UK&I PRME Conference 2024 Abstracts

Day 2 – 21st June 2024

## Equipping Students to Partner with Small, Local Businesses on their Journey to Sustainability

Dr Fodhla McGrane; Dr Rachael Singleton (Ulster University)

*Please note this is being presented as a paper.*

**Workshop Title**: Equipping Students to Partner with Small, Local Businesses on their Journey to Sustainability

**Workshop Summary**: welcome to a visually appealing workshop, showing multiple resources created to support a new undergraduate module on business ethics and sustainability. Propose and discuss your running order of the 12 week module.

**Presenter**: Fodhla McGrane PhD, Ulster University Business School, Northern Ireland, UK

**Background to the New Module: Business Ethics and Sustainability**

- Module was written and taught by the presenter, Fodhla, to BSc Human Resource Mgt students, year 2, Level 5, age 19, pre placement year (during which they could impact the sustainability efforts of the business).

- Module direction results from research in 2022 with 1st years into the use of an interactive, dilemma-based approach to business ethics education

- Research results were published in Journal of Business Ethics Education (JBEE, 2022) with the primary finding in the title: ‘The Need to Personalise Business Ethics Education’.

- Coursework (CW) impacted by ‘The Most Ethical Business in My Hometown’ (JBEE, 2019), CW used in a US uni. Adapted CW for local application to NI’s small business economy, resulting in: ‘The Most Ethical and Sustainable Small Business in My Hometown’.

- Resulting module results from another two years background work with Masters level, international students using this as a project for an Applied Consulting Module.

**Overview of the Module: Business Ethics and Sustainability**

Using UU’s Integrated Curriculum Design Framework

- LOs x 4

- CW1 (50%) planned behaviour change (related to self, to experience what is required to make a lasting change). Delivery options: in-class presentation to peers, or written report. Due w8.

- CW2 (50%) nomination of a small business using a nomination form (show on JISC surveys) to which students contribute. Due week 12.

- Order of module’s 12 weekly sessions from this year

**Module Partnerships with**

* The Innovation Lab (iLab), Dept of Finance https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/innovation-lab, (formerly part of the EU’s Nudge project https://www.nudgeproject.eu/. Tailored to the planned behaviour change for CW1.
* Sustainable NI <https://www.sustainableni.org/> (local charity that advised on B Corps contents of the award nomination form for CW2),
* Carbon literacy training by Keep NI Beautiful
* Social value consultant, Sarah Fearon
* Two large companies with dedicated sustainability depts who presented to the students: Charles Brand Construction (local including site visit), Sealed Air Packaging (global),
* Two small local businesses: Mike’s Fancy Cheese, and Brogan’s Optometrist.

**Presentation of unique resources created to support the award**

* Video to promote the award to small local businesses that may be approached by students. 4 mins, <https://youtu.be/G_HbXdLMtP0>
* Webpage about the award on UU website (open URL)
* Corporate infographic of the award with UU logo, including symbols of doughnut economics and circular economy, and peace doves from UU logo

**Findings from first iteration of the module**

- assessment Cw1 and Cw2

- before and after research with students in weeks 1 and 12

- LOS: need revision in line with assessments?

**Proposed workshop activity**

**Part A**. Order of 12 sessions?

Aim of the module: To enable students to live sustainably and to coach others in sustainable living and business: for their own ‘good health and wellbeing, for businesses, for the world.

Tasks for students when partnering with businesses for CW2: Keep it simple. Speak about sustainability while being respectful and encouraging, and not overwhelming. Focus on what’s most important which is what is the most impactful. A tall order for any teenager!

Using Mentimeter digital interaction tool,

participants are invited to place the 12 sessions into their recommended order. Includes option to propose alternatives to the 12 topics provided.

**Part B**. Discuss participants’ proposals and presenter’s proposed order for 2025.

**Part C**. Conclude with consensus on a 12 week order for the next module iteration.

## Responsible Management Education and the Elephant in the Room

Dr Peter Edward (Newcastle University)

Who are we educating the managers of the future to be? What role do we really want them to play in helping to bring about the large-scale systemic social change which is required to respond to the diverse Grand Challenges (GCs) that society will confront in the coming decades?

An important difference between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the precursor Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is that the SDGs are much broader in their coverage, both by including the developed world and in their expanded subject-content. Their extensive inter-dependence clearly demonstrates that to achieve the SDGs (ever, let alone by 2030) will require major systemic transformation.

Unfortunately, the implications of that challenge are too readily obscured by presentation of the SDGs as a set of discrete challenges each with its own metrics and targets. The limits of this sort of managerial/organisational, rather than systemic, approach are well-recognised by (some) management and organisation (MOS) scholars, but even then the solutions proposed often remain constrained by organisation-level mindsets (see, for example, Crane, Palazzo, Spence, & Matten, 2014).

It is hardly surprising then that, when MOS academics investigate what happens when businesses address GCs, they find the systemic challenge is lost sight of in favour of Business-as-Usual (Scheyvens, Banks, & Hughes, 2016; Wright & Nyberg, 2017). More surprising is how rarely this has led management academics to place, front-and-centre in their own work and teaching, the challenge of understanding how systemic transformation happens – an omission seen as a sobering reflection of our collective failure to confront the ‘elephant in the room’ (de Bakker, Matten, Spence, & Wickert, 2020).

Where MOS academics have drawn on theories of systemic transformation, recurring themes are the importance of transforming people’s imaginaries (Levy & Spicer, 2013), their identifications as persons-in-community, and their perspectives on the collective (Brammer, Branicki, & Linnenluecke,

2020). These all resonate with calls in other fields that major systemic social transformation cannot occur without widespread, deep (and deeply psychologically challenging) changes in our intimately-held worldviews (Beddoe et al., 2009), mental-conceptions (Harvey, 2014) and the ideas we live by (Hulme, 2009).

Much of business, management and organisational thinking tends to focus on how we do things (our technologies) and how we organise ourselves to do things (our institutions). The tacit presumption – the ignored elephant – is that somehow changes in worldviews and mental-conceptions will simply follow on from changes in our institutions and technologies. As educators, however, the main thing we try to influence is the worldviews of our students. But, if a radical change in worldviews is needed then it is not enough merely to help students to think differently about the world we encounter today. They also need to understand social transformation as a socially- and psychologically-challenging process: what are the stages of that process; what happens in those stages; and what role should business, and themselves as future business leaders, play at different stages. Responsible Management Education needs to be about confronting this elephant in the room - not being complicit in obscuring it.

## Stakeholder Harmonisation through PRME: Shaping Sustainable Education in Student and business partnerships

Dr Marc Duffy (Ulster University)

The world faces imminent environmental challenges, with businesses and society consuming resources at an un-sustainable pace. Carbon emissions into the natural atmosphere are at an all-time high (USDC, 2022) and are expected to have not yet peaked (IPCC, 2022; Mitchell et al., 2000). Climate change is heading for an increase of at least + 2.7 to + 3.1 degrees against a target of + 1.5 degrees (Samset et al., 2020). Societies challenge lies in effectively engaging stakeholders, particularly students and employers, who hold diverse perspectives on responsible and ethical management education.

Higher Education (HE) institutions and Business Schools are under pressure to do more and to be the change they wish to see in the world (Cortese, 2003). The United Nations (UN) have introduced The Principles of Responsible Management Initiative (PRME) to encourage Business Schools to be more sustainable in action and education (PRME, 2020). Scholars argue that the time is ripe for HE institutions to lead change and stakeholders demand change (Moore, 2005), students are increasingly from Generation Z are said to be the most demanding generation yet for climate change response and calling for change in institutions. Greenberg (2017) highlights the significant challenges associated with creating meaningful and lasting change in Business Schools in relation to PRME.

While PRME creates a structure to embed sustainability into curricula, often missing from this process is practical engagement with, and obtaining the buy-in from wider stakeholders,

including student bodies and employers. This is increasingly important when the two stakeholders are combined in the case of employee-sponsored degree apprenticeships. In particular, the diverse perspectives from business in relation to their present challenges is often overlooked.

Russo et al., (2023) point out that while institutions are beginning to harbour ‘positive feelings’ towards PRME, the work still rests with individual academics. Cortese (2003) argues that HE should embed PRME into all areas of campus life.

This presentation will demonstrate the process of how the PRME Lead engaged with (1) students to assess their understanding of and expectations in responsible management education (PRME), (2) the Course leaderships team to assess their expectations at course level, (3) the leadership of the university and (4) the employers to assess their expectations and needs from graduates in this area.

The literature suggests that Generation Z view ‘the environment’ as the number one issue facing society, and they believe that business have a significant role to play in addressing these grand challenges (Cone, 2019). This multi-dimensional and multi-faceted stakeholder approach at UUBS facilitated the creation of two new PRME modules in our flagship undergraduate programme at UUBS, accounting for 40 credits in total at Levels 4 and 5 that were created ‘with’ stakeholders as opposed to ‘for’ stakeholders.

## Mind the Gap: Sustainability in Accounting Curriculum and Green Skills in the Accounting Profession

Dr Didem Gundogdu (Queen Mary University of London)

The UK Parliament (2024) has recently published a POST Note presenting its analysis of the current state of green skills in education and employment in the United Kingdom (UK). The Platform for Advancing Green Human Capital (2017) defines green skills as “the professional knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed in the transition to a green economy” (p. 5). To meet the expectations of a wide range of stakeholders, accounting professionals providing strategic advice on various sustainability-related business decisions are and will be in high demand in both domestic and international job markets. In line with the UK Government’s increasing emphasis on the need for upskilling the workforce, higher education institutions, along with the professional bodies, have a crucial role in upskilling the talent in the accounting profession.

To respond to this urgent call for action, this study aims to explore whether sustainability in accounting curriculum is currently fit for purpose, and whether the breadth and depth of sustainability-informed accounting education enables students to foster their green skills as required by the employers in the accounting sector. In this study, we are drawing upon the green skills framework by Kwauk and Casey (2022, 2021) to analyse to what extent current accounting curricula delivered in two UK universities facilitate the growth of instrumental and transformative skills among accounting students, and to identify possible skills gaps between the academic content and the expectations of the accounting sector. This framework is particularly useful for our study because firstly, it outlines various types of green skills that accounting education should aim to cultivate. These include skills for green jobs, green life, and green transformation. This is an underexplored area in the current literature. Secondly, Kwauk and Casey’s (2021) classification of green skills required for driving technical and social transformation serves as both a sorting tool and a focal point for analysis, allowing us to capture and interpret the diverse skills cultivated in current accounting education to foster a comprehensive understanding of their implications.

This study contributes to the current literature by providing an account of the extent to which sustainability is incorporated accounting education to advance students’ green skills. It elaborates on the green skills framework in a social science discipline, allowing for the identification of new skills. It is also a study in the UK higher education context, and accounting in particular, which has been currently facing increased external and institutional pressures for contributing to the United Nations’ sustainable development goals. Results of our analyses have implications for the higher education institutions, accounting profession and national policymakers.

## Bridging the Gap: Cultivating Sustainability Initiatives in Post-92 Universities - A Case Study of the University of Greenwich

Dr Emilio Costales; Dr Grace O'Rourke (University of Greenwich)

This study presents a ‘state-of play’ review of sustainability practices at a typical post-92 university - by taking the University of Greenwich as a case study. Despite sharing common challenges typical to institutions of its kind: an early-stage sustainability culture and disjunction between senior management deliverables and grassroots pedagogical initiatives, this research endeavours to map pathways towards fostering multi-level pathways necessary for cultivating sustainability initiatives within a university business school.

Situated within the broader context of the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), and as an illustrative example, the authors of this abstract – both early career academics – hold the distinction of PRME champions within the University of Greenwich. We secured internal funding to implement rolling carbon literacy training, targeting (thus far) two cohorts of students, all of whom have since been certified – these students will also facilitate future training with the view to widening the net in terms of those qualified as sustainable citizens (both during and after their time at University of Greenwich). As a consequence of our pilot initiative, senior management has resolved to deliver university-wide faculty and student sustainability literacy; this demonstrates a pivotal role is being played by junior academic staff members in driving sustainability initiatives, despite their positionality within the wider organizational culture. In particular, this Carbon Literacy initiative showcases successful grassroots opportunities with the potential for wider organizational development. Though still ongoing, the project has already highlighted various points of inflection whereby bottom-up, middle-out, and top-down collaborative approaches can catalyse sustainable change within post-92 universities.

The aim of this project is to develop a starting point for sustainability-related pedagogy that can be replicated by similar institutions. The authors believe that currently, there is no ‘working standard’ for comprehensively cultivating a culture of sustainable education within a university and thus, we seek to fill this gap by offering pedagogical insights derived from our multi-stakeholder approach. We will induce an autoethnographic methodology we will draw on our reflections of change whilst employed at Greenwich, combined with experiences and insights from institutions facing similar challenges. We can say with certainty, sustainability focused initiatives of junior staff should be better harnessed and encouraged – as illustrated by our example of the aforementioned student-led carbon literacy initiative. Furthermore, we contend that a bottom-up, middle-out, and top-down approach to sustainability education has the potential to consolidate the three traditional academic realms: research, teaching, and academic citizenship.

Overall, this study serves as a point of departure for further discussions on the cultivation and support of sustainability initiatives within post-92 universities. By identifying current barriers and challenges, this research endeavours to pave the way for a more sustainable future in higher education, wherein the principles for responsible management education emerges as core component of the student experience.

## PRME Chapter UK and Ireland Interest Group focused on Sustainability, Employability and Jobs of the Future

Dr Jonathan Louw; Dr Karen Cripps (Oxford Brookes University)

Background

Over the past year we have set up a **PRME Chapter UK and Ireland Interest Group focused on Sustainability, Employability and Jobs of the Future.** We have held some 5 events since our inception, hold details of some 60 people from Chapter schools on our mailing list and wish to use the 2024 conference as an opportunity to:

(a) Provide interim findings from two research studies (one involving multiple Interest Group members, the other Oxford Brookes only) – see details below

(b)Engage in workshop activities with Interest Group members to explore interest in further collaborations between member schools

Research Study One

**An investigation of organisations’ approaches to Business and Management placement, internship and new graduate level roles related to Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability (ERS).**

Student placements (and shorter-term internships) are integral to many Schools’ employability and work-based learning strategies. Despite clear evidence in surveys such as ‘Students Organising for Success’ of interest in sustainability and the growing green/sustainability skills job sector, within the field of Business, Management and Enterprise the experience is that student and graduate demand is greater than current job offer supply in this domain. This research project seeks to fill an ‘ERS placement and graduate recruitment knowledge gap’ by understanding what kind of roles organisations offer, if and how ERS components might be made more explicit, what ERS skills are sought after, how roles are communicated, and what Business Schools can do through operational processes and/or curriculum development to more explicitly link curriculum learning with placement and graduate role opportunities so as to benefit both students and employers.

The governmental ‘green jobs taskforce’ advises that coordinated action is urgently required at policy, business and educational level to address a skills gap (Centrica 2023). The research responds to this call through the study of desirable skills. taking as a framework those skills mapped by research studies such as Microsoft and BCG (2022). Kwauk and Casey (2021) refer to ‘transformative’ green skills that are needed to address unjust social and economic structures. This research is concerned with such ‘transformational expertise’, to consider broad workforce engagement, enablement and empowerment, and the role of HE institutions in developing the ERS skills talent pipeline. Through working alongside industry/employer collaborative partners, particularly the sustainability reporti g comparison platform Windo, it also enables the collation of data that can be used to directly inform how opportunities are communicated to applicants.

**Research Questions**

:

1. What is the scale and explicitness of sustainability-related roles

2. Where sustainability is not explicit, why is this the case

3. What are employer perceptions of applicant interest in and demand for sustainability-related roles

4. What are employer perceptions of applicant readiness in terms of desirable skills for sustainability-related roles

5. What are employer perceptions of the organisational (non-curricular) role universities do and could play in promoting and facilitating sustainability-related role uptake?

At the conference the aim is to share findings from the pilot survey stage of the study, and to recruit further Schools that might be interested in involving their business networks in survey completion.

Research Study Two

**An exploration of the extent and nature of student engagement in and learning from ERS projects while on placement**

Student placements are integral to Oxford Brookes Business School’s entrepreneurial and experiential learning strategy, representing an opportunity to develop confidence and enhance analytical and communication skills, to support future career choices. Institutionally, placements form part of the strategy to ensure enterprise and employability are fully embedded into the student experience. Furthermore, placements represent a key opportunity to reinforce sustainability competencies, as defined by the QAA and Advance HE (2021) and reflected in recent Subject Benchmark Standards (QAA, 2023).

Yet despite clear evidence of student interest in sustainability (SOS-UK 2023) and the growing green/sustainability skills job sector (gov.uk, 2021), there are relatively few placement roles that explicitly detail Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability (ERS) projects/desirable skills. However, this does not necessarily mean that ERS opportunities are not implicit within more generic placement roles, and it does not limit students’ opportunities to proactively seek out and engage in such projects when on placement. Our project seeks to fill an ‘ERS placement knowledge gap’ by understanding what kind of projects our undergraduate Business School students are involved in, and what we can do through operational processes and/or curriculum, to more explicitly assist students in preparing for and engaging in sustainability-related placement opportunities. This will enhance students’ employability and career learning.

**Research Questions:**

1. Have students engaged in ERS-related projects while on placement, and if so has it been explicitly recognised/defined as such or is it more implicit?

2. What are student perceptions towards how engagement in ERS projects during placements develops their employability capital?

3. How might ERS components be effectively embedded into (a)university placement preparation and post placement learning curricula and (b) placement management processes?

At the conference the aim is to share the findings of this study, arising from 20-25 interviews with students on or just returned from placements.

Workshop Component

Proposed roundtable discussions focused on

1. Opportunities to get involved in further phases of Research Study One

2. Collaboration opportunities offered by Nottingham Trent University research projects in this area

3. Open discussion of topics for future Interest Group webinars and other events.

## Sustainability Accounting Education through an Innovative Pedagogical Approach

Dr Xinwu He (Queen's University Belfast)

I would like to propose an interactive workshop titled Sustainability Accounting Education through an Innovative Pedagogical Approach for the upcoming PRME UK and Ireland Chapter 11th Annual Conference. This workshop aims to share experience and insights and foster collaborative discussions on embedding SDGs into accounting/business education, inspired by the implementation of a pedagogical project titled Understanding Sustainable Diet and Accounting for the SDGsi. This project won the PRME UK&I Chapter Seed Funding Competition for Developing Innovative Pedagogic Approaches and Teaching Practices in 2023, which can serve as an example of innovative pedagogical approaches towards sustainability education.

The proposed interactive workshop will have two parts (duration: 1 hour). In **Part 1** (20 minutes), I will do a presentation on the outcome of the pedagogical project and share the transferable learning resources generated from it, which can be of benefit to the wider UK&I PRME Community. Specifically, the presentation will cover the following aspects:

• Project Introduction: A brief overview of the pedagogical project, including its purpose, design, and links to the SDGs, the PRME Seven Principles, and the PRME i5 Framework.

• Implementation Insights: Sharing the highlights of the unique one-day live learning event that combines a visit to a local farm, sustainable lunch and informative speeches, interaction with a food retail company, and students producing learning outputs.

• Challenges and Solutions: Reflections on the main challenges encountered during the project implementation and how they were resolved.

• Student Engagement: Presenting feedback and perspectives from students who participated in the project, highlighting the impact on their understanding and commitment to sustainable diet and SDGs broadly. Feedback from university staff members and guest speakers who participated in the project will also be shared.

• Transferable Resources: Introduction to the learning resources generated from the project, including a book chapter (which will be published in October 2024), a podcast episode, and a blog article.

**Part 2** (40 minutes) of this workshop will be an interactive brainstorming. I will facilitate a discussion among the workshop attendees, to reflect on the presented project, discuss areas of improvement, and explore other potential innovative pedagogical methods/techniques. Predetermined questions for the brainstorming include:

• How can we further integrate the SDGs into business school curricula across various disciplines?

• What innovative assessment methods can enhance students’ engagement with sustainability issues?

• How can partnerships with local businesses and communities be optimised for sustainability accounting/business education?

• What role do digital learning tools play in enhancing sustainability education?

• How can we measure the impact of sustainability-focused pedagogical projects on student learning outcomes and even behavior?

To foster a rich exchange of ideas, the workshop attendees will be encouraged to share their experiences, insights, and recommendations on the above questions or more broadly.

Overall, the proposed workshop can help share the outcomes, experience, and insights from the innovative pedagogical project, inspiring and equipping attendees with ideas and resources to implement similar initiatives. By fostering an environment of brainstorming and collaborative learning, I aspire to contribute to advancing sustainability accounting/business education within the PRME community. This workshop aligns with the conference theme, particularly focusing on the Healthier track. It encompasses themes including sustainability accounting/business education, innovative pedagogical methods, PRME’s Seven Principles, PRME i5 Framework, and SDGs.

## Transforming Education: Integrating Sustainability Across Curriculum and Assessment at the University of Sussex Business School

Estela Castelli Florino Pilz (Sulitest); Alison Bailey (University of Sussex); Dr Madina Tash (University of Sussex)

The urgency of today’s global challenges demands a shift towards mainstreaming sustainability, so that everyone has a sufficient understanding of it, and can integrate it into their personal and professional practices and decisions.

At a general macro level, the University of Sussex Business School is fully committed to advancing its mission and dedication to social responsibility, ethical practice, and sustainability, aligning with the United Nations Global Compact and Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), both of which organizations the School is a member of. The School integrates these values into curricula, teaching, and research, fostering and infusing a culture of sustainability and equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to address complex sustainability challenges to build a more sustainable and equitable future.

At the specific micro level, the School prioritises teaching, researching, and engagement aligned with PRME and UN Global Compact’s principles, in various manners, ranking from embedding sustainability into the curriculum and research initiatives to fostering collaborations with industry to engaging students, staff and external agents in sustainability-oriented initiatives. For example, we integrate and embed sustainability within the curriculum and ensure linkages are transparent at a course and a module level through module and course templates. We have dedicated Education for Sustainable Development pages with global, national, and local sources of information and educational opportunities. Module convenors, reports to course directors to indicate the SDGs covered and assessed in each module to make sure the entire course offers a solid and coherent discussion of sustainability. Through a thorough quality assurance process, we review our course portfolios regularly to align them closely with PRME and sustainability principles.

In March 2023, Sulitest launched TASK™—The Assessment of Sustainability Knowledge—an online, 112-item, multiple-choice, psychometric test that measures both the quantity and quality of knowledge about sustainability possessed by test-takers. TASK™ issues a certificate to each participant stating their score, acting as a sustainability micro-credential.

In October 2023, the University of Sussex Business School became the first UK institution to become a TASK™ Change Leader, committing to certifying most of their graduates with this sustainability assessment. As a first step, the school offered the assessment to over 400 first-year students as an “entry-assessment”. This generated the interest of third-year students and post-graduate students, who will soon take the assessment too.

This session will share more about our deployment strategy and give insights into the levers for changing curriculum and assessment methods. The TASK™ certificate, that will be offered to all our graduating students and is an example of commitment to educating and motivating students to understand complex issues of the interplay of environmental, societal, and economic sustainability.

## Towards expanding paradigms through action research approaches to research and education - enabling deep transformational learning

Dr Helena Mary Kettleborough (Manchester Metropolitan University)

This paper grows from the perspective of an educator, community activist, manager and policy maker. It argues the case for genuinely new approaches to research and learning in Business Schools which can lead to wise and urgent action.

Globally, humanity is not cutting emissions or transitioning fast enough. UN General Secretary António Guterres reflecting on 2023 being the hottest year on record, stated that “the era of global warming is over; the era of global boiling has begun” and that “We have opened the Gates of Hell”. Global temperatures on land and sea are unprecedented (Vaughan, 2024), NOAA and ‘simply mind boggling’ according to scientists. And, whilst the gap between the world’s richest and poorest ever widens, evidence mounts that the consequences of climate and ecological breakdown will bear most heavily on the poorest continents, countries and communities.

Collectively we need transformative new ways of thinking and acting. Alongside science and technological advancements to mitigate further damage, learning in society needs to be joined up, multi-disciplinary and open to community, ecology and planet. This paper explores how action research can contribute to the development of such learning – encouraging and facilitating collaborative, inquisitive and inclusive inquiry.

The paper argues that the PRME Principles working alongside the UNSDGs offer a unique opportunity to address these challenges through participating business schools. It particularly focuses on expanding paradigms, worldviews and mindsets, presenting a family of paradigms helping researchers and learners locate themselves within a meaningful universe. Arising from the author’s two decades of applying action research methods in a variety of community, government and academic settings, it briefly explores five hopeful paradigms. By exploring each of these both visually and by signposts to resources, the paper can contribute to the three objectives of the 10th Annual Conference of PRME being met.

This paper points to an Action Research Toolkit – the adoption of which in Business Schools would radically reshape current curricula and pedagogies and open the door to transformational approaches to thinking and learning. This approach critiques current paradigms of infinite growth and consumption on a finite planet; energizes participants by offering hopeful paradigms within which they can locate their teaching and learning and enables learners to imagine a different world where the economy restores a healthy planet.

The paper offers a brief critique of action research and again signposts to further references.

Finally, a case study of a current initiative at MMU’s Strategy, Enterprise and Sustainability Department bringing together staff, students and community to plant and nurture trees in a local inner-city park will be presented. A PRME grant will enable tracking the development of experiential learning by students in such a setting alongside their traditional learning in the classroom and the way in which it uses extended ways of knowing to develop wider paradigms.

The paper, built on of my experience and ideas explored in my book: Journey to Hopeful Futures: A Handbook (2023), ends by calling for action research to be adopted as a learning methodology, an orientation towards inquiry and an underpinning for deeper transformational learning across disciplines in participating PRME Business Schools as the world boils…

## Systems Thinking in Practice and Application: A collaborative, multi-university, inter-disciplinary approach to provide students with a systems view toolkit for Responsible Strategic Thinking

Dