance becomes understandable only through the participants´ own narratives of their actions.

Although MacIntyre emphasizes the importance of specific contexts where judgments for action are made, he does not liberate subjects from the responsibility or consequences of their actions; rather, each of us carries a complex past, and through our daily doings, contributes to the legacy of the future (see Nixon 2004, 119). For example, through their actions students contribute to a tradition of studying in business education (re)producing specific notions of the student whether as instrumentally oriented social climbers or as skillful, goal-oriented and morally aware practitioners, for instance. Similarly, postgraduate students are balancing between competing and contradictory academic practices, having to decide which traditions they carry on or which futures they want to contribute to (see Hakala 2009). In this last move MacIntyre relates people´s struggles with the continuities and discontinuities inherent in the tradition within which they are involved in, and the struggles are not easily defined, certainly not in any manner.

The process of becoming virtuous is described as reciprocal and relational: it is dependent on the specific practices, contexts, and communities of participants. However, looking at students´ daily endeavors from a moral stance suggests that there are high expectations and assumptions for subjects´ agency. As Nixon writes (2004, 119): "The reciprocity refers to my relation to my own practice, my relation to the contexts and situations within which I practice, and my relation to the continuing traditions within which my practice

is located. The motor which drives these virtuous reciprocities is my own agency: my own developing sense of purposefulness and intentionality."

3.3.4 Personal stance – Who am I?

In the framework of practical activity, the subject is placed in the middle, for s/he continuously confronts the complex issues of practical activity in the course of daily doings. Considering the multiple demands and expectations that the subjects face, and the constrained spaces in which the subjects operate, it is no wonder if the subject´s personal stance is left rather unarticulated. The four-fold framework of practical activity suggests that being able to resolve the three issues of how to do (tactics), what to achieve and accomplish (politics), and why (morals), giving oneself a believable account can lead to a strengthened sense of self. It can also help to resolve the fourth issue of who I am and who I might want to become. The issue of identity can however, also be dealt with separately.

Practice-theoretical researchers offer rich and diverse notions of subjectivity, self and identity. In their academic production these notions vary from the extremely pessimistic versions where identity is seen as a barrier to social freedom to those quite noble ones viewing identity as an ethical relation to self (Weir 2009). In this thesis, I rely on the work of those researchers who stress the role of subject in the living world that neither shuts down the possibility for meaningful identity work nor celebrates it as independent from contextual pressures and politics. In the discussions on identity development through participation, there are a few overarching features that can be discussed. Next, I will briefly examine what to me seem the most significant ones.

Firstly, identity construction is seen as continuous and processual work that is never finished or completed. This identity work is conditioned by the landscape of diverse practices that researchers depict with varying concepts, such as those of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991, Handley et al. 2007), structures of social practices (Dreier 2003, 2009), or figured worlds (Holland et al. 1998). As long as people participate in diverse social systems in the course of their life, the process of identity construction will emerge, because different sets of practices have their own norms of belonging and different repertoires of desired identities. Identity work emerges in various sites, leading to multiple and partly inconsistent identity projects. Thus, there is not one single stable or coherent core that forms the basis for identity development, although subjects might strive to construct such self-conceptions. However, people do not have infinite possibilities to construct and pursue aspired self-conceptions, but are bounded by their current involvements as well as their past experiences.

Secondly, people participate in diverse practices from their own unique positions with substantial consequences for identity construction. As Dreier (2009) points out, individual participants play different parts in different practices, often from different positions and with different scopes of possibilities, concerns and obligations. The space for meaningful identity work becomes marked by our position in these micro worlds. Holland et al. (1998)

use the term figured worlds (see also Trux 2010) to study how people, by their engagement, are positioned and become positioned through markers such as age, gender, and ethnicity. In figured worlds people place themselves and others in varying degrees of relation to identifiable others. This means that identity work can only be achieved in relation to others, and through others´ recognition. Without one´s own active identity work and positioning, others will take the authority of performing the task (which of course they might do anyway).

This leads to the third combining feature, which is that identity work requires translating the social and cultural into personally meaningful and practically feasible. Thus identity work can be seen as "negotiations between the personal relations and social repertoires" (Wenger 1998), "developing own voice as an answer to the world" (Holland et al. 1998) or "contextual narrative practices" (LaPointe 2011). These accounts, voices or narratives that we express about ourselves, and share, need to be recognized by others. Identity is manifested in the familiarity and recognition we experience with others in certain contexts. Subjects need their identity work to be recognized[6], and hence, we relate ourselves to what is familiar, and depart from the strange.

Considering what was presented above, it is obvious that students´ narratives of themselves are always constrained by local contexts of studying. Leppälä and Päiviö (2001) have described narratives of being `a good student´ in a business school: the so called master narrative, the narratives of students majoring in different disciplines, and finally variations within the particular major called `Organization and Management´. They show how socialization into being a business student comes first in the students´ narratives, followed by socialization into a specific discipline later on – if at all. Päiviö writes (2008, 64): "Narrating is socially constrained, and students need to learn proper and possible narratives that are available to them in the context of business education. It is not enough to learn and tell appropriate stories but one has to live the stories too (Van Manen 1994)." Personal identity projects are thus tightly connected into socially and culturally accepted ways of representing oneself.

Business students who decide to continue into postgraduate studies will then encounter different repertoires for possible identity work (Kantelinen & Korpiaho 2009). The sets of practices that doctoral students enter and learn to know diverge from those fashioning undergraduate business students´ identity work. However, doctoral students´ personal stories as well as the

6 Also Butler has written about how we - as subjects - have a desire for recognition: the desire for recognition by another subject but also the desire to transform the natural world in order to gain autonomy and self-recognition. Salih (2002, 28), in a reader of Judith Butler, says: "We gain recognition both through our bodies (the forms we inhabit the world) and our work (the forms we create of the world), so that evidently there is an important connection between subjectivity, labour and community. Indeed, it is only by being in and of community that the subject can acquire the identity for which it is searching, since as Butler puts it, `[t]rue subjectivities come to flourish only in communities that provide for reciprocal recognition, for we do not come ourselves through work alone, but through the acknowledging look of the Other which conforms us`". Thus Butler also sees that the change in the world can be achieved through identity work, and through our recognition for divergent, and even resistant, identities.

prerequisites for their emergence are constantly in flux. Changes in Finnish higher education, its reshaping practices, together with studying and working contexts reconstruct the possibilities for meaningful identity work (Hakala 2009, Ylijoki & Ursin 2013). Still, identity work can also be resourced and cultivated in order to enhance the variation in the stories of business undergraduate (Korpiaho 2007a, Räsänen & Korpiaho 2007) or postgraduate studying (Räsänen 2009a, 2010a, 2011, 2012, 2013a).

3.4 Student agency in the four-fold framework

I have argued above that a look at students´ everyday doings within the four-fold framework of practical activity offers different possibilities to understand student actions in a business school. In that framework, students address different issues of practical activity – how, what, why, who – and try to resolve them as well as they can, and as a consequence, relate themselves differently to the bundles of practices involved. These issues represent the tactical, political, moral and personal stances to studying. It is important to keep in mind that in reality, these stances are intertwined with each other as they are all dimensions of one and the same practical activity. However, for the purposes of specifying diverse forms of student agency, and describing them in a business schools context, it is beneficial to tackle these issues one by one.

In the framework of practical activity, there is a subject in the center: a subject who deals with the four issues in the course of her or his mundane endeavors. The subject is conceived as a bodily actor who does, thinks, feels and experiences in the midst of diverse relations of practices, communities and other participants. The subject´s agency, on the other hand, can be described as (a) the subject´s consciousness of its own situation, (b) forms of purposefulness and intentionality that enable action, and (c) the strength and ability to construct alternative interpretations and/or action. As Fenwick (2006, 26) formulates it, "Agency is articulated in the subject´s recognition of both the processes of its own constitution, and the resources within these processes through which alternate readings and constitutions are possible".

In the four-fold framework, the tactical, political and moral stances highlight the subject´s practical activity from different angles. They also bring out diverse aspects of the subject´s agency. The stances differ in their presumptions of the subject´s awareness of its own situation; they suggest diverse possibilities for the subject´s intentional and purposeful action; they also differ in regard to assumptions of the subject´s ability and strength to create alternative action. Therefore, I suggest that they can be understood as illustrating different forms of student agency. Student agency can be conceived as being a rather weak, tactical survival in the space defined by others, or it can be seen as a conscious aspiration to achieve and accomplish something in spite of or in co-operation with diverse others, or it can be understood in rather strong terms as a morally motivated realization of internal goods. These come close to Thévenot´s (2002) categorization of different forms of agency, which he calls `local regimes of engagement´: the regime of familiar engagement

(agency in participants´ accommodated surroundings), the regime of regular planned action (means for reaching goals) and finally the regime of justification (where people are qualified as moral beings).

In the framework of practical activity, the fourth stance, i.e. the personal stance, deals with the issue of identity. I do not approach identity as a separate from agency, but rather as a particular form of a realizing agency. I understand identity as performed and constructed through a subject´s daily doings, which varies in degrees of awareness, intentionality and ability to generate alternatives. A subject has to confront the personal issue of `who am I?´ in the same way s/he faces the other three issues of practical activity. If the subject´s agency is weak in attempting to resolve the issues of identity, others (participants in practices and communities) may override the subject´s aspirations. If the subject´s agency is strong, s/he will be better equipped to present a unique self. In the construction of identity, subjects can try to resolve each issue (how, what, why and who) in a satisfactory way and to integrate their resolutions into a meaningful and coherent whole. The better the coherence between resolutions the stronger a subject´s agency seems to be.

Besides variations in terms of weak and strong agency, there are also variations in terms of a personal and a collective agency. A subject who is able to realize the diverse resolutions in her or his own work – with like-minded others – in a coherent way in a context of institutional, social and cultural demands and pressures, may be a practitioner of a form of praxis. Räsänen suggests (2008) that praxis means collective activity that combines a moral purpose with a political commitment and tactical skillfulness. And while realization of praxis might be a rare and a special case of a practical activity in current universities and business schools, still, ordinary students and academic workers can be in search of a meaningful praxis (Mäntylä 2007, Räsänen 2008, 2009b, 2010b). With the help of like-minded others, there may lie a chance to find – or to create – a meaningful way of working, so that we can feel we are doing valuable, good work.

I started this thesis by addressing concerns on how to support the students in their struggles for a personally meaningful agency in the midst of diverse practices in a business school. This concern is not unknown to me or my colleagues in the academic contexts of changing practices. Rather, we, too, face the questions of how to carry out meaningful academic work and how to perform desired identities. And an academic answer would be: by researching and teaching. Therefore, this thesis tells not only a story of my investigation of students´ worlds, it is also tells a story of group of academics who are themselves in search of meaningful academic work - by conducting particular kind of research, and undertaking local developmental efforts in teaching.

Research process

24.5.2006

One day I decided to act like `a proper ethnographer´: to go and make field notes in order to write a thick and vivid description of the physical settings of business studying. I walked to the Main Building, which is a post-war construction – built in 1950 – although the business school itself has a hundred years of history. In front of this architectural masterpiece of craftsmanship there is a statue apparently representing the business school ethos. There are two seagulls struggling in the air, another seagull at the back of the other trying to take the fish out of its fellow creature´s mouth.

I walked pass the statue and entered the building. The entrance hall is spacious and grand, with white columns standing on both sides. On the wall, there is a list of companies that are sponsoring the school and its operations. Auditoriums and classrooms are named after these companies, thus giving considerable visibility to the sponsors. At this particular time the auditorium opposite the main entrance was full of students taking their exams. The hall was quiet and I had a perfect opportunity to concentrate on reading the huge noticeboard protected by glass doors. The noticeboard was divided into three sections: recruitment services, announcements, and International MBA program. I was just about to immerse myself in the announcements when a bunch of Asian male students rushed into the hall in a controlled but cheerful manner. It was graduation day for the MBA group. The men were all over the hall as a Finnish staff member was adjusting their gowns and mortar boards on them – in American style – and photographers were giving loud instructions…

"This was not a good day after all", I thought and closed my notebook. I could do this some other day, for example next week, next month or next year… After all, this is my workplace …

4. `Tales from within´: methodological choices

For almost 15 years I have been a participant in the field of business education, first as an undergraduate rushing from lecture to lecture, and then as a postgraduate working in the department. A lot has happened during that time. When I started this thesis project, I belonged to the Helsinki School of Economics, an over a hundred years old business school established in 1904 by the Finnish business community, which had received its university status in 1911 (Pöykkö & Åberg 2010). Today, the same university is part of Aalto University created in 2010 by a merger of the Helsinki School of Economics, Helsinki University of Technology and the University of Art and Design. This has meant reframing old practices, as well as emergence of new ones resulting in changes in working and studying contexts.

In these uncertain times, I have been glad to work with colleagues that share a participatory and collaborative way of working, researching and teaching. I have had the pleasure to work with like-minded colleagues who share my view of the social world as being relational and co-constructed (Gergen 2009) and thus also subject to changes (Heron & Reason 1997, 2006, Maguire 1987). I have been privileged to be involved in many intriguing discussions, and to witness efforts of local renewal concerning academic work practices, classroom practices and gendered practices. However, the changes witnessed in the institutional and socio-cultural milieu have not always made work easy.

One group of colleagues has been especially important to me: the MERI-research group situated in my home department. The purpose of the MERI initiative is to advance critical understandings of business schools as sites of education and academic work. An important theme in our work has been an autonomous renewal of prevailing work practices. Together with my colleagues, we have strived to understand everyday life at the present day university in a way that appreciates local forms of practical activity and supports their cultivation. Through our positions as researchers, teachers and autonomous developers, we have had an opportunity to produce `living knowledge´ (Heron & Reason 2006) for practical service in our and other peoples´ lives. Considering my own intellectual, emotional and physical engagement, it is more than justified to claim that the current research is written within the study of an object, i.e. studying in a business school, and as such, it encompasses certain features that are perhaps not typical in

mainstream academic research (see Anderson & Herr 1999, Brannick & Coghlan 2007, Anderson et al. 2007).

As a researcher constructing the phenomenon from within, I join the tradition of organizational ethnography (Yanow 2009, Ybema et al. 2009), where aspects such as a researcher studying lived realities at close-range, immersing oneself into the field and engaging with other participants, are understood to be natural parts of research work. Cunliffe (2010, 232) presents how ethnographies can vary from tales of organizations to tales for organizations encompassing various elements from participatory, co-operative or even action research. Despite the diversity, they all are stories told from within, with cultural analysis of `what is going on here´. One form of organizational ethnography, particularly well-suited for the study of one´s own university and educational institution, which I will refer to, is called `at-home ethnography´ (Alvesson 2003, 2009).

4.1 From `organizational ethnography´ to researching one´s own work organization

Writing about organizational life, organizing processes, and work practices has a long standing heritage (e.g. Dalton 1959, Pettigrew 1973, Kanter 1977, Kunda 1992, Orr 1996, Barley & Kunda 2004). The recent turn to practice-theoretical studies in the field of organizational studies suggests that describing how organizations become socially and materially constructed through practical activity, requires a diligent concentration on work, work practices, and daily operations. Thus, there is a renewed interested in studying work practices (as the title of the article ` Bringing Work Back In ´ by Barley & Kunda 2001 suggests), and increased awareness of feasible methods to study such phenomena (Nicolini 2009).

The researcher´s own involvement in the field, engagement with other practitioners, as well as attempts to understand work practices from within, are seen as offering a particular stance from which s/he can gain a rigorous understanding of the phenomenon (Mottier 2005, Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006). As Nicolini puts it (2009, 121): "Only through immersing oneself and being there is one capable of appreciating, understanding, and translating the situated, creative, interpretive and moral nature of the actual practices of organizing". The researcher's `embeddeness´ or `situatedness´ is seen as an inseparable part of knowledge creation and meaning making, suggesting that a researcher´s detached position in the field is not desired (nor described as a possible one), especially if the aims of the research is to understand the lifeforms of others.

In this thesis, I draw on a special case of organizational ethnography, namely `at-home ethnography´ (Alvesson 2003, 2009, Mäntylä 2007), where a researcher´s position as an academic worker at a university is utilized. The researcher's involvement is acknowledged, and brought forward by taking it as the focal point of the research process. As Alvesson (2009, 159) describes it: "At-home ethnography is a study and a text in which the researcher-author

describes a cultural setting to which s/he has a `natural´ access, and in which s/he is an active participant, more or less on equal terms with other participants. The researcher works and/or lives in the setting and uses the experiences and knowledge of and access to empirical material for research purposes." The researcher is thus familiar with the settings and has no issues with access, getting close or going native, which are typical issues in ethnographic research. The researcher is not a stranger to the field, and certainly not an outsider, rather s/he is better described as an insider (Brannick & Coghlan 2007), observing participant (Moeran 2009) or engaged participant (Beech et al. 2009).

Having been in the field of business education for most of my adult life, I have found myself in various positions, for example, a student, a peer, an administrative assistant, a teacher, a developer, and more recently, a female academic working on a short-term contract with family obligations. These positions have provided me with a solid understanding of what studying is like at the university and a sound base to produce empirical material. During the years, I have written diaries and made notes in classrooms, seminars and faculty meetings. I have had hundreds of lunch and corridor conversations with fellow academics, and interviewed many of them. I have enjoyed access to online resources, newsletters and magazines. I have compiled piles of assignments, feedback forms, evaluations, and asked others to do so. I have offered administrative guidance and tutoring, and been subject to the same measures myself.

In many ways my knowledge production process has resembled what Alvesson calls (2009, 164) an emergent-spontaneous approach, meaning that a knowledge-production mode activates when something intriguing or extraordinary happens, or simply when a good opportunity arises. I have not been preoccupied with material production in every moment; rather, most of my days are filled with ordinary academic concerns. On the other hand, some of the materials I have generated are the consequence of planned data production. Exploiting my role as a teacher, for instance, has enabled me to create spaces for writing in which students have been encouraged to discuss the tacitly known but often overlooked or concealed dimensions of studying. As an at-home ethnographer, I have had the opportunity to balance between almost invisible roles and more participatory ones. Thus, generating material has not been an issue for me. Instead, the challenge is, and has been, to avoid drowning myself in the richness of the material available.

4.2 Situatedness and reflexivity in the research process

Conducting an inquiry into something that one is painfully familiar with is sometimes hard. There are two slightly different reasons for that. First of all, the issue of subjectivity cannot be avoided. I have lived through the joys and hardships of studying, and those experiences have shaped – and keep on shaping – my habitus in a way that cannot be ignored or escaped. Consequently, engaging the self with a close-range inquiry requires willingness

and preparedness for self-reflection. Ybema et al. (2009, 9) define the requirement as follows: "This calls for a heightened self-awareness – a ´reflexivity´ – of the ways in which their own persons (from education to training to experiences to personalities to demographic characteristics) might be shaping the knowledge claims researchers advance with respect to their research topic: their `positionality´."

I have aspired to exhibit glimpses of my personal experiences throughout this thesis so that a reader would have the possibility to get a sufficiently full picture of who I am as an author of this text. But for those wanting to read up more on my positionality, on my contextualized and embedded experiences in academia, I offer a palette of stories elsewhere. I have depicted my encounters with the diverse bundles of practices from different perspectives. I have described how my Master´s thesis served as proof of socialization into my home discipline (Korpiaho 2006) and how I experienced the entrance into the academic world and the first years of doctoral studying as an emotional roller-coaster (Korpiaho 2007b). I have also illustrated my experiences of becoming a teacher (Räsänen et al. 2005), and especially becoming a teacher in a community that appreciates autonomous renewal of teaching practices (Räsänen & Korpiaho 2010). These self-reflective accounts could also have been included in this thesis, but they are not – for reason that I will elaborate on next.

In addition to the task of recognizing one´s own situatedness, there lies the almost opposite task of struggling with all that closeness and familiarity. Once a researcher is immersed within the field and the landscape of its differing practices, then the challenge is how to avoid sinking into the mire. Although the auto-ethnographical writings have helped me to address the phenomenon of studying at a complex and personal level, my direction of interest has not been solely to understand my own socialization process, but to find insights and conceptual ways to speak about everyday events in a way that speaks to others as well. According to at-home ethnography, a researcher may live and work at the scene, but s/he is still not necessary conducting autoethnographical research. In the words of Alvesson (2003, 175): "The intention is however, to draw attention to one´s own cultural context, what goes on around oneself rather than putting one´s experiences in the centre (...). The work situation provides the viewpoint, but the aim is to carry out cultural analysis and not introspection, although it is important to not overstress this division as one´s feelings, thoughts and experiences may offer some valuable material."

My aim has not been to turn inwards, as autoethnographic texts are often interpreted to do (although I do not totally agree with this) but to turn outwards, in order to trigger critical dialogue on the practices of business education. This being the aim, the challenge has been to create fractures in the (sometimes too) personal and familiar. Alvesson (2003, 185-186) suggests a few ways to do that. For example, he encourages drawing on theories or theorists that challenge the common sense and facilitate looking at issues in a more all-sided way; or building an interpretive repertoire sufficiently broad in

order to read empirical material in a variety of ways; or attempting to construct a particular or a unique point of view. For me, turning to practice-theoretical studies, and especially trying to develop a particular interpretation, has offered me just this. The aim has been to provide a perspective on studying as a practical activity involving the tactical, political, moral and personal dimensions, as well as conceptualizing students as active subjects in business education. Of course this view has been a developing one, and thus it may unfortunately not be coherently presented in the studies of this thesis.

4.3 Generating and analyzing materials

There is an ongoing debate on what counts as organizational ethnography (see Hodson 2004, Yanow & Geuijen 2009, Down 2012), and this article-based PhD thesis certainly belongs to that debate. While my research deals with core issues of ethnography – of being in the field and doing fieldwork – it lacks the elements of traditional, coherent and thorough ethnographic writing. Instead, each study in this thesis represents a unique combination of handling the field materials: generating them, analyzing and presenting results. In this phase of research work I have turned to a variety of narrative research methods, which suit the practice-theoretical framework well.

From a practice-theoretical perspective, the world appears to be relationally constituted and kept together and perpetuated by active processes of ordering and sense making. This ordering and sense making is achieved through the storytelling of diverse participants about their practical activity (Gherardi & Poggio 2007, Brown & Duguid 1991). Through stories and use of language, diverse participants also render their embodied experiences and thoughts recognizable and accountable to their colleagues. In narrative research this is referred to as occupational storytelling (Cortazzi 2001) or professional storytelling (Riessmann & Quinney 2005). An ethnographer in the field can then either observe situations in which they occur naturally, or collect stories written in text form, or provoke such storytelling.

The format of article writing has not allowed much room for elaborations on generating materials, analyzing them and presenting the findings. Therefore, I take this opportunity to carry out a re-reading of the choices made, and will here take that discussion a bit further.

4.3.1 Narrating `forms of education´

The first study presented in this thesis is a literature review of three prominent journals on management education, and therefore it deviates from the rest of the studies encompassing ethnographical material. However, as such, the study casts light on what it means to read material through a particular conceptual lens in order to create a fruitful distance. I, with my colleagues, studied academic journals and articles as practitioners´ accounts on educational practices, and their reflections on those practices in other business schools and universities within the field of management education.

We conceived journal materials as narrative research materials, i.e. stories about the kinds of educational practices there are – what practices are endorsed or called for. Researchers write articles to tell stories and to accomplish something: to justify and legitimate certain views, to silence others, to deconstruct, to offer contextual interpretations, or to share local efforts. As such, they can be viewed as occupational stories (Cortazzi 2001) that are told in various contexts and to a variety of audiences in order to convey collective understandings, values and a sense of history and progress. Therefore, the stories are performative in a wider meaning, having a role in the continuity and reproduction of specific educational practices and forms of education.

As researchers we were both interpreters of these performative accounts as well as producers of new stories which we call `forms of education´. In order to craft these new stories, we utilized particular practice-theoretical lenses through which we looked for answers to particular questions. We were after accounts of educational practices featuring understanding of the subjects, tactical considerations, political goals, and/or moral reasoning. After analyzing the most relevant accounts (including more than one of the searched elements), we reconstructed the material into new stories, which we called `forms of education´. Here, the stories were clearly constructed by us, and their construction – applying the specific frame of practical activity – is a central part of the article.

As a result, we suggest that there exists a dominant story of a U.S.-based form of education and its revisions, but also other more invisible stories, which we call alternatives. Boje has also (2001) described how hegemonic stories exert force as cultural dominant frames or `regimes of truth´ in society, and states that one of the purposes of qualitative research is to shake and question the hegemonic, linear and often one-voiced presentation of the grant narrative. He suggests that this is done by bringing, alongside the grant narrative, more diversified and multi-voiced stories that show the complexity of the phenomenon. And indeed, we suggest that by recognizing variety in prevailing educational forms, we were able to question the hegemony and become more aware of alternatives available.

4.3.2 Zooming in on the practice of examination

The second study is an explicit case of the at-home ethnography[7]. From the days of my undergraduate studies, I had kept up my old habit of reading students´ web discussions. And then one day, my eye caught an interesting discussion about taking an exam in my own discipline. In the discussion the more mature students guided a novice to prepare and relate him/her to the practice of taking an exam in an appropriate way. The situation is a more traditional case of occupational storytelling, where professionals share the

[7] Note that this study was conducted almost ten years ago. Therefore, my methodological reflections concerning the study, and how I understand them at the moment, may slightly differ from those written back in 2005.

secrets of their craft with novices (Cortazzi 2001, Brown & Duguid 1991, Lave & Wenger 1991).

Taking the sociality that is inherent in practices seriously and casting some light on it, a researcher needs to capture situations where practitioners meet, articulate or illustrate their daily doings to each other. For me, this discussion on internet, the students´ exchanges of messages, offered precisely that: naturally occurring materials that pry open the logic of the practice of examination from the students´ point of view. The situation served as a productive starting point to zoom in on a specific practice and to gain insider knowledge also of the power-relations amongst the participants. The interactions between novices and more senior members are fruitful methods, as they open up the patterns of relationship. These interactions unveil, as Nicolini put it (2009, 125): "(…) who is who and who knows what, the interests at stake, and how these different perspectives, usually sustained by specific discourses are worked together, aligned, or played against each other, creating differential power positions in the field."

In order to describe and analyze specific practices, what is required is to appreciate them as performative, social and knowable accomplishments. In fieldwork, this means focusing on the making of everyday life. Nicolini (2009, 124) instructs us: "(…) making practice of the object of ethnographic observation thus requires that we turn our attention towards issues such as: what are people saying and doing? What are they trying to do when they speak? What is said and done? Through which moves, strategies, methods and discursive practical devices do practitioners accomplish their work?" In the analysis of students´ message I have carefully analyzed the words, meanings and aspirations of the discussants in a spirit of a performative narrative analysis.

In performative narrative analysis the focus of analysis goes beyond the linguistic choices; it goes beyond `the stage´ or direct context of a particular storytelling, concentrating more on the social action that is mediated through language. Riessmann (2004, 708) describes performative narrative analysis as follows: "Storytelling is seen as performance by a `self´ with a past who involves, persuades, and (perhaps) moves an audience through language and gesture, `doing´ rather than telling alone." Students´ performances in webpages are conceived as a form of social action, where they use different and sometimes contradictory discourses to understand the educational contexts and its practices around them, and/ or to advance and convey certain ways of studying, goals and values.

As a result of my analysis of the messages (i.e. considering the setting, positioning of diverse participants, logic and the plot of message creations, and the responses each message received), I describe how the specific practice of examination becomes known and learnt, what kind of action is cherished and valued amongst the students, and with what consequences.

4.3.3 Creating the scene

One of the purposes of ethnographic studies is to reveal the hidden, and often implicit, dimensions of organizational life (Ybema et al. 2009). However, such things can be hard to spot and sometimes a researcher needs to use his or her imagination as a way to create spaces for such an empirical material to occur. For me, an opportunity arose as I became a co-teacher for the undergraduate course called Professional Development. This is how the third study of my PhD research originated. I participated in course planning and teaching with a more experienced colleague, who shared an interest in practice-theoretical approaches and participatory methods. Our aim was to create a safe environment for students to reflect on their studying and to write essays on it.

During the course, 34 students wrote personal essays about studying from the tactical, political and moral perspectives. I interpreted the essays as stories which fostered my understandings of a cultural and institutional milieu: the meanings students gave to their studying contexts, to their studying, and to themselves. As Cortazzi (2001) points out, reading texts as narratives can be a method to develop an understanding of the meanings people give, to share in the experiences of particular groups, to portray the insider's view, and to capture human qualities such as feelings, doubts, moral dilemmas, ethical concerns etc. For me, the students´ texts were familiar but not self-evident.

As an insider to business education, I recognized the socially and culturally accepted ways of presenting oneself as a university student in a certain discipline (see Ylijoki 2000), and especially presenting oneself as a proficient business student (Leppälä & Päiviö 2001). However, as I analyzed the essays applying `thematic narrative analysis´ (Riessman 2004), searching for common thematic elements, I also found deviations from the dominant ways of expressing the self, as well as stories of difference. Therefore, in the depiction of how the students accounted for their studying, I used excerpts from essays as exemplars to illustrate thematic variation (instead of describing the most common themes) revealing tactical, political and morals themes in studying. These excerpts showed the ability of the students to reflect on their own practical activity in a fertile and profound way.

4.3.4 Harvesting on my doctoral course experience

The inspiration for the last two studies in the current research project (the fourth and the fifth study) came from the course called Professional Academics at Work. This course can be seen as a continuum of the ideas put forward in the course on Professional Development described earlier. This time the course was aimed at postgraduates, and not for undergraduates, which also meant that I did not approach the course from a teacher´s position, but that of a participant. For me, a course dealing with academic work and professional identity projects served as an experience of collaborative learning and collective reflection with a group of peers.

Writing a course story draws from the ideas of participatory and practitioner research (see Anderson et al. 2007, Kemmis & McTaggart 2005). The course,

also characterized as a developmental effort, was generated by the local need to support doctoral students and academic workers, who are faced with rival conceptions of proper professionalism, contradictory demands and contested competence claims. The purpose was to organize and facilitate co-operative inquiry on academic work and professional development in order to strengthen participants´ professional identities (whether academic or not). I ended up writing a course story with the teacher (Keijo Räsänen) of the course. Through our positions as researchers, a teacher and a student, we had the ability and the opportunity to produce `living knowledge´ (Heron & Reason 2006) for the practical service in our and other peoples' lives. Writing about the course and the participants´ accounts on the experience was a collaborative and political effort on a subject matter that we both felt strongly about.

Afterwards, inspired by the course – I and a postgraduate colleague of mine (Susanna Kantelinen) – decided to interview the rest of the course participants. Our primary aim was to discuss the experience and relevance of this particular course that we had shared together. Another aim was to provoke storytelling about doctoral studying at a more general level by asking questions such as what students do on a daily basis, what they are involved in, and with whom they interact, in order to understand their unique positions within academia. However, as these discussions turned out to be very intriguing, they resulted in narratives illustrating doctoral studying as a practical activity. The stories were constructed by us, the researchers, but negotiated with each participant respectively.

Consequently, this period of almost a year ended up as two different studies: one describing the story of a specific course, and the other focusing on postgraduate studying as balancing between exposure and subjugation to bundles of practices of doctoral education. Next I will elaborate on the latter study in greater detail, because it contains some special features concerning the research methods.

4.3.5 Zooming in and out of the practices of doctoral education

The last study strives to describe the landscape of doctoral studying in a particular department. All the participants to the study were our (the writers of the study) peers, meaning that the power relations in the interview settings could be conceived as relatively equal. Despite the democratic starting point, it became clear that stories shared during the interviews were told specifically to us. And we, who were seen differently in varying situations, were positioned either as confidential friends, insiders of our disciplinary unit, or serious researchers, depending on the topic discussed and each participant´s personal relationship with us. Consequently, the interviews formed specific contexts for accounts and meanings to emerge (see Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 215).

In order to avoid the misusage of the researcher´s authoritative power and too subjective readings of the interviews (which might have resulted in distorted analysis), we wanted to provide participants with an opportunity to engage with our research process. After transcribing and analyzing the

interview materials and rewriting short stories of doctoral studying (see Czarniawska 2000 on constructing new stories based on interviews), we gave the stories to the participants and invited their comments. Most agreed on our construction of their situations, some made small corrective remarks, and one required more substantial revisions to her story.

To make the process a bit more complex, the stories were not crafted with specific questions in mind (like for the first study), or based on thematic analysis (like for the third study), but rather interpreted through a dialectic process of zooming in and out of the practices of doctoral education, moving between empirical data and theory, between interviews and describing the practices of doctoral education. In the interviews we had asked about the students´ involvement in diverse practices; hence, now we wanted to draw a tentative map of those practices. As Nicolini points out (2009, 128): "The study of practices cannot be limited to focusing on the details of their accomplishments. There is a need to integrate and alternate the zooming in movement with one which is a horizon-widening zooming out. As such, understanding practice requires moving between practice-in-the-making and the texture of practices that causally connect one particular instance to many others." Thus it is the web, or the bundle of practices, which makes the studying as a practical activity so contradictory and demanding.

After sketching the draft of the whole paper called `Doctoral students as participants in academia´ we, my colleague and me, offered our paper for the participants to comment on and to consider if they approve our interpretation on (a) the bundles of practices in doctoral education and (b) on our analysis of the constructed stories. The comments that we received were encouraging: Some found it "interesting and funny", some "beneficial", and one even thanked us. But the process had also been significant to us, as we learnt to know our colleagues better and to appreciate them and their specific circumstances. It also provided us with a beneficial distance to the practices and their powers into which we were immersed.

4.4 On the goodness of the research

Doing a doctoral thesis within one´s own workplace encompasses features of a double socialization process. I have researched studying in my own school and department, and thus gained a good understanding of the spectrum of cultural rules; tactics utilized, politics employed, internal and external goods to be nurtured and avoided. I have also become a member of a particular research community myself, and thus internalized a great deal of local practices. But at the same time, I have aspired to reflect on these practices, to objectify them, and to turn them into research objects gaining a substantial distance to these (see also Alvesson 2003, 176). I have had an opportunity to study something that has practical value and significance in my own local surroundings. I have not felt the need to balance between practical relevance and scientific rigor. I have been able to study a practical activity of diverse participants at close-

range and with a participatory orientation that might have not been possible in some other contexts.

In the evaluation of inquiries conducted in the spirit of participatory research, a researcher encounters extended criteria for validity, or goodness, of the research. As Guba and Lincoln (1994, see also Heron & Reason 1997) articulate: "Practical knowing about how to flourish with a balance of autonomy, cooperation, and hierarchy in a culture is an end in itself, and is intrinsically valuable." I conceive my research process in terms of searching for such ways of knowing. In the introductory chapter I asked what shapes students´ agencies in business education and how their search for meaningful agency could be supported within an institution that simultaneously oppresses them and enables their growth. I have kept these questions in mind and searched for answers with the help of congenial colleagues.

The role of the research question is crucial in social sciences, as the cultivation of societal practices depends on our ability to ask critical or `right´ questions. The questions that we ask carry values and moral considerations of what is searched for, studied and presented, and what is ignored and left outside, and thus forming the ground for evaluation. As Chaiklin (2011, 131) writes: "The study of societal practices necessarily requires explicit attention to the societal values used to form research questions (and their associated interventions). Part of being objective in the study of societal practices is to consider the societal values and interests that appear in the specific activities being examined." Once the choice of questions and ways to intervene in the practices are made, the process of validation begins.

Mishler (1990) highlights validation as a process through which a community of researchers evaluates the `trustworthiness´ of a particular study as opposite to validity as an abstract set of ideas. There are particular ways of warranting validity claims. They are linked to the craft of conducting research, i.e. what researchers do, rather than a set of universal ideas and concepts. Mishler (p. 435) notes: "The discovery, testing, and validation of findings is imbedded in cultural and linguistic practices". Thus, the contexts and communities in which the study is conducted and to which it is aimed at becomes crucial. Being able to conduct research `within´, has proved to be beneficial: the response is immediate, if the interpretations of local settings, the practices or participants seem unfair or otherwise distorted. All the studies in this thesis have been read by several colleagues, peers and students. In addition, most of these papers have gone through official peer review processes.

Emphasizing the social constructionist nature of the validation process does not mean that there are no commonly accepted and what Whittemore et al. (2001) calls `primary validity criteria´ in qualitative research, such as credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity. However, these can be seen as particular ways of warranting validity claims, rather than general guarantees of the goodness of the research (Mishler 1990, 420). In my research these mean that in portraying the students´ views on studying, I have tried to be aware of the differences in the participants´ accounts. I have tried

to ensure that the results of the research reflect the varying contexts and the participants´ experiences in a believable way. I have used direct excerpts and quotes as much as possible, or asked for participants´ comments on our interpretations. I have not claimed my authority on the `truthfulness´ of the presentation, but rather understood it as one possible reading and thus open to critical appraisal of the choices made. Furthermore, I have tried to be as honest as possible in accounting for the methodological, theoretical and practical choices.

In addition to validity criteria stated above, Whittemore et al. (2001) highlight that also things like explicitness, vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence, and sensitivity should be taken into consideration. These are mentioned as `secondary validity criteria´ enhancing the quality of the research.

The studies of this research process

My own stories lie here; they hide behind the worlds and paragraphs surfacing every now and then. They are embedded in feelings of frustration and alienation in the face of the narrowest views on management education and research; but there is also hope and optimism - there is space for alternative views. Since my undergraduate studies, I have learnt to recognize and identify those experiences that might seem like individuals´ attributes or qualities as actually more general products of shared socio-cultural practices. I have learnt to see the power of practices in forming and conditioning us (as subjects) and our possibilities for agency. Therefore, joining a group of colleagues who have been – and still are – deliberately reiterating and renewing those practices, whether gendered practices, teaching practices, research practices, program development or administrative practices, has generated a new set of feelings and another space for me to be in and become .

In summer 2010 I participated in writing a joint paper that describes the autonomous development work as something done by practitioners in their own terms, means and goals, in order to realize internal goods in specific academic practices (Räsänen & Korpiaho 2010). In that paper I reflect on my choice of joining the group of (self-named) autonomous developers as follows:

"My story reminds me of something that Davies (2006, 425) has written about learning and subjectification (drawing on the ideas of Judith Butler). She writes that the process in which one becomes a subject is a simultaneous process of mastery and submission, entailing a necessary vulnerability to the other in order to be. I seem to have accepted five years ago the unavoidable paradox and ambivalence of the process of becoming an academic. I now think that both `submission as mastery´ and `mastery as submission´ are always present in our attempts to learn, to participate and to become. If I could choose my way of becoming, I would choose collaboration over competition, collegial relationships over a supervisor/student hierarchy, participation over withdrawal, and belonging over separation. "

At this point I felt I had found my place within a business school.

5. Summary of the five studies

In this chapter, I will briefly present the aims, foci and main findings of the five studies presented in the Part II of the current research project. First I will summarize each study briefly, after which I will discuss my main findings, with reference to my research questions: What are the different forms of student agency? How is student agency manifested in the context of business education? How can student agency be supported and strengthened?

5.1 Anglo-American forms of management education

Korpiaho, K. & Päiviö, H. & Räsänen, K. (2007). Anglo-American forms of management education: A practice-theoretical perspective. Scandinavian Journal of Management, 23(1), 36-65.

Aims and focus of the research: Academic stories about teaching and learning in management education

The first study is a review of three Anglo-American journals of management education research, namely The Academic of Management Learning & Education, The Journal of Management Education, and Management Learning. From the pages of these journals, we looked for and identified the various ways in which academic practitioners – researchers and teachers – write about their and their students' activity, i.e. participation in the teaching and learning practices of management education. In this study our aim is to present the richness of management education, for the "hegemonic form" of practicing management education is often referred to and criticized but seldom further explicated. In order to be attentive to less visible accounts, we read the articles in these journals from a practice-theoretical perspective, asking the following questions: (a) Who is being educated and by whom? (b) How is education to be accomplished? (c) What is to be achieved and accomplished in education? (d) Why is it justified to aim for certain goals and to employ particular means in education? Although practitioners do not normally talk about their practical action in terms of questions and answers, they do share with one another stories that touch on the four issues.

Main findings: Diverse forms of practicing management education

We describe seven forms of management education, each embodying differing teaching and learning practices, promoting different understandings of the subjects (who), tactics (how), politics (what) and morals (why) of education. We classify them as traditional, revised, and alternative forms of education. The traditional, explicit goal of management education is to educate successful specialists and effective managers by leaning on discipline-specific tools and techniques, using conventional teaching methods. The revised forms modify this goal by redefining what is needed to become `effective´: mastering of scientific knowledge or acquiring personal and workplace skills. The alternative forms suggest new goals and ways of accomplishing them, namely the education of responsible citizens by means of service learning, or critically reflective practitioners by means of action based learning/research projects, or politically conscious and active professionals by means of critical reflection. The moral justifications of these forms vary from individualistic reasoning (providing opportunities for individuals) to more societal concerns (such as creating a more democratic society).

The traditional form of education and its revised versions assume a teacher´s dominant role in designing, planning and implementing education, but the alternatives call for project leaders, facilitators, co-learners and fellow activists. Also, the assumptions concerning a student role varied: At one extreme students are seen as rather passive objects of teaching, and at the other, as active subjects capable of assuming moral responsibility and taking political action. The responsibility for learning processes and outcomes has shifted increasingly from teachers to students. The presumptions of students´ willingness to act as powerful subjects in educational settings have also increased, and consequently, so has the expectations that students have to fulfill these assumptions.

Discussion: Differing spaces for student agency in diverse forms of education

In diverse forms of education, positions reserved for students differ from presumptions made about the learner as well as appreciations of different ways of knowing and learning. Individual courses, as well as whole programs (e.g. Bachelors and Masters) always cultivate, nurture and advance certain notions of subjects, either intentionally or unintentionally. However, although we can identify forms of education as they were presented in the journals, we cannot truly know how they are realized, negotiated and experienced in local contexts. Teachers may or may not be able to carry out even the most carefully developed plans in educational settings, and students may or may not accept the subjects positions offered to them, resisting or revising their presumed positions. However, these conceptions of management education even partially or inconsistently implemented set boundaries for a practical activity of students. They set the limits of what is feasible, acceptable, desired, or rejected and unwanted.

In the course of their studies, students encounter forms of education which position and situate them in particular ways. Mann (2001) writes that these sociocultural contexts can form either an experience of alienation or

engagement for students, depending on how the prevailing ideologies embedded in these forms of education are conceived. If they are conceived as natural and fixed, there is no space left for creative subjects, leading possibly to an alienating experience. On the other hand, if they are conceived as partial and subject to change, there is more space for the capable subjects, leading to a more engaging experience. In a world viewed as relational, the self is dependent on particular events, constructing practices, and other participants. Consequently, Mann (2001,12) describes the situation as follows: "Being in a situation where the self is not validated in good enough relationship and contexts leads to a loss of a sense of self, and of agency and desire." Of course, the opposite is also true, although the `good contexts and relations´ are argued to be less common in current higher education institutions.

Overall, from the students´ perspective, loads of courses, obligatory and voluntary studies, and a mixture of majors and minors, offer colorful variations in terms of their assumptions of knowing and the knower. Studying as a practical activity is never a formless experience; rather, students enter a world punctuated by rules and regulations, an official curriculum and its requirements. The idea of an autonomous subject is seen as an illusory one, the engaged subjects can appear in some particular contexts, but the instrumentally oriented subjects are everyday life in academia. There is an inherent imbalance between those planning and controlling learning processes, and those being the objects of education. Consequently, many students find themselves in rather weak positions. The official curriculum serves as a landscape designed by academic and administrative professionals, where students are left to either embrace it as given or to tackle it as skillfully as they can.

5.2 The practice of examination

Korpiaho, K. (2005). Students' curriculums: What do students learn in a business school? In S. Gherardi & D. Nicolini (eds.), The Passion for Learning and Knowing (pp. 221-241). Trento: University of Trento e-books.

Aims and focus of the research: Students learning and knowing the practice of examination

The second study explores education from the students´ points of view. It is a description of the students´ world, where the official curriculum with all its requirements must be skillfully managed in order to survive the first few years of studying. The study proceeds from a practice-theoretical perspective, where participation in practices of business education – attending lectures, participating in classroom work and taking exams – constructs and governs studying. Students become acquainted with practices shaping their everyday operations, revealing the significance of the design of educational practices. In order to research student learning and knowing within these practices, I introduce the concepts of `situated curriculum´ and `hidden curriculum´. The situated curriculum (Gherardi 1998) highlights the contextual nature of learning and knowing that practices produce, whereas the concept of hidden

curriculum (Margolis 2001) puts more weight on the political and critical sides of learning, emphasizing unintended learning outcomes, subtle messages, silent socialization, and reproduction of different kinds of inequalities.

In this study, I describe what it is that students learn through their engagement in one particular practice, i.e. the practice of examination in the context of HSE. As empirical material I use naturally occurring data, a series of exchanged messages, which was posted on the student union webpages between March and April 2004. The chain of messages is analyzed in detail and is attached to the study in its natural state.

Main findings: Situated curriculum + hidden curriculum = students´ curriculum

After analyzing the chain of exchanged messages on internet, I suggest that learning the practice of examination consists of six activities and eighteen sub activities. These activities, better described as `learning objectives of the students´ curriculum´, range from very practical concerns of finding and circulating book summaries and old exams, to learning different kinds of composing strategies and usage of an ideologically right vocabulary, to preferring exams that maximize their credit points collection (i.e. quantitatively oriented courses) and enhance their possibilities of getting their desired major. But they also learn about power-relations within business schools, diverse mechanisms of differentiation, and ways to present oneself as a competent and self-assured knower. The chain of messages shows how the more proficient students effectively familiarize newcomers with the practice of taking exams, and how the students themselves reproduce what it means to master the practice and represent oneself as a proficient business student.

As a result I conclude that integrating theoretical insights from situated and hidden curriculums is beneficial in describing students´ practical activity of taking an exam. The term students´ curriculum is proposed, as it refers to how the social reality of studying in a business school is replicated and renewed through students´ own actions. The practice of examination perpetuates its existence as an ill-designed educational practice as students turn to their own curriculum and share it with peers and newcomers thus serving as an effective socializing resource among the students.

Discussion: Importance of knowing the local context and ability to read it

This study suggests ways in which social reality and social practices are kept alive and reproduced through mundane operations. Students are creative and tactically skillful; they create their own curriculums when the official curriculum generates a fruitful ground for it. The form and content of students´ curriculums arise from the official curriculum, in this case from the institutionalized practice of examination. A student´s curriculum is about making do within a practice; it is a way to express and convey tactical maneuvers and tricks in an explicit form. In this particular case, the practice of examination enforces practical activity that is characterized by, for instance, individualism (surviving alone), showing self-assurance (composing strategies, presenting self as a competent one) and competitiveness (comparing self with

others). It fosters a kind of agency that suits some kinds of habitus better than others.

The danger is that the game of surviving, collecting credits and gaining recognition amongst peers starts to govern the subject. If the tactical concerns (of making do) override the other aspects of practical activity, such as the political aspect (achieving and accomplishing something meaningful) or the moral aspect (pursuing internally good studying for the self), then the subject is easily caught into a deprived space with limited horizons for possible practical activity. This has various consequences.

Firstly, stress on tactical survival leads students to adopt an instrumental and performance-oriented approach to studying. Emphasis on tactics of surviving can lead to distracting students from intrinsic and nonquantifiable features of studying (Beatty 2004, 187) and in some cases it may be possible for some students to feel themselves estranged from their very selves, struggling to find their own stance and a path (Mann 2001, 14). According to the practice-theoretical perspective, students´ involvement and their relation to practices construct their conceptions of themselves, and also shape their identities. Thus, approaching studying from the tactical stance alone is not the most fruitful starting point for students´ professional growth.

Secondly, dispensing with the political and moral dimensions from students´ practical activity has an ethical significance which concerns many management education researchers. Beatty writes (2004, 191-192): "Assuming that students´ attitudes and experiences in school shape their attitudes subsequent to graduation, we might hypothesize that students who focus on the short-term instrumental outcomes of grades are at risk of becoming the business leaders who focus on short-term gains by any means." Therefore, practices constructing and guiding studying, as well as students´ own operations within those practices, are to be considered essential for educating future practitioners.

5.3 Proficiency and reflectivity in study practices

Korpiaho, K. (2007). Students as practitioners in academia - proficiency and reflectivity in study practices. Journal of Organisational Transformation and Social Change, 4(3), 249-262.

Aims and focus of the research: Starting from student experience

The third study addresses a course where students´ experiences of studying in a business school are taken as a starting point for course planning and organizing. The course in question was called Professional Development (PD), and it was offered at the HSE in 2005. In that course we, the teachers, assumed that if the students learned how to identify, describe and reflect on their studying, they would also be able to utilize those competencies in their participation in other forms of practical activity. We proposed a connection between articulating one´s own ways of working, reflecting on them, and developing as a professional (Brown & Duguid 1991, Lave & Wenger 1998).

The article can be read as an attempt to educate reflective practitioners with experiential learning methods (better explicated in Räsänen & Korpiaho 2007), but it can also be read as an attempt to organize a safe and a facilitated space for students, as a part of the official curriculum, to reflect on their studying. We hoped that if students learned to be reflexive about their own knowing and learning, it would help them to find their own stance towards studying, and might consequently reinforce their agency and sense of themselves as business students. During the course, studying was approached from three perspectives: tactical (How can I perform my studies at HSE?), political (What can I accomplish and achieve in my studies at HSE?) and moral perspective (Why am I studying at HSE, and why am I studying in a certain way?). The 34 course participants wrote a personal essay on each of these topics. The contents of the students´ essays formed the research material, and the main findings are discussed in the study.

Main findings: Students as reflective practitioners

The results show that the craft of critical reflection can be already rehearsed during undergraduate studies, although students do not necessarily have much work experience outside educational institutions. However, students are able to construct profound and concrete reflections of their own studying. This can be seen as an analogy to practitioners reflecting and developing work practices in other work places.

The students in the study analyzed the appropriateness of their study skills in the context of business education, the constraints and prospects for pursuing certain goals (e.g. ethical contradictions and gender influences), and the cultural demands placed upon them. In the essays, the harshness of studying became quite evident. While some hailed the subject position of a typical performance and career-oriented business student and evaluated their studying accordingly, many recognized problems with this approach. Students expressed pressures to perform, be efficient and to devote themselves to their future careers even during the studies. Many elaborated on how the practices of business education shape subjects, and how the seeds of work addiction are sowed during their studies. Reactions toward these notions varied. Some were ironic and detached themselves from the main stream of `benefit-maximizing social climbers´ and their way of studying, while others reported feelings of being inadequate or deviant from the cultural expectations, which made their studying more difficult. These latter students had to plan and develop their study practices more carefully into something meaningful to themselves, but perhaps, in the end, it was these students who gained the most from the course.

Discussion: Exploring studying from tactical, political and moral stances

One way to enrich students´ views on their capabilities and possibilities for a meaningful agency is to broaden the horizon from which to explore their practical activity. Raising questions that not only come from a tactical and technical stance, but also from a political and a moral stance, supports students´ understanding of their own situation within a business school

setting. It also gives a more complete and a richer picture of diverse forms of practical activity situated in any institution, and thus supports `a critical self-world understanding´ (Roberts 1996, 67-68). Another significant feature is to reflect on everyday doings as shaped and conditioned by the social fabric of institutional structures, procedures, and practices; and to remind students that the perspective is social rather than individual, meaning that the individual experiences that we witness are essentially socially and culturally constrained.

Framing and approaching students´ own doings and sayings as suggested above connects our attempts to those promoted in the discussions of critical management education (Reynolds 1999b, Cunliffe 2004, Fenwick 2005). Researchers and educators in that field warn about the danger of self-reflection turning into self-discipline. In business education, serious self-reflection can easily turn into a thread of desired identity, which often is the professional identity of a specialist or manager in business life (Fenwick 2005). The challenges of critical management education are to practice critical reflection within practices, using experiential learning methods, but still not to make students reject their aspired identity or to kill the desire to engage oneself in the practices of business life.

However, after graduation, after being exposed and subjugated to business school practices and its values, some postpone or reject the lure of business life as they carry on their studies as full-time doctoral students. Some might continue the performance-oriented logic of studying, some might be after status and prestige, and some might long for academic freedom and autonomy, or be in search of an alternative set of values, such as collegiality, altruism, or pursuit of truth. Whatever the reasons are, creating a new identity as an emerging academic is not an easier path.

5.4 In the midst of the practices of doctoral education

Kantelinen, S. & Korpiaho, K. (2009): Doctoral students as participants in academia: The process of (un)becoming academics. An invited paper shared in the Public Seminar of the Oxford Learning Institute, University of Oxford, October 29.

Aims and focus of the research: Researching doctoral studying from the student´s perspective

The fourth study addresses studying in a doctoral program as a practical activity, where professional knowledge, knowhow and identity are considered to develop through participation in bundles of practices in particular contexts, in this case, at HSE. The research focus is topical, as the practices of doctoral education have been in flux in the last few years. The changes in higher education policies, governance and academic contexts described in research literature (Churchman 2004, Nixon et al. 2001, Nixon 2003) also occur in Finland, though with a national twist (Hakala et al. 2003). In their search for professional identities, doctoral students are balancing between exposure, engagement and subjugation to controversial practices – those from

cherishing autonomy and academic freedom to those emphasizing efficiency and a more structured education.

In this study, doctoral students are seen as subjects who confront bundles of practices in their daily academic endeavors, sometimes letting practices engage them and sometimes resisting their enchantment with versatile recognition of these practices and of the consequences of their participation. We approach students as carriers of practice (Reckwitz 2002, 249-250) and as participants in structures of social practices (Dreier 2003, 2009) building their personal trajectories and forming stances towards the practices they encounter. We are interested in how academic identities build up and develop in fine-tuned ways through participation. The research question is twofold: How do the practices condition, direct and shape doctoral students´ expectations, actions and experiences and their professional identities? And, respectively, how do students relate to practices and take different stances towards them?

Main findings: Six stories about studying, six practice configurations, six personal stances

As a result, we depict six stories of postgraduate studying, consisting of different practice configurations and stances towards the practices. The names of the stories illuminate the students´ situations in a nutshell: Lauri is a project worker struggling to survive in the crossfire of project responsibilities, Kaisa is an efficient and learning-oriented PhD student following the official doctoral program, Tia is a developer-consultant searching for her own space in academia by relying on her advisor, Sami is a detached lecturer suffering from writer's block, Iiro is a relaxed storyteller polishing his monograph in solitude, and finally, Ilona, who is a representative of an academic precariat[8] advancing a societal agenda through research.

The paths the students have followed and the situations they have ended up in might be conceived of as their personal and more or less deliberate choices. However, a practice-theoretical analysis offers an alternative reading. It might be that the students have stuck to the practices at hand without even recognizing them as practices and adopted the modes of intentionality they incorporate. By forming personal practice configurations without knowledge of the other possible practices and their consequences, doctoral students might – unintentionally and against their own interests – be contributing to being excluded from an academic career they might actually be aspiring towards. Likewise, practices might also impede doctoral students' endeavors during their studies even though they might not even be trying to achieve staying in academia. In the more positive scenario, the practices might work to give strength to doctoral students as subjects of their own actions if he or she is well aware of the functioning of the practices, and his or her own goals. Whichever is the case, our point is that it is not just individual choices but also

8 According to Wikipedia the term 'precariat' can be explained as follows: "Precarity is a condition of existence without predictability or security, affecting material or psychological welfare. Specifically, it is applied to the condition of intermittent or underemployment and the resultant precarious existence. The social class defined by this condition has been termed the precariat."

the practices that are involved in either empowering or marginalizing doctoral students.

Discussion: Participation shapes emerging academic identities

In order to become a competent or skillful practitioner in an academic field, prevailing sets of practices need to be recognized and appreciated. In this study, we see how the practices of doctoral education and the students´ personal stances towards them impact their identity construction. Their personal stances, i.e. their relation towards the practices, ranged from partial exposure, engagement and mastery, to submission, withdrawal and even avoidance of some practices. In their stories, doctoral students expressed tactical considerations of what is tactically possible or feasible in a world figured by divergent practices, as well as political deliberations of what they wanted to achieve and accomplish through their work, i.e. in most cases their research work, to moral reasoning of what they considered as meaningful and a good work. Although the individual stories were rich and engaging, it became clear how different sets of practices require and develop different mastery, and how these notions have evolved and changed in time.

Through this study, we noticed that the changing practices of doctoral studies enculture students to different preferences, wants and desires, which change the notions of an ideal student, postgraduate studying, and what it means to become an academic. New generations become familiarized with different sets of practices and preferences than did earlier generations. However, as the practices are historically and culturally layered and reproduced, they do not vanish suddenly – nor are they born suddenly; rather, there are subtle shifts, or more radical eruptions in time. Thus power and meaning are renegotiated. For instance, program governance practices as well as curriculum practices have gained more weight, with substantial consequences for thesis writing practices and engagement in university work practices (such as contributing to the academic community and developing educational or administrative practices). These transitions can be devastating for some emerging academics, if the identity work that used to be promoted and supported becomes disregarded in a new situation.

This identity work, i.e. the process of becoming or unbecoming an academic, is never self-evident work. It requires reflecting on the tactics, politics and morals that different practices imply, and at least moderate understanding of their subject constituting nature and views for alternative readings, i.e. what the possibilities are for action, what kind of relations could be taken towards the practices of doctoral education, and what kind of personal stances could be created and cultivated. In the current situation of shifting values and preferences in doctoral education, there is a need for this identity work to be facilitated and resourced as a part of doctoral education.

5.5 Resourcing identity work

Räsänen, K. & Korpiaho, K. (2011). Supporting doctoral students in their professional identity projects. Studies in Continuing Education, 33(1), 19-31.

Aims and focus of the research: Reflecting on one´s own work in academia
This study reports on an attempt to support doctoral students in their quests for a professional identity in a discipline and institutional setting. The attempt was a new course that aimed to provide both cultural resources for identity work and a site for doing this work collaboratively and reflectively with peers. The need for collaborative reflection among doctoral students is motivated by the fact that academic work itself is multifunctional and embraced by contradictory demands. Also, academics in particular, even newcomers to academia, confront rival conceptions of proper professionalism and contested competence claims. The course in question was a new course, organized in January–April 2009. The main point within the course concept was to reflects on one´s own work in terms of the questions `how, what, why, and who´. This approach provides opportunities to articulate one´s own stance to academic work and consider alternative takes on each of the basic issues.

In order to provide resources for self-reflective work on the course, a particular practice-theoretical view on academic work as practical activity was introduced. Participants were asked to reflect upon their own work by using the help of practice theorists (e.g. de Certeau on tactics, Bourdieu on politics, MacIntyre on morals, Harré on identity). Addressing issues one by one guides joint reflection from mundane, tactical considerations to the possibilities of political and moral action. There was an assumption that answering these issues even partially would help students to deal with the primary issue of who they might want to become. The whole course design (the process of reading practice-theories, doing preparatory tasks, reflecting on one´s own work, and writing about it) was co-operatively organized. It was the doctoral students´ and the new faculty members´ own emerging conceptions of good academic work and professional identity that mattered.

Main findings: Experiences from peer learning
The course also served as a local developmental effort, which we (the writers of the article) approached from different angles, i.e. from the organizer´s and the participant´s point of view. As a result we suggest a collegial and affirmative alternative to normative approaches for supporting doctoral students. Instead of teaching how to write research proposals or articles, how to teach, how to conduct research etc., there is thus the alternative of arranging more open, collegial reflection on academic work.

Organizing such an alternative educational event requires considering the following aspects: Firstly, the issues to be inquired into and discussed have to be relevant and enriching from the participants´ point of view. Secondly, there has to be an affirmation and appreciation of unique identity projects, as each emerging practitioner has to find their own stance to academic work. Encountering dissimilar emerging practitioners – whether on their way to becoming academics or not – is central for the construction of one´s own identity work. Thirdly, identity work is always relational work; thus peer-learning based on collegial relationships has to be promoted. And finally, combining the practice-theoretical literature and practice-based knowledge in a way that reduces the dualism between theory and practice is essential, for

theory is used here as a resource for understanding and cultivating one´s own work.

Discussion: Creating a space for identity work

In this research project, subject´s agency is defined as an awareness of its own constitutions and capability to create and act on alternative situated readings. This requires reflection, which can be supported and facilitated through education. Smeyers & Burbules (2006) describe this mission as `education about a practice´, and not merely `into a practice´, which includes promoting a critical and reflective relation to practices in order to revitalize them and to enhance a more liberating relation to them. Through education, a variety of resources can be provided to participants to better understand what we are involved in, and how diverse sets of practices are defining and guiding our actions and our sense of ourselves.

The course presented above was about one collaborative effort to understand academic work. It can also be read as an event of supporting the rise of reflective practitioners, or simply as strengthening student agency and professional identity. During the course different stances to practical activity, and related forms of agency, were introduced. A practitioner who is able to see and creatively take advantage of sudden opportunities, and to harvest these little wins (de Certeau 1984), is tactically skillful. A practitioner who ponders on, and enacts upon aspired goals, whether conformist, revised or radical goals, is politically goal-oriented. And a practitioner who searches meaning and good things in given contexts and is inclined to grow in virtue (MacIntyre 1981), is morally motivated. A practitioner who is able to realize these stances in her or his own work in a coherent way in a context of institutional, social and cultural demands and pressures, might be a practitioner of a form of praxis (Räsänen 2009b).

However, these kinds of super-subjects rarely emerge in an individualized academic world configured with divergent practices. Still, even imperfect and inadequate practitioners may be in search of a meaningful praxis. With the help of like-minded others, there may be a chance to find a way, or to create a way, to participate in work practices where we can feel valuable, and feel we are doing good work. Why then go to the trouble of all this reflection? Answer: There are differences in the traditions or sets of practices in which we participate, and in the ways we participate. In Smeyers & Burbules´s words (2006, 449): ”Some practices thrive on the possibility of multiple or alternative identities; others exemplify and enforce a more static identity. And in both cases our relation to others and to ourselves will be changed.”

Endings and fractures

31.5.2013

At the end of the spring term, a group of academics – me included – decided to throw a party in a carnival spirit, with funny hats and workshops on craft therapy. We wanted to invite colleagues once again together as the working circumstances at our university had become unbearable. One of us phrased it as "it´s the end of the world as we know it", referring to the lyrics of the band REM. The collegial and collective way of working, teaching and developing academic work used to be considered as internal goods in our unit. There were several of us who were especially inspired by exploring and exploiting these ways of working. This shared enthusiasm and commitment had resulted in the development of a high-quality Master´s Program called "Developmental and HR work". The program stood explicitly for advancing an original approach towards working life and the renewal of its practices.

Today, we have realized that the new neoliberal university does not support our efforts. The Master´s Program was merged with other programs and with another discipline; courses were reduced and terminated. People who had worked 10–20 years in our unit had to leave; and some left of their own free will. The disappearance of a carefully developed Master´s Program was especially aggravating. I had become convinced – with many others – that students´ learning and knowing does not happen in a vacuum of individual course contents. Renewing just one course runs a huge risk of ending up with indifference or even resistance amongst students – especially if they are considered to be too different, radical or feminist by mainstream students. More is needed than incidental efforts by individual teachers in order to make a difference.

However, on that Friday we danced and celebrated our accomplishments, the work we had done, and our achievements – the developments we had seen in our students and their work. Nancy Sinatra sang: "These boots are made for walking, and that's just what they'll do…"

And I sang along – without knowing the direction I was to be taking…

6. Conclusions

In this chapter, I will present the key contributions of this thesis and suggest their practical relevance. In the end, I will present some research challenges that I envisage to be worthy of further studies.

6.1 Key contributions

The extensive agenda of this thesis has been to enhance understanding and research on studying as a socio-cultural phenomenon: studying as navigation through diverse bundles of practices that construct student learning and knowing. I have showed how studying can be approached as a social accomplishment of relational participation in bundles of practices sustained and constructed by themselves as well as others. I have proposed a particular conceptualization for understanding, analyzing and interpreting students and their studying. Firstly, I conceive students as active subjects who are physically, emotionally and intellectually active. And secondly, I understand their studying as a practical activity, with an extended view on practicality comprising tactical, political, moral and personal dimensions. The practice-theoretical view on studying has led to me raise issues that are social in character and central in any studying experience, but often disregarded by mainstream studies on student studying and learning, for example, issues of socialization, reproduction of students´ own curriculums, experiences of difference as well as collegiality, opportunities for peer learning, collective reflection, and identity work.

Contributing to theoretical discussions of student studying and learning, I emphasize how diverse practices craft our practical activity and space for meaningful agency, and thus, ultimately touch upon our desire to be and become. I argue that student learning and knowing are seamlessly intertwined with the everyday doings involved in studying. Studying as a practical activity involves an arduous and continuous balancing between exposure to, submission into, and mastery of diverse practices. Therefore, students´ possibilities and abilities for agency, i.e. to create and act on alternative situated readings are defined by prevailing bundles of practices. Student agency can be specified as tactical surviving in a space defined by others. It can be goal-oriented aspiration to achieve and accomplish something despite or with diverse others; or it can be a morally motivated search for internal goods.

Furthermore, there is always a subject who has to solve, one way or another, issues like who I am or who I want to become in given contexts. And these contexts can be understood in required terms: they can be classroom contexts, business education contexts or contexts of academic work, depending on the scope of inquiry or a target of development.

As for empirical contributions, I have shown how mainstream forms of business education still dominate in the field of management studies, despite the existing alternatives. In the everyday life of business studying, drawing on traditional teaching and learning practices comes with consequences for student agency. By describing one particular practice (practice of examination) I have shown how students actively take advantage of ill-designed practices in most creative ways, and thus produce the usual story of business studying (representing merely instrumental values). Socialization into the ethos of business studying is described as powerful, for students are dependent on recognition and appreciation from peers. The existence of students´ socially and culturally shared curriculum does not enhance the emergence of reflective, critical or reformist practitioners. In such a situation, the practices of business education would play a crucial role in supporting more meaningful notions of studying, especially if they are related to students´ desires to become practitioners in business life. Students do not learn just from the contents of business education, but also from the practices shaping their studying experience. The challenge I have described is not only targeted at teachers, but also to other academics, the administrative staff, and managers.

In discussing postgraduate education, I have depicted how changes in the bundles of practices within doctoral education are changing doctoral students´ understanding of what they can be and become. The eruptions and discontinuities in the practices of doctoral education are for some students more tragic than others. Therefore, especially in an era of changing practices and eruptions in traditions, space to resource students´ search for meaningful agency is called for. In order to provide resources for self-reflective work, a practice-theoretical view on academic work as practical activity was introduced. The key argument in this thesis has been that combining practice-theoretical literature and practice-based knowledge in a way that reduces the dualism between theory and practice offers an opportunity and a resource for understanding and cultivating one´s own work, i.e. studying.

In this thesis, considering undergraduate students as practitioners of their own studying (Korpiaho 2007a) and postgraduate students as carriers of diverse practices (Kantelinen & Korpiaho 2009), and as emerging academics (Räsänen & Korpiaho 2011) has provided a way to create space for reflection about the relation between the subject and its constituting practices. These conceptualizations shape in diverse ways one's relation to the practices, supporting a particularly critical and reflective relationship. These are in sharp contrast to those conceptualizations of students and their studying that were introduced at the beginning of this thesis. Through the alternative narratives suggested in this thesis, I have for my part strived for a more multicolored and nuanced understanding of business studying. I have also introduced practical

examples of how to strengthen students´ views of themselves as active subjects, and of how to support their search for a personally meaningful agency in undergraduate and/or postgraduate studying.

6.2 Practical relevance

The practical relevance of my research project concerns those parties that participate in supporting and resourcing the subjects of business education, either students or teachers.

Supporting student´s studying
The practice-theoretical view on studying suggests that studying should be approached as a socio-cultural phenomenon. But the typical situation in students´ counseling or advising is that it is viewed from rather individualistic viewpoints (comprising students´ past experiences, skills, motivation etc.). Less attention is paid to the introduction into and discussions about the socio-cultural contexts students are either entering or already engaged with, although these contexts with their unique bundles of practices have constituted the landscapes of these students´ studying and learning for many years. It would be wise to open up and elaborate the contexts of studying: what practices they are now joining, what traditions, with what kinds of practitioners and with what consequences – in the course of their studying as well as later on as business graduates. Business students are often inspired by the thought of acting as professionals or practitioners in business, but the process of becoming one is too often put off, as something to be worried about in the future. But resources for this would be needed. Official curriculum should include opportunities for students to search for their unique ways of studying, which would enable them to address the issues, hopes and worries of becoming a practitioner.

Another pitfall in current advising of students has to do with concentration on rather technical issues of `how to do it´, such as how to make a study plan or a research proposal. The issues of what to achieve and accomplish through studies, why have these goals and use these means, and/ or who to be or become are often disregarded in students´ advising, and left for individuals to ponder on. By arranging situations where these issues could be dealt with – either individually or collectively – would be beneficial. The four-fold framework of practical activity presented in this thesis can be used in face-to-face-discussions with students as a device to ask thought provoking questions. Or it can be used as a course design in both undergraduate and postgraduate courses to prompt stories about studying and academic work (Korpiaho 2007a, Räsänen 2009a, 2010a, 2011, 2012, 2013a).

Finally, I want to highlight the usefulness of providing students with texts that describe their own world – both critical as well as inspirational texts. Students are intellectually curious, but often grow to see and believe the dualism between theory and practice. I have wanted to write articles that describe studying and/or practices that shape studying, and I have been pleased to know that at least some of these articles have been used in teaching,

either as mandatory or additional reading. Similarly, doing research with students is an efficient intervention that can be employed under certain circumstances, for example, interviewing doctoral students, writing their stories, giving them back, and revising the stories based on their comments. All this is a laborious but rewarding way of combining research and facilitating identity work.

Teachers´ pedagogical training

There are also practical implications concerning university teachers´ professional development, which is often conceived as enhancing their pedagogical skills and competencies. Programs and support for teachers typically involve increasing teachers´ awareness of the diverse teaching and learning practices and their exploitation in classroom situations. Of course, this can be a well-grounded starting point for developing education, but it is not necessarily enough. If attention is directed towards individual teachers´ capabilities, the possibilities of curriculum change are primarily in the hands of the teachers, or in the interaction between teachers and their students. As a consequence, any failure in introducing critical or alternative elements to the classroom is easily considered an individual teachers' failure, when, in fact, one should note that processes of students´ learning and knowing are more complex by nature.

If the aim is to improve teaching or curriculums, then attention should be directed to the cultural and social settings under which individuals work – both students as well as teachers. I argue, that a prerequisite for carrying out development work in universities, is acknowledging the special features of particular local programs (whether discipline-based or not), changes in current studying and working contexts in business schools and in higher education institutions more generally. Therefore, I want to emphasize the importance of both reading and conducting discipline-based research, such as studies on management education, where practitioners (teachers, academics, and administrative staff) study their own and their students´ work in specific business school surroundings. However, the significance of this research field should also be recognized by universities, for instance, as modules, credits or certificates in teachers´ training programs.

Finally, I propose that the focus of developmental work be targeted at educational programs, rather than individual courses. In that lies the paradox that when individual courses become more attuned and sophisticated, at the same time the contexts for studying become more challenging for students, especially if the courses have different assumptions of students´ subject positions, tactics, politics and morals of education. Therefore, providing support for academic units or groups of colleagues that take part in defining and developing a curriculum would result in better support for students´ learning and knowing. In facilitating teachers´ and other academics´ self-directed program planning and development, the four-fold framework of practical activity can be utilized, as it can help to explicate who develops what, and with what means and what justifications (see Korpiaho & Mäntylä 2012).

6.3 Avenues for further research

While the strength of this thesis is that it describes the inner life of business school from within, the downside is that it depicts only superficially the changes at policy level and does not really describe their effects on students´ studying and learning. Although this thesis has not originated from the changes in the Finnish political atmosphere (such as changes in education policy, legislation, reports and evaluations), the speed and direction of change has been substantial (Rinne & Koivula 2005, Välimaa 2004, 2011, Kankaanpää 2013).

It appears logical that changes in practices concerning university financing, governance and its core activities will inevitably result in changes in diverse practices shaping studying and student agency. Therefore, considering avenues for further research, the possible changes in the practical activities of students and their wants, fears and desires would be interesting to look at in greater detail. As Lave and Wenger (1991, 51) write: "One way to think of learning is as historical production, transformation and change in persons." Thus, the sophisticated claim is that changing the subject constituting practices comes with consequences – but without empirical and qualitative research it is impossible to elaborate on the phenomenon any deeper.

At the time when this thesis project began in 2003 the seeds of forthcoming changes in the Finnish higher education sector were already sowed through the establishment of a common European educational market, and the harmonisation of European higher education degree systems (started in 1998 by the Sorbonne Declaration)[9]. And over the years, the trend towards strengthening market-orientation in the higher education sector has continued to accelerate. This is reflected in national-level documents concerning the role of Finnish universities where discourses on utility and productivity gained a dominant position by the beginning of the 21st century (Kankaanpää 2013). Concrete measures include, for example, the new Universities Act in 2010, which extended the autonomy of universities by giving them an independent legal personality, either as public corporations or as foundations[10].

While these can be conceived as structural changes, there are signs indicating that the work performed at universities is also being transformed, as universities find themselves in a competitive global market place competing with each other as education providers. Researchers show us how higher education has become a brand, seeking measures of prestige and advertising its services to students, staff, alumni and business partners in such a way that their operations have started to resemble those of private corporations.

9 The means to this have been, for example, easily readable and comparable degrees, uniform degree structures, establishment of a system of credits - such as in the ECTS system - and increased mobility

10 In 2014, there were 14 universities under the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture; two of them are foundation universities and the rest are public corporations. However, out of 24 polytechnics, 3 are run by by municipal education consortia and a whopping 21 operate as private organizations. This development can also be seen in other countries, where countries such as the UK, Australia, U.S. have led the way. But as Currie & Vidovic (2000) conclude, the privatization trend incorporates the full gamut from the creation of fully private institutions which operate without government financial support, to reforms in largely government-funded institutions operating in more of a quasi-market mode.

Especially business schools and universities seem to be fore-runners in this new game (Aula & Tienari 2011, Wedlin 2011). Working and studying in a private university that used to be a state owned business school but now strives aggressively for `world class´, has made me see how these new and revised practices are shaping especially academic, managerial and administrative work in universities.

In spite of all these changes, there seems to be little research on their impact on the everyday life of undergraduate studying. One option would be to study the possible changes in subject production (what kind of subjects are endorsed through business education). The message of market-oriented education to students embraces consumer rights, freedom of choice, and values of consumerism. Molesworth et al. (2009), drawing on Fromm´s (1976) humanist philosophy having and being, suggest that a consumer society results in the dominant existence of having, possessing objects, where an individual is valued against what she/he has. According to Fromm, such a person whose attributes are acquired in order to successfully position oneself in a capitalist system is called `a marketing personality´. This relates to the claim made by Walkerdine (2003, 239) who states that "the neo-liberal subject is the autonomous liberal subject made in the image of the middle class".

The last sentence above has stuck in my mind, perhaps because it feels intuitively true although not enough attention has been paid to it. Hence, it would be interesting to research issues of class and classification in business education: How are middle class subjects produced through business education? And how are changes in higher education contexts perhaps linked to this process? What happens when students with increasingly diverse backgrounds encounter these practices? What are the living conditions and ways of life like among students, and how do they shape studying as a practical activity? How do students make sense of themselves? What kinds of agencies are played out, and what kind of identity work is required to survive in the new entrepreneurial university? Researching studying as a practical activity with a special interest in class and classification, in a country that explicitly embraces the virtues of equality and equal opportunities, would be something worthwhile studying.

Considering the ongoing changes in higher education and special features of business education, there seems to be a continuous demand for critical education (and critical education research) that supports an emergence of reflective students and future professionals. Therefore, I want to end this introductory essay to the words of an undergraduate business student:

> "If we want to find the keys of success, we have to look deeply into ourselves and boldly ask who we are and where we are going. We have to know ourselves – our ways of acting, personal goals, motives and desires – to accomplish the things we aspire." student c5

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Anglo-American forms of management education: A practice-theoretical perspective

Kirsi Korpiaho, Hanna Päiviö, Keijo Räsänen*

Organization and Management, Helsinki School of Economics, P.O. Box 1210, 00101 Helsinki, Finland

Abstract

This article is based on a review of three Anglo-American journals of management education research, namely *The Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *The Journal of Management Education*, and *Management Learning*. In order to identify different forms of management education, articles in the journals were read from a practice-theoretical perspective. The main finding is that researchers have described or suggested five different conceptions of management education, which either revise the business-school tradition or provide alternatives to it. One implication of the finding is that it is not reasonable to speak for or against *the* US model of management education, since there are several. Management education research could thus aim at a more nuanced appreciation of what business-school teachers regard as good education.

Keywords: Management education; Business schools; Practice theory; Academic work; Teaching; Studying; Moral; Political; Tactical

1. Introduction

In conversations on management education reference is often made to "the US model" as practised in "the top business schools". The model is either taken as the ideal for arranging business education or it is accused of being the hegemonic—if not even the imperialist—source of dubious ideals. Seldom, however, do the interlocutors specify what this US model actually consists of. Another intriguing aspect of the situation is widespread claim that management education is in something of a crisis. These

*Corresponding author. Tel.: +358 9 43138444; fax: +358 9 43138777.
E-mail address: krasanen@hse.fi (K. Räsänen).

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critics include US scholars (Adler, 2002; Bennis & O'Toole, 2005; Ghoshal, 2005; Lissack & Richardson, 2003; Mintzberg, 2004; Mitroff, 2003; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002, 2004; Zell, 2001) and UK scholars (Gabriel, 2005; Grey, 2002, 2004; Grey & French, 1996; Roberts, 1996; Starkey, Hatchuel, & Tempest, 2004; Thomas, 1997). Such claims then also raise the question as to what kind of education is in crisis or at least in need of reorientation.

The present article reports on a review that we have undertaken of three prominent journals of management education: *The Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *The Journal of Management Education*, and *Management Learning*. The purpose of the review was to identify the kind of educational "models" that appear in the pages of the journals. As the first two journals stem from the USA and Management Learning at least partly from the UK, we refer to the set of journals and to models that we have found as 'Anglo-American'.

Is the field actually as homogenous as the usual claims indicate? In order to be attentive to potential, unacknowledged diversity, it was necessary to broaden our perspective and to search carefully for deviating approaches in the mass of articles. The following two sections offer brief explications of our perspective on management education as 'practical activity' and of the reviewing process. Our main finding is a simple but thought- provoking one: instead of a single "model" of management education, we found several. The greater part of the article consists of a description of these models, after which we discuss the implications of this finding.

The following review is selective and written from a specific point of view. We all work at the Helsinki School of Economics, which is a Finnish business school established in 1911. We are concerned with the ways in which the myth of "US management education" is used in advancing strange, imitational agendas in the development of curricula and learning methods. From our own experiences of attempts at development in management education we have found that such agendas are not always appropriate in the local contexts, to say the least.[1] However, the mechanisms whereby the spread of educational ideas has been achieved, and the concrete consequences of these processes, lie outside the scope of this article (cf. Engwall, 2007). Nor will we evaluate the different models. Before that, each of them should be studied more thoroughly and by using also other sources than the material available in the three journals (cf. Perriton, 2007).

2. Management education as a practical activity

2.1. A heuristic concept of practice

We set out to identify different forms of management education as they are recommended or described in journal articles. We thus needed a way of identifying and describing forms of management education on the basis of the material at hand. We also needed to be alert to less visible accounts, and to keep our distance from the "hegemonic rhetoric" and the critique it implies.

[1]Some of the local developmental efforts have been documented in the publications of the Management Education Research Initiative at HSE (see: www.hse.fi/meri). We authors are all members of the MERI group and colleagues in the unit of Organization and Management.

We use a specific conception of 'practice' in framing management education and in describing its various forms. This conception, based on so-called theories of practice, suggests that management education is a 'practical activity' among others. In any practical activity practitioners need to deal with a set of basic issues, which the conception tries to explicate. What did this conceptual starting point mean in respect to the review task?

We read articles published in the three management education journals with four questions in mind:

(a) *Who* is being educated and by whom?
(b) *How* is education to be accomplished?
(c) *What* is to be achieved and accomplished in education?
(d) *Why* is it justified to aim for certain goals and to employ particular means in education?

We suggest that this set of questions embraces different conceptions of management education: Each "model" is expected to have its own, specific answers to the four questions. Our concrete task has thus been to discover articles that answer the questions and to construct answers from several, possibly divergent texts.

Why do we find the four questions to be relevant and sufficient? To save the space needed for presenting our findings, we will only briefly list the justifications for our choice. First, the four questions would appear sensible to any practitioner. Any student or teacher would easily recognize them as relevant in everyday life. Although practitioners do not normally 'account' for their practical action or activities in terms of questions and answers, they do share with one another stories that touch on the four issues. Writing articles to academic journals is a special case of such story telling.

Think of yourself as being engaged in various educational activities at a university: It is unavoidable that you come up against the 'how' question, and you have to 'answer' it within given time frames and localities. You consider ways of focusing and structuring the contents of your courses and ways of teaching your subject. If changes have to be made in you teaching, you ask yourself 'what' you can both accomplish and achieve by them. Perhaps you negotiate with your colleagues or your bosses regarding the aims of your program, and what all this means for your or your students' position in the academic context. And can you avoid moral concerns and the 'why' question as well? You may look for moral motives that underpin the meaning of teaching as a part of your work, or others at any rate will demand justifications for your educational goals and the means you employ to achieve them (e.g. the way in which you treat your students). And quite often you ask yourself "who am I as a teacher and an academic, and how do I live up to my expectations". The same questions face students, when they are asked to reflect upon their studying as a practical activity (Räsänen & Korpiaho, forthcoming).

We suggest that the set of four questions can support reflection for two different purposes (cf. Gherardi & Nicolini, 2001, pp. 51–53): It helps practitioners to reflect upon their own practical activity, while also making a practical activity easier for outsiders to discuss. The questions offer a two-way link between pre-reflective knowing in practice and distanced theorizing on the part of outsiders.

Secondly, the set of questions is based on a particular conception of practical activity and emergent practice (e.g. Räsänen, Korpiaho, Herbert, Mäntylä, & Päiviö, 2005;

Räsänen, forthcoming).[2] This conception draws on what are known as 'theories of practice', the development of which has recently occupied a central position in social theory and philosophy (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2001). These developments have impacted both research in education (Saunders, 2006), and most recently, specific subfields—particularly organization studies—in business schools (Nicolini, Gherardi, & Yanow, 2003). The concept of practice is especially relevant in the context of education, because it has generated a new understanding of learning as situated participation in social practices (Lave & Wenger, 1991). According to this view, it is not meaningful to regard working, learning and innovating as separate processes (Brown & Duguid, 1991), or to ignore the social and political contexts of learning (Contu & Willmott, 2003). This also applies to academic work in general and to teaching in particular (cf. Béchard & Grégoire, 2005).

Thirdly, the set of questions allows for a broad perspective on what management education is all about. Researchers—and educators and students, too—may regard political issues as important (Grey & French, 1996; Holman, 2000). The goals of educational activities are contested and re-negotiated constantly on various arenas, including the different units and programs of business schools. Researchers and practitioners may also be seeking a moral perspective (Roberts, 1996). No approach to management education should omit the key actors, namely students and teachers (for the latter, see Bellamy, Morley, & Watty, 2003; Danieli & Thomas, 1999). In other words, a fruitful conception of management education should not only resolve the tactical (how) issues, but should also address the political (what) and moral (why) issues and suggest who are—or should be—the key actors.

2.2. *Tactics, politics, morals and subjects of education*

We suggest that the four questions express a moral, political, tactical or 'subjective' stance to and mode in practical activity. We use the concerns and the related questions as heuristic devices that guide our attention, interpretation and narration. We do not take them as given concepts from which we can deduce a priori categories for the analysis of statements in journal articles. However, it is first necessary to explicate briefly how we understand the stances. In doing so, we turn to relevant sources in the practice-theoretical literature.

2.2.1. *Tactics*

In considering the question as to how education is to be accomplished, we rely on the distinction drawn by Michel de Certeau (1984) between 'strategies' and 'tactics'. De Certeau's point is that in certain practices in the everyday life of most actors it is a matter of "making do" rather than strategizing. In a space owned by others, the individual actors can only act in their own style, i.e. using the space and resources that it provides in their own personal way. In management education, it is conceivable that most students and

[2]The four-stance conception of practical activity has been developed gradually by researching managerial work, developmental work, academic work, and students' activities. While the earlier formulations were used in identifying managerial 'logics of action' as researchers' inferences from interview and documentary data, the recent studies rely rather on a narrative approach that appreciates practitioners' own accounts for their action, and on researcher's engagement in the practices studied (i.e. participatory research).

teachers feel that they can only make choices about how to study or teach, without being able to enact political strategies or alter the setting in terms of political opportunities or legitimate moral justifications. Accordingly, it is not surprising that there are plenty of articles addressing the various technical issues attaching to education: teaching and learning methods, course concepts, course content, and relating to students and to their behavior. In reading the articles, we have focused on writers' descriptions of—or suggestions about—ways of studying or teaching in the context of a particular educational model.

2.2.2. *Politics*

In considering what is to be achieved and accomplished[3] in education, we draw on a sociological perspective that links education to its social and political context. Education is not only about the efficient transfer of neutral knowledge: it also has reproductive and re-allocative consequences regarding the distribution of opportunities and positions in society. The work of Pierre Bourdieu (e.g. Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) is a good representative for this kind of approach. Life is according to his view about the economy of positioning in social fields. Individuals inherit particular positions that can be changed to a limited extent only by participation in education. Rather than adopting a deterministic reading of Bourdieu's approach, our view is that within the strict limits suggested by Bourdieu (i.e. habitus and accessible forms of capital), individuals and groups may seek to improve their positions in certain fields. Further, those who are in a position to influence the curricula and the rules of access to education may seek to revise or even make more radical changes in them, for reasons of equality or other considerations. A crucial question is what management education should accomplish in relation to the management profession and managerial practice. In reading the relevant articles we have focussed on what they have to say about the goals or "functions" of management education in general or of specific programs and educational concepts.

2.2.3. *Morals*

When it comes to the moral issue—why is it justified to aim at certain goals and use certain means—we look at specific 'moral orders' as expressed by the authors concerned. That is, how do the proponents of a particular model justify its value, and/or what moral motives do they inscribe to it. We are not thus interested primarily in alternative schools of thought within moral philosophy or in classifying the articles accordingly. However, there are moral philosophers who regard the concept of practice as central and who have also inspired our attempt to discuss the moral side of practical activity. The most notable among them are MacIntyre (1985) and Taylor (1989), both representing the tradition of virtue ethics. Their view also emerges in the idea that "the moral is in the practice" (Hansen, 1998; see also Macfarlane, 2004; Nixon, 2004; Roberts, 1996). MacIntyre (1985, p. 175) himself defines social practice in terms of the 'internal goods' that can be realized in it and not by any other practice. Knowing what these 'goods' are requires engagement in the specific practice, or at least one has to take seriously what practitioners say of their own

[3]The pair of words marks two related aspects in political issues. Actors may be concerned both about their own achievements (e.g. gaining a more respected or influential position as a teacher) and about contributing to the accomplishment of a "better" form of education (e.g. a pedagogically more advanced program or one that is more popular).

practice and its moral evaluation. We have thus also analyzed the relevant articles in the context of the 'good things' that a particular form of education can provide for students, teachers and relevant others, and in the contexts of the 'virtues' that this form of practice requires. When we have not been able to find statements that bear directly on these themes, we have looked at any statements referring to the ''values'' that education serves or should serve, or to the moral concerns that education can address.

2.2.4. Subjects

In looking for answers to the questions about who is to be educated and by whom, we concentrated on statements about the kind of students and teachers who participate—or should participate—in a particular form of education. Theoretically, this could have been complicated, since the concept of 'subject' (or 'actor') is central—and controversial—in many fields (Collinson, 2003; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Ortner, 2005). Moreover, education discourses are unavoidably concerned with a potentially moving, changing and fragmented subject—the student, which could make it difficult to specify ''who is the student'' in different situations and at different phases of education. In higher education students may be expected to ''develop'' as regards their tactical capabilities, their moral motives, or their political concerns. The fact that the articles in the three chosen journals are not necessarily involved with these complications made our task easier.

In other words, we are making a fairly simple claim, namely that neither tactical, political, or moral issues, or the issue of subjects, can be subsumed in or reduced to any of the others. In practical, educational activity, a teacher or student (group) has to encounter each of these issues as different facets of the one and same activity. Each of them has to be resolved, but not necessarily by conscious choice and deliberation. In contrast to a rationalist perspective, we do not assume that practitioners deduce an answer to a specific question from an answer given to another question (e.g. a tactical move from a political strategy, or a political goal and strategy from a moral motive). In fact, we consider it as a special case that a group of actors has succeeded in establishing a relatively consistent, meaningful, and credible way of answering all the questions—and of living up to their ideals (on emergent practice, see Räsänen et al., 2005; Räsänen, forthcoming). It is more usual that a teacher or student—or researcher in management education—is primarily concerned with one stance at a time, and that the concerns evolve over time, also as responses to what is possible and needed. However, it is fair to expect that those who propose or describe a model of management education do not limit their attention to only one of the four questions. A tactic is not a model, in this sense—any more than a mere expression of moral concern or political will.

From this point of departure, it is possible to read articles on management education in an open-minded, non-evaluative way, without resorting to technical jargon, political prejudice, or moralizing. On the other hand, the conception of *practical activity* allows that a suggestion regarding a particular form of education can be internally inconsistent, or at least inconclusive, if any one of the issues is ignored.

3. Review of three prominent journals

We decided to focus on three prominent journals, two of which are US-based and one is UK-based. That is to say, we looked for diversity in the main forums of management education research. If we can locate different approaches in the Anglo-American literature,

then it is likely that the variants noted will have established a position for themselves within the predominant currents, and that there must be more diversity to be found in a wider range of contexts (cf. Amdam, Kvålshaugen, & Larsen, 2003a).

Articles in management education journals have a complicated and varying relationship with the everyday life of business schools.[4] Some authors report on their own long-term efforts to develop a satisfactory form of education. Others discuss alternative ideas, but without having really experimented with them or being committed to them. Some articles are written as part of an ongoing debate or as a way of publishing empirical research, in which case the educational setting is there as a source of data. And then we have authors who write about education in general and others who approach the subject form their own, local setting.

Thus, since the material is heterogeneous, we can only identify different 'conceptions' of management education; we cannot know how all the conceptions are related to educational practices in specific business schools. This means that we are not really describing specific forms of educational activity as they are experienced and accounted for by the practitioners themselves, so in this respect our review does not exploit the potential of the practice-based perspective to the full. Further research will be needed to follow this up and to assess it.

Our present review concerns articles in the following journals (and years): The Journal of Management Education—JME[5] (1991–2005), Management Learning—ML[6] (1994–2005), and The Academy of Management Learning & Education—AMLE (2002–2005). The long periods covered meant that we went through a great number of articles, including around 670 in JME, around 110 in AMLE, and around 300 in ML. Almost all the articles in JME and AMLE were relevant as regards the topic of the present review. ML also publishes articles on learning in work organizations, of which we omitted those not directly concerned with education in business schools. Of the 300 articles 115 fulfilled this criterium.

Our analysis of the articles proceeded as follows. We had to first select articles for closer analysis from the huge mass of texts. To accomplish this, we each went through all the articles in one journal, chose the relevant articles, and created a file with basic information about them (abstracts or extensive summaries). In this phase we tried to find articles that touch on any of the four questions (who, how, what, why), and that address teaching, studying or both. After sharing notes from this exercise we realized that we should focus on articles that are helpful in identifying different conceptions of education. In the second phase we together sought examples of contributions that touch on all the four main questions or at least on a few of them. This gave us a set of potential representations of diverse forms of management education. We then checked this set against our original notes to see that we had not missed any significant proposals or descriptions. In the final

[4]By the overall term 'business school' we refer to independent universities that concentrate on business or management education and to university faculties, schools or departments with a similar focus. Both represent 'higher education' in management or business, albeit official terms vary across countries.

[5]The journal's previous names have been "The Teaching of Organizational Behavior: A Journal of Teaching Theory and Technique"(1975–1977), "Exchange: The Organizational Behavior Teaching Journal" (1978–1983), and "The Organizational Behavior Teaching Review: Journal of the Organizational Behavior Teaching Society" (1984–1989). See "OBTS Web Companion" by John D. Bigelow: http://cobe.boisestate.edu/msr/jmechang/jmechang.htm.

[6]Published previously by AMED with the name "Management Education and Development" (1970–1993).

phase we constructed descriptions of the conceptions from the original articles. That is to say, we tried to find out how the authors' descriptions or suggestions regarding a particular form of education answer to the four questions.

In reporting our findings, we first present a "traditional model of management education". This description is a 'stereotype' in the sense that we have constructed it on the basis of the comments of those writers who are suggesting corrections or alternatives to it. It is something from which they want to deviate. Since the critical comments address either the traditional model in general or one of its most visible current versions, the MBA program, we describe these two separately. Secondly, we present a number of revised or alternative approaches. To be specific, we found five major forms, plus a few others that were less comprehensively formulated. To make the (2 + 5) forms comparable with one another we summarize their main ideas in a table that gives their answers to the four questions: who, how, what, and why.

4. Conceptions of management education

4.1. "The tradition"

Traditional management education: Epithets such as "traditional" and "mainstream" frequently appear in the journals of management education. The terms seem to refer to management 'education-as-usual', which is the main target for criticism among those who are suggesting something different. The criticism of the tradition is amazingly consistent, and the content of the critical comments provides a basis for characterizing the traditional model. However, a distinction can usefully be made between the traditional form and its current representative, namely the MBA program. Recent criticism focuses on this last in particular. It seems that the MBA model continues the tradition with minor deviations.

The traditional form of business education is organized according to business disciplines, such as organizational behavior, marketing, accounting and finance. The teacher is a specialist in his or increasingly her discipline. Willmott (1994, p. 115) observes that the careers of most management academics are generally concentrated quite narrowly on "empires" built upon a single discipline or sub-discipline. The "significant others" for management academics, in terms of identity, self-esteem or career, are those working in the same sub-discipline. Academics, students or employers beyond this boundary are much less significant.

The writers' accounts of the tradition represent the students as practically and instrumentally oriented individuals who are more interested in self-advancement and career prospects than learning or intellectual challenges. The titles of their articles are revealing: "Motivation: That Is Maslow, Isn't It?" (Watson, 1996), "Learning? I've Got No Time" (King, 1995), "Grades as Money and the Role of the Market Metaphor in Management Education" (Beatty, 2004). For students of this kind, studying is about collecting management techniques. As Grey and Mitev (1995, p. 78) put it:

> Management students, for their part, are commonly more comfortable when learning techniques (such as those of finance, accounting or systems analysis, or 'methodologies' of change management or motivation) which they perceive as practically oriented, useful and immediately applicable.

Tactical concerns include ways of structuring the content of courses and curricula. The usual curriculum embraces the sub-disciplines most in-demand allowing for specialization in various managerial sub-tasks or functions. The means of education are lecturing and, increasingly, case-exercises and a variety technological aids or e-learning. Mintzberg and Gosling (2002, pp. 64–65) state their concern:

> [This model of education is] …mostly about the functions of business, not the practice of administering. For the most part, they take people inexperienced in that practice and drill them in analytical decision making. As a consequence, they graduate individual specialists, not collaborative managers; it is hardly coincidental that so many of these people go into consulting and investment banking.

As to the goals of traditional management education, the criticism often exposes a double-edged political strategy with goals that are explicit and public on the one hand and others that are known but not openly discussed. Grey and Mitev (1995, p. 75) put it this way:

> …[T]he object of management education is to improve the managerial competence of students for instrumental reasons of control ('to shape strategic action'). This may occur because the manager acquires more effective techniques or, perhaps more significantly, because management education bestows a legitimacy upon those managers who possess it.

Why would the traditional form of education then be morally desirable? Although the critics are especially worried of the moral impact of business education-as-usual, they do not articulate its justifications on its own terms. Our guess is that the justification is based on the claim that business academics serve their society best by educating efficient managers that can control and create competitive businesses. Individuals have their own values and talents, and markets determine best what kind of education is desirable and available for individuals.

MBA program: The critics of management education seem to concentrate mainly on the education leading to the Master of Business Administration (MBA) (e.g. Mintzberg, 2004; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). Our set of articles acknowledges that the MBA program is the predominating version of business education today, but also addresses its problems.

The MBA as a concept and a brand is of US origin, but is widely available all over the world today. It is aimed primarily at people seeking a route to an executive position and needing the degree for the sake of their reputation. They pay high tuition fees, and business schools tend to exploit the programs as cash cows. Altogether, the MBA model is a way of making business out of business education. It embodies the political and moral ideas of the traditional model, but differs as regards its curriculum and the audience it targets.

Full-time, part-time and executive programs serve different market segments. Mazza, Sahlin-Andersson, and Strandgaard Pedersen (2005, p. 481) report that in the European countries the target audience is often graduates with at least a few years of work experience. The educational backgrounds of the customers vary, and the MBA provides management education for all, or at least for those who can afford it or whose employers pay it. The student is a paying customer and the teacher is a service provider. According to Feldman (2005, p. 217) the teacher becomes then the one "feeding the beast", one who

does not necessarily want to teach what MBA students want to learn and is pressured to give them high grades. He describes the situation as follows:

> It is an open secret in business schools that many faculty simply want out of the rat race altogether and would rather teach undergraduate and doctoral students, both of whom seem to be much more appreciative of what business school faculty have to offer.

The political struggle between the competing sub-disciplines is replaced in the curriculum by a broad program covering all the major subjects, each offering a few courses or even only one.[7] Some researchers regard this as a major improvement (e.g. Hamilton, McFarland, & Mirchandani, 2000; McLeod & Cotter 1999). However, a number of authors have set out to critique the model, and also in regard to its ability to integrate knowledge from the sub-disciplines. The critical accounts add to the characteristics of the model by commenting on its specific weaknesses.

The curriculum is composed of modular courses, but many MBA students experience it as a hodgepodge giving them an awful lot "stuff to do" and lacking integration (Feldman, 2005, p. 217). The MBA model promises to promote general management practice, but does not do so (Mintzberg & Gosling, 2002). The MBA programs promise to deliver 'general management skills', but the term itself is problematic (Grey, 2002, p. 503): it suggests that management techniques are neutral artefacts ready to be put to use in pursuit of all kinds of values, be it charity, health, banking or industry. It represents a positive incursion against supposedly entrenched privilege, making such people as arrogant doctors or public sector elites to account. In Grey's view the educational goals of the model can be summed as a political irony: it claims to favor anti-elitism and to provide 'management for all', but it serves to reproduce a managerial elite. The model promotes a new category of elitist experts, the manager or the consultant who, albeit not "professionalized" in the classical sense are possessed of techniques, a language and values denied to others.

The articles on the MBA as an educational concept—and as an "industry"—make no attempt to identify its moral justification, apart from the political irony. Perhaps its justification for all those who value it highly enough to investing in it lies in its promise of "education for all". For others its justification may stem from the belief that 'better managing means a better economy, a better society and a better life'.

4.2. *Revised forms*

Science-based education: A major long-term trend in the US business schools has arisen in response to the accusation of lacking academic credibility, namely the increasing emphasis on research. Recent articles in the journals concerned have discussed what it means to ground education in scientific research. An extreme position claims that the knowledge content of education should be "evidence-based", that is, based on empirical research on variables that have significant effects on organizational outcomes and that are controllable for managers. Some other positions submit to a broader conception of relevant research. Whatever the specific position, the supporters of science-based education assume that the student must learn to think scientifically in order to benefit from

[7]Although the generalist approach is the standard, some programs do favour specialization, in international activities for instance (Mazza et al., 2005).

researchers' knowledge. The promise is that this model would enhance the profession of business-school academics and their students' future profession as managers. In this way business schools could achieve greater credibility.

Pfeffer and Fong (2002, p. 78) are concerned about the weak career success of the MBA graduates, and about the meagre impact of management research on management practice:

> What data there are suggests that business schools are not very effective: neither possessing an MBA degree nor grades earned in courses correlate with career success, results that question the effectiveness of schools in preparing their students. And, there is little evidence that business school research is influential on management practice, calling into question the professional relevance of management scholarship.

Ghoshal (2005, p. 76) suggests that the impact is not just lacking, but is actually unfavorable:

> I argue that academic research related to the conduct of business and management has had some very significant and negative influences on the practice of management. (…) More specifically, I suggest that by propagating ideologically inspired amoral theories, business schools have actively freed their students from any sense of moral responsibility.

As Ghoshal sees it, the teacher has a significant role in preparing the future managers. Even if students are in danger of being corrupted, genuine scholars can change the trend by undertaking relevant research and paying more attention to the content of management theories. The aim is to improve the students' managerial decision making by teaching them how to think, and how to exploit theories of different kinds. In particular, the graduates should be able to distinguish between "excessive truth-claims" based on extreme assumptions and partial analysis of complex phenomena, on the one hand, and more "rigorous scientific results" regarding the effectiveness of particular practices and techniques (Ghoshal, 2005, p. 87). However, an ability to interpret the scientific research is not enough, unless the knowledge is translated into effective action. Donaldson (2002, p. 104) offers his solution as follows:

> Thus, theories used in management schools need to feature managerially relevant independent and dependent variables, rather than just pursuing whatever theories are on offer in the social sciences. A good social science theory of organizations explains them, but a managerially useful theory also empowers managerial action.

The overall aim is to upgrade management as a profession. And here the moral condition of the profession is crucial. A research-based approach with better theories will bring positive benefits in this context. As Ghoshal (2005, p. 87) puts it:

> If we are to have an influence in building a better world for the future, adopting the pessimistic, deterministic theories will not get us there. If we really wish to reinstitute ethical or moral concerns in the practice of management, we have to first reinstitute them in our mainstream theory. If we wish our students to contribute to building what Warren Bennis (2000) has described as "delightful organizations", we will have to teach them the theories that describe how they can do so.

Is the moral motivation then to create flourishing organizations and a good life for managers and other employees? Future managers should at least be aware of concepts and

of the supporting evidence that make such organizations possible and the efforts to create them effective. While statements on moral issues are rare in the articles concerned, the belief in the value of 'scientific knowledge' is shared by almost all of them.

Competency-based education: The basic motivation behind competency-based business education is to correct the bias towards knowledge as being the main outcome of educational activities. This model emerged in response to criticism suggesting that business education has failed to produce men and women able to undertake managerial work of an acceptable standard, that is to say, as ''competent managers''. Competence requires skills, not just knowledge (e.g. Brewis, 1996). As Brownell and Chung (2001, p. 124) put it:

> The most sought after graduates are not only knowledgeable in business fields but also demonstrate effective management practice in specific and measurable ways.

Essentially, the competency-based model calls for a specification of the goals of education. These goals can be achieved by identifying competencies, creating competence databases, disseminating best practices, and by assessing students' competencies. McEvoy et al.(2005, p. 386) write:

> Taking a competence-based approach to HR curriculum design involves, first, identifying what competencies are critical to professional performance, and second, addressing if and how motives, traits, and skills can be incorporated into an educational program in addition to specialized HR knowledge.

Moreover, the competency-based model relies on ''advanced forms of social learning theory''. Learning from experience is a key element in the process (Hill & Houghton, 2001; McEvoy, 1998). The learning process is ''amended'' by adding a significant cognitive component prior to experiential exercises. Finally, students are supposed to operate in real-time, real-life contexts, employing relevant knowledge and skills. Indeed, as Bigelow et al. (1999, p. 356) put it:

> …[A]t the heart of the skills movement is a commitment to teaching management so that individuals improve their performance in ways that achieve relevant goals in real situation.

The student that fits into this model is a competitive and inductive learner who aims to develop and utilize his or her personal capacity for work. The student has certain prior capabilities to be used and developed further. This can be taken into consideration already in the selection process, as McEvoy et al. (2005, p. 385) suggest:

> …[T]he selection of candidates for degree programs can be enhanced by pretesting program applicants for their potential to develop competence rather than purely scholastic aptitude.

The teacher's role is to identify and categorize the relevant competencies and determine how they can be developed and assessed. The teacher is typically a former OB-teacher or someone with expertise in professional tasks, such as HRM. In fact, the shift towards the teaching of competencies began in OB circles, and as early as 1983 the *Journal of the Organizational Behaviour Teaching Society* (now JME) published a special issue on teaching managerial competencies (Bigelow et al., 1999). Faculty members in OB and

HRM were active in securing support from their deans for programs in management skills (Smith & Forbes, 2001).

The proponents of competency-based education do not in our material make a big issue of the moral grounding for their practice. This may be because the approach does not deviate very much from the mainstream positions. There is a shared base in individualistic values, which means that every individual is regarded as being responsible for their own choices and career success. However, teachers should also take responsibility on the student's human development in a broader sense. As everyone tries to make the best of their own talents, a business school serve society best by discovering what competencies are the most valuable ones, by arranging training in them, and by assessing who in the end possesses them. Competent managers are better than incompetent ones.

4.3. *Alternative forms*

Service-learning: Service-learning is a broad and originally US-based movement that has now also spread to business schools. As an approach to management education it clearly diverges from the traditional model by introducing civic engagement and not-for-profit-sector projects into the official curriculum. The service-learning model offers a solution to the problem of the "narrowness" of business education by enriching the students' educational experience. Godfrey, Illes, and Berry (2005, p. 309) neatly summarize this approach:

> Service-learning pedagogy seeks to balance academic rigor with practical relevance, set in a context of civic engagement, which furnishes students with a broader and, we argue, richer, educational experience.

The articles on service-learning in our material are special in that some of them adopt explicitly moral positions. For example, DiPadova-Stocks (2005, p. 352) puts it thus:

> Service-learning, properly designed and implemented, is grounded in the value of the human dignity and the inherent innate worth of the individual. These values are fundamental to democracy and belong to all academic disciplines. None of us as faculty is exempt from preparing students for their moral, ethical, and social responsibilities as citizens in a democratic society.

The writers also declare openly that they want to promote democratic practices and attitudes. Drummond (2005, pp. 380–381) says in reviewing of a book on service-learning:

> …[The author's] goal is to help service-learning practitioners effectively contribute to creating a truly engaged, truly democratic American higher education system, which, in turn, will contribute to a truly democratic society (p. 380).
> …[R]eading Building Partnerships for Service-Learning made me feel a little sentimental and patriotic. What could be more all-American than universities working closely with their communities for the greater good? (p. 381).

The aim of service-learning is to enhance students' moral awareness through service-learning projects and, in this way, educate "responsible citizens" capable of using their skills in solving socially important problems. Lester, Tomkovick, Wells, Flunker and Kickul (2005, p. 279) put it like this:

> Service-learning experiences, therefore, can be seen as one instructional technique that encourages individuals to be socially responsible and engage in moral actions. Godfrey (2000) suggests that service to others is a fundamental moral act. Thus, without prescribing ''rules of ethical behaviour'', service-learning encourages social responsibility through experiential learning opportunities.

This form of education calls for motivated and committed teachers, because planning, organizing and facilitating service-learning projects requires time, energy and strong personal involvement. According to Kenworthy-U'Ren and Peterson (2005, p. 273), teachers have to have a high level of intrinsic motivation regarding service projects. They have to have a penchant for experiential activities and to feel a commitment to student learning; they must have a personal predisposition toward service or volunteerism, and to be prone to academic curiosity. Teachers are also concerned citizens who recognize the privileged position of business academics and students in society. They feel a responsibility to do something. As DiPadova-Stocks (2005, p. 351) declares:

> So as we work and study and learn in the context of our privileged status, we must ask ourselves—and ask our students—what do we owe those people who cannot qualify to be privileged, but who make it possible for us to be so? What is our responsibility to them?

Students are expected, or induced, to be interested in participating in small-scale community development efforts in collaboration with others. Students should be willing to experience the world from the perspectives of those others, question their own prejudices and assumptions regarding themselves as ''superiors'' (DiPadova-Stocks, 2005, p. 350).

However, service-learning is not only about volunteerism or goodwill. It is as much about learning as it is about service. Kenworthy-U'Ren and Peterson (2005, p. 272) emphasize that the term ''service-learning'' applies only to projects that are embedded in a theoretical foundation and have clear leaning objectives, activities and reflective components. Service-learning can vary between those that emphasize learning to those that emphasize service, but both types are central elements of the model. For example, finance students can teach budgeting to low-income groups, or MBA students may help a state government to establish a small business consulting centre to assist minority-owned businesses (Godfrey et al., 2005, p. 311).

Action-based education: While action learning can be regarded as a standard technique in executive training and action research as a tool in consulting assignments, some of the selected articles suggest a different interpretation of their purpose and their use. We call this emerging form of education 'action-based education', although the authors of the articles do not use this label themselves. The new term is needed due to the connotations attached often to ''AL'' and ''AR''. According to our way of reading the relevant articles, this is an approach that also provides an alternative to the traditional.

The concept promises to do away with the ''theory versus practice'' dichotomy, along the usual rivalry between different sub-disciplines claiming superior strength of their own theories and tools. The point is to educate the student to act in professional contexts. In order to develop this educational approach, 'practice' has to be moved to the center of the educational process (e.g. Raelin, 1994). The approach thus ''disputes the view that management can be learned in an isolated lecture apart from experience'' (Raelin, 1994,

p. 305). It is not enough to bring work experiences into the classroom via anecdotes, stories, case texts or visiting practitioners, or to present empirical evidence provided by the teacher.

Students learn most effectively with and from other managers and teachers, and by engaging in the solution of existing, real-time problems occurring in their own work settings. The "real world" is regarded as an appropriate learning locale (Raelin, 1997, p. 369):

> The action referred to in action learning is not temporary or simulated. Students need to take real positions, make moral judgements, and defend them under pressure. Action learning thus, as a form of management education elicits managerial behavior, not student behavior. Students derive knowledge not about management but rather about their own capacities to take action.

The answer to the how-question is ambitious. The separation of academic knowledge from practice is overcome by participation in action learning or action research projects, during which students research and reflect upon specific work-life practices. This is organized so that students not only "learn by doing" but, first and foremost, by reflecting on their doings and experiences, which can be arranged in the classroom context. At this stage other students are also involved, as is the teacher who now becomes a facilitator of the learning process. Gosling and Ashton (1994, pp. 267–268) write:

> Since the problems which experienced managers deal with are not 'textbook' cases, it is most unlikely that standard prescriptions for either techniques to apply or moral behaviors will be universally applicable. So it is the praxis of their dual role as managers and students in the specific social context that forms the prime learning opportunity. The course structure (modules, tutorials and especially the tutorial group) provides for a 'reflexive space' in which the tensions generated by this praxis are worked upon. The pedagogic assumption might therefore be characterized as 'reflective praxis' (Schon, 1983).

The goal of action-based education is to educate 'reflective practitioners' who will have a capacity not only to reflect on practices but also to take action in real-life working situations. The learning experience should "teach students to become practitioners, not merely learn about practice" (Raelin, 1997, p. 371). Moreover, the idea is to cultivate an ability to recognize practices that may not be problematic only in the conventional or managerialistic sense, but which might generate human, social or environmental harm. Thus the political position supports the education of professionals capable of sustaining their own autonomy and of challenging decisions and policies that run counter to their own views.

A teacher may be a former practitioner or an academic, but has to be able to master the practices of action learning or action research, and to be willing to collaborate with practitioners. In an ideal case the student is a manager or specialist who has plenty of work experience. Our set of articles passes the question of how students who do not have work experience or access to employment should be educated. But the approach suggests a reconfigured relationship between teachers and students: the teachers do not share their knowledge with variously ignorant students, but the students and the teachers both set out to examine experiences, to reinterpret them and to try out new moves. Both sides are thus regarded as actors in action learning projects. As Raelin (1994, p. 314) put it:

> Naturally, there are times when teachers should take the responsibility for learning within a group and other times when the responsibility should be shifted to the student. It is not so much a question of which focus to emphasize but rather one of creating a learning environment where everyone is free to study and grow.

Proponents of action-based education acknowledge that managerial action is necessarily social and value-laden. Humans have a capacity to reflect on themselves and the practices of the life-world in which they are involved. Raelin (1994, p. 313) suggests:

> Once managers enter the world of practice, no matter how hard they try to apply universal criteria or use advanced analytic techniques, they confront cultural, moral and personal idiosyncrasies which defy categorization.

Reason (1999, p. 207) emphasizes that action-based education strives for "democratic and emancipatory" purposes, which represents a clear deviation from the business-school tradition. In his words, the purpose is in "…relinquishing the monopoly of knowledge held traditionally by universities and other institutes of 'higher learning', and helping ordinary people regain the capacity to create their knowledge in the service of their practical purposes".

Snell and James (1994, p. 332), however, suggest a less radical view when they relate the need for an action-based approach with the increasing importance of intangible aspects, set against tangible aspects, in managerial work:

> People managing the organizations which impact on and are impacted by this new order need to learn about learning, need to understand change not as an abstract but as a personal process, need to understand the systemic nature of the world, need to move constantly between action and reflection, need to see company ethics and personal integrity as corollaries, and must take responsibility for their own response to events, rather than regarding the world as happening to them.

Generally speaking, action-based forms of management education are thus dealing with all the key questions of practice, at least somehow. They have specific answers to the how-question, and they bring up morals as a practical issue. As regards the politics of education, the approach is fairly flexible—or ambiguous. It can be supported from a variety of political positions. However, the versions all share an emphasis on professional autonomy and on the practitioners' knowledge of their own work. This line of thought takes issue with the overall managerialization of work organizations, because managers do not necessarily like autonomous professionals—not even in universities. It is the paradox of action-based management education that it aims to educate professional managers who will question the omnipotence of management.

Critical management education: Advocates of Critical Management Education or Pedagogy (hereafter CME) offer a pronounced alternative to the "mainstream". They challenge the taken-for-granted goals of business education and treat explicitly the politics of education (e.g. Grey, 2004; Reynolds & Vince, 2004; see also Clegg & Ross-Smith, 2003). This is understandable, since the educational approach draws on various currents in critical management studies. A central premise of these studies is that social phenomena are about power and the reproduction of social domination rather than about economic efficiency.

The articles in our set contain various passages that we read as answers to a particular question, namely what is to be accomplished by education. Dehler, Welsh, and Lewis (2001, p. 508) claim that the goal of education is to reveal—and to discuss critically—relations between power and knowledge and their managerial consequences, and in this way to produce "critical beings". Education is about "developing students with a greater sensitivity to the emancipatory and transformational possibilities in the future" (Dehler et al., 2001, p. 493). This means challenging and extending the students' intellectual horizons, expanding their mindsets and strengthening their ability to 'speak truth to power' (Grey & Mitev, 1995, p. 76). The purpose is that they learn a multidimensional and potentially transformative conception of managerial practice. Business-school graduates are also expected to recognise and respect interests and subject positions other than those of the managerial profession and company shareholders. Education should induce sensitivity and commitment with regard to such social issues as class, gender and race. After the degree studies, words such as power, equality and justice, together with exploitation and oppression, should be a genuine part of a student's vocabulary.

When it comes to the how-question, the CME teachers focus on specific course contents and learning methods. They draw on CMS and their background traditions such as critical theory and post-modernist lines of thought. Their educational material deals with the complex relations between knowledge, power and the ideology of efficiency, emphasizing the de-naturalization of the dominant hegemonic practices and stressing the importance of reflexivity. Critical thinking, reflection and critical reflection are mentioned most frequently as ways of learning. To engage students and to awaken their interest, critical management educators may make use of the students' own experiences and rely on their ability to problematize cases of unfair treatment in their own lives. Both the possibilities and the limits of critical pedagogy have been discussed in several articles (e.g. Case & Selvester, 2000; Dehler et al., 2001; Fenwick, 2005).

The students are either victims of the technocratic and neo-liberally structured education, or they are reflective and open-minded learners. In either case, they are to be educated to become politically active professional individuals, emancipated—as far as possible—from structural or cultural determination. The challenge to the teacher is that business-school students seldom recognize this need (Currie & Knights, 2003; Reynolds & Trehan, 2003). Cavanaugh (2000, p. 428) writes about his role as a teacher:

> … [A]s I see it, my mission as an insider (a business school professor) and a pessimistic liberal is to work against graduating yet another generation of students without the capacity to engage the refractory politics of inequality.

Answering the question 'who is the teacher' is complicated in the CME model, since the proponents of this approach have to struggle with their own identities as deviant business-school teachers. Cunliffe, Forray, and Knights, (2002, p. 492) say that critical management teachers are "driven by moral and political questions, intellectual and social scientific interests, and professional careers". While mainstream management educators remain managerialist, critical management teachers will "…engage in academic life to change ways of thinking about business practices and to move away from technorationality to more critical and morally responsible action" (ibid., p. 491). Consequently, the articles include lively discussions as to whether or not the business-school professors are in a position to "emancipate" their students.

The debate has evoked ethical concerns (e.g. Elliott, 2003; Reedy, 2003). A quotation from one article, Perriton and Reynolds (2004, p. 73), illustrates an ethical dilemma:

> We might already have acknowledged the painful truth that, just outside of the margins of the articles we write that so proudly outline our 'critical' approaches, we are embedded in an educational system that both profits from and promotes the managerialist agenda we like to believe we are combating.

The writers on CME have paid increasingly attention to the fact that professional practice is not only an arena for politics but also a form of moral action. The way in which managers perform their work either reproduces or transforms society and its unjustified divisions. Business education should therefore educate morally responsible actors who can contribute to the construction of a more just society. It is a matter of debate what this means with regard to the moral justifications and motives of teaching.

5. Discussion

By reviewing the three main journals in management education research we found diverse conceptions of what education in business schools is, or what it should be. It was possible to construct five revised or alternative "models" and characterize "the tradition" in its two forms. Although the writers' accounts in the articles are heterogeneous by nature, we can suggest an interpretation of the models in Table 1.[8] Each model has its own answers to the questions of who, how, what, and why.

We regard each set of answers as being internally relatively coherent, even though some of the conceptions are inconclusive or not fully articulated. The moral of education is the least explicit dimension in the texts, which means that Table 1 represents our guesses rather than our interpretations of the authors' views in this respect. The purpose of presenting these guesses anyhow, rather than leaving the cells empty, has been to inspire discussion.

In the following pages, we will, discuss first certain important similarities and differences between the educational forms. We will then look at the specific opportunities generated by the practice-theoretical perspective on research in management education. Finally, we will note some of the implications of this variety for those who are engaged in management education and in its development.

5.1. Comparison of the models of management education

We have now presented the prevailing conceptions of management education in a specific order and have classified them (under sub-titles) in three categories: traditional,

[8]In addition to the two plus five models, the following opportunities for reconstructing education have also been discussed in the journals: feminist approaches (e.g. Mills, 1997; Sinclair, 1997, 2000), the greening of business schools (e.g. special issue in JME 2003, 27:2), and spiritual education (e.g. special issue in JME 2000, 24:5). In these three journals the suggestions were (even) less prominent than some of those models described above, and we could not reconstruct their answers to the four questions. However, this does not mean that these additional conceptions would be less significant in other forums. Likewise, we have omitted case-based education from the main models, since it was discussed in the journals in a tactical sense only. It is a matter of debate whether it can be seen as an element in the traditional model or as its one, specific version (see Contardo & Wensley, 2004). All these approaches that we omitted deserve serious attention in further research.

Table 1
Conceptions of management education in the three journals

	"Traditional" (as construed in critical articles)	MBA program (as construed in critical articles)	Science-based education	Competency-based education	Service-learning	Action-based education	Critical management education
WHO	Teachers: specialists in sub-disciplines	Teachers: service providers	Teachers: scholars and researchers	Teachers: Skills researchers, trainers and assessors	Teachers: concerned citizens and experts in their own field, committed to teaching	Teachers: motivated to change and bridge academic and work-life practices, developers, facilitators and co-researchers	Teachers: activist scholars and facilitators.
	Students: instrumentally oriented careerists	Students: paying customers, with a few years of work experience, on route to executive positions	Students: Subjected to the quality of theories ('good/bad')	Students: individuals with personal, improvable skills, growing up to professional tasks	Students: coming professionals and privileged citizens who learn from encounters with the less privileged	Students: experienced professionals with reflective capacities	Students: victims of education or self-reflective, open-minded learners, potentially responsible professionals
HOW	Lectures, cases and other exercises on discipline-specific tools, techniques, and models	Program of modular courses on a wide array of managerial tools, with traditional teaching methods	Introduction to robust, evidence-based theories, with the rehearsal of thinking skills, reading and writing	Exercising and demonstrating working skills, defined and assessed by teachers.	Applying academic knowledge in not-for-profit-sector projects, in collaboration with others	Action learning or research projects on professional practices, with the support of reflective spaces	Providing intellectual resources and spaces for critical reflection on managerial ideology/practices and experiences of injustice.
WHAT	Successful specialists and forthcoming managers	Certifying access to executive positions and the profession, in a profitable way	Academically educated, responsible, professional managers	Competent professionals, capable of diffusing and developing best practices	Educated, responsible citizens, for democratic society	Reflective, autonomous practitioners	Politically aware and active professionals (and intellectuals).

WHY	Success (wealth and status) depends on individuals' talents and values, and education provides then with opportunities ?	Management education as an investment for 'everyone' makes for a better economy, individuals' free to choose according to their values (and preferences) ?	Intellectual virtues and moral responsibility make a real profession ?	Competent, human professionals are effective and do 'good' in society ?	Service is moral action and values human dignity (in relation to others), democracy as a set of values ?	Human development to serve practical, professional and social purposes, in equal relations ?	Resisting alienation, keeping up hope and a struggle for a better society and work. ?

revised, and alternative.[9] What are the crucial differences and similarities that give meaning to this order and to the classification?

The most visible differences concern the politics of management education, that is to say, the goals of educational activities. The traditional, explicit goal of management education has been to educate effective managers who succeed in their work. The revised conceptions simply modify this goal somewhat by redefining what it means to meet this interest: the mastering of scientific knowledge or personal and workplace skills. The alternative conceptions suggest new, alternative goals for management education, namely the education of responsible citizens by means of service-learning, of critically reflective practitioners by means of action-based learning or politically conscious and active professionals by means of critical management education. The alternative positions suggest that a business-school graduate should be able and willing to question the current professional, institutional, and even the societal contexts of their work. In Bourdieu's terms, the models aim either at learning a 'sense of the (business) game' or at learning to change the stakes and rules of the game itself.

The educational goals proceed from different assumptions concerning the students: at one extreme as passive objects of teaching whose motives are purely instrumental, and at the other as active subjects partaking in educational activities and as individuals capable of assuming moral responsibility and taking political action. From one model to the next in the order of presentation (see Table 1), the expectations increase, and the 'educated subject' becomes richer as regards the qualities involved. In the revised models, the instrumentally oriented 'customer' acquires either academic or workplace skills, while service-learning moves into a new universe by demanding civil and moral responsibility. Action-based education adds to this the ability and willingness to act with a 'sense' of different situations, while critical education expects—on the top of all this—politically informed action.

We can discern related differences in the tactics of the types of education. Although the traditional and revisionist models share similar ambitions, they differ in the way these are to be accomplished: by learning a wide range of tools in the MBA program, by learning to think like a researcher in science-based education, or by learning personal skills that are actually needed in work in competency-based education. The first two of these models rely on traditional teaching methods and focus on the content of the educational material (managerial tools vs. 'good theories' and thinking skills), while competency-based education emphasizes experiential exercises and skill assessments. What we have called alternative models go even further by emphasizing the students′ active role: engaging in service-learning projects outside classrooms, reflecting on and improving working practices in action learning or research projects, and examining their own experience of subjugation or injustice by way of critical reflection.

The responsibility for learning outcomes shifts increasingly from teachers to students. The traditional model and its revised versions still assume the teachers′ dominant role in designing, planning and implementing educational events: teachers teach tools and techniques, they (produce and) choose proper management theories, or they classify and assess competencies, or even organize exercises. The alternatives call for project leaders,

[9]The service-learning model could also be regarded as a 'complementary' approach, since projects in the not-for profit sector cannot alone fulfil the needs and expectations of business-school education. However, the political goals and moral justifications of the approach are clearly 'alternative' in comparison to the tradition.

facilitators, co-learners, and fellow activists. The further we move from the tradition, the more demanding the process of education becomes—both for the teacher and the student.

As to the moral dimension, the texts are too inconclusive to give an equally clear idea of the differences between the conceptions of education. We had to pay attention to almost any statement regarding the ''values'' of education or its moral concerns, since we did found nothing that could be taken as referring to the 'internal goods' of educational activities. The proponents of the traditional model and its revisions were in particular ambiguous regarding to their moral position. Those writing about the science-based model did at least express their moral concern regarding the impacts of the business-school tradition. One way of interpreting this ambiguity and the accompanying silence could be that the traditional forms of management education have been mainly concerned and motivated by the 'external goods' of educational activity, which in MacIntyre's (1985) terms include money, status and fame—for business schools, faculty and students.

In contrast, the alternative conceptions paid explicit attention to moral concerns, justifications or motives, although we could not identify any specific, clearly articulated positions. Texts on service-learning referred to explicit but diverse moral motives, like ''service as moral action'' and ''respecting the dignity of individuals''. Some proponents of CME were sensitive to the ethical dilemmas in teaching, and in student/teacher relations. And, they also questioned the ethical impact of the tradition on managerial practice.

There are also some interesting similarities between the conceptions, however. The most evident similarity is that versions of experiential learning are presented as key pedagogical ideas in almost all the models (cf. three of the four models in Holman, 2000). Competency-based education, service-learning, action-based education, and critical management education rely explicitly on experiential leaning. In addition, the MBA model is based on the assumption that the participants have already gained work-experience before embarking on a program, although the teaching methods of the programs do not necessarily build on any methods of experiential learning, beyond case-based teaching. This interpretation would leave the science-based model alone in the category of non-experiential education, but some supporters of this model may also value experiential exercises.

The shared interest in experiential methods makes it difficult to distinguish between some of the conceptions, especially between competency-based and action-based education. It may well be that in the borderline versions of these two ideals there are no concrete differences in educational practices themselves. Another example of common ground can be found between the action-based approach and critical management education, since some proponents of the latter apply action-based methods. These two approaches may also share the aim of educating self-reflective graduates that can commit themselves to action in politically or morally problematic situations. A further case of overlaps could probably be found on the borders between science-based and critical management education: for some teachers 'good theories' and 'critical theories' are the same thing.

5.2. Possibilities for further research

Reviewing management education research from the practice-theoretical perspective generates ideas and possibilities for further research. As to the particular conception of practical activity used in this article, its main advantage is in its ability to outline a broad

agenda for management education research. The four issues of practical activity ask for research in educational techniques or tactics, politics, morals, and subjects. This broad view is helpful in locating research opportunities and omissions in the field.

In particular, studies of the 'moral orders' in studying and teaching management, as well as in governing these activities, are rare (cf. Béchard & Grégoire, 2005). The moral and ethical issues in education and business are a matter of concern and debate, but unfortunately they have come to be treated more as separate issues, and to be dealt with in special journals, especially business ethics journals. When ethical issues are studied, the focus tends to be on ethical perceptions, codes and conduct and particularly on misconduct (e.g. Ahmed, Chung, & Eichenseher, 2003; Cabral-Cardoso, 2004; Grimes, 2004). It would be more meaningful to examine the moral motives or passions that drive different academics and student groups, or how various educational practices and conceptions are actually justified in local contexts (see Leppälä & Päiviö, 2001; cf. Nixon, 2004).

The political issues of management education have received some attention, especially with the emergence of critical management studies and education as a distinct network and stream of research, both in the UK and in the USA. The critical researchers have contested the dominant assumptions of what management research and education should be, and have pointed out how educational models have societal consequences beyond the graduates' success in the labor markets (e.g. Grey & French, 1996; Grey, 2002). What the practice-based perspective would add to this line of discussion could be to emphasize the need for concrete studies in academic work and 'studying'. Such work could focus on the following kind of questions: What do students and teachers aim to achieve and accomplish by engaging in educational activities in various local contexts? How do they themselves account for their efforts and ambitions? How do local actors negotiate as regards curricula, why do certain political strategies win over their alternatives, or how do actors end up with specific compromises or hybrid models?

The most interesting research opportunities for the practice-based approach will ultimately reside in what we have here called the tactics of education. How do students and teachers 'make do' in spaces that are owned by others and that are filled with historically layered, pre-given 'realities', that is to say, in educational and governance practices that are difficult to change? More knowledge about the way the everyday life in academia is accounted for by ordinary business-school students and teachers would perhaps make us wiser when it comes to suggesting changes or defending the conditions for 'good work' in academia. Ordinary academics and students cannot always make a big fuss about policies or ethics, but they deal with the contradictory demands and expectations—in more or less creative ways. Unfortunately, empirical research in studying activity or even student experience is especially rare (for exceptions in the three journals, see Brown, 2000; Currie & Knights, 2003; Reynolds & Trehan, 2003; Sinclair, 1997; Watson, 1996). Teacher experiences, on the other hand, are typically presented as memoirs of famous scholars (e.g. Augier, 2004; Detrick, 2002), or in self-reflective reports on attempts at renewing teaching (e.g. Case & Selvester, 2000, 2002; Hagen, Miller, & Johnson, 2003; Raab, 1997; Sinclair 2000).

Danieli and Thomas (1999, p. 449) also call for research on business-school academics. They give good reasons for their claim. Namely, academic work has been neglected as an object of research; work in management education has become a major activity in universities; and it has recently been exposed to significant changes whose implications are poorly understood. We would like to add that a response to this call requires also

ethnographic and other participatory forms of research. Since such methods may call for justification among business-school academics, the prominent journals of management education research could help by inviting and encouraging submissions based on various forms of qualitative and engaged research.

It is important to note that our review suffers from a limitation as regards the full potential of the practice-theoretical approach. We were able to identify 'conceptions' of education as they were presented in the articles, but we could not have described the forms of education in terms of educational practices that are actually rehearsed by management educators and students. The nature of the material reviewed does not allow for the description of education as a 'practical activity' in a strict and rich sense. And we cannot blame the authors of the articles for not adopting the same perspective as we have done, or for not producing detailed accounts of practical activity. Our interpretations thus remain tentative and in need of elaboration. Empirical research is needed to look at what the diverse conceptions of education—and their ideals—mean in the everyday activities of those who try to live up to them at work.

We want to remind here also of another limitation in our way of constructing the models in this review. We relied only on texts published in the three journals, namely AMLE, JME and ML. If one brings in other publications, then the picture may change. One can generate more nuanced interpretations, contest our present ones, and pay due attention at the contextualization of the educational ideas.

5.3. Some implications of diversity

As we have found several educational models just in the Anglo-American literature, it seems likely that more alternatives must exist elsewhere. In our view, the very diversity of educational models available to business schools is a challenge and stimulus to anyone engaged in educational activities and in the governance of such activities. We try to tease out a few implications, because they may not be self-evident to all the relevant actors. In Helsinki, for instance, there can be complications in that the abundance of foreign ideals and practices come up against local traditions and attempts at development. In such situations, different actors draw their own—possibly contradictory—conclusions, but a few points can serve to start a discussion.

A business-school student, and in particular a student-union leader responsible on educational matters, may bring up the question of the model most likely to suit local students. However, before adopting a particular stance, the students or their unions need to find out something about the alternatives. The repetition of the mythical slogans is not enough. As to business-school teachers, they can—at least in certain local conditions—develop their own teaching and learning methods geared to a specific ideal, or they may even set out to construct innovative, local solutions to the four practical issues. Knowledge of the current alternatives and about experiments made in other localities can help in such efforts.

The models of education identified in our material are of such a kind, however, that they require support and active involvement on the part of administrators or "university managers". A business-school rector or dean, and the governance bodies of the institute concerned, all have to accept a concept and be prepared to invest it, before it can be realized as a new set of practices in a wider scale. It is these people, who participate in university governance, who are most likely to find the very fact that alternative educational

forms do exist quite challenging. They may do so, for instance, if they want to make deliberate choices regarding educational development. They may want to reconsider whether a strategy of imitation is sensible and sustainable in view of the shifting situations that competitive reputation games imply. Or whether an alternative, securely anchored in local conditions and traditions, would not work better than becoming just another mirror image of thousands of other business schools. The university leaders who have supported the new models identified in the journal articles, at least, seem to have chosen this second alternative.

In our view there are even better reasons than the concern for reputation and competitiveness for considering alternative conceptions of management education and for supporting the development of educational practices. As an institution the business school should support and enable forms of academic practice, and not simply produce 'external goods' such as status, fame and money (cf. MacIntyre, 1985).

As education is a main activity of the university, those involved in the governance of a business school should respect and appreciate what the teachers regard as the 'internal goods' of their disciplinary practice, in other words what they consider to be morally valuable in education (see e.g. Hansen, 1998; Nixon, 2004). In the constant search for the nature of these goods and for ways of realizing them, teachers are both motivated and obliged to improve their practice. In their constant, inherent urge to re-interpret what education should be accomplishing, teachers necessarily call in question any previous conceptions and standards of good practice and come up with answers—more or less innovative—to the why, what and how questions. Accordingly, management education, too, inevitably evolves from the inside and out, unless business-school managers prevent this directly and efficiently. Wise governors recognize this and built on it, rather than offending their teachers by forcing them for political reasons to adopt foreign, ill-argued models, or—what is even worse—for perfecting managerial control over academics and their work.

6. Conclusion

The results of this review call in question the rhetorical and mythical uses of the slogan "US business-school model" in reference to management education. If at least five different Anglo-American models of management education have earned a place in these prominent journals, then it does not make sense to fall back on simplistic rhetoric. It provokes the reader to ask: "Which model are you referring to?"

For researchers in management education our review recommends a broader agenda, and exemplifies a specific set of approaches—namely, theories of practice. If management education is approached as practical activity, one option is to focus on the way its practitioners deal with the questions 'who, how, what, and why'. Such a focus would produce accounts of the subjects, tactics, politics and morals of education (cf. Roberts, 1996), and would complement studies in teaching techniques, program contents, and the symbolic functions of business schools in various contexts (cf. Amdam, Kvålshaugen, & Larsen, 2003b). Moreover, introducing the quartet of questions may help practitioners to reflect on 'what they are about' (Reynolds & Tyler, 2001; cf. Grey, 2002).

Local efforts and accounts by teachers and students are unlikely to make a big difference in the international struggle between competing ideologies and powers. Nonetheless, no

business school can improve its educational processes without taking into account what its students and employees regard as worthwhile education. News from somewhere else, and knowledge of existing alternatives beyond the stereotypes, might also be useful to those who are concerned with the current forms of management education.

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Kirsi Korpiaho, M.Sc. (Econ.), is a researcher and doctoral student in Organization and Management at the Helsinki School of Economics, Finland. Her research interests include management education and students' learning. Kirsi is a founding member of the Management Education Research Initiative (MERI) at HSE (www.hse.fi/meri).

Hanna Päiviö, M.Sc. (Econ.), is a researcher and doctoral student in Organization and Management at the Helsinki School of Economics, Finland. Her research interests include management education and academic work. Hanna is a founding member of MERI at HSE.

Keijo Räsänen is Professor of Organizational and Management at the Helsinki School of Economics, Finland. He is a founding member of MERI at HSE. Keijo is also researching and teaching approaches, practices and practitioners in workplace development.

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Introduction

"Business students are not interested in learning." "Business students are always looking for ways to cut corners." "Business students cheat and have low ethical standards."

Are these statements familiar to you? To me they are, but although these are not totally unfounded assumptions, to my ear (being a recent graduate of the Helsinki School of Economics), these allegations also seem somewhat unfair. They seem unfair not because they are not true but because they give only a partial and incomplete explanation of the situation. Surely there is also some fault in the way business education is organized. As Pferrer and Fong (2004, 1508) point out, when business school faculty complain that students are not interested enough in learning for its own sake, it is possible that business schools themselves have, through their own actions, helped to create this situation.

Romme and Putzel (2003, 512) find reasons for student behavior in the design of educational practices. They argue that most of the educational practices in business education do not rely on any meaningful educational theory and hardly any on organizational theories. They say that business schools´ faculty members do not seem to practice what they teach, i.e. teachers preach organizational and group learning but do not design education accordingly. In addition, Thomas & Anthony (1996, 17) sarcastically point out that it does not require much philosophical insight to realize that the mere existence of institutions that claim to be dedicated to management education is not sufficient for accepting that what they do is educational. But why is this state of affairs then problematic?

It seems to be forgotten in the design of business education that according to our own theories (e.g. Lave & Wenger 1991, Brown and Duguid 1991, Wenger 1998, Gold & Watson 2001) people (i.e. students in this case) do not only learn the contents of their work but they also learn through work processes and practices. This means that we should treat students as individuals working, learning and knowing through their participation in educational practices. Accordingly, we should study students´ studying activities using theories of organizational learning and knowing. I claim that this would lead to fairer and kinder treatment of business students.

In this paper, I am interested in student curriculums, which include students´ ways of learning and knowing. Thus, the focus of my paper is on the ways BSc./MSc. students of Helsinki School of Economics (HSE) themselves

[1] Note: This is a language checked version of the publication

create and maintain meanings within educational practices, and in particular within the practice of examination. In this inspection of students´ curriculums, I turn to theoretical concepts emphasizing participants´ agency in creating, maintaining and renewing their social realities. Consequently, I introduce the concepts of `the situated curriculum´ and `the hidden curriculum´.

As empirical material for this paper, I use a series of exchanged messages from the student union web pages in March - April 2004. About ten students took part in the exchange of messages, and by summer 2004 these messages had been read almost 2500 times. In the analysis of this empirical material, I present an interpretation of the students´ curriculum, and analyze the kind of learning and knowing it enhances. In my conclusions I argue the integration of the concepts of the situated curriculum and the hidden curriculum opens up new ways to understand business education.

The situated curriculum

Business education as a net of practices

Business education can be seen as a network of practices within specific institutional settings. Practices of everyday business education include listening and giving lectures, participating in classroom work, taking and grading exams, and evaluating both students and teachers. These practices interact with each other, support each other, depend on each other, and interfere with each other (Nicoloni & Holti 2001, 3). Thus these practices constitute a net of educational practices in which changes in one practice affect its relations to others. However, despite the connectedness of practices, they are not all of equal importance. There are so called anchoring practices (see Swindler 2001), which means that some practices are more crucial than others in defining and sustaining the net of practices and the prevailing reality. In particular, in business education, the practice of examination affects the ways courses are organized, the ways the students study and act in teaching situations (in lectures and classrooms), and the ways teachers evaluate and grade students.

Moreover, practices are situated; which means they do not appear as identical in different contexts. Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that this very relationship between a practice in a specific context, and participation in that context is significant. They emphasize that people in different contexts create and negotiate particular ways of acting, learning and knowing. Thus, participating in the practice of examination for example - and the learning and knowing produced by this participation - varies from one educational institution to another. Taking an exam in HSE, for example, may require a different kind of learning and knowing than taking a similar exam at the same level in some other business school.

Practices become learnt and known through situated curricula

Gherardi et al. (1998) have introduced the concept of a situated curriculum to emphasize the contextual nature of learning and knowing. They argue that the

contents of situated curricula differ from the contents of formal curricula and work manuals. Accordingly, the situated curriculum is embedded in the social processes and traditions of the community and it is sustained and transmitted from one generation to the next. Thus, when today's newcomers have acquired sufficient know how and knowledge to act as masters, they tend to guide those who follow the same path as they did, perpetuating the curriculum with some of the innovations that have occurred in the meanwhile. The situated curriculum is one of the ways in which new knowledge, both cultural and material, is produced.

As stated above, learning and knowing the relevant practices can always be located to a particular community. However, referring to 'community' does not mean emphasizing the existence of informal groups or social systems within an organization. It is a way to emphasize that every practice is dependent on the social processes through which it is sustained and renewed, and that learning takes place through engagement in that practice (Gherardi et al. 1998). Brown & Duguid (2001, 204-205) also argue that if people share a practice, they will share know how and knowledge of that practice. Thus, communities of practice are actually defined by the communal practices of which its members are likely to have shared knowledge and know how. Consequently, the focus is more on the practices and less on the community.

Being a business student is learning and knowing the situated curriculum

Based on these assumptions, being a business student means participating in different kinds of practices with other students in a specific business school, for example in HSE. Being a business student means being capable of participating in the complex web of relationships among other people and activities. As Gherardi et al. (1998, 274) put it: "The goal is to discover what to do, when to do and how to do it, using specific routines and artifacts, and how to give a reasonable account of why it was done." As if this was not a big enough challenge, being a competent business student means reaching this goal in a way that is appreciated and valued by others. Contu and Willmott (2003, 6) continue: "It is not the acquisition of skill or knowledge with a universal currency (e.g. textbook knowledge) that identifies the 'competent' member. Rather, it is a demonstrated ability to 'read' the local context and act in ways that are recognized and valued by other members of the immediate community of practice that is all-important."

Therefore, the situated curriculum contains learning and knowing a practice in a specific context. It implies that once members of a community come to learn the situated curriculum of their work practices, they will also gain a better understanding of those practices. From this perspective, the link between the situated curriculum and the practices involved in it seems generally promising. But what if the situated curriculum comprises learning and knowing that do not lead to a qualitatively better understanding of the practices in question? In education studies, this problem is often solved by introducing the concept of the hidden curriculum. I will therefore next look at that concept in more detail.

The hidden curriculum

Concept of hidden curriculum connects doing, learning and knowing

Another way of looking at the link between practices, learning, and knowing in business education is by introducing the concept of the hidden curriculum (Ottewill, Leah, Mackenzie 2004). This concept problematizes the harmonious connection between practices, learning, and knowing in education. It claims that sometimes the practices of education do not operate in the way an official curriculum suggests. Beside the official curriculum, there exists a hidden curriculum, which favours a different kind of learning and knowing than what the official curriculum is meant to promote (Bergenhengouwen 1987, Ahola 2000, Margolis 2001).

An overview of the concept of hidden curriculum

The concept of hidden curriculum was first introduced by Jackson (1968). He noticed that students were expected to develop skills and competences which were not stated in the formal curriculum. Students were expected to learn to wait quietly, complete assignments, be neat and punctual, keep busy etc. This provided a foundation for the general definition of the hidden curriculum as the element of socialization which takes place in schools, and which is imparted to students through daily routines, teaching and studying practices, and social relationships (Margolis et. al 2001, 6). The hidden curriculum was understood as institutional expectations, values and norms, which were set by teachers, and initially completely unknown to students. It was contrasted with the official curriculum, in which sense the former is hidden because it is not public (Portelli 1993, 345).

However, this view has been criticized by pointing out that teachers cannot straightforwardly direct the students´ knowing and learning. Educationists such as Martin (1976) and Gordon (1982) have argued that educational practices always produce learning and knowing that cannot be foreseen. Thus, the hidden curriculum can also been seen as unintended learning outcomes or messages (Portelli 1993, 346). These messages imply what kind of learning and knowing is desired and from whom, not only in the context of education but also in society. As Margolis et al. (2001, 15) state, from this perspective the hidden curriculum is located in specific social practices, cultural images and forms of discourse. Here the 'hiddenness' of the curriculum is emphasized, but the positive side of that is that it can potentially be uncovered and eliminated.

A more radical view of the hidden curriculum implies that the hidden curriculum has a more profound relationship to society (e.g. Bowles & Gintis 1976). It is argued that through formal and hidden curricula schools reproduce the social relationship necessary in maintaining society and capitalism. The whole educational structure supports the practices of competition and evaluation, hierarchical division of labour, bureaucratic authority and compliance (Margolis et. al 2001, 7). Reproduction of these practices, and the skills and attitudes needed to participate in them, prepares students for their future work roles

(Ehrensal 2001)[2]. The hidden curriculum functions to mediate and legitimate the reproduction of different kinds of inequalities, including social class, racial and gender relations. And as the hidden curriculum is seen to arise from the structure of education (and its relation to society), it is hard to transform.

However, the view of education as an ideology machine maintaining prevailing practices is contested by arguing that the reality of education is more complicated. It is lived and produced by teachers and students. This view points out that the hidden curriculum is multi-faceted, opening up space for teachers and students to resist the mechanisms of social control and domination. However, this does not mean that teachers' and students' interests go hand in hand. The students may resist teachers' attempts and vice versa, as the students do not necessarily share the same idea of what is or is not 'domination' (Korpiaho and Päiviö 2004). Thus, students can act creatively and in ways that contradict the expectations of teachers and/or the educational system. Furthermore, students can create and share their own hidden curriculum, which arises out of their reactions and attitudes toward the formal curriculum (Snyder 1973).

The hidden curriculum in business education

I understand the hidden curriculum to be an essential part of educational practices producing unforeseen learning outcomes, including ideological and normative meanings. However, the hidden curriculum does not simply subordinate students, but it is also rejected, recreated and maintained by students. Students are not just pawns moved by the hidden curriculum of educational practices; they themselves are active participants in creating and exploiting the hidden curriculum. Thus, studying students´ learning and knowing in business education requires an understanding of the concept of the hidden curriculum.

Studying the students´ curriculums in practice

In order to study students´ views of learning and knowing the required educational practices, access to the students´ world is needed. A real challenge is to create situations where students would give unreserved accounts of their everyday doings, and openly discuss their understanding of the practices in business education. It is not necessarily in the students´ interest to reveal their curriculum, including elements of the situated curriculum and the hidden curriculum, to people that are potentially dangerous to their ways of doing, learning and knowing, i.e. the personnel of the university. Therefore, I decided to rely on naturally occurring data, i.e. material that was produced without my (teacher/researcher's) intervention.

I use students´ internet discussions about the practice of examination as my data. In HSE, as in many other business schools, there are internet forums - often supported and updated by student unions - for students to get their voic-

[2] The name of Ehrensal´s article crystallizes the idea of the hidden curriculum: "Training Capitalism´s Foot Soldiers. The Hidden Curriculum of Undergraduate Business Education".

es heard. In these internet forums, students share their thoughts and opinions about educational practices, different courses, and teachers. In HSE, the internet forums were established in 2002, and after two years there were almost 1400 registered users. Registered users have their own nicknames behind which students write and send messages to the public internet forum, where the messages are visible for everyone to be read and commented on. Therefore, there are much more readers than there are active participants in the internet forums.

The series of messages which I used as data for this paper took place in the forum called "HSE-internet discussions about HSE and its courses". As this forum deals mostly with matters important to first and second year students, it serves as an important channel for students to instruct each other. This is also the case in my particular series of messages, which was entitled "Organizing work, panic attacks". Almost ten students sent messages and commented on them in March - April 2004. By the summer of 2004, the series of messages had been read 2480 times[3].

The focus of my paper is on the ways the students, in their internet writings, construct views of the relevant learning and knowing of the practice of taking exams. Consequently, what I need to ask from my research material is: What, and how, do the students write on the Internet about the practice of taking exams?

In this paper, I present eight out of fourteen messages and analyze them in detail. I have not altered the nicknames of the students; nor have I changed the sequence of the messages. I start the analysis from the beginning and analyze the first eight messages quite thoroughly but leave the rest out of the analysis, as they begin - more or less - to repeat each other. In the analysis, I am not interested in the use of language per se but rather in what the students are trying to say about the practice of examination in particular and studying at HSE in general. To be able to analyze their writings from this perspective, a thorough comprehension of the context is needed. Thus, for the scope of this paper, I offer a brief description of the context of studying at HSE.

Studying at HSE

The Helsinki School of Economics was founded in 1911. It is an independent state institution, which engages in economics and business research and education. It is the largest business school in Finland with over 4,000 students. The main programs at HSE are the undergraduate Bachelor of Science and the graduate Master of Science degree programs.

Annually about 400 new students are admitted to the BSc/MSc program out of about 2,000 qualified applicants. The admission is mainly based on an entrance test (questions on five books) and grades in the nationwide matriculation examination. As the admission rate is as low as 20%, applicants have to study hard in order to get in. The living legend among the students has it that

[3] Note that about 400 students are accepted to HSE yearly.

this is the hardest test they have to face in their studies. Once they have been accepted to the HSE, they do not need to worry about passing tests anymore. Unless a student participates in deceitful activities, it is almost impossible to become excluded from the program. However, this information offers only short-term comfort for students.

As the new students begin their studies at the HSE, they soon realize the extent of the work they are expected to carry out during the first one and a half years. Students´ schedules are filled with mandatory courses in economics and business disciplines[4], together worth 60 credits[5]. These studies are called 'general studies' as their official purpose is to ensure that every student has the necessary knowledge and skills required from The Business Candidate. At the HSE, the official curriculum concentrates on logical and rational thinking, quantitative methods and mathematical skills. These kinds of competences are required in 36 out of 60 credits. Furthermore, students who possess these competences are able to participate in so called 'combination courses' (in mathematics, in statistics, in macro- and microeconomics) and thus gain an extra 16 credits. This means that after the mandatory courses it is possible to have a total of 52 credits in quantitatively orientated courses compared to 24 credits in other, less quantitative subjects.

After the mandatory courses students are to choose their majors from 16 different subjects. The mandatory core courses serve as an introduction to most majors e.g. to Accounting, Finance, Economics, Marketing and Organization & Management. In addition, there are the so called 'Major Fairs' where professors, assistants and graduates market their own subject as a major. For the disciplines' point of view, the number of majoring students is crucial as the number of graduating students is the key to receiving funds. For the students' point of view, choosing a major is regarded almost as seriously as choosing a future. According to Kinnunen (2002), the most important reasons in HSE in the choice of major are the attractiveness of future job responsibilities, compatibility with one's own abilities, job prospects after graduation, and potential for salary and career development.

However, in order to become a majoring student in a specific discipline, students have to apply into the subject. There is a calculation formula, which ranks students based on the number of courses taken and grades received. Thus, it is in the students´ interest to take as many courses as they are expected to, and to receive as good grades as they assume they will need. Here again subjects like Finance, Accounting, Quantitative Methods of Economics and Management Science, Management Science and Technology Management and Policy have their own basis of calculation. They put more weight on their

[4] These are: Introduction to Mathematics, Introduction to Statistics, Introduction to Financial Accounting, Introduction to Management Accounting, Introduction to Finance, Principles of Macroeconomics, Principles of Microeconomics, Operations Management, Introduction to Management Science, Introduction to Business Law, Introduction to Information Systems, Business Policy and Strategy, Organizing work, Principles of Marketing, Introduction to International Business, Introduction to Entrepreneurship and Innovative Thinking.

[5] The scope of the degree programs is described in terms of credit points to be gained, one point referring to an input of 40 hours (i.e. one study week) from the students.

own courses and require good grades[6]. Consequently, if a student wants one of those subjects as a major, there is pressure to perform in the required courses, and gain good enough grades. Actually, there is no competition between students; almost every student gets the major of their preference, and those who do not, are able to change majors later on. But this artificially imposed competition has effects on the practice of examination.

Because the core courses are mandatory for everyone and they 'need' to be done before choosing majors, the students usually take the courses with their peers. This means taking at least ten exams and spending about 40 hours in exams during their first year. Although the popularity of other grading methods, like cases, reports and other assignments, has increased in recent years, the weight of exams in the final grade is still between 80-100% in most courses. And the same continues as the students advance in their studies: over 1000 exams[7] are arranged in HSE annually. Thus, learning and knowing the practice of examination is a key to studying at HSE and it is in the students´ interest to share the knowledge of that practice with their own student community.

Discovering the students´ curricula

In this paper, I am interested in what students learn in business schools. In order to answer this question I look at HSE students´ own conceptions of their studies and of the practice of taking exams in particular. From my empirical material I ask: What, and how, do the students write about the practice of taking exams on the Internet? The series of exchanged messages, that I show here, deals with one mandatory course, i.e. 'Organizing work'. These messages have been named as "Organizing work, panic attacks." [8]

The first messages deal with a question where a novice asks for help to find study materials for the book exam in 'Organizing work'. The following messages show how quickly (s)he is instructed in the practice of examination .

1. Time investments

FK: I intend to take a book exam but I cannot find Gabriel's book on 'Organizing & Organizations' anywhere. Does anybody happen to have a decent summary of the book? Or the book? Otherwise, I guess it is pointless to go to the exam.

Karl: If you have taken the trouble to register for the exam, it is always worthwhile going. And if you drag yourself to the exam, it always pays to answer. If I had not taken the exams that I panicked about or had one or more books left to read, I would probably have about 20-30 credits less than

[6] http://veppi.hkkk.fi/netcomm/ImgLib/2/58/Perusteet%202004-2005.pdf

[7] According to the official curriculum, 836 exams were arranged in HSE in 2003-2004. In addition, many teachers prefer having the test as part of their lecture courses. These are not mentioned in the official curriculum.

[8] Note that the original language used by the students has been Finnish, and translation from Finnish to English is made by the author of this study.

I have now. And as it is an exam of the course 'Organizing work' you only have to answer more or less right…

The first objective of learning - that is hardly ever publicly questioned - is to use time efficiently[9]. In the first year of studying, students are to take up to 10 mandatory courses, of which almost all include a final exam at the end of the semester. This puts students in situations where they are unable to master the content of every subject with equal thoroughness. As Ahonen (1997, 44) points out, in business education there is a fundamental contradiction between the course content and students´ abilities to learn. This leads to a situation where students´ primary concern, especially at the beginning of their studies, is how to pass the mandatory courses.

For students to concentrate on quality and not quantity of the courses they take would require an essentially slower studying pace. However, both the formal curriculum and the students´ moral order work against this sort of activity. The mandatory courses serve as an introduction to the 12 different majors, so it is unrealistic to expect students to be content wise motivated. Moreover, the students are pressured to perform efficiently on these courses within the suggested time span, as the number of completed courses is an important criterion for getting the major of one's choice. Also, the students´ moral order at the HSE supports the virtues of effectiveness, performance, and fast graduation, and thus emphasizes the speed of studying over the depth of understanding (Päiviö & Leppälä 2001).

So, in order to 'just pass' through the mandatory courses, the students have innovated ways to optimize their time usage. Students´ union, KY, runs a book agency, where used textbooks, book summaries, and old exam questions are sold. After 2004, the selling of book summaries was forbidden because of copyright violations. As a consequence, abstracts are now distributed through internet free of charge by students. In this situation, a new challenge arises, as the students are to learn where or from whom to get this material once delivered by KY. This chain of events explains why a novice asks for book summaries on the internet in the first place. His/her request opens up a possibility to an older student, Karl, to comfort a novice. Karl assures that it is always worthwhile to take the exams despite insufficient preparation.

2. Coping strategies

Karl: If you feel that you cannot answer some questions, just 'compose' something. Be obscure and difficult to understand but give the impression that you know what you are doing. Write at least one page, use concepts and sophisticated words that sound stylish. Let your imagination guide you! It is very possible that you will manage to slip through that exam. And considering the course you are taking, the grade should not matter at all.

[9] Consequently, when I and my co-teacher Keijo Räsänen asked, in the course called Professional Development, students to write an essay about one academic skill needing improvement, a considerable number of students chose the skill of time management.

Karl advises a novice to concentrate on learning a 'composing' strategy instead of spending his/her time searching for literature. Composing can be understood as a kind of intellectual play against the examiner, where the name of the game is how to present oneself as a competent student. This requires learning and knowing the key concepts and terms of management discourse. As Karl instructs, "Write at least one page, use concepts and sophisticated words that sound stylish". However, this requires at least a rough comprehension of the concepts and terms that are considered to be persuasive and convincing in the context of business education, and in the context of specific exams. Gradually, exam by exam, these business students will learn the particular - and for an outsider peculiar - language of contemporary management practice. Grey (2002, 501) points out that this very capacity to speak and understand the right kind of management discourse is a major accomplishment of business students.

Accordingly, more important than learning and understanding business realities, its practices and actors, is to know the 'right' vocabulary and discourse in different contexts. But not any language will do. The suitability of terminology is defined by the appropriateness of ideological messages expressed through the language (Grey 2002). It is suggested (Alvesson & Willmott 1992, 1996, Prasad & Caprioni 1997, Frost 1997), that these ideological messages often promote rationalistic aspects of business life, salute the managerial view, and advance technocratic thinking. However, it is important to remember that ideological messages in management discourses can vary from subject to subject. Thus, it is essential for students to learn what discourses to use in different contexts.

When the students learn the discourses well enough, they just might be able to bluff/convince the examiner to pass them in the exams. Consequently, students also share tips on appropriate discourse usage on the internet. For example, it is argued that using the phrase "the whole organization must be committed to organizational change" in the exam of "Business Policy and Strategy" increases the average grade by 10 points (when the scale of grading is from 40 to 100). I believe that this phrase is mentioned because its ideological message deviates from the managerialist dominant way of teaching business policy and strategy issues in business education.

Although mastering the composing strategy comes very handy for students, it also mystifies the students´ learning processes by alienating the outcome (the answer filled with management jargon) from the learner (typically: a business student with no experience in business life). Learning becomes secondary and the mastery of the composing strategy primary. This might be one reason why the use of a 'composing strategy' is not appreciated by all the students.

3. Choosing exams, majors, futures

Big III: Thank god there are other subjects in HSE, which punish students for 'composing' rather than support this kind of activity by giving points. There-

fore, one should consider if one wants to choose 'composing' or 'knowing' as a major in HSE.

Interestingly, criticism of the use of a composing strategy is not targeted at its users but at the exams and subjects that allow its usage. Students learn that 'composing', as the use of sophisticated concepts and terms, is possible only in some exams, or more precisely, in some subjects´ exams. The possibility to benefit from verbal abilities and intellectual imagination (remember Karl´s advice: Let your imagination guide you!) makes the exams somehow less worthy, requiring less of the actual 'knowing'. The discussant above talks about 'subjects of composing' and 'subjects of knowing' without naming the subjects in question. It seems that the students collectively produce this category, which is not - at least officially- supported by the faculty. But on what basis is the divide then made?

One obvious source of knowledge is the official curriculum and its emphasis (in terms of credits) on subjects of technical rationality. Another source of knowledge is the success of these subjects in the selection process for major subjects, where subjects like finance and accounting have traditionally been winners, not just in Finland but elsewhere as well (e.g. Kallinikos 1996). Roberts (1996, 56) suggests that in the analysis of the popularity of these subjects it is important to take into account the instrumental interest that shapes management education. The hope offered in business education is that the business student will be better able to control organizational reality and thereby to realize his/ her own interests through the organizations´ goals. There is thus a relationship between the instrumental interests of students getting their degree and the assumptions students are taught in different subjects. There is strong pressure from students, a sort of impatience, for all knowledge to come to them in a usable and controllable form. Students learn very quickly which subjects offer this compact 'knowing' and instant career prospects.

Consequently, management education as an institution seems to reinforce students´ expectations (see Pfeffer and Fong 2004). For example, HSE advertises management education with the slogan: "Are you, too, aiming for top jobs?" In the so called 'Major Fairs', there are lists presenting how graduates of different subjects have been placed (job titles) just after their graduation. These lists are placed in note boards and maintained by the recruiting office. But before getting these 'top jobs', students need to pass at least the first mandatory courses. Meanwhile, a novice's anxiety has not been eased. S(he) is not convinced the exam can be passed without studying.

4. Relationship between knowledge and discipline

A novice is still afraid that he/she will not pass the exam without reading.

FK: Rumor has it that in the book exam precise answers to every question were required. This means that 'composing' is not allowed. All knowledge outside the book is ignored. That's sad.

Seppo: If all knowledge outside the book was accepted in the school exams, the system would bore students more than develop them. Everybody can make the world a better place but who wants to work hard? Despite this, maybe the current system does increase the stupidity of the students. They are hopeless, they need not be developed. You can find nice blonde girls everywhere; they are not all blonds, but girls anyhow. Girls with s-problems and nice clothes, but that is about all they have.

FK: I agree that many exams (e.g. the entrance test to the HSE) measure the noble skill of memorizing. Here, memorizing the details presented in one book measures the ability to absorb knowledge regardless of the correctness of those details. But as in the matriculation examination, knowledge outside the set books is a requirement for an excellent answer; this should also be the case at university. Of course it would be an impossible job for examiners to check the validity of the knowledge. However, this would support the idea of a science-based university, which HSE states as its own business idea.

A novice learns that taking an exam at a business school differs from taking the matriculation exam at high school. In the matriculation exam one can combine knowledge learnt outside the book more freely: from different courses, current affairs programs, newspapers etc. However, a novice interprets this as 'composing', of which a more senior student was talking earlier. But I argue that this is a different category of composing. This type of composing endorses drawing from one's prior learning experiences, connecting knowledge and going outside (beyond) the textbooks.

A new discussant, Seppo, sees 'composing' as a threat to business education. He reproduces the understanding that this kind of 'composing' should not be accepted, because it would ultimately lead the system into decay. According to him, business schools should not allow 'essays of how to make world a better place' otherwise nobody wants to do the 'hard work' of studying[10]. His answer can be seen as resistance against the novice's interpretation of composing, or it could be seen as a defense of the current system, which does not satisfy him either. The novice echoes this dissatisfaction and claims that the current system grades students only by their ability to absorb knowledge, and nothing more.

A novice is learning something essential of the practice of examination. Making students absorb the subject-based knowledge mediated through textbooks and exam questions can be seen as a target of examination. As Kvale (1996, 230) writes: "The purpose of examination is to maintain the knowledge of different disciplines, to delimit its boundaries, and to incorporate new developments into the authorized body of knowledge. In this conception of examinations, high grades are rewards for those students who have given the clearest presentation of the discipline's knowledge. Correspondingly, low grades are punishments for not presenting the expected knowledge, or not giving it due respect." By participating in exams students learn to stick within contents and discourses that are accepted and legitimized in particular courses. This is a

[10] Interesting point of view: Instead of saying, "Apply the model/formula y to situation x", why do we not ask: "How does the use of model/formula make a world a better place? Or does it?"

safe solution for a beginner. But as they learn to know which courses come from similar disciplinary fields and which do not, they learn to orientate to the right sources of knowledge outside the books.

5. The purpose of examinations

Big III: I do not believe that any sane examiner punishes anyone for using knowledge from outside the book. But there is a huge difference if an examiner passes a composer who has just barely scanned through the summaries a couple of times or if (s)he gives an excellent grade to a student who combines knowledge learnt from books to the knowledge (s)he has learnt otherwise.

I myself took an exam where a list of 5 sentences was asked from over 1000 pages. I sent a courteous email to the examiner. In that email I presented my annoyance regarding the unreasonably detailed questions with only little relevance to the actual subject matter. The examiner's answer was as polite as my email. She/he replied that one has to ask too many details in order to separate the summary scanners from the students who actually have read the books.

To sum up: forbidding teachers to ask trivialities is not the same as forbidding the students to think. The one who is to be felt sorry for is the assistant teacher who has over 400 papers from which to sort out the correct answers from the nonsense. Of course the easiest solution is to pass all students who have enough text on the paper. Unfortunately, this happens too often at HSE.

As discussed by the students earlier, the professional development of business students is not exactly the purpose of examinations. But in a good enough business school, exam questions are, and are allowed to be, about exact textbook knowledge. Personnel, examiners and/or assistants, are then the gatekeepers, whose job is to maintain and protect the standards of subject based knowledge mediated through textbooks. And consequently, they grade and differentiate students based on that learning. Here the students produce an understanding that it is the assistants (not the professors) that do this dirty work, and therefore they are to be understood and felt sorry for because of their desperate mission to separate the summary scanners from the book readers. That is why students endure unreasonably detail-orientated questions and the insanity of examination – out of loyalty towards assistants and their mission to protect the standards of education.

This purpose of examination is learnt to be an essential part of education and is thus silently accepted among the students. As Boje, 1996, 182-183) points out, the purpose of examination is to segment, rank and differentiate students. Exams order good and bad students in relation to one another, distribute people by aptitude, quality, skill, and order penalties in terms of grades. And as the discussant points out, this purpose needs to be differentiated from the actual learning processes.

What do students then learn if not to develop their intellectual abilities? Through the practice of examination, they learn to value their performance in terms of how well they have - as individuals - succeeded in comparison to oth-

ers. They learn to measure their performance as well themselves against other students. It is not the grades, but rather the grades of others that count. And when this silently agreed arrangement fails, i.e. everyone is passed or given good grades, students get angry.

6. The 'business school game'

Big III: I don't doubt the assistants´ work ethics, but rather the negative feelings attached to making somebody fail. I have more than once been on a course where all students have passed the exam, whatever their level of competence. If anything, I believe that students are passed because they do not want the image of being a bitchy subject or a person. The brashest students then go and complain why they did not get excellent or good grades with their tip lists. Thus, they want to be friends with us business students who know nothing in exams. No hard feelings to anyone from failing students in exams. They do not want to cause any unnecessary bad feelings to students by failing them in exams.

As students become more familiar with the practice of examination, they learn to see it as part of a more complex net of institutional practices. Students sense the competition for students and reputation, which prevails among the different subjects and departments in HSE. This leads, according some discussants´ insinuations, to a situation where teachers by giving good grades lure students to choose majors in their subject field in order to get funding and negotiation power within the HSE. Although this is not necessarily the case, students learn to read that kind of behavior through "the customer (here: business student) is the king" discourse. Students produce the belief that teachers want to give good grades hoping that students would also remember the nice feeling of succeeding at the moment of major selection.

Some students even learn to take advantage of this situation. As Big III argues: "The brashest students then go and complain why they did not get excellent or good grades with their tip lists." This kind of behavior is consistent with the overall conduct that the practice of examination favors: individualism (surviving alone), self-assurance ('composing' strategies and presenting self as a competent student), competitiveness (comparing self with others), and finally arrogance (complaining and confronting) all label the practice of examination, and are enhanced through participation in the practice. Considering the magnitude and significance of this credit collection mechanism at HSE, it is obvious that those who adopt this way of presenting self are the winners in business education.

Summary of the analysis of the students´ curriculum

The content of the students´ curriculum of the examination includes elements from both the situated and the hidden curriculum. The situated curriculum is needed to understand the role of learning and knowing the educational practices, whereas the hidden curriculum is needed to emphasize the power structures of business education and its wider connection to reproduction of that

society. Table 1 summarizes the analysis of the data, and presents the students´ curriculum within the practice of examination.

Table 1. The students´ curriculum within the practice of examination

The contents of the students´ curriculum	
Main activities	Sub-activities
1.Surviving through the intensive exam periods with the help of time management	• Learning to pass courses and maximize the collection of credits. • Learning to be efficient, finding exam materials from libraries and students´ book agency. • Learning that it is not necessary to actually read the required course materials. Finding and circulating book summaries and old questions and answers.
2. Becoming acquainted with different kinds of coping strategies.	• Learning the use of the 'composing' strategy. • Learning the right vocabulary, including ideological messages, required in different subject's exams. • Learning to present self as a competent student with the help of a specialized vocabulary.
3. Finding out which exams are considered to be the important ones and deciding on the use of coping strategies.	• Learning the structure of credit gaining implied in the official curriculum. • Learning to give priority to exams that may affect their possibilities of getting a major. • Learning to appreciate subjects offering technical rationality that match with their ambitions of getting a job and promise comfort against the insecurities of business life.
4. Understanding the role of discipline-based knowledge in the practice of examination.	• Learning to stay within exam areas, learning textbook knowledge. • Learning to consider explicit course contents as knowledge, and to bypass ques-

	tions that require 'making the world a better place' -reflections. • Learning that faculty members are gate-keepers of knowledge.
5. Learning the operation mechanism of the institutionalized practice of examination.	• Learning to separate learning processes from taking exams. • Learning the purpose of exams as a mechanism of differentiation. • Learning to measure one's own performance against others.
6. Becoming aware of how the business school as an institution operates.	• Realizing the competition for students and funding, constructing the realities of business schools. • Learning to take advantage of the 'student is the customer' - discourse. • Learning to present characteristics such as competence, self-assurance and if needed, arrogance.

Conclusions

I argue that the concepts 'hidden curriculum' and 'situated curriculum' interact with each other. The hidden curriculum puts more emphasis on the political and critical view on practices, whereas the situated curriculum stresses the significance of learning and knowing that various practices produce. The practices of business education do not only organize education and students´ experiences but they become learnt and known by students, who then actively (re)produce the situated/hidden curriculum of business education. In both approaches the question of agency becomes central: To what extent are students able to produce their own ways (hidden or not) of learning and knowing in business education, and to what extent are they just objects of educational practices? The discussion around the situated curriculum seems to offer a welcome space for agency in business education, whereas the discussion around the hidden curriculum brings forth a kind agency often ignored in the design of educational practices.

From these starting points two things follow: First, students should be understood as academic workers who work/study, learn and innovate as the rest of us academic workers. The need of producing understandings and finding meanings - what to do, how to do and why to do it - exists alike. Secondly, the practices of education do affect the ways students learn these things. The situated/ hidden curriculum that arises from students´ attitudes towards the formal curriculum often appears as 'a destructive curriculum', but it could also be

'a supportive curriculum'. It can work against or along with the official curriculum, as it is not intrinsically good or bad. We need to take students´ learning and knowing seriously, not just as something that takes place in so called educational situations, but as something that is continuously produced through participation in even the most mundane practices.

This learning and knowing becomes important as it affects how the students act in lectures, how they relate with, and encounter, other students and faculty members in departments. If students learn early on in their studies the presented ways of studying, it is much harder - for both students and teachers - to try to convert the direction later on. However, it is paradoxical that the situated/hidden curriculum, which emerges from practices in business schools, is rarely accepted by faculty members. This situation leads quite easily to double standards and creates the distrust between faculty members and students.

I argue this gap between academic workers and students is to some extent unnecessary and artificially maintained. As Mäntylä & Päiviö (2005) point out, researchers of academic work are frustrated by the managerialist approaches under which their work has been put in recent years and thus claim that there should be more appreciation of the internal values of academic practices. In a similar way, those students that would want to appreciate learning for its own sake, and to develop meaningful stance towards studying, are put in a difficult spot. And, when it comes to intelligent business students, it is not realistic to think they would just disregard the curriculum, which is the basis for becoming a competent and respected student in business education.

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Students as practitioners in academia – proficiency and reflectivity in study practices

Kirsi Korpiaho *Helsinki School of Economics*

Abstract

In this paper, I will ask what happens when students' experiences of studying in a business school, instead of their experiences in workplaces, are taken as a starting point for course planning and organising. The course in question was called Professional Development (PD) and it was offered at the Helsinki School of Economics in 2005 (see Räsänen and Korpiaho forthcoming). In the course, we considered the process of students becoming 'skilled and reflective business students' as an analogy to employees gaining proficiency and reflectivity in other work practices (see Gherardi et al. 1998; Brown and Duguid 1991). We approached the participation of students in study practices as if it were participation in work practices and their learning as if it were similar to that of other practitioners. The results show that students are able to construct profound and concrete reflections of their own practices.

Keywords

business education
studying
reflexivity
teachers
students

Introduction

There has recently been criticism of the quality of business school education. Business schools are accused of educating technicist managers (Grey and Mitev 1995), individual specialists (Mintzberg and Gosling 2002), and even amoral business practitioners (Goshal 2005). According to the critics, business students are educated to focus on seemingly rational and objective techniques, which tend to produce managerialistic, simplistic, and unrealistic views of business. This preserves the illusion that the use of technical tools is morally and politically neutral and that they can be applied universally regardless of the business context. However, it is argued that an understanding of professional practice solely in terms of instrumental rationality and ignoring the importance of situational reflections causes serious problems when students enter business (e.g. Pfeffer and Fong 2002; Grey 2002).

A suggested remedy to the dilemma of preparing students to encounter the realities of business is to design educational events to start from their own experience (e.g. Caproni and Arias 1997; Dehler et al. 2001). This would highlight the ambiguity and complexity of work through the

students' own experiences. Students would learn how to recognise, confront and question issues that shape their prospects to carry out, redefine, and reconstruct professional practices. However, building educational events on students' working experiences is an unachievable task if the students do not have such experiences. This is rather typical in undergraduate education (see Mutch 1997).

In spring 2005, these concerns became relevant to me and to my colleague Keijo Räsänen. We had promised to teach an undergraduate course called 'Professional Development' (hereafter PD), which was an obligatory, second-year course for business students studying Organisations and Management in the Helsinki School of Economics. As the name of the course implies, we were to address questions regarding the kind of professionals practices students are supposed to learn, and especially what professional development could mean both during their studies and thereafter. Instead of perpetuating the very problems business education is accused of causing, we hoped to move, as Cunliffe (2002: 36) puts it, towards educational practices 'grounded in the more informal, everyday ways of sense making and learning that are the essence of management practice – a critical questioning within practice'.

In principle, we intended to draw on the so-called practice-based approach (e.g. Nicolini et al. 2003; Schatzki 2001). Nevertheless, we were puzzled by the challenge of how to bring the messy, ambivalent and emotive everyday work of practitioners into the classroom. Mutch (1997: 301) argues that in postgraduate education current professional practice is often brought along by the participants into the classroom in a way that at least provides an opportunity for fruitful engagement. Here undergraduate education differs from postgraduate education, because many undergraduate students do not have much working experience. This is the case in Finland. Students usually come to the business school directly from high school and have no prior working experience. In our course, making professional practices alive for closer examination proved a difficult challenge.

Instead of bringing in visitors from 'real companies' or arranging 'field trips', which would have been feasible options, we decided to focus on the students' studying experiences. We knew that they had plenty of experience of educational organisations, were accustomed to their practices, and knew how to gain acceptance and respect among their peers (Korpiaho 2005; Korpiaho and Päiviö 2004). Hence, the lack of practical knowledge or know-how would not be a problem if we managed to make the students consider their study experiences worthy of enquiry.

We attempted to arouse students to take on intellectual challenges in respect to their own activities. We chose to introduce concepts like communities of practice (Brown and Duguid 1991; Lave and Wenger 1991), situated learning (Brown and Duguid 1989; Gherardi et al. 1998), and reflective practice (Cunliffe 2002) and presented them as means and theoretical resources for the analysis of their own 'work', that is studying. We found these particular concepts appealing because they stress the social

and cultural nature of knowing and learning, as well as the active role of actors in communities of work.

First, I will present how we framed the idea of students as practitioners in academia. We did this by introducing the concepts of 'communities of practice' and 'situated learning'. Second, I will discuss the concept of 'reflective practice', which we presented as something to be rehearsed by focusing on studying practices and experiences. Third, I will explore how this way of framing professional development in the context of business education led us to the course concept, to certain methods of delivery, and to particular results. In the main part of the article, I will elaborate the results with an analysis of the students' written accounts during the course. Finally, I will discuss briefly the relevance of the experimental course experience to the debate on educating management practitioners.

Practice-based view on business education: Students' activities and situated learning

Our endeavour in organising a course embracing students' experiences was largely influenced by our interest in 'practice-based studies' (e.g. Nicolini et al. 2003; Schatzki 2001). We have been working in a group that has been searching for appreciative, rich and vivid ways to describe the work of academic practitioners (e.g. Räsänen and Mäntylä 2001; Mäntylä 2000), including that of students (see Räsänen et al. 2005). Understanding studying as participation in different sets of practices and learning in terms of situated learning offers a fruitful way to examine business education in general. Next, I will elaborate on these ideas a bit further.

Being a business student means participating in different kinds of practices with other students in a specific context, for example in the Helsinki School of Economics. Furthermore, it means being capable of participation in a complex web of activities and relationships. As Gherardi et al. (1998: 274) put it: 'The goal is to discover what to do, when to do and how to do it, using specific routines and artefacts, and how to give a reasonable account of why it was done'. As if this were not a sufficient challenge, being a competent business student means reaching this goal in a way that is appreciated and valued by others. Contu and Willmott (2003: 6) add: 'It is a demonstrated ability to "read" the local context and act in ways that are recognised and valued by other members of the immediate community of practice that is all-important'.

As stated above, all practical activities are located in a particular community or communities, as proposed by the 'communities of practice' approach. Gherardi et al. (1998) refer to the use of the community concepts as a way to emphasise the social and situated nature of learning the practices. In this view, every practice is dependent on the social processes through which it is sustained and renewed, and learning takes place through engagement in that practice. That is why it is relevant to consider the practices, not the community, as an object of professional exploration. In our course, the studying practices of students were chosen as an object

of reflection. Hence, the course's success depended on the willingness and abilities of students to reflect on their everyday life.

Can students actually reflect on their own practices?

We proposed to the students that there is a connection between articulating one's own working practices, reflecting on them, and developing as a professional. We presumed that if the students would learn how to identify, describe, and reflect on their own studying practices, they could also benefit from that craft in future. This line of argumentation stems from the pedagogical ideas of experiential learning and reflective practice (e.g. Reynolds 1998; Cunliffe 2002).

The 'reflexive' approach to management education celebrates the idea that students can learn from their own experiences by reflecting on those experiences more closely. Roberts (1996: 67) writes the following about the objectives of this approach: 'it should attempt both to bring awareness and then reflect on what the student brings to the class; it should encourage them to look more closely or look again at what they though they knew'.

The main point is to increase students' critical understanding of the self in relation to their lived experiences. However, Roberts (1996: 96) warns that such self-reflection may turn into a form of 'self-discipline'. In order to escape this limitation, management education must offer more than new ways to criticise and discipline the self. In the PD course, this meant that self-reflection should encourage students to see their participation in studying practices in ways that do not only discipline them but instead offer new and inspiring thoughts and prospects for action. The concrete challenge to teachers here is to open up new opportunities and appreciate students' own hopes rather than offer a pre-defined worldview or add to the burden of self-surveillance.

This concentration on students' experiences was also motivated by emancipatory goals. As Holman (2000: 208) argues: 'the specific aims of the experiential/critical school are to develop a body of critical knowledge and skills which enable people to be reflexive about their own knowing and doing, and to take non-instrumental actions that facilitate emancipation'. I did not know beforehand what this non-instrumental action would mean in the course but perhaps I hoped that the students would find their 'voice in Babel' (Collin 1996) or take control of their studying instead of just performing randomly selected courses in order to get a degree.

Analysis of the students' accounts of study practices

The PD course has had a crucial position in the curriculum of the subject organisation and management since 2001. During these years, there have been several attempts to develop and redefine the course, although the concepts of students' experiences, study practices and the significance of social processes have always served as guiding principles. However, it was only in 2005 that we were able to articulate a clearly defined concept for the course. This was due to our insights from the practice-based studies.

One of the key insights was the importance of developing the conceptual framing of the course rather than elaborating on the pedagogical practices in the course planning and implementation. We worked on practice-theoretical perspectives and especially on a particular three-stance conception of practical activity (e.g. Räsänen et al. 2005). According to this conception, the practitioner has to deal with the following three issues in any practical activity: how to do it, what to achieve and accomplish by doing it, and why is it justified to aim certain goals and in certain way? Note that the 'why' question is unavoidably twofold: it can concern either the means or the goals of an activity. The practitioner can participate in and account for the activity from three stances: 'tactical' (how), 'political' (what), and 'moral' (why).[1] Moreover, the fourth issue of 'who I am' can be approached by suggesting that the answer to the 'who' question is embedded in the answers to the questions of how to do, what to do, and why to do it in a certain way.

We invited the students to examine their study practices from these three perspectives and presented orientations to the perspectives in the classroom sessions. In the course, we used the term 'strategic' instead of 'political', because we thought that this would be easier for the students to relate to, taking into account their previous studies. The questions were then applied to the study practices in the following way:

- Tactical perspective: How can I perform my studies at HSE?
- Strategic perspective: What can I accomplish and achieve in my studies at HSE?
- Moral perspective: Why do I study at HSE, and in a certain way?

In the course programme, the stances were dealt with one-by-one. After each phase, the students wrote a personal essay about the topic. In the first essay, they were asked to reflect on their study skills and in the second on their goals, from the tactical and strategic perspective, respectively. In the third essay, they could choose to reflect on whatever they considered important and interesting in the course themes. We did not oblige them to write on moral issues. It was neither our aim nor our intention to pressure the students to engage in any potential threatening or confessional forms of writing. Hence, we allowed topics other than morals in the final essay.

In the course, there were altogether 34 participants and almost the equivalent number of course essays from each topic. I considered these essays, the accounts of the study practices in the business school, as my primary data. I have read them through and organised them thematically. I traced the most common themes that the students had chosen to deal with, but I was also attentive to the more deviant themes. Especially, I focused on the accounts where the students seemed to recognise something important about their studying practices and studying in business school. Often these accounts included strong feelings, pleasures, uncertainties or dissatisfactions.

1 The specific practice concept and the three stances cannot be opened up in detail here. It would require an introduction of the works by Michel de Certeau (on tactics), Pierre Bourdieu (on politics), and Alasdair MacIntyre (on morals).

My role as both a teacher but also as a doctoral student has naturally guided my reading and interpretation of these essays. I am not an ignorant outsider, but rather an informed insider. I recognize the institutional structures, rules and regulations of studying as well as different study cultures, norms and values that are reflected in students' essays through my own situated experience. I consider this knowledge essential, as I am inspired by methodical ideas (e.g. Smith 1987; Campbell 1998), where a researcher goes about exploring and understanding her own or someone else's everyday life. Then, the entry point of an investigation is always the standpoint of actual individuals (in this case the business students) located in the everyday world.

The following excerpts from the essays illustrate the students' thoughts when asked to reflect on their study practices.

Tactical perspective: how can I perform my studies in HSE?

Asking students to discuss their study tactics might appear trivial as most business students at the HSE seem to manage quite well. Students generally carry out and return assigned tasks and papers promptly, although basic questions like how to read academic articles, to answer exam questions or to write essays are seldom brought up in the local, subject-specific, educational settings or in school level settings.[2] Still, based on students' performance, teachers are predisposed to assume that students know how to perform. However, this easily creates an atmosphere of individual survival, strengthening the position of the most proficient students and leaving others in uncertainty. Hence, I argue that it is necessary to approach studying from the very basic 'how to perform' questions.

Being able to perform presumes a mastery of the requisite range of skills for practice. Knowing 'how to' is an essential starting point for professional work. Thus, in our course every student had to choose one study skill, reflect on it, and write a personal plan for its improvement. We asked them to write as personal and concrete descriptions as possible taking into an account the context and constraints of studying. Their choices varied from information searching to giving presentations, while time management, writing and reading constituted the three most popular themes.[3]

Time management was the most frequently chosen skill for reflection and considered by many students as the most important academic skill. Emphasising the ability to control and allocate time might be a sign of the students' experience that business education is hectic and stressful. But it can also be their more or less conscious strategy to present themselves as efficient and capable business students. Thus, time management can be considered a safe choice.

> In order to describe my time usage, I made a list of all the things on which I spend my time. After this I transferred the list to an excel sheet. After calculating how many hours each operation takes per week, I got 174. 5 hours. However, there are only 168 hours in a week and I thought I already

2 At the time, there were no 'study skill courses' offered by the HSE. However, separating study skills from the locally defined subject contents and the processes of learning through particular 'study skill courses' is a contentious phenomenon. According to Wingate (2006, 459) this can lead to results which are actually counterproductive to learning: teaching the study skills without linking them to subject content inevitability encourages the undesirable epistemological belief that knowledge is an object which can be acquired with certain tricks and techniques.

3 Students' choices were distributed in a following way: time management (10), writing (8), reading to exams (6), reading (3), information searching (2), giving presentations (1), creative thinking (1), it-skills (1), absorbing information (1), motivation (1).

> underestimated my time usage. But then, in order to be totally honest, I cut the time spent on my studies a bit. Essay A, student 31

Questioning one's skills in basic tasks like writing or reading fractures the image of competent and self-assured students and uncovers a rather different picture. Presenting doubts as to one's mastery of the essential study skills renders differences between the students visible, which may strengthen feelings of vulnerability, inadequacy, and incapability.

> I chose to focus on reading for exams as the skill needed in higher education. I consider this a critical skill, an object of this inquiry and a target of my personal and professional development as a business student. Being a higher university student requires absorbing massive loads of information and I have noticed that my old study techniques do not seem to be sufficient anymore.
>
> I realised that reading for exams is a problem for me in many ways. First of all, I have trouble in starting to read and concentrating on the text because I cannot make the anxiety and feeling of inadequacy that hurry creates go away. My reading also often remains at a superficial level because of the mismatch between my personal values and the implicit values in required materials. I also fear that if I concentrate too much on studying, it will become the most important thing in my life again. Essay A, student 34

The student, who has written the text above, reveals in her essay that she has started to doubt her decision to study in a business school, partly due to her problems in studying. These problems were not merely technical ones but also included value contradictions and a sense of 'being different' from the value sets represented in the study materials. However, by the end of her essay, she succeeds in making a plan of action to deal with the issue. Reynolds and Trehan (2003) have studied experiences of difference among the business students. They suggest that an understanding of the differences that surface and manifest themselves in social contexts of learning offers a fertile starting point for reflection. They argue for the importance of differences being deconstructed, understood and confronted, instead of being suppressed by the consensual values of the learning communities. In order to develop one's study practices, it is important to reflect on how differences in study skills emerge; on what basis, of what kind and with what consequences for individual experience and action.

Strategic perspective: what can I accomplish and achieve in my studies at HSE?

Strategic questions of what to accomplish in business education can be straightforward as business students are often accused of being only after a label, a master's degree, and a status it provides (Grey 2002). In spite of this, we also wanted to give them an opportunity to consider other goals, such as establishing new social relations, participating in student union activities or other voluntarily activities, growing as a person, developing

one's intellectual resources, becoming acquainted with academic work and university and so forth. However, the students' eagerness to graduate and head for the labour market became evident as most of them wrote primarily about professional interests and life after graduation.

> My aims are clearly professionally focused. I hope to get a job that is good and interesting. My aims don't have anything to do with self-development. Of course, I will develop myself during my studies in many ways but I expect more from work and the challenges its offers. Essay A, student 18

In their essays, many students presented ambitious targets and career expectations but at the same time expressed mixed feelings towards business and its values. The double burden of being a business student is perpetuated in students' essays: first they have to learn how to be a university student and then how to deal with the ideological considerations of becoming a master of business. Whereas becoming a doctor, teacher or priest is often seen as a virtuous path, becoming a businessman or woman requires further ethical pondering: what kind of a businessman/woman, in what field and why? Being subject to the culturally obscure meanings and justifications of business, students are inclined to wonder on how they fit this picture. This shows how seemingly straightforward strategic questions are intertwined with more painful moral considerations.

> I admit that there are times when I am frightened and shocked by the fact that I will work in a field where the harshness of our society is most evident. I mean, in the end, the primary purpose of business enterprises is to make a profit, and then the softer values are left aside. Companies can neglect environmental and employee issues when pursuing financial gains and higher share prices, especially if those are considered the most important objectives. And anyway, is it ethically right to create pseudo needs for customers with the help of advertising just to get them to buy things that they don't really need? Or is it right to produce things that are eventually dumped where they will probably just cause pollution? In this report I won't deal with ethics, so I leave it to that. The more important question is: do I personally want to be part of that? "Yes", I answer to myself and others. Essay B, student 6

As the text above indicates, students recognise contradictions in aspiring or working for something that may not endure critical examination. Students are tempted to bypass too perspicacious examinations as they could turn out to threaten their desired professional identities. Fenwick (2005: 34) also points out that the desires and identities of business students may reflect middle-class circumstances and ideologies conforming more to the prevailing views than offering alternative or resistant managerial images and traditions. Sometimes students may deliberately take these conservative positions, but they might just as well be unable to evoke or cultivate more radical positions. Whatever stances the students took in

their essays, they probably had to explicate and reflect on the morally value-laden strategic question of 'what to achieve through education' for the first time in their studies.

There is still another learning task for business students, namely being a male or female business student and becoming a male/female business professional. Salminen-Karlsson (2005) notes that gender appears to be highly relevant to the notion of situated learning. She argues that learning in the social fabric of practices embodies elements of socialisation, whereas according to the 'doing gender' approach, all socialisation implies learning to 'do gender' in an appropriate way. And indeed, female students in particular explicitly pondered the acceptable or possible ways of being a professional woman in the field of business and at the same time, perhaps more unintentionally, presented themselves as female business students.

> I am ready to begin at the very bottom and work my way up. I don't want to be a top manager, because then there won't be enough time for family. That is one reason why working in the field of human resources feels right. It seems like a soft sector, where maternity leaves or having a family are not considered barriers to career advancement. Most of the employees have children, and therefore being a human resources manager with children can be an advantage. This way she could better understand the various life situations of her subordinates. Essay B, student 13

From the professional development point of view, students had a chance to discuss personal issues that are often disregarded and carefully left aside. In every profession, the goals and targets we choose to pursue are affected by our starting points, our values and beliefs. Whether we acknowledge it or not, wider political and gendered practices are embedded in these seemingly individual preferences. And sometimes these preferences work along the conventional appreciations, for example by encouraging individuals to pursue certain goals, to step aside or to capitulate, and in fact subdue the individual's will and power to redefine professional development. Acknowledging and identifying one's expectations of what is possible to achieve is a precondition for the more profound questions of why.

Why I am studying at HSE and in a certain way?

In the two first essays the students concentrated on their personal feelings and subjective arguments but in the third essay we required the use of literature as a source of resources and a more general perspective to studying. Before they wrote the third and final essay, the class sessions were concerned with the moral question of why to aim for certain goals and with certain means. We discussed the meaning of local moral orders and the virtues and vices of studying (Leppälä and Päiviö 2001) that are employed to justify practical activities, either the means or the ends of studying.

We also wanted to approach studying and business education from an explicitly moral perspective. Roberts suggests (1996: 55) that

instrumental and moral domains can and should be brought back in relation to each other. In our course, we took the class discussions and learning tasks beyond the technical 'how', but also beyond the strategic 'what' questions. In education, discussing moral issues with students implies an effort to generate some understanding in them about the social processes of organisation and in particular the role of their own immediate practices in the production and reproduction of organisational life.

In the final essays, students were to extend their views from study skills, and strategic choices to wider perspectives of what influences and triggers their personal choices. They outlined an analysis of what is regarded as virtuous and vicious in society, in business schools and in different disciplines. The students wrote on several themes varying from work values, contradictions between family and work, meaning and purpose of business education to the differences in disciplinary-based tribe cultures. They wrote of how the different value sets and moral orders embedded in different set of practices can actually affect and drive their learning processes.

> Every school has its own values, with which students identify, e.g. in business schools: performance, efficiency and possession of fact-based knowledge are commonly considered as virtues. Everyone is aware of these values, although they are not explicitly listed anywhere. I think these values can be read between the lines of the study guide, where the school's aims of being the leading business school in Finland are emphasised. These values are already linked to work addiction, which may start during the studies. Many students devote themselves to their careers during the studies. They demand top grades and fast graduation from themselves. They do a lot and they do it efficiently. Essay C, student 1

Although it is important to recognise the morals and value sets embedded in institutional practices, in different work and study cultures, and how they are enacted and sustained through action, it might be even more important to recognise the possibility of taking a personal stance and even deviating from the commonly produced ideals of desirable and avoidable action. Some students wrote about being true to oneself and finding one's own way to relate to business studies as their guiding principles. One student argued in favour of reflective practice and studied its possibilities to do the work for others as well.

> Can a typical performance-orientated business student benefit from reflecting on study practices? Has this goal-orientated and benefit-maximising social climber enough self-control to stop, think and question the generally accepted practices that he/she has adopted and that are firmly established in students' tribe cultures. Could learning reflective practice actually even assist a business novice to move on to new arenas of work? essay C, student 5

Discussion

In this paper, I have described the concept and written products of an experimental approach. My colleague and I approached the students' educational experiences through the analogy of people gaining proficiency in professions. In the course we assumed that if the students would learn how to identify, describe, and reflect on their studying practices, they would also be able to practice those competences in learning other situated work activities.

The course experience leads me to recommend the following steps. First, it is essential to start from the students' lived experience, from the very tactical and technical questions of 'how to do things'. Students determine the most critical study practices and then aspire to develop creative ideas for their improvement. Second, in order to be able to make deliberate decisions concerning the desired outcomes of 'what to achieve', students name and identify their own personal yearnings and aspirations, in contrast to the mere recapitulation of what is considered institutionally and culturally appropriate. Third, students engage in moral considerations and in discussions of what is important to them, that is what good studying, working and life are like for them. Moral reflections are relevant when giving meanings and justifications for the students' aspirations and study practices. And vice versa, prospects of living up to one's ideals are bound to what is politically possible and tactically feasible.

As the students' accounts prove, they are able to construct profound and concrete reflections of their own practices. They wrote about issues of technical performances and strategic aspirations together with the value considerations, showing the inseparable nature of the moral element in the understandings of practices – whether study or any other professional practices. The students analysed the appropriateness of their study skills in the context of business education, the constraints and prospects for pursuing certain goals (e.g. ethical contradictions and gender influences), and the cultural demands placed upon them. It became evident that questions of identity and a sense of agency are embedded in the students' professional reflections.

Cultivation of students' sense of agency in educational contexts requires an understanding of the order of how, what, and why questions; starting from the personal and 'practical' experiences of studying and then gradually moving forward to more complex and unclear issues exposes new contradictions, doubts and dilemmas. Cunliffe (2002: 38–39) calls this inside-out reflexivity. Starting from the outside can, she argues, paralyse the students. Focusing on a disembodied intellectual knowledge from outside can be disempowering to individuals who may feel that they are not in the position to influence the processes and practices that they examine. The danger of self-reflection turning into 'self-discipline' lurks here. It can be avoided by emphasising and appreciating the students' practical and experiential ways of knowing (Fenwick 2005).

Roberts (1996: 66) sees this process as a shift from a focus on the practitioner as neutral technician to a focus on the practitioner as

self-conscious agent. The process is essential in educating the businessmen and businesswomen of tomorrow. Management practice as well as management education is accused of concentrating too much on techniques and tools at the expense of political and moral considerations. This arouses the question of what 'professional development' may then mean in management education. A suggested answer to this is that professional development should be about educating politically conscious and morally sensitive actors who can better understand the messy realities of organisation life. Indeed, Grey (2002: 506) suggests inviting students to make sense of their own organisational experiences as a way to educate more self-conscious practitioners. Nevertheless, in undergraduate education this task is much more complicated than at the postgraduate level and it challenges us, researchers and teachers of management education, to explore further the possibilities of undergraduate education.

In this paper I have reported on a case in which conceptual insights were crucial in convincing the students that their experiences are worth reflecting. In this case, concepts such as communities of practice, situated learning and reflective practice, and especially our three-perspective concept of practice did the job for us. Overall it seems that the course fulfilled our own main hopes and those of the students. Here are some examples of the most encouraging comments:

> Reflective practice has really been stored in my subconscious. I have noticed that nowadays I tend to reflect on my entire life constantly . . . It is good thing that we concentrated on studying issues, because they are not dealt with elsewhere.
>
> This clarified my own thinking about my studying practices and my goals.
>
> Learning this kind of reflective practice helped me to question and develop my thinking.

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Contributor details

Kirsi Korpiaho is a researcher and an assistant in the Department of Organisation and Management at the Helsinki School of Economics, Finland. She is a member of a MREI-group (Management Education Research Initiative) and she is working on her doctoral thesis on students' agency in business education. Contact: Kirsi Korpiaho, Organisation & Management, Helsinki School of Economics, P.O. Box 1210, 00101 Helsinki, Finland.
E-mail: Kirsi.Korpiaho@hse.fi

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Abstract

In this paper, we examine studying in a doctoral program as a practical activity. This means that we see professional knowledge, knowhow and identity developing through participation in situated and local work practices. Based on these premises, we aim to illustrate doctoral students' different ways of participating in various practices in the academic world, and the consequences these can have for their professional identities – either academic or not. To understand what kind of work practices comprise doctoral education from the students' perspective, we tentatively sketch an analytical map of the practices doctoral students are likely to encounter in one particular context, the unit responsible for Organization and Management (OM) teaching and research in Helsinki School of Economics (HSE). Based on interviews with doctoral students, we present six local stories about being a doctoral student and studying in a doctoral program. We show how diverse practices condition and enable doctoral students' actions and how doctoral students, respectively, encounter and counter these practices with their personal stances. Consequently, we argue that if we want to comprehend doctoral studies from the students' perspective, identifying the practices that constitute their everyday life is a necessary but not a sufficient step. What really matters is an understanding of the interplay between the practices and students as participants in these practices. On the grounds of these insights, we suggest that incorporating opportunities for doctoral students and more senior academics to collectively reflect on the local practices of doctoral studies and university work might support students in their personal identity projects and contribute to the aims doctoral education programs have of educating new generations of academics.

Introduction

Louise Archer (2008) suggests that an 'authentic' and 'successful' academic is a desired yet refused identity for many junior academics, who must, on a daily basis, balance between their attempts at 'becoming' and the threats of 'unbecoming' (see also Colley & James 2005). As doctoral students ourselves, we find it easy to agree with her. We witness our colleagues straining to figure out what it means to be a doctoral student and a junior academic in a present-day university. We see our peers puzzling over what they should be doing and what it even is that they are involved in. And what we recognize the others doing, we do. Yet, these emotionally, psychologically – sometimes even physically – consuming endeavors are often bypassed by educators, teachers and faculty members, who all too readily assume that they are preparing junior academics who know the rules of the game and, at least to some extent, feel they are part of

the academic community now as well as in the future. This leads to the academic world and its constituting practices, all but clear and intelligible to a newcomer, often remaining unaddressed in doctoral education. Paradoxically, these are the very practices doctoral students should master if they wish to succeed and strengthen their professional identities as (future) academics. When doctoral students are left ill-equipped to deal with the inscribed expectations and implications that practices carry with them, it might be that the process of 'becoming' turns into that of 'unbecoming'. Thus, for a doctoral student, it is not just professional knowledge or a doctoral thesis that is at stake in the everyday struggles in the academic world. What is at stake is their professional and academic identity, the question of who they feel they are and can or cannot be.

Research on academic identities (e.g. Becher & Trowler 2001, Tight 2000, Räsänen & Mäntylä 2000) abounds, but its results do not automatically apply to doctoral students. This is because, for many doctoral students, the idea of being a junior academic is promising and tempting but at the same time contested and contradictory. It cannot be assumed that doctoral students automatically embrace, or even aspire towards, an academic identity. Nor can it be taken for granted that they all have similar access to the communities and work practices in and through which professional identities and academic subjects are constructed and nurtured. In fact, Pyhältö et al. (2009) noticed that many students feel isolated from academic communities, and that among those who do feel that they belong, notions of belonging and interpretations of the meaning of a community are highly varied. That is why we argue that we should be careful with the term *junior academic* as doctoral students may or may not see themselves as such. Instead of taking doctoral students' academic identities as given, we think it might be enlightening to draw attention to the ambivalent processes of becoming and unbecoming, and see how professional identities in academia are formed or left unformed during doctoral studies through (non-)participation in various practices.

Luckily, there are some insightful contributions that have paved the way for this kind of an approach. For instance, Henttonen and LaPointe (2010), both PhD students, have shed light on the process of constructing professional identities in academia by sharing their own experiences of learning what it means to be an academic. Elg and Jonnergård (2003), even though they do not explicitly talk about identities, describe eloquently the challenges female doctoral students might encounter, and the coping strategies they might have to resort to when pursuing career objectives in academia. Boud and Lee (2008), for their part, have made an excellent conceptual job in discussing what counts as a practice in doctoral education, and making a preliminary attempt at naming some domains of practices within doctoral education. McAlpine and Jazvac-Martek (2008) and McAlpine et al. (2009) have taken a step to combine interest in practices and identities by identifying and categorizing a comprehensive amount of activities that influence doctoral students' identity development.

Despite these and other similar pieces of work, we argue with Archer (2008) and McAlpine and Norton (2009) that there is still too little knowledge of, and

research on doctoral studies and doctoral education *as seen by the doctoral students*. This means, for example, that, the practices of doctoral education are often scrutinized one at a time but not as the whole that doctoral students confront in their everyday lives. In the same manner, the focus tends to be either on practices or on individual experiences, and not so often on their dynamic interrelations. Yet, we, the researchers, are assured that the students' perspective and the views it opens differ from those of other parties involved in doctoral education – in research as well as in practice. Hence, we suggest that there is much to be gained by bringing students' voices and data-driven research "from within" into research discussions, as well as practical efforts at developing doctoral education.

So, in this study we adopt the perspective of doctoral students and approach studying as the whole of various practices, itself a practical activity. We regard doctoral students as being in the process of becoming or unbecoming, but assume nothing about the goals and directions of their identity construction projects. Taking this as our starting point, we are interested in the formation of doctoral students' professional identities in doctoral education. This implies taking a closer look at how professional identities build up and develop in fine-tuned ways as doctoral students participate in, and interact with, various practices during their studies. In other words, we are concerned with doctoral students as subjects who act in diverse ways in their daily academic endeavors, sometimes letting the practices lead them, sometimes actively countering the suggestions practices offer. All in all, we focus on three issues. Firstly, we want to understand what doctoral studying is and what it looks like from the doctoral students' perspective by finding analytical means to describe the "mess" they confront. Secondly, we try to figure out what the practices of doctoral studies "do" to doctoral students, in other words, how these practices condition, direct and shape doctoral students' experiences, actions and agency. Respectively, we concentrate on understanding, what doctoral students "do" to the practices, i.e. how they relate to them, take different "stances" towards them, use their agency to encounter and counter them. Thirdly, we look into how this interplay between practices and students fashions their professional and academic identities. By shedding light on these questions, we hope to address the domain of interaction between doctoral students and the practices of doctoral education, which Boud and Lee (2008) point out as being under-researched and under-conceptualized.

The paper is constructed as follows. First, we introduce our theoretical approach, 'practice-based theories'. Secondly, we draft one conceptualization of the activities that constitute the academic world and show how doctoral education and doctoral studies might be fitted into this bigger picture. Then we zoom in into the activity of doctoral education and sketch a tentative map of the practices of doctoral studies in one particular context, the disciplinary unit of Organization and Management (OM) in Helsinki School of Economics (HSE). After that, we move on to the empirical part of our study. Based on interviews with doctoral students studying in OM, we tell six stories about studying and being a doctoral student. In analyzing these stories we depict the dif-

ferent ways of participating in the practices of doctoral studies, that is, the different personal practice configurations in the midst of which students find themselves and their personal stances towards the practices. We pay attention to the interplay between practices, and students as participants in these practices, and see how this interplay molds their professional identities. We conclude by considering the implications the insights deriving from our study might have for developing doctoral education and understanding the development of professional identities in the context of doctoral education.

Practise-based approach to understanding doctoral students and their studying

In this paper, we draw from practice theories and practice-based approaches (e.g. Chaiklin 1993; Nicolini et al. 2003; Reckwitz 2002; Räsänen 2008, 2009; Schatzki 2001) and understand doctoral studies as bundles of practices within a specific institutional setting. A practice can, in the words of Reckwitz (2002, 250), be conceived of as a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood. For him (p.249), "a practice consists of forms of bodily and mental activities, things and their use, background knowledge and know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge". A practice, defined in this way, is stable enough to be understandable to subjects participating in it as well as to potential observers. This means that practices are by virtue of their social nature "inherited", pre-given to an individual who reproduces and sustains them in improvised ways (Räsänen 2009).

Yet, this does not mean that practices would be linear, clearly defined or fixed in nature. First of all, practices, or bundles of practices, can and do indeed overlap and merge with each other. Similarly, they can be linked to each other and either be well aligned or pull in different directions. Secondly, although some practices may seem quite institutionalized, they do not have an existence of their own. That is, they do not exist without people participating in them, learning and knowing them and consequently reproducing them. Practices can also be modified to some extent and under certain circumstances (Räsänen 2009). In relation to this, we find it illuminating to think about practices as malleable routines or patterns that can be filled out by a multitude of single actions that either work to reproduce or change the practice (Reckwitz 2002). This kind of a view directs the focus to everyday doings, learning and knowing in which the individual and the social world cannot be separated (Nicolini et al. 2003, Gherardi et al. 1998).

According to Reckwitz (2002), and interestingly for our study, every practice implies a particular mode of intentionality, i.e. a way of wanting or desiring certain things and avoiding others. However, the modes of intentionality vary for different parties participating in any particular practice. In doctoral education these include, among others, students, advisors, teachers, professors, program developers, managers and administrators. Together they sustain, repro-

duce the practices of doctoral education, reiterate them differently[1] or attempt to renew them[2], each from their situated positions. In this paper, we do not try to capture all the viewpoints, but concentrate on the perspective of doctoral students while acknowledging that this perspective is hardly a unified one.

In a practice-based approach, doctoral students and other parties involved in various practices can be conceptualized in diverse ways, for example as 'carriers of practice' as Reckwitz (2002) does. For him (p. 250) a 'carrier of practice', a participant in any particular practice, is seen to carry certain body/mental behaviors as well as the ways of understanding, knowing and desiring the practice 'brings along' and offers to the participant. We take this view as our starting point but because our interest is in the doctoral students', that is, the subjects' viewpoint, we enrich Reckwitz's conceptualization with the ideas of Ole Dreier (1999, 2003, 2009). Dreier (2009, 195) emphasizes that subjects are embodied participants in a particular context of social practice in which they are situated in particular locations and positions, have a particular perspective on the context, on themselves, and on others in it. He continues (p. 195) by suggesting that in order to understand participants´ activities, abilities, thoughts and emotions, we must consider the ways in which they take part in that context from their particular locations and positions which offer different scopes of possibility of action.

What Dreier (2009) is saying is that people configure their participation in a social context in partial and particular, i.e. personal, ways. This is, for one, due to the fact that human subjects do not live their lives in one context or in one homogeneous lifeworld but, instead, participate in many diverse contexts. Dreier's (p.197) argument is that the relative importance of these other contexts and the links between them affect how people participate in particular context. A person's current mode of participation in the context of any particular practice is thus influenced by its embeddedness in his or her structures of social practice and pursuit of concerns across contexts. This means, according to Dreier, that subjects are not exclusively at the mercy of practices. Against their background and exposure to several contexts and practices, subjects are able to build their *personal trajectories* that transcend individual contexts and develop *personal stances* towards the practices they encounter. In our view, both Reckwitz's and Dreier's conceptualization of subjects or agents suits particularly well our study on doctoral students as participants in various practices in the academic world.

Doctoral studies as seen from a practice-based perspective

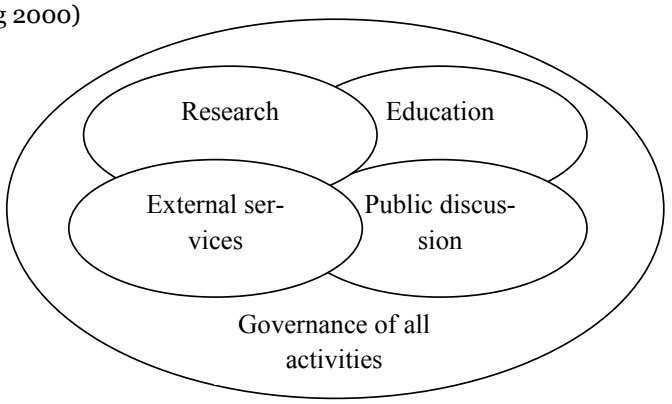
Next, we will chart the context of our study, the world of academic work, from a practice-based perspective, and position our object of interest, doctoral studies, into this context. Together with Räsänen (2009), we see academics contributing to a range of university *activities*. These activities can be mapped

[1] Butler (2004) uses the term ´reiterating differently´ to highlight how participants can, consciously or not, construct a new order in a social reality comprised of networks of discourses and practices.

[2] Räsänen (2008) has written about renewal attempts in academia.

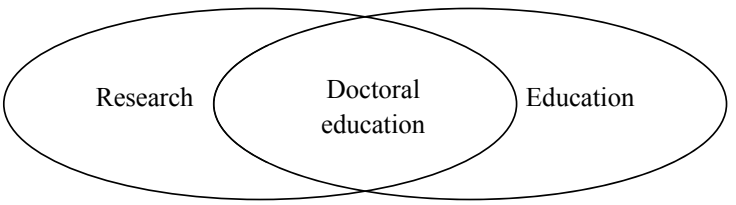
down and named with a five-fold categorization: research, education, external services, public discussion, and the governance of these activities (Kalleberg 2000). In each activity, academics engage in a set of *practices* that form a broad, structured net (Räsänen 2009).

Figure 1. The five constituting activities of academic work (Räsänen 2009, see also Kalleberg 2000)



Doctoral education, as seen from the perspective of those who are responsible for organizing it, occupies a somewhat peculiar position in the overlaps between research and education. It is not an activity as such, rather it comprises of both research-related and educational practices. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The position of doctoral education within the activities of academic work



However, from the point of view of a doctoral student, the picture probably looks quite different. When changing into the students' perspective, it feels more apt and relevant to talk about *doctoral studies* than of doctoral education. It is likely that when doctoral students, differing in their social and cultural backgrounds, get accepted into a doctoral program and start their studies, they arrive into specific locations in the academic world. Like Reckwitz (2002, 256) phrases it: "As there are diverse social practices, and as every

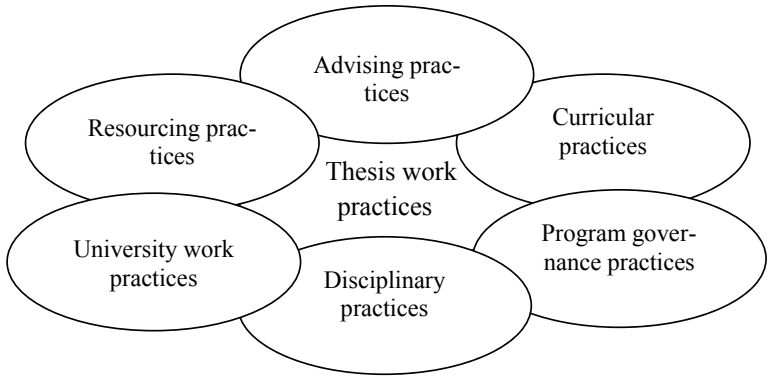
agent carries out a multitude of different social practices, the individual is the unique crossing point of practices, of bodily-mental routines." For doctoral students this means that many of them find themselves in the middle of something they hardly recognize as practices but which still imposes its expectations and demands on them. It might seem more like a 'mess' than an orderly bundle of practices with their particular modes of intentionality. What is more, the mess looks a little different to every student. Depending on the unique encounters with sets of practices, different possibilities of action and interpretations open up for every student. Consequently, the variety of experiences is considerable. To learn more about the emergence of these experiences instead of just accepting their individualistic nature, we should pay attention to the particular local contexts and their constituting practices, which shape and form these experiences. To accomplish this, we need analytical tools.

Schatzki (2005, 476) has suggested that identifying bundles of practices requires considerable 'participant observation', that is, watching participants' activities, interacting with them and attempting to learn their practices (see also Mäntylä 2007 on practicing research at close range). As doctoral students, we are participants in these bundles of practices in our studies. Thus, we exploit the opportunity, and draw upon our own experiences in order to tentatively recognize some of the practices most doctoral students encounter and are expected to participate in.[3] We have also used the interviews we conducted for this study and the existing literature as the basis of our mapping. As a result, we have come up with seven bundles of practices. These bundles we have named as: thesis work practices, advising practices, curricular practices, program governance practices, disciplinary practices, university work practices and resourcing practices.[4] These bundles are shown in the Figure 3.

3 In fact, our motivation to scrutinize doctoral studies through practices derives partly from our own experiences of having been simultaneously drawn and directed by several, even conflicting forces, which we have incrementally recognized as practices. For us, studying has appeared as fragmented and somehow fuzzy, which has led to a need to better understand what is actually going on. However, we are aware of the fact that not all doctoral students experience their studying similarly or even see the practices as we do. There hardly is a typical doctoral student, but we can immediately identify some features that set us apart from many of our peers: we have both worked at the department, we have our offices at the university which means that we are engaged in the everyday bustle of our unit and the university life at large, we are members of MERI-research group which focuses on researching academic work and higher education from a practice-theoretical perspective, and we have been involved in teaching and in developing teaching and teaching programs in our discipline. Nevertheless, we assume that because of our extensive exposure to different practices, we have quite a comprehensive picture of the elements that can constitute the academic world for a doctoral student.

4 Other researchers have also taken up the challenge of naming the practices of doctoral education. David Boud and Alison Lee (2008) have mapped down eight practices: supervision, governance and regulation, assessment, program provision, establishment of working environment and research culture, candidature, research work and writing. Even though we have named and divided our practices a little differently, our maps are not that far from each other at the level of their content. The slight differences might be due to our differing perspectives: Boud and Lee are academic managers and supervisors talking about doctoral education; we are doctoral students talking about doctoral studies. Whereas Boud and Lee include students' personal identity projects and their interaction with the rules, regulations and possibilities provided by doctoral education within the practice they call 'candidature', we take these as our starting point and tag them along throughout our study.

Figure 3. Tentative map of the practices of doctoral studies from the doctoral students' perspective



As Figure 3 illustrates, in everyday life, the bundles of practices - like the individual practices within them - are nested within each other. However, for analytical reasons we produced a list of practices that we see belonging to each of the aforementioned bundles. The list is not exhaustive, but we hope it gives an idea about what we mean by these bundles. What is more, these bundles could have been named and grouped in many other ways. So whereas some bundles are probably fairly digestible, some are not necessarily self-explanatory. That is why we also briefly describe the reasons for dividing and labelling them as we do, and point out the interrelationships we see between the bundles. Our list is as follows:

- **Advising practices:** discussing research plans and papers, receiving comments and improvement ideas, getting feedback, getting help and support in resourcing arrangements etc.
- **Thesis work practices:** reading relevant literature, generating and analyzing data, writing, finding ones' own voice, making a contribution etc.
- **Program governance practices**: applying into the doctoral program, writing personal study plans (PSP), filling in assessment and evaluation questionnaires etc.
- **Curricular practices:** taking part in mandatory, optional and voluntary courses, writing essays, taking exams etc.
- **Disciplinary practices:** doing research, participating in research groups and networks, attending conferences and seminars, submitting own work for review, publishing papers, articles and books, commenting and reviewing other peoples' work etc.
- **University work practices:** teaching, developing courses, teaching programs and oneself as a teacher, participating in public discussion,

doing professional service work, administration, self-governing all the aforementioned tasks etc.

- **Resourcing practices:** writing applications, asking for letters of recommendations, negotiating funding and working station arrangements, reporting etc.

Advising has attracted notable research interest (e.g. Burnett 1999, Green 2005, Johnson et al. 2000, Lee 2008, Malfroy 2005) and is probably most easily identifiable as a bundle of practices. In defining which practices belong to this bundle, we have concentrated strictly on the students' perspective. Thus, we have, for example, excluded the practices of supervisory development, which have recently gained increasing attention (e.g. Pearson & Brew 2002) and are sometimes included in advising practice (cf. Boud & Lee 2008). Instead, we have included those advising practices that are visible to students and recognizable as advising in their eyes. Usually these practices materialize through an appointed advisor or advisors even though students might also resort to more informal relationships with other academics for support and guidance. More collective forms of advising like internal tutorials organized by disciplinary units and national or international tutorials gathering students together from the same field across universities can also be seen as advising practices.

Like advising practices, the program governance practices and curricular practices are quite clearly defined even though closely interrelated. They both derive from efforts to structure and standardize doctoral education by centralizing some of the decision making traditionally residing at the level of disciplinary units. Consequently, the idea of a doctoral program with a set curriculum has established a foothold; hence the label *curricular* practices and *program* governance practices. To doctoral students, these find their expression, for example, in the form of admission and degree requirements as stipulated in the study guide. Compliance with degree requirements, which in practice mean mostly coursework and related target times for completion of studies, is aided and monitored through program governance practices like personal study plans. Despite the school-like mentality and the spirit of surveillance these practices bring into doctoral studies, curricular practices can, depending on each student's personal attitudes and research problems as well as the nature of the courses, be tightly-knit with thesis work practices. At least the mandatory courses are aimed at supporting students' thesis projects and developing and refining their basic research skills. Doctoral students are also often allowed to do course assignments on their thesis topics.

The relationship between thesis work practices and disciplinary practices is hazier. We want to separate thesis work practices from other research-related practices because it is highly likely that the relevant world of research is one's own thesis. It might be that a doctoral student works on his or her thesis in a rather independent and isolated way without explicitly seeing it in relation to wider disciplinary traditions and discussions until the final stages of the pro-

cess. Thus, we include in thesis work practices the necessary and practical phases of doing one's own research, the 'minimum' with which one can attain the doctorate. With regard to disciplinary practices like participating in conferences and publishing, students have more liberty in deciding the extent to which they want to participate. Moreover, it is also possible that doctoral students do, in addition to their thesis, research for other purposes, for example in research projects to finance their studies as a member of a research group, or more informally because of personal interests or a desire to gain experience and widen one's professional knowledge. The distinction between thesis work and disciplinary practices also serves to highlight the different roles research can play for a doctoral student. By drawing this line, we want to emphasize the social and communal side of disciplinary practices, which might be called research community practices as well.[5] These practices are concerned with communicating and becoming part of a more or less loose and 'imaginary', or tight and 'real', scientific community.

The bundle of university work practices is another one posing challenges with regard to its name and constituting practices. Especially for those doctoral students who work from home, university work quite typically manifests itself either as a rather mysterious whole, or as teaching and other teaching-related practices. However, those who are physically present on university premises, and are members of some kind of a grouping or a work community, have the opportunity to conceive of university work more comprehensively. So what we see giving a special flavour to university work practices is a certain kind of 'anchoring', an attachment to a university, disciplinary unit or university life more generally. For a doctoral student, working as an assistant at one's department is probably the most typical way of doing this. This kind of concrete involvement opens up new perspectives besides the rather individualistic viewpoint of a doctoral student concentrating on his or her thesis. In university work practices, the focus is not solely on one's own work anymore, but also on the academic work community and the maintenance and renewal of institutional practices. This extended view reveals a broad range of new tasks, which also highlights the need to consider how to make do with all the competing demands and how to possibly integrate them in a meaningful way (see Räsänen 2009). On the other hand, university work could be seen to incorporate all the other practices of the bundles we have named. Thus, in addition to 'anchoring', we understand university work also being a question of the doctoral student seeing his or her daily academic endeavours as such and identifying him- or herself as an academic.

Finally, we want to incorporate resourcing into our analytical model as its own bundle of practices because our practice-based view is not just about getting funding and earning a living. It is also about defining the physical location and the symbolic position of a doctoral student in the academic world. We think that resourcing practices are invested with power to move doctoral students around by connecting them to certain practices and keeping them apart

[5] We chose to call these practices disciplinary practices because they are maintained by disciplinary communities, which bring along their specific traditions and cultures (cf. Becher & Trowler 2001).

from others. They can be seen to direct students' attention and efforts by requiring, offering, and rewarding for a wide variety of different things. For instance, graduate schools expecting efficient achievers with credits and good grades push students towards curricular practices, but might keep them away from university work practices. Trust funds valuing a research-oriented attitude with thorough research proposals draw students with scholarships to focus on thesis work and disciplinary practices. If doctoral students depending on this funding instrument do not manage to negotiate a desk at the department, and if they do not actively involve themselves in other work than their thesis, they risk getting excluded from university work practices. Project work bringing along a wide variety of research-related tasks familiarizes doctoral students with disciplinary practices, but this might be done at the expense of participation in thesis work practices. Assistantships bringing students to the university premises 'anchor' students in the community and initiate them into university work, but the responsibilities this work entails might restrict participation in other practices. Consequently, in our view, resourcing practices are closely linked to all the other practices.

To situate the analytical map in Figure 3, and the list of practices, into a larger context and to make them more intelligible, we will next depict the Finnish context of doctoral education in general, and the features of doctoral studies at Helsinki School of Economics and especially in the disciplinary unit Organizations and Management (OM).

The Finnish context of doctoral education: Doctoral studies at HSE, with special focus on the OM unit

The practices of doctoral education have been in flux globally during the last few years. The changes in higher education policies, structures of governance and finance, and academic contexts described in research literature (Churchman 2004, Nixon et al. 2001, Nixon 2003) also occurred in Finland, though with a national twist (Hakala et al. 2003). In Finland, doctoral education in social sciences has traditionally leaned on the German tradition of academic apprenticeship. This tradition emphasizes the personal development and independence of doctoral students. Newcomers are regarded rather as colleagues and academic workers than as students. Today, this tradition is being challenged by the American tradition, where students are conceived of as novice researchers to be educated through a systematic curriculum and hard coursework.

The coexistence of these two competing traditions in Finland is due to changes in Finnish institutional contexts and the Finnish higher education policy (e.g. Ylijoki 2005, Mäntylä 2007). The number of doctoral students has increased rapidly whereas the number of academic posts has remained constant. Special measures have been undertaken to manage doctoral students' funding arrangements (e.g. through graduate schools, research centers and externally funded projects) as well as their education (e.g. the establishment of doctoral programs, national networks providing courses and summer schools).

Hakala (2009) has described this phenomenon as the establishment of Finnish mass research universities. This has led to a situation where new practices are emerging in doctoral education, but the old ones still persist. This also holds true for Helsinki School of Economics and the disciplinary unit of Organization and Management.

Helsinki School of Economics is the largest business university in Finland. It produces a substantial portion of Finnish Doctors of Science in Economics and Business Administration. On its website, the Doctoral Program presented in 2009 itself as follows: "HSE offers an international doctoral program for those seeking academic careers or high level positions in business in Finland or abroad." In order to become a doctoral student in HSE, candidates have to apply into the doctoral program, and choose a major from 16 different alternatives. The rector of the school confirms the choice of the new students based on the doctoral program's proposal, but the disciplinary units can influence the choice of candidates. Until recently, the number of new doctoral students taken in was quite flexibly in the hands of the disciplinary units. Nowadays, the number of new students is strictly limited: in the year 2009, there were 53 slots to be filled, three of them being earmarked for students choosing OM as their major. After being accepted, the students become, at least partially and in a piecemeal manner, familiar, if not always familiarized, with school-level demands and procedures as well as the disciplinary culture and traditions of his or her major.

At the school-level, curricular and program governance practices have gained momentum in recent years. Currently, the doctoral degree at HSE consists of three parts: common scientific doctoral studies (30 ECTS), major subject studies (30 ECTS) and a doctoral thesis (180 ECTS). To complete the common scientific doctoral studies, students are required to take courses pertaining to research skills, research methodology, and research theories in business and economics. These courses have to be elected from a restricted pool which does not leave much room for choice. The major subject studies, divided into general disciplinary studies and studies in one's own research area, instead, allow doctoral students to pursue their own interests more freely. Doctoral students' progress in their coursework is carefully monitored. Students fill in personal study plans (PSP) and send them yearly to the disciplinary Head of the Doctoral Program and the Center for the Doctoral Program to be reviewed and approved. PSPs are accompanied by clear instructions for the required progress and sanctions imposed for breaking the rules[6]. The aim of these measures is to shorten study times, and guide students to graduate in the target time of four years[7].

6 The decision made by the Council for Academic Affairs stipulates that full-time students should have at least 24 ECTS by the end of the first year, 18 ECTS during the second year and 42 ECTS (including all the obligatory courses) by the end of the second year. All doctoral courses (60 ECTS) should be completed by the end of the third year and the thesis should be submitted during the fifth year. Those who do not manage to fulfill these expectations and cannot present an acceptable reason for delay can be suspended from the Doctoral Program.

7 It is acknowledged, though, that completing an article-based thesis might take a longer time.

Lately, demands on what should be accomplished in the reduced study time have also increased along with pressure to attain an international level of quality. Doctoral students are encouraged to participate in conferences, spend time abroad and publish internationally. It is quite easy to get grants for conference purposes, and a special fund, HSE Visiting Scholar Program, has been set in place to support cooperation between doctoral students and international researchers, and to finance participation in courses abroad. The publishing imperative (Tienari & Thomas 2006) has also come to stay. HSE promises on its web pages that the quality of the doctoral theses is of an international standard. Most theses are written in English and the main results are often published as articles in international refereed scientific journals. Each student is expected to publish at least one article related to his or her thesis in an international peer-reviewed journal, and a special system of compensations has been set up to support desired behaviors. Doctoral students are, for instance, granted a scholarship for their first ISI-rated publication.

In the disciplinary unit of OM, the approach to educating and supporting doctoral students varies. However, it has traditionally been – and partly still is – quite different from the model emphasizing coursework, publishing, and quick graduation times, even though these new ideas are also gaining ground. In the spirit of the German tradition, doctoral education in the unit has revolved around each student's thesis work and professional development. Because of this focus, in OM the notion of what counts as a 'good' thesis, and expectations concerning what doctoral students should accomplish in a thesis, diverges from the notion of thesis as a "driver's license" and a merit. In OM, doing a PhD still bears the connotation of 'proving oneself at the highest level' (see Leonard et al. 2005), something for which four years is not always enough. Thesis is seen as a researcher's independent contribution to his or her research field (Aittola 2006, 178) and thus doctoral students usually start by choosing their topics rather independently. In order to live up to the expectation, some are ready to learn new approaches, methods and ways of doing independent research with the support of their advisor. This has understandably emphasized the centrality of advising. In OM, instead of courses, the advisory relationship is seen to represent the stage of doctoral education. The role of the advisor is to support and guide the doctoral student in the research project without curbing too much his or her agency as the decision maker – after all, writing a thesis can be, at best, about finding one's own voice (Gallos 1996, Naconey et al. 2007) and about 'authoring', not just about writing (Dunleavy 2003). However, the intensity and style of the advisory relationship varies greatly, as there are no protocols guiding advising practices. It is up to the adviser and the doctoral student to decide how to build up their relationship.

When it comes to university work, the physical location seems to have a bearing. For those doing their thesis physically outside of the disciplinary community, academic practices risk remaining more distant, even unattainable, whereas those with a desk it the department seem to be more prone, or privileged, to participate. What gives a special flavor to the unit of OM is that there is a tradition of doctoral students being active in renewing academic

practices (Mäntylä 2007, Mäntylä & Päiviö 2005, Räsänen & Korpiaho 2007), especially gender practices (Katila & Meriläinen 2002, Meriläinen 2001) and writing about that – even at the risk of delaying their graduation. This kind of engagement in the everyday life of the university reflects how at least those doctoral students who are physically present and take the initiative are treated more like colleagues and academics than novice researchers or "just" doctoral students.

So far, we have described our conceptual model and our local context of doctoral studies. In the next section, we will proceed to the empirical part of our study and combine these two elements.

Research methods and empirical material

It goes without saying that researching studying as a practical activity is challenging, as we are not able to follow every student in the course of their daily engagements. Thus, we have to rely on students' narrative accounts of their studying. In these accounts, cultural practices and processes are discursively constructed as they are expressed, manifested, and reproduced through narrating (Moisander et al. 2009). For generating the accounts, we interviewed six doctoral students studying in OM at HSE in spring 2009. Thematic and open-ended interviews took from 1.5 to 2 hours and were recorded and then transcribed. Also our own stories could have been included in the analysis. However, instead of pretending they are only 'research material' produced through interviewing, we, in the spirit of 'participatory research' (see e.g. Mäntylä 2007), draw upon our own experiences and involvement in the world we are studying throughout the study.[8]

We will analyze our empirical materials in two phases. In the first phase, our goal is to gain insight into studying in a doctoral program as a practical activity from the student's point of view. We want to understand and make visible how students go about their studies, which practices they encounter and participate in, and how they act as (academic) subjects. Our interest here is in individual students, their experiences and the whole of their studying. To accomplish this, we will use narrative analysis (Czarniawska 1999, 2000; Cortazzi 2001, Boje 2001) and construct a story of each interviewed doctoral student and his or her studying. We find narrative analysis especially suited for our purposes as it enables doing justice to the richness and vividness of the students´ own accounts. Yet, just as Czarniawska (1999) has claimed, these stories are not descriptions of students' stories as told by them, but our constructions. Because of this, they are not representations of the data, either, but products of our analysis. Hence, in each of the stories, we have tried to preserve what seemed to be essential in the interview, and give an overall picture of the interviewee and his or her world. Because of space limitations, we have focused on the most salient practice(s) as presented by the student in the interview, and

[8] The members of our MERI (Management Education Research Initiative) research group have adopted and refined the approach of participatory (action) research in studying academic work and higher education. (e.g. Mäntylä 2007, Räsänen 2006, 2008)

have not tried to describe all the practices students have confronted in the course of their studying or mentioned in the interview. This means that the stories are situated and temporal. They are snapshots that depict each student's situation as it appeared at the moment of the interview – as interpreted by us. Therefore, our stories should not be read as definitions of fixed studying styles or permanent personal orientations. What we want to accomplish with these diverse and ambiguous local stories is to convey the complexity and variety of possible ways and styles of studying in a doctoral program (see Boje 2001 on 'micro stories').

In the second phase, we turn our attention from students' experiences to practices. As we do not believe that experiences are purely individual and due to the students' psychological and personal features, we will analyze their stories to see what the aforementioned practices do to doctoral students; in other words, how they condition, direct and shape doctoral students' experiences, actions, agency and, finally, their professional identities. Furthermore, we concentrate on understanding what doctoral students do; in other words, how they relate to practices, take different stances towards them and use their agency to encounter and counter them. Lastly, we look into how this interplay between practices and students fashions the students´ professional and academic identities.

In the next section, we present six local stories of individual doctoral students and their studying[9]. In the section that follows, we continue by analyzing the stories from our practice-based perspective.

Six local stories of doctoral students and their studying

Lauri –a project worker, conscientious and hard-working, struggling to survive in the crossfire of project responsibilities (1st year doctoral student)

Lauri is a newcomer in academia. He sought his way into the academic world because of an interest in diversity management and a need to learn more about it. By chance, Lauri met a well-established researcher from the field he wanted to enter. This researcher offered Lauri a job as his research assistant. Lauri accepted the job as he saw it as an opportunity to finance his PhD studies. Quite quickly, he got a longer term contract as a project worker and got accepted into the doctoral program.

However, reality has turned out to be somewhat different from what Lauri had imagined it to be. Duties in the project have swept Lauri away and have made him put his thesis aside. He works long hours in order to reclaim his position as a diligent project worker. A whole array of demands varying from teaching, conducting fieldwork and presenting research results in international conferences is suddenly thrown wide open in front of his eyes. He is unsure

[9] Note that the names of the doctoral students have been changed in order to preserve their anonymity, and that the interview translations from Finnish to English are made by the authors.

about what he should have a hand in, what he will miss if he turns down an offer, and whether he even has the right to say no.

Consequently, Lauri has experienced the past months in the project as stressful and confusing: "Content-wise there is nothing wrong with the project, but I realized it is not such a big deal to me as it seems to be to the others working in the project." At first that was a minor shock for him: "I felt like I have to be very committed to the subject in order to be a good employee." Nevertheless, he has abided by the expectations and conventions of the project, partly because he longs for a work group to belong to. The resulting contradiction comes through concretely in writing, as a detaching effect: "When I look at the literature, I'm just like blaah blaah blaah, he argues this and that, therefore, hence." This insight has also been baffling identity-wise: "When you don't have a researcher identity and you are just kind of constructing it, it feels like quite a big and radical thing to notice that what you have thought would interest you actually doesn't."

In this complex situation, Lauri is hesitant about what conclusions he should draw. He has been told that "this group, it carries you somewhere" and he sees the good sides of being part of something. He feels grateful for the privileged opportunity given to him and reproaches himself for not being satisfied with the state of affairs: "If there was someone else in my place, he or she might experience these things very differently. I have spent an awful lot of time thinking whether it is due to my expectations, feelings and assumptions, or whether it is just due to my personality and all that." Despite the hardships, Lauri has turned the experience into strength, and appreciates it for making him aware of what really matters to him and what he wants to accomplish with his thesis work.

While Lauri puts all his time and energy into his project work and keeps his thesis on the shelf, Kaisa pushes her studies forward as speedily as possible…

Kaisa – an efficient and learning-oriented PhD student following the curriculum to the dot (2nd year doctoral student)

Kaisa is a CEO of a small consultancy company operating mainly in public administration. Thanks to her prior work experience, she has gained considerable knowledge in conducting survey research and producing reports for research institutions and ministries. For Kaisa, doctoral studies are a question of merit, but also a "means of getting time to think further than one project". She already has university degrees from adult education and law but has always wanted to study in a business school. Doing a PhD at HSE realizes this dream. Even though she sees doctoral studies as an escape from the hectic world of projects, Kaisa has put herself under tight time constraints. She is now on a one-year study leave from her post and her major concern is "how far can I get by the end of the year".

Then again, the schedule does not seem to pose notable pressures, as Kaisa sees doctoral studies to be "a clear package" and has oriented herself according to this principle from the very beginning. At first, she had another research topic in her mind. However, after preliminary discussions with the head of

department and her current advisor, she decided to change her research topic: "It became clear that if I do not intend to spend a long time with my thesis I should choose a topic which I have written about earlier and which relates to my current work". Kaisa's casual attitude is also reflected in her advisory relationship. The advisor was appointed to her because she did not know the professors in the department in advance and could not decide for herself. However, this does not seem to bother her: "I have felt that whoever my advisor is, I can go and talk almost with anybody."

And by "anybody" Kaisa does not refer only to the people in the department. She is well integrated into her research field nationally, especially on the practitioner side. "Finland is such a small country, and because of my prior work experience I know, at least to some extent, the people doing research relating to the same subject." She is also at ease in creating new academic contacts. She tells how "in seminars professors from different fields are ready to have discussions" and how "one gets invitations like welcome to this and that" while doing interviews. The real issue, then, is not finding the people to talk with but to find a point to talk about and to participate in discussions "also through papers".

To refine her point and argumentation skills, Kaisa takes maximum benefit out of the obligatory courses of the doctoral program. She sees them as good research training that helps develop scientific thinking: "People can have a view on many things but I mean it in a way that is accepted by the scientific community." She explicitly puts herself in a position of a student and a learner by talking about "learning challenges" and "learning tasks". She sees the whole thesis as a "learning process" and calls the OM research seminar a channel of peer-learning. Based on discussions with her friends who have done their doctorate at HSE or are doing it in some other university, Kaisa has come to the conclusion "that when you do these yearly study plans, participate in the courses, then this is here [at HSE] more structured than elsewhere." But it has its benefits. She states that "one cannot be a master straight away" and believes "that the courses do have significance from the point of view of learning."

While Kaisa is keen on learning the rules of the academic game and lets the curriculum and Doctoral Program guide her, Tia is critical of academic conventions and does not take them for granted…

Tia – a developer-consultant searching for her own space in academia by relying on her supportive advisor (3rd year doctoral student)

Tia is a 30-year-old developer-consultant with a degree in education and 10 years of work experience. She entered academia because her consulting projects had made her realize that "people have so few tools for changing or renewing organizational culture". Tia had, and still has, a strong belief that "action research or that kind of participatory research could be meaningful from the point of view of the quality of working life". Because of her background in consulting, she declares she is interested only in research that also has mean-

ing outside of academia: “I’m rather the kind of person that whatever I do, I hope that it has meaning for people.”

From the very beginning, she has wanted to do something different “from the average”: “It is quite simply the fact that it [my research] is different in every single aspect. It differs from the consulting world thing an awfully lot, then it differs in its worldview, its ontology and epistemology and its way of doing.” Most importantly, she emphasizes that these differences are real: “Everybody thinks their research is somehow special. I truly believe this is special. Why else would I do something like this?” Because of the nature of her research agenda, Tia has made an effort to find the right discipline for her and the right advisor. She applied and got accepted into two doctoral programs and finally made her choice based on the impression about her current advisor: “I got this feeling that he is ready to commit himself strongly to my research process.”

Ever since starting her doctoral studies, Tia has centered most of her academic endeavors on her action research project and kept on working as a consultant. The close ties to consulting have not made her transition into academic circles easy, though. One of her main challenges is to find a way of writing that meets academic criteria and at the same time does justice to what she considers important. She feels quite confident about her own skills and hints at the problem being in the constraining academic practices: “After all, I can write an excellent essay, but it isn’t, in the end, what I would have wanted to do.” Tia, avoiding the seemingly “burdensome” and “boring” obligatory doctoral courses, acknowledges the help of her advisor in trying to make her familiar with academic conventions. Nevertheless, understanding the basic principles does not help Tia get rid of the feeling that the requirement of “confining one’s message to one simple thing at a time makes all the experiential dimensions disappear”.

With regard to academic demands, Tia is also perplexed by the need for being special and humble at the same time: “One should be so incredibly humble. I understand being humble is a good thing, but there has to be a limit to how humble you should be. There is some kind of a contradiction in that you have to do something special, make a special contribution, but at the same time you just have to melt into everything.” Tia also identifies a contradiction between socialization and one’s own space: “I also take the space for my own doing, I’m ready to accept a lot and to learn, to welcome feedback, but there is a limit. If the scale is balanced so that you just have to socialize to be a certain kind [of a person], and you’re not left with any space of your own, I don’t choose that.”

In the face of all these challenges Tia turns to her advisor who, at times, seems to represent the whole academic community for her. Meeting with her advisor is Tia’s main reason to come to the department, and she prefers taking doctoral courses and writing essays that offer an opportunity to get to know her advisor better. Hence, paradoxically, many of the problematic issues become manifest in the advisory relationship. And yet, she is convinced that the relationship is “mutual” and thus believes that “you have to understand the interests and thinking of the advisor”. Accordingly, she emphasizes that “the

advisory relationship is quite decisive. If the advisor is confident, I guess the thing goes gradually forward."

While Tia is convinced about the message and meaningfulness of her research, Sami is paralyzed by not seeing the point in saying anything about his topic...

Sami – an independent lecturer suffering from writer's block (7th year doctoral student)

After graduating from a business school, Sami, currently in his thirties, started writing a textbook based on his Master's thesis. Suddenly, the project was cancelled in midstream by the publisher. Starting doctoral studies was the best of bad alternatives in that situation – or the only alternative, as Sami puts it: "I didn't know of anything better." This choice allowed him to utilize the data he had already gathered and, at the same time, it gave him a legitimate reason to be interested in a particular field without actually working in it. The option of getting employed in the field was out of the question, as Sami had done three big artistic projects within three years and was "mentally exhausted".

Despite his coincidental entry, as a doctoral student Sami has done everything just right: he has taken the courses, spent some time abroad, attended tutorials and conferences, and has even worked as an assistant at his department. But lately, the ambiguous relationship he has had towards academia from the beginning of his doctoral studies has culminated into a crisis: Sami feels extreme anxiety with regard to writing – or mostly with *not* writing – his thesis. He has confidence in his ability to write and to use language, but he "doesn't find a reason to use it [language]". He is convinced that he does not have anything interesting to say to anybody, neither to academics nor to practitioners. "I can write, I have the data, and I pick up this and that from it, but "so what"? I can't produce the "so what" academically. I kind of know what I'm expected to do, but I can't produce it." He figures this challenge might be related to the meaning of work: "What might be the problem is that from the point of view of the need for meaningfulness, you don't find meaningfulness in any activity if it is not meaningful for others. And here comes the problem, as I´m doing this for myself, and that in itself isn't enough. But that is how it is."

Sami's inability to write has made him retreat to lecturing, which he currently does in different universities around Finland. When lecturing, he feels at home: "Lecturing is as natural to me as one can imagine." The main reason for choosing to focus on lecturing is twofold: "I know how to do it, I know that I know. And it pays." Sami also explains his preference for lecturing by him being a blabbermouth, and both his parents being teachers. Lecturing feels good as it is a "means of getting in into some themes and subject areas at least at a modest level." Sami supposes his advisor has tried to build up Sami's role as an expert in certain fields by encouraging him to teach, but Sami denies that that is the reason for his lecturing: "It has just been nice to get a chance to talk." Quite interestingly, Sami, who shuns every attachment to academia, could still consider a lectureship after graduation: "It establishes my role, but it doesn't tie me down. I don't want to be tied down."

Avoiding being tied down is one of Sami's basic tenets. He describes himself as a "free agent" and makes it clear that he wants to stay as such in academia. His main concern is that his identity might commit him to the academic world and become institutionalized. This is a scary vision for Sami who is "afraid of getting into a rut, having hung 10 years onto something that doesn't interest me." Yet, he reflectively analyzes how a certain dependency is inevitably established "even when I don't tie it [my identity] down". "In a way I draw a distinction and thus I validate the existence of the other."

While Sami retreats from writing and bears the ensuing anxiety, Iiro devotes himself solely to his thesis and derives great pleasure from it…

Iiro – a relaxed storyteller polishing his monograph in solitude (9th year doctoral student)

Iiro is a 40-year-old university graduate in economic history with an apprenticeship education in consulting. Throughout his adolescence, Iiro travelled around the globe on business matters with his consultant father. Thus, he says that by the age of 30, taking into consideration his young age and the fact that he had never worked as an employee in any organization, he had gained an exceptional understanding about how business organizations function. After university studies, Iiro, who had devoted his youth to serious athletics, wanted to do a PhD in a business school in order to utilize his insights from the consulting world and to avoid "work that overrides everything else".

The first steps along Iiro's academic path were troublesome as he was considered to be too consultant-like. It took him two years to find the right discipline, advisor, topic, and the right way to talk. After this sticky start, Iiro has found himself a desk and a chair at the department, but he is still somehow at the outskirts of the academic community. Iiro says that he "just comes to sit here". He feels that "nobody even wants to try to make me a professional researcher" but admits that he might have wanted to become one. Now, he does not see it to be realistic anymore. He is assured that in research, just as in sports, one should aspire for certain merits, which requires being aware of what they are. Iiro regrets it took him several years to understand all this. He feels he "came into this game too late" and has not even started chasing credits. In effect, he seems to be the total antipode of the researcher ideal he depicts. He does not belong to a research group, he is writing a monograph, he has never participated in a conference, and he published his first article after 8 years of study. He even describes himself as a "baron" in the work community, meaning that he does not have any responsibilities. He has never said no to anything, though, and has been occasionally involved in teaching in an assisting role.

But there is one thing Iiro is devoted to: his doctoral thesis. He is ready to go into great pains in order to make his thesis a "phenomenal reading experience", a book the reader would "devour". He writes in his own style and regards himself as a storyteller. "It is not at all enough that things are just listed; doing a thesis nobody will read." So of the eight years he has worked on his monograph, he has spent three years on polishing the text. In Iiro's view, that

is more important than thinking about the goals of his research."If I think that I am trying to accomplish this and that, it is immediately effaced because I know that it depends on the audience, on whether they buy it, if I can reach the goals. So I see it as totally stupid to think about it."

By exercising a strategy of active passivity, that is, not proactively participating in anything extra, he has been able to enjoy a luxury unknown to many of his peers: long periods of uninterrupted time to write. The fact that he has succeeded in financing his studies by grants and occasional consulting gigs with his father has also helped in guarding his writing peace. Iiro's active passivity is well manifested in his relationship to the doctoral program as well: he does not know how many credits he has, and leaves the letters sent by the centre for the doctoral program unopened. In a way, he also actively turns into himself by not exposing his work-in-progress to other academics, and showing his texts mainly to his wife and father only. Yet, despite all the benefits of his strategy, exclusive thesis writing feels sometimes unbearable: "It is to-and-froing the same thing for many years, it is terribly boring." "You have to have, at least I have to have, psychic techniques. I don't have a burnout or anything like that but you have to distance yourself from your text all the time." Luckily, motivation is restored by moments of deep satisfaction when it feels that "now this [text] is good stuff."

While Iiro refuses to worry about the goals of his research, the political research agenda is the engine that gets Ilona going…

Ilona – a representative of an academic precariat[10] advancing a societal agenda through research (9th year doctoral student)

Ilona is a university graduate and a licentiate in psychology. 10 years ago, she was in a situation all too familiar to her: doing mixed and short-term jobs to bring home the bacon. When Ilona's contract as a research project leader in a public fund was ending, one of her co-workers suggested continuing with the topic in a PhD at HSE. Ilona reasoned it could be a way to advance issues close to her heart and to do something "nobody else was interested in doing at the time". And so, with unemployment as the other alternative, Ilona took heed of the idea.

But doctoral studies have not brought any relief to Ilona's employment problems. "Because work equals paid work and official employment, I have lived outside of this society. I don't have a job." She feels being condemned to the faith of "academic precariat", a faith she shares with her "precariat friends" who are "just about as weak as I am". The talk about academic precariat does not, however, imply that she would consider herself to be an academic worker, quite the contrary. She identifies herself primarily as an "intellectual" and talks about the "intellectual motivation" that pushes her forward. But in the aca-

[10] According to Wikipedia the term 'precariat' can be explained as follows: "Precarity is a condition of existence without predictability or security, affecting material or psychological welfare. Specifically, it is applied to the condition of intermittent or underemployment and the resultant precarious existence. The social class defined by this condition has been termed the precariat."

demic world, she defines her position to be that of an "accepted affiliate member at the outer circle with a certain status".

Basically this means that everyday academic life in the department is strange to Ilona, who has worked from home all these years. For example, when it comes to her possibilities to teach at HSE, she feels that her hands are tied: "It doesn't depend just on me, it depends on the school and curriculum, and all this is invisible to me. Someone somewhere decides on these matters and I can't influence them." Yet, she seems to talk about the politics in the world of science and research with an awareness and insightfulness rare to a doctoral student who considers herself just a "visitor" in academia. She is aware of the painful need for "a research-political backrest: having a department or a professor that supports you and gives you credibility, or another kind of a traditional framework". Based on her own experiences from the times of her licentiate, she summarizes her view bluntly: "[If] you don't have it [the research-political backrest], you are quite vulnerable to these jackals in the world of science."

Despite all this, Ilona is passionate about the goals of her research. She lists with conviction a considerable number of audiences to which she wants to say something through her research. She does not stick to her desk but moves around in different circles. She gives talks as a visiting lecturer, holds training sessions to public organizations and presents her on-going research in national and international conferences and seminars. Even though lecturing and training is a means to make ends meet, Ilona feels that "at best, I might get a chance to talk in places where I can really change something." She takes every occasion of public speaking or writing as an opportunity to learn about advancing her politically sensitive and societal agenda on different stages: "It is a good thing to make presentations in different places. Then you receive feedback on how you should put your words, you learn to anticipate certain attitudes and formulate your arguments accordingly. That is how you get your message through."

In addition to learning to orientate herself in semi- or non-academic circles, Ilona puts emphasis on academic feedback and discussion. She talks about one particular international conference she attended a few years ago as a turning point in her research process. "It was really good that one could come out with the story and hear whether it's reasonable at all and to get feedback. And it got off the ground. After that I've written more." The doctoral program and the obligatory courses, for their part, are a totally different story. Ilona sees them as a series of square bashing exercises which are "in a class of their own" and shouldn't be taken too seriously: "I don't expect anything from them."

And while Ilona is pretty well aware about who she is and is not professionally, Lauri - the protagonist of our first story - is confused about his identity in academia...

Analysis: Doctoral students' personal practice configurations and their personal stances towards the practices

The six local stories above seem to confirm our assumption that all the tentatively recognized and named practices shown in Figure 3 are present and relevant in students' everyday endeavours. However, the stories also highlight the fact that not all practices play an equally important role for an individual student. In fact, the interviewed doctoral students tend to lean on a few practices that are more central in their studies than others. This means that their personal "map" of the practices of doctoral studies is very different from our analytical model. Interestingly, and at the same time understandably, thesis work practice appears to be the only practice that assumes a central position in all stories except for Lauri's. Because of the salience of thesis work practices, they could be called *focal practices*, which give purpose and structure to other practices. Around this focal practice, doctoral students build their own configurations from other practices: These *supporting practices* are available and make sense in students´ personal trajectories. Thus, students find themselves in very distinct "terrains" where their actions are defined and conditioned by the focal and supporting practices, which form the student's *personal practice configurations*. To bring our terminology closer to the everyday lives of students, we call these terrains students' *situations*. To offer an overview of the situations of the six doctoral students in our study, we have mapped out their personal practice configurations in Appendix 1.

In addition to the notion of a personal practice configuration, another conceptual point emerged from the empirical material. After having read the interview transcripts, we felt the need to incorporate a short description of the background of each student and his or her way to academia. The interviews were so rich in personal details that it seemed impossible to analyze the stories solely from the point of view of the practices of doctoral studies without taking into consideration how they fitted students' personal trajectories. It became apparent that all six doctoral students in our study had entered academia and the Doctoral Program for their own reasons, and that they all related to studying in different ways. Thus, we ended up with the idea of "entry point", that is, the situation into which the person arrives in academia, and that of "route", that is, motives and stages that brought the person into this situation. We are tempted to think that at the entry point some practices might be more readily at hand and more apt and tempting because of doctoral students' personal trajectories. This encourages the students to cling onto these particular practices – either consciously or in a haphazard way. Admittedly, our empirical material is too limited to enable us to say anything definite. However, on the basis of our analysis we suggest that the "route" and the "entry point" into doctoral studies may well shape the consequent everyday actions. Based on the stories at hand, it can even be hypothesized that the influence of the entry point might not be short-lived.

Being able to depict the variety of the personal practice configurations, entry points and routes is, as such, illustrative as it opens up the world of doctoral students for us. By momentarily putting themselves into the position of a doc-

toral student, other parties involved in doctoral education can hereby gain access to something they are otherwise unable to see in practice because of their own positions and situations. However, inasmuch as we feel that this is a necessary step that has to be taken, we believe there is even more to be gained by taking a closer look at what the practices "do" to doctoral students, i.e. how they condition, direct and shape doctoral students' experiences, actions and agency, and what the students "do" to the practices, i.e. how students encounter and counter practices with their personal stances. Looking at studying and the various practice configurations from this perspective makes it visible how some have managed to bring along their personal stances better than others. But most importantly, it turns out that it is the interplay between the practices of doctoral studies and the participating students that really matters in understanding doctoral studies from a student's perspective. This is what we will discuss in the next section.

The interplay between the practices of doctoral studies and the participating students

One of the clearest examples of the power of practices over their participants is Lauri's story. For him, unlike anybody else, the focal practice is not thesis work, but resourcing. What the resourcing practice does to him is that it brings along the whole array of disciplinary practices and drives him to take part in them in terms of the project, not his own thesis. These practices pull him to many conflicting directions; the personal stance with which Lauri encounters the resourcing practice and the practices of project work further increases the pressure. Because Lauri feels he has to be a committed and assiduous project worker he is not ready to compromise on the quality of the tasks assigned to him. Rather, for the time being, he postpones his doctoral thesis and lengthens his workdays. As a novice unaware of the bigger picture, he does not try to resist the practices or accommodate them for his own purposes. Yet, what emanates from his account is an insightful reflexivity which allows him to distance himself from the tensions caused by the resourcing practice.

Kaisa's story says more about what she *allows* the practices do to her and what she does to them than vice versa. She obviously feels she is the subject of her own actions. She does not depend on her advisor, but creates wide supporting networks herself. And unlike many of her peers, Kaisa already possesses some social and cultural capital in the form of education, experience, skills and acquaintances that enables her to readily reap the benefits of disciplinary practices. Moreover, Kaisa's story suggests that her personal trajectory is mainly elsewhere than in academia: she is not studying to become an academic, but to learn. Thus, while not putting her professional identity at stake as a whole, Kaisa does not seem to have any problems in positioning herself as a beginner, and subjugating herself to the practices. However, this does not mean giving up control. On the contrary, capitulating to the practices strengthens her as an academic subject through learning and legitimation. She takes the personal study plan as a valuable guide steering her through doctoral studies. This works for her own benefit by helping her run to time. Similarly,

she is ready to modestly succumb to curricular practices in order to learn to conduct academic research and argue academically. By doing so, she gains the skills that earn her the merit she is after. And likewise, she resigns to the demands of the governance practices, because they are an essential part of what she originally sought: an institution to formalize her qualifications. But all the time she keeps on reminding, *"it is just a thesis"*. She allows the practices to refine her skills without letting them get her.

Tia's entrance to academia resembles that of Kaisa's because of the work life link. Yet, their reasons for doing a doctoral thesis and the consequent stances towards the practices of doctoral education are opposite. For Tia, it is a conviction to make a difference in practice and to accomplish something meaningful through her academic endeavors. Because of this, she truly throws herself into the game as a person. Yet, this does not mean embracing the practices. She tries to preserve her own identity, worldview, values and goals, but it seems that what has made her a strong subject in the practitioner field, backfires in academia. This leads to an uneasy balance between exposure and subjugation to the constraining practices of doctoral studies. Tia's main tactic seems to be avoiding giving in too much to the practices, and consciously or unconsciously choosing to concentrate her academic life around advising practices. The advising practices offer her a safe repository where she can encounter the problematic sides of academic research and writing in the spirit of mutual trust, but at the same time advising practices make her turn towards herself. Because she does not give other practices, especially disciplinary practices, a chance to guide her, she drifts further away from being able to use her agency and incrementally reiterating the practices differently in a way that would still be accepted by the scientific community. As a result, Tia does not get to enjoy the empowering effect of practices, feels them oppressive, and paradoxically adheres to her advisor and the projects in the practitioner world even more intensively.

Sami's story is an interesting example of the practices doing and failing to do something to their participants because of participants' personal stances. Of all the students interviewed in our study, Sami is probably the one who has participated in the widest range of practices of doctoral studies. However, this exposure to the influences of practices has not planted in him a seed of academic identity; nor has it filled him with practical understanding of the tactics, politics and morals inherent in these practices. He masters the practices smoothly enough to be able to play the game, but he consciously distances himself from what he is doing with his personal stance of the independent and detached "free agent". Nevertheless, he bears the modes of intention inherent in thesis work practice within him in the form of a terribly anxiety when he retreats to lecturing. In this way, thesis work practices continue to "do" something to him despite his attempts to escape from them. And at the same time, Sami exhibits the agency doctoral students can, at best, use to guide their own actions and personal identity projects. He has taken the practice of teaching, one of the core jobs in university work, into his own hands. In his personal trajectory, the teaching practice has become that of independent lecturing. It is

not a means to bond with the academic community and 'anchor' himself, but to keep his distance. And despite the overwhelming need to protect his identity and independence, Sami uses lecturing as a convenient way to "belong" by "getting in into some themes and subject areas at least at a modest level" – a feeling he apparently misses research-wise.

Iiro's personal practice configuration strikes one immediately when compared with the others'. Thesis work practices, or more specifically the writing practice, are practically the only ones he currently participates in. His story gives the impression that thesis work practices have seduced him and made him close his eyes from other possibly relevant practices. While he has stayed true to his personal stance of not worrying too much and being a provocative storyteller, he has driven himself to the margin. In other words, the overwhelming hold of the thesis work practice has made Iiro renounce the idea of an academic career. This also brings to surface the fact that the practices have changed quite significantly during the last few years. Nine years ago, Iiro started in a totally different context with differing demands and expectations. Now the practices have in a sense "betrayed" him and left him on nothing, as new practices have come to replace the old ones he had counted on. On the other hand, attaching so strongly to one practice and its modes of intention well aligned with his own desires, Iiro has been able to use his agency in blockading the lures and demands of other practices that might have distracted him. It also seems that his personal stance of independence and self-sufficiency have worked to scale up his solitude. By not actively getting involved in university work even though he has a desk in the department, he has guarded his writing peace. By being sure about his priorities, he has been able to ignore the influences that the PhD Program governance practices have tried to impose upon him. By being reluctant to offer people his texts because they might end up reading them involuntarily while not daring to refuse, he has bought himself time to spice up his storyline.

In Ilona's story, the presence of the personal trajectory and the influence of the entry point are eye-catching. The question of employment – or the lack of it – seems to be the larger issue that gives meaning to her actions. What emanates from her account is a certain kind of feeling of submission. It is quite evident that for Ilona, the self-proclaimed intellectual, non-participation in the practices of university work clearly conditions her actions and her felt agency. Ironically, it is the mystery machine of university work practices with which Ilona has barely anything to do, that does the most for her. As she is not acquainted with everyday life at the university, probably because she has not been offered an opportunity to access it, she does not even know where and how to start integrating into academia through teaching. The practices of university work that include some and exclude the rest make her feel condemned to wait for one-off lecturing invitations here and there. Then again, she derives some strength from doing it on her own, outside academia. The case with thesis work practices is totally different. As Ilona's route to academia suggests, her motivations and reasons for doing research on her particular topic long preceded her doctoral studies. Because of this, thesis work practices give her

the means to do what she has always wanted to do. They provide her with the time to dig deeper into the topic than would be possible in short, "ethically not so tempting" projects in which "important societal issues are poked at". Likewise, public speaking and participation in conferences legitimate Ilona's work and fill her with strength and refined skills to advance her agenda. They have an empowering effect, especially when keeping in mind her personal trajectory and the encounters with the "jackals in the world of science", which gives her more room to manoeuvre.

The consequences of personal practice configurations for the development of professional and academic identities

The mutual "doings" of practices and students are important not only for shaping students as subjects of their studies but also for constituting their professional identities. When it comes to the latter issue, our stories bring to the surface one particularly illuminating, even worrying, insight, which reflects the power of practices to do something to their participants or the power of students to counter these effects: None of the students we interviewed represents or considers him- or herself as an academic now or in the future. Because of the funding arrangements, Lauri is, of necessity, first and foremost a project worker. He does not explicitly deny the possibility of staying in academia in the long run, but at this phase with his thesis being the last of his priorities, academic career considerations are not first and foremost in his mind. In her studies, Kaisa represents herself as an efficient, goal-oriented and studious learner. She says she is undecided about whether to stay in academia after graduation, but the option of returning to her CEO post in the private sector surely competes with a post-doc position. At least, Kaisa's talk about her thesis as a merit tends to tilt the scale towards the former alternative. Professionally, she seems to be a consultant with academic skills. Tia, for her part, has steadily established herself in the field of development work and consulting. Even though she has set herself high expectations concerning the academic level of her thesis, and talks about herself as an action researcher, her professional identity seems to be that of a developer-consultant and her objectives primarily in the practitioner world.

Tragi-comically, Sami, who outright flinches at the idea of himself as an academic, starting from rejecting the university's e-mail address, gets closest to doing university work. However, calling himself consistently a lecturer instead of a teacher and giving in to a lectureship because it does not tie him down, makes it quite clear that he does not want to be part of the next generation of academics. Iiro, a storyteller and a thesis writer for whom the most relevant academic world is his own thesis, is the first one wishing to become an academic. But by not readily knowing what it takes to be a professional researcher and then refusing to take the demands of the academic game too seriously, Iiro has consciously or unconsciously narrowed down his participation to thesis work, and thus gained himself a permanent place on the bench. At least, this is how he sees his future and accordingly positions himself in the margins by plainly distinguishing himself in the interview situation from us who have

"come in directly to be professional researchers". Ilona shares the agony of Iiro, but for different reasons. For her, too, working in academia would be a job where her "heart would be involved". However, for her as someone having lived outside academic society without a job, there is one insurmountable challenge: "It [continuing in academia] would necessitate having a place, a position as a teacher, a post somewhere." Thus, she settles for regarding herself as a precariat-intellectual outside of academia, and counts on doing "a little bit of everything, just as I have done my whole life".

Conclusions

The paths the students in our study have followed and the situations they have ended up in might be conceived of as their personal and more or less deliberate, if sometimes unfortunate, choices. However, our practice-based analysis offers an alternative reading. It might be that these students have stuck to the practices at hand without even recognizing them as practices, and adopted the modes of intentionality they incorporate. By forming personal practice configurations without knowledge of the other possible practices and their consequences, doctoral students might – unintentionally and against their own interests – contribute to excluding themselves from an academic career they might have been dreaming about. Likewise, the practices might impede doctoral students' endeavors even during their studies, though they would not even aspire to stay in academia. In a more positive scenario, the practices might work to give strength to doctoral students as subjects of their own actions if he or she is well aware of the functioning of the practices and his or her own goals. Whichever is the case, our point is that it is not just individual choices but also the practices that are involved in either empowering or marginalizing doctoral students.

So the conclusion that follows is that not only should we renounce the idea of doctoral students as *junior academics* but also dispense with the assumption that participation in the practices of doctoral studies or doctoral education automatically constitutes academic identities or academics. We should be conscious of the danger that practices of doctoral studies might work to constitute doctoral students as permanent legitimate peripheral participants (Wenger 1998) or, in the words of Ilona, as "accepted affiliate members at the outer circle with a certain status" who never reach academic identities. If the practice configuration exposes the doctoral student to too few practices, he or she might not be able to develop the necessary knowledge, knowhow and identity to become an academic. On the other hand, being subject to many practices with conflicting and contradictory modes of intention might have an equally paralyzing effect. And of course, it is also a possibility that doctoral students consciously fight against the practices and try to escape their influence. In any case, in participation, there is simultaneously the potential for 'becoming' and the threat of 'unbecoming'.

This notion of (un)becoming leads to some insights that might be valuable for developing doctoral education. First of all, we want to emphasize how im-

portant it is to understand doctoral studies and doctoral education as a complex and comprehensive set of educational, professional and academic practices, not just as research training or a set of PhD writing skills. Furthermore, if the aim of doctoral education is to develop and nurture future faculty members, doctoral students should be predisposed, little by little and to some extent, to *university work practices* during their doctoral studies. By drawing attention to the significance of university work practices we want to point out that doctoral education, as seen through the practices of doctoral studies, does not necessarily cover the whole array of the practices that are essential for becoming an academic. Not participating in these practices – either because of a conscious decision, negligence, ignorance or exclusion – can have detrimental effects both for the student and for the institution arranging doctoral education.

However, predisposition and subjugation to academic practices is not enough. We claim that problems arise when students are left alone to survive in the midst of differing practices. Making well-thought-out and reasoned choices about finding one's own way in the jungle of practices would require a profound understanding of the practices available in doctoral studies, and especially those available in university work. Yet, these practices seem to be poorly known by doctoral students. As McAlpine and Norton (2009) and Golde and Dore (2001) state, many students entering doctoral programs are misinformed about the process of doctoral education and lack the knowledge necessary to navigate the system. Their findings are echoed by Austin (2002), who has studied the socialization process of aspiring academics, and found that students are ill-equipped to understand faculty lives and careers. Thus, we suggest that some kind of a practice-oriented induction to doctoral studies, research and university work as a practical activity would be in place in doctoral education right at the beginning of the studies.

But even an understanding of the practices of doctoral studies and academic work, together with a map of the practices which one could possibly submit oneself to, will not suffice if students are not clear about where they are heading for. We claim that being more conscious and articulate about their own goals, moral motives and identity projects (Räsänen 2009) in the academic world would help doctoral students to direct their academic activities and spot spaces for agency. This kind of self-consciousness and welcomed support for students' processes of "becoming" could be achieved with organized and guided possibilities for collective and individual reflection as part of doctoral education. Austin (2002, 106) has made the same point and argued that although focused and guided self-reflection is integral to graduate students' sense making processes, it is not an activity that graduate advisors or doctoral programs facilitate. However, we hope that future generations of doctoral students and new academics will see a change in this matter. Thus, with our and our peer students' voices, we want to end our paper with a plea for more structure and place for collective reflection and emphasis on individual students' identity projects in doctoral education.

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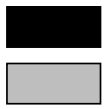
Appendix 1: Doctoral students' situations as defined by their personal practice configurations



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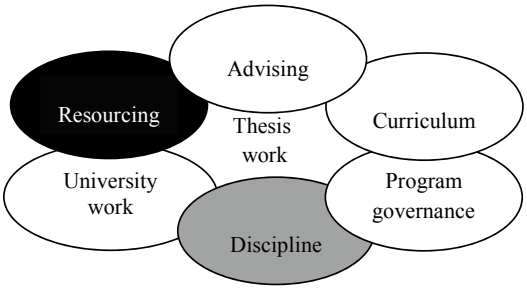

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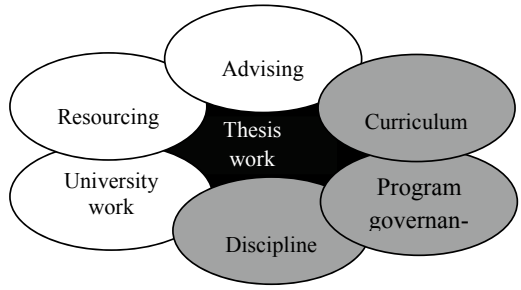

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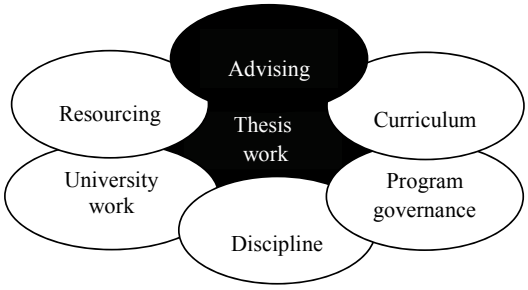

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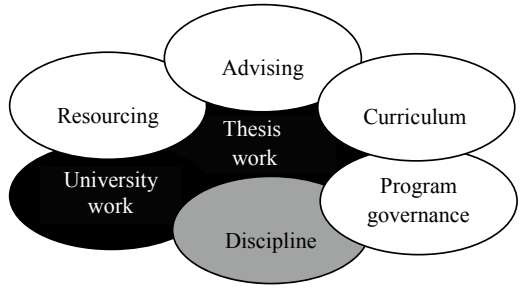

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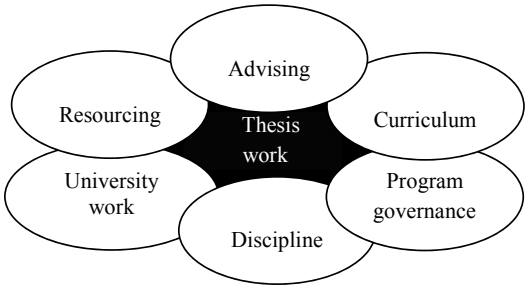

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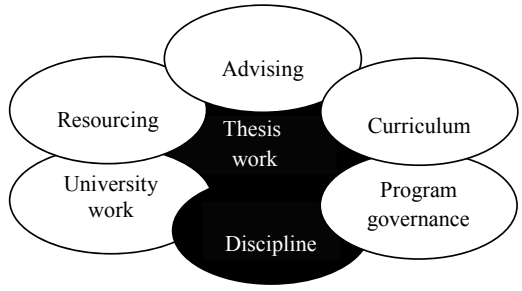

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Supporting doctoral students in their professional identity projects

Keijo Räsänen* and Kirsi Korpiaho

Organisation and Management, School of Economics, Aalto University, Helsinki, Finland

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Doctoral programmes and education do not necessarily pay enough attention to the professional development of the student. Doctoral students may struggle with an unclear conception of who they can and want to become as a result of their doctoral studies. This paper describes an event that aimed to provide doctoral students with opportunities to reflect collectively upon and resource their identity projects. In this course academic work was approached as 'practical activity' that can be discussed in terms of its tactics, politics, morals and subjects. After identifying the specific features of the course design, the authors assess its usability beyond the local context.

Keywords: special issue; doctoral education; academic work; professional identity; practice theory

Introduction

Doctoral programs and education do not necessarily pay enough attention to the professional development of the student (Austin 2002; McAlpine and Norton 2009). Doctoral students may struggle with an unclear conception of who they can and want to become as a result of their doctoral studies. This experience can be taken as an aspect of any 'higher learning'. It can also be seen as a major hindrance to learning, and a factor that contributes to the exclusion of some candidates from a university career. Thus, the time is right to develop ways of supporting doctoral students in taking a personal stance to academic work.

This paper reports on an attempt to support doctoral students in their quests for a professional identity in a discipline and institutional setting. This attempt was a new course that aimed to provide both cultural resources for identity work and a site for doing this work collaboratively and reflectively with peers. This identity work was discussed in terms of professional 'identity projects'; that is, 'the achievement of uniqueness within a moral order' (Harré 1983, 256). The design of the course was based on a practice-theoretical understanding of academic work as 'practical activity' (Räsänen 2009a). The purposes of this paper are to present this approach, describe the course and its reception, and then discuss the specific features and general relevance of the approach.

This account from practice proposes a way of making use of practice-theoretical thinking, the potential of which has been pointed out by other researchers in the field of doctoral education and academic development (Lee and Boud 2009; McAlpine,

*Corresponding author. Email: keijo.rasanen@aalto.fi

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Jazvac-Martek, and Hopwood 2009; Trowler and Turner 2002). First, we need to clarify how practice theorists would make sense of professional identity.

Supporting professional identity projects in academia

Professional identity is a controversial concept. Different conceptualisations of 'identity' abound and the usefulness of the concept itself is doubted (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Nevertheless, we have found the concept useful in framing any practical activity. Conceptions of identity are inherent in various theories of practice.

Foucault's works on subjects as products of discourses and on the technologies of self problematise any simple views on autonomous subjectivity. Bourdieu's (1990, 53) concept of habitus emphasises the politics of reproduction in relations of domination. Macintyre (1981) and Taylor (1989) regard identity primarily as a moral issue, in terms of goods, virtues, and life narratives, or of moral horizons and strong evaluations. They both emphasise the view that identity is defined in relation to communities and their traditions. The growing literature on the 'communities of practice' shares this view. Holland and her collaborators have developed a conception of identity as authoring in various contexts of activity (Holland et al. 1998). This is a nuanced way of understanding how subjects gain or lose their personal identity and strength as agents. While all these understandings share practice-theoretical inclinations, they can lead to different, almost opposing ways of talking about subjectivity and identity.

Some scholars give reasons to be pessimistic about the possibilities of unique human agency, and some others think that it might be possible (for an attempt at balancing the extremes, see Weir 2009). If we are to support the construction of professional identities, we cannot opt for the most pessimistic approaches that explain subjectivity away. Yet, we need to be attentive to how practices shape the self. Dreier's (1999) practice-theoretical approach to identity helps to clarify the setting. Dreier suggests that individuals participate in structured sets of social practices and come to follow unique 'trajectories'. Therefore, they eventually have 'personal stances' to specific practices. This is a way of talking about how individual doctoral students participate in educational practices and other academic practices, and thereby proceed or get stuck in their identity projects. The positive outcome may be a professional identity and effective agency as a new academic – or another professional identity.

In identity work, the individual is the subject working on her or his own subjectivity. How can we then understand the task of those 'others' who aim to have a supporting, educational or developmental, role in this intimate 'work'? Harré's (1983) notion of 'identity project' is useful in defining the developmental task. This notion highlights the processual and infinite nature of the moves that people make to establish an adequate interpretation of themselves. The term 'project' suggests that this process involves self-reflective work, and that this work requires cultural resources. The educators' or developers' tasks are then to offer a worksite and to make resources available. Acting as one of the 'relevant others' must, however, be added to this agenda.

The nature of academic work makes professional identity projects demanding in academia. It takes an arduous preparation to master this work of symbol manipulation and human cultivation. An academic discipline may support rival

conceptions of proper professionalism, and competence claims are usually contested. Work at the university and in the disciplines is multifunctional. Kalleberg (2000) proposes the following classification of these activities: research, education, external services, public debate, and the governance of each of these activities.

The current arrangements in doctoral education, staff development and educational development are also challenging. While an academic has to live with the multi-functionality of work, developmental activities mostly focus on one activity at a time – be it teaching and learning, or research (and publishing). A potential new academic receives 'support' from different stakeholders with varying interests and normative ideals (cf. Lee and Boud 2009, 10–12). Advisors, possibly the nearest collaborators, do not necessarily realise how influential the other actors can be, or even avoid taking responsibility for the contradictory expectations. A young scholar can feel lost under all this support and control.

In this situation, it may do good to arrange events that are not activity-specific and that leave space to the participants to find out what they consider meaningful work in academia. In particular, collegially organised sites for collective reflection may now be needed (cf. Austin 2002; Boud 1999).

Becoming an organisation researcher in a Finnish business school

Our approach to supporting professional identity projects in academia has evolved as responses to local worries and hopes. The course described in this paper is a step in a longer sequence of developmental efforts. These efforts have been carried out by colleagues working in the same disciplinary unit (Organisation and Management at the Aalto University School of Economics, hereafter ASE). We call our efforts 'autonomous development work'. We want to distinguish them from measures directed by university managers or higher education policies.

Studies on doctoral education have provided us with intellectual resources, but trends and issues observed in other countries are not necessarily relevant in accounting for (non-policy-oriented) local action, despite the similarities in policies. Therefore, we try to describe the local context and explicate reasons for the move to start the new course.

The unit of organisation and management has been especially active in doctoral education since the mid 1980s. This was before the number of doctorates became a 'results indicator' at ASE (or HSE until 2009). Since its inception in 1969, the unit has 'produced' 57 doctors. Of these, 17 have become professors at ASE or other Finnish universities, 25 have continued their careers in other posts in universities or research centres, 13 have been employed by companies, and two have worked in university administration. Among the business school disciplines, the unit has been research oriented and professors have considered doctoral supervision a central task.

Since the mid-1980s the seniors have shared the style of personally guiding new researchers whatever the interests and research approaches of the latter. Senior colleagues have treated newcomers as independent researchers rather than as 'students', and apprentice relationships have formed the basic method of training. Doctoral candidates employed by ASE have been 'members of the community', whereas other doctoral students working elsewhere may have found it more difficult or less interesting to get involved in academic affairs. The option of a professional

doctorate does not formally exist, but advisors have tried to support all dissertation projects whatever the candidates' professional interests.

Early on, ASE's leaders built a joint doctoral programme for all of the sub-disciplines. Since the 1990s this programme has been run according the course-based model. Each student is expected to take first eight obligatory courses and only thereafter concentrate on thesis research. This form of programme has created ongoing tensions with the unit's style of emphasising research work and providing personal advice.

Changes in national policies have had only minor influences on local practices in the unit. There are some new funding opportunities (such as the graduate schools established in the 1990s), and the pressure to 'produce degrees' has become more intense (Ylijoki 2003). The national system of funding research (and development) has made the formation of research groups or alliances more attractive. Now a small but increasing number of doctoral students are employees within externally funded projects led by more senior colleagues, and no longer working on their 'own' projects.

Primary motives for planning and launching the new doctoral course were based on concrete worries and hopes expressed by doctoral students, post docs and seniors. The overall changes in universities – and especially the continued managerialisation of governance at ASE – had made most academics concerned about their future employment. Very few doctoral students seem to have a positive and optimistic view of a possible career in academia (cf. Hakala 2009).

Despite the good record in bringing on original researchers, the unit's practices did not feel satisfactory to some of us. We were aware of research quality in other fields. In particular, we saw it as evident that something should be done with regard to the cultivation of writing skills.

Organisation studies (and in combination with management studies) sit nicely in the category of 'diverging disciplinary culture'. The new funding arrangements had further increased diversity of work orientations in the unit. Owing to this development, the communal nature of collaboration inside the unit had weakened and people found it harder to identify any common ground.

There were thus worries over both the quality of doctoral education and the future of the candidates. One conclusion was to take action and create a forum for collective reflection and inquiry into the conditions and prospects of academic work. In addition to the worries listed above, there were positive opportunities in continuing educational experiments and in making use of a practice-theoretical approach developed over the years.

A practice-based approach to understanding academic work

We have presented elsewhere a way of framing academic work as 'practical activity' (Korpiaho, Päiviö, and Räsänen 2007; Räsänen 2009a). The explicit purpose of this framing is to generate and appreciate practitioners' own diverse accounts of academic work. They are needed to complement and contest the externally imposed managerial frames of reporting and evaluation. This framing identifies generic issues of practical activity, and thereby aims to make them and their alternative resolutions discussable. Table 1 summarises this frame in a simplified form.

The frame generates the following 'working hypothesis' about professional identity: you know *who* you are professionally, if you have resolved the three other

Table 1. Practical activity – a generic frame for interpretation.

Issue	Stance	Concretization	Practice theorists
How?	Tactical	Means	de Certeau (Goffman)
What?	Political	Goals	Bourdieu (Foucault)
Why?	Moral	Motives/justifications	MacIntyre (Taylor)
Who	Personal	Identity	Harré (Dreier, Holland)

issues of practical activity in your work. These issues are: *How* to do this work? *What* to accomplish and achieve, in it and by it? *Why* these means and goals?

The doctoral course was designed to provide cultural resources to understand and resolve the three issues in participants' own work. The main point within the course concept is to reflect on one's own work in terms of the questions 'how, what, and why'. This approach provides opportunities to articulate one's own stances to academic work and consider alternative takes on each of the basic issues.

In this approach, a strong 'subject' is tactically skilful, politically goal-oriented, and morally motivated. However, we ordinary people – including academics – are something different. Resolving any of the issues may be hard enough, but solving them all in a coherent and sustainable way is usually impossible. Therefore, joint inquiries in these issues must start from tactical action – from the mundane, non-heroic ways of 'making do' (see de Certeau 1984).

The route from an individual's tactical action to collective 'praxis' is long and one can get easily lost on the way. Collective action should be considered as an accomplishment rather than a preordained state of affairs in academia. Turning the 'I' in the questions above into 'we' is a necessary moment of the professional identity project, but it takes measures to reach that moment. Relating with peers may be of help in this respect.

Doctoral course: 'Professional academics at work'

The first round of the course was organised by Keijo Räsänen between January and April 2009. Kirsi Korpiaho took part in the course as a participant, and thus we authors witnessed the event from two different positions. The event was formally offered as a part of discipline-specific studies for students in the field of organisation and management at ASE.

Course design – an agenda for co-operative inquiries into practical issues

The organiser translated the design template reported in Räsänen (2009a) into a programme presented, in an abbreviated form, in Exhibit 1 below. He understood the programme to be an agenda for co-operative work among the participants. The aim was to study the tactics, politics, morals and subjects of academic work. The sequence of tasks and sessions was structured according to the following principles:

- *The primary issue is 'who'* (I might want to become). This issue is introduced at the beginning, together with the approach by which it is to be dealt with

during the course. At the end of the course, we return to the personal stance and draw conclusions from the previous steps.

- *Inquiries into the issues of practical activity start from the tactical issue of how one is doing academic work*. This anchors our attention and further inquiries to our ways of surviving and improvising in an immediate and largely given context. Thereafter, we can approach the political and moral issues, and their broader contexts, more concretely and personally. Transitions to a political and further to a moral orientation and mode of action are taken as specific accomplishments, rather than pre-assuming that we are capable and in a position to resolve these issues.
- *Each basic issue and stance to practical activity is studied in two consequent sessions and on the basis of preparatory tasks.* The following cycle is repeated: readings about a relevant practice theorist (and HE literature), orientation to the issue and discussion on the basis of the preparatory task, a new preparatory task focusing on one's own work, further learning tasks and discussion on the basis of the results, and preliminary re-orientation to the next issue. The preparatory tasks are carried out individually, and their results are then shared and reflected upon in the spirit of co-operative learning.

The organiser introduced a complementary element to the original design: a thread designed to be an integrating theme. During the first round this thread was research writing, and it was studied from all of the four stances. An emergent outcome was an edited volume of essays on academic writing (Räsänen 2009b). Towards the end of the course, we established co-operative teams to support essay writing. The thread turned out to be an important addition to the original template. We were not only talking about academic work but also doing it, and doing it collaboratively. The course concept allows for a changing thread, chosen according to the interests of those in the room.

Exhibit 1. Course programme

	Professional academics at work: Programme, January–February 2009
I	**INTRODUCTION: TO THE SOURCES OF RESOURSES**
	S1: Start: purposes, frame, working methods, participants
	Preparatory Task (PT): Connell (2006); re-write article abstract
	S2: Academic work and HE research as a source of cultural resources
	PT: Kemmis (forthcoming); search for and read on practice theories
	S3: Theories of practice
II	**ACADEMIC WORK AS PRACTICAL ACTIVITY**
	PT: de Certeau (1984); read, and report observations from everyday life.
	S4: **Tactics**: ***How*** to work?
	PT: write a story of writing a text of yours; Bazerman (2007)
	S5: . . .continued
	PT: Bourdieu's world; one's own goals?
	S6: **Politics**: ***What*** to accomplish and achieve?
	PT: the story of writing and my goals; mapping the space of possible goals

	S7: … continued
	PT: MacIntyre's world; internal and external goods
	S8: **Morals**: ***Why*** aim at these goals with these means?
	PT: essay topic; why this one; 'moral horizon' (Taylor)
	S9: … continued
	PT: Lenoir (2006); describe Bourdieu's praxis
	S10: Praxis: tactics, politics and morals?
III	**CONCLUSION**
	PT: Tang & John (1999); write essay introduction; "I" in it
	S11: **Subjects**: ***Who*** may I want to be/become (professionally)?
	PT: write the essay
	S12: Essays on writing; Summarizing and reflecting
	Improve and finalize the essay
	Submit the finalized essay
	Continuation: Book – a collection of essays; other joint moves?

Exhibit 2 documents how the organiser presented, by means of a slide, the multiple purposes of the event to the participants. In the organiser's view, the event had to serve multiple purposes, because it was the only available event of its kind and participants were likely to be diverse with regard to their background, position in relation to academia, and current interests.

Preparatory tasks between sessions were crafted in order to generate accounts from practice, and thereby material for reflection. For example, participants were asked to write a brief account of how they produced one of their own texts and of what goals they had in mind when writing it. Another task was to explicate why they consider their essay topics personally important (from their 'moral horizons'). Participants were also invited to visit (by reading) 'the worlds' of a set of practice

Exhibit 2. The purposes of the event (course slide translated by KR)

Purposes of this collaborative event

A forum for discussing openly and critically the current conditions of academic work – and everybody's own hopes and worries.

An opportunity to rehearse:

- an 'inquiring, reflective' stance and mode to one's own work
- finding 'cultural resources' produced by HE research and using these in one's own work
- the 'basic operations' of academic work, especially writing (and reading, and face-to-face conversation).

Supports the participants' own, professional identity projects.

Prepares new researchers/teachers for academic work.

Provides points of departure for the reproduction and renewal of academic 'practices'.

theorists. In the sessions we then shared results of the work done individually, first in triads and then within the whole group.

Participant responses to the event

We will here use evidence from two sets of material to report participant responses to the course design: participants' (anonymous) responses in a feedback form crafted by the organiser and peer interviews conducted afterwards by two participants with all the other participants. The feedback form was completed in the last session. Ten participants answered the questions (the 11th had started her maternity leave just before this session). Susanna Kantelinen and Kirsi Korpiaho (2009) carried out the peer interviews and presented their results in the form of narratives, the content of which was negotiated with each participant. The participants' essays, published in Räsänen (2009b), also provide a document of the participants' thoughts at the end of the process.

The limited evidence presented here should make it credible that the course idea was feasible, at least locally, and that the participants of the first round considered the course design useful.

An important indicator of the reception of a new course is whether somebody wants to take it. In this case, 11 people participated in the course in 2009 (and a further 10 in 2010). These 11 people were working in different positions with regard to ASE: eight participants were working as researchers (and teachers) at ASE or other universities, and three were not employed by a university. The size and composition of the group indicates that there is demand for the event. In January 2009 the unit had 34 doctoral students, and the annual intake is between two and five. After two new rounds, all the current doctoral students majoring in the discipline will have taken the course. So far, two post-doctoral researchers have also participated in the event (one in 2009 and 2010). However, the course format may not fit the schedules and expectations of post-docs.

One item on the feedback form asked about the usefulness of the event. Nine of the 10 participants considered the event very useful in three contexts (Table 1).

Another question that asked 'What was special in this event – if anything?' generated the response that co-operation was considered by half of the respondents as the special feature. This, they expressed in various ways. One formulation follows:

> The special thing was encountering others in a way that does not emerge spontaneously. Rarely do people get hold of others' texts and read them with similar enthusiasm as we did during this course. I always eagerly waited for an email signal.

Three other participants pointed out that the diversity of individuals was given space or that it was even appreciated. Two respondents wrote that working in the event was

Table 2. Responses to the question 'How useful do you find this kind of an event?'

	Useless	Somewhat useful	Very useful
Personally	–	1	9
In your own discipline	–	1	9
At HSE in general	–	1	9

'natural'. In this regard one reported: 'The event was actually quite exceptional in the academic field, but you did not notice it during the event.' Two others regarded as special the use of 'theory' to study one's own work. One participant saw that the literature that was read was special.

Participants were also asked to assess the course concept. Nine respondents marked the choices that the concept 'worked very well' and that we jointly 'succeeded in the realisation of the concept as a whole'. One respondent elaborated upon the advantages of the concept in the following way:

> Without a shared framework and concepts to be elaborated upon the discussion disperses. Now we got beyond coffee-table conversation and still, everybody was allowed to work on the issues in relation to one's own work.

Answers to the question 'If you learned something in this event, then what was it?' reflected seven themes. Among these, learning to know colleagues was mentioned six times. One of the participants wrote:

> Perhaps it was the very joint generation of ideas for the essays, giving and receiving feedback, following how the others work and helping them, that felt especially good . . . writing in a group, in which each one's own style and voice was sustained and diversity was blossoming, was special. Valuation of, and respect for, the others.

According to the peer interviews, all the participants considered the course rewarding. Seven interviewees mentioned explicitly the supportive atmosphere of course. They expressed the feeling that everyone and everyone's work was considered equally important despite differences in age, experience or academic expertise. The course was taken as a collegial discussion forum where different views were accepted:

> There was an amazingly trusting atmosphere at the course, people were not critical towards each others' points of view, it was not at all like a debate situation but instead there was actually room for different kinds of opinions which was actually a bit surprising, because it goes so easily to that [debate].

The participants' shared formal status as doctoral students hides significant differences in ways of relating oneself to academic work. Six of the interviewees did not regard themselves as academics. They perceived themselves as merely doctoral students, lonely thesis writers, or, as one of the participants described herself, some sort of 'accepted affiliate members' in the academic world. The course made the different positions and aspirations at least visible and discussable. The 'outsiders' could use their new 'insider' acquaintances as reference points and interlocutors when articulating their positions and identities in other arenas. Relating with dissimilar professionals when carrying out joint learning tasks may also help in identity work.

Re-interpreting the experience

The course described in this paper is an instance of our academic practice, and accounting for any practice without losing its richness and complexity is a tricky task. What we can do here is to re-interpret our 'doings' and propose features that

may be specific to the educational event. Then we can assess the course design with regard to its context specificity versus more general usability.

A collegial and affirmative alternative to normative approaches?

According to our experience and knowledge of literature, a vast majority of professional development activities in academia are normative in their orientation. Developers are usually hired to advance an agenda set elsewhere – be it by politicians, funding agencies or university managers. As a typical example, the purpose of a programme may be to train better, 'learning centred' university teachers. However, for a researcher any normative approach may contradict her or his basic stance to knowing and acting. She does not easily accept the presumption that the developer has better knowledge of the activities in question. She would prefer to understand first, and then draw her own conclusions. The course on academic work was built on this alternative assumption.

The idea was that participants make inquiries of issues that they find relevant, and that the organiser does not suggest pre-defined solutions to their dilemmas. It is a different thing to understand academic literacy than to be taught to write correctly. The organiser did not even want to limit the potential interests to a particular academic activity such as teaching and learning. In fact, almost all of the participants in the first round were more interested in research than teaching. Undeniably, all approaches have normative implications (such as directing attention), but the intention was to avoid normativity in issues that were under explicit consideration.

The second, closely related feature was the affirmation of identity projects. From the very beginning, the organiser kept reiterating that there are different ways of being an academic and each individual has to construct her or his own solutions to the four basic issues of practical activity. When focusing on any of the four issues (how, what, why, who), the plot was to develop personal understanding and to search collectively for alternative solutions.

The appreciative spirit is symbolised by a learning task invented for the last session of the second round (during 2010). Each participant was introduced by a colleague to an unknown researcher during an imaginary situation; that is, during a conference break and after finishing the dissertation. To prepare for this presentation, each participant was asked to articulate (in a triad) what she or he wants the colleague to tell of her or his (then accomplished) work or character as a researcher. In this way the participants heard a colleague say what they would like to hear of themselves in the future.

The third feature of the approach is peer learning based on collegial relationships. The initiators of the event are disciplinary members of staff, and the organiser is its senior member. The event was not ordered, planned or funded by 'outsiders'. In the sessions, and in between them, the participants were expected to treat each other as colleagues. This mode of interaction was built into the working methods by using the procedures of co-operative learning in the sessions and by forming support groups for essay writing.

We consider the fourth main feature of the approach to be the combined use of practice-theoretical literature and practice-based knowledge. The whole approach can be taken as a homemade version of practice theory – or at least, as a practical philosophy. Thus, this account provides other researchers and developers with a case of what can be the result of the use of these traditions.

A key justification for theories of practice was put to a test: can this kind of thinking actually deal with the dualism of theory versus practice? The participants were asked to reflect upon their own practice by using the help of practice theorists. The theorists were asked to serve (through their texts) the practitioners. The multi-faceted conception of practical activity made it possible to bring in the theorists at a point where they were at their strongest (such as de Certeau on tactics, Bourdieu on politics, MacIntyre on morals or Holland on identities). A theorist's practice, Bourdieu in this case, was put under critical examination.

Finally, it is somewhat peculiar that the event was arranged in the form of doctoral course, as a part of formal, disciplinary studies in organisation and management, and at a business school. This was due to, and indeed possible, because of various local factors, which we will discuss in the next section. It is, however, important to ask how the status of the event influenced the process and experience of collaborative work. On the one hand, this arrangement made it legitimate for the participants to spend time weekly on the reflective practices, even if only a minority of them wanted to have the six credit points registered. On the other hand, the methods of 'course work' were familiar and 'academic': people engaged in reading, writing, and discussing, and they received instructions for learning tasks from the 'teacher'. 'Natural' methods were combined with 'exceptional' conversations and cultural resources.

Assessing the context-specificity of the course design

The formal status and form of the developmental event were a compromise fitted to local circumstances. It is doubtful whether it is sensible or possible to arrange a similar event elsewhere. Everything had to be done with resources controlled by the disciplinary unit. The unit cannot afford to arrange several discipline-specific doctoral courses. The event had to serve multiple purposes. No support could be expected from university managers or from specialist in academic development. On the positive side, the unit has previously been relatively autonomous in curriculum decisions and the unit's faculty are used to continuous experimentation.

The actual programme of the course cannot be easily translated into other disciplinary contexts without major revisions and innovative solutions. We would expect that in the social sciences and humanities researchers may find it meaningful to make use of practice-theoretical literature, but in some other fields this may not work. One direction of development would be to draw more upon such higher education literature that is directly relevant to the participant, and leave the practice theorists in the background.

Another complication of using the programme as a template is that it sets specific demands on the facilitator. It may be difficult to find facilitators who can not only invest the time needed (three days a week), but who are also familiar with both the practice-theoretical literature and higher education studies, are capable of working with the methods of co-operative learning and are open to and tolerant of different conceptions of good academic work.

What may be usable in other contexts is the frame of practical activity and the agenda of collaborative inquiries based on this frame. The general frame is usable in studying any form of work. In fact, we developed the first versions of the frame when researching managerial work and developmental work in workplaces other than

universities. As a version of the classic concept of praxis, the frame has deep historical roots and there are several other interpretations available in the literature (see e.g., Kemmis 2005; Räsänen 2009a). We have only taken seriously all of the four challenges of practical activity (tactics, politics, morals and subjects) and developed a way of turning this concept into a programme for collegial and critically reflexive inquiries at work.

Conclusion

We have reported here a local and feasible attempt to resource professional identity projects in academia. The design of this doctoral course is based on the practice-theoretical and practice-based understanding of academic work as 'practical activity'. The design guides co-operative inquiries from mundane, tactical action to the possibilities of political and moral action. These inquiries generate cultural resources that participants can use in advancing their professional identity projects; that is, in constructing solutions to the issues of why, what and how.

The approach provides to participants and developers a way of opening up for discussion issues that are bound to remain tacit or even silenced in other (formal) occasions. Moreover, the approach is purposefully collegial. It suggests a balancing counterforce to more managerially directed forms of professional development. It is the doctoral students' and new faculty members' own emerging conceptions of good academic work and professional identity that matter.

Although the course design was a response to local needs and circumstances, we nevertheless suggest that the frame of practical activity and the event template are general enough to be usable in other contexts of continuing education. The specific course programme presented here may only have use in social sciences and humanities. In any case, the approach demands context-specific knowledge and disciplinary or professional expertise. If, however, the collegial approach were used by experts in academic development, active participation from academic practitioners, that is, academic staff members would be necessary.

Leonard and Becker (2009, 82) may be describing current developments accurately when they state:

> Some of the more creative things some departments were previously doing to enrich the doctoral experience were initially blown away, and subsequently there has been little time for academic units to innovate or adapt the requirements to their circumstances, or to undertake investigative research for their own use.

We hope that this story from an intellectual semi-periphery will keep up the spirit of those who are not yet ready to surrender.

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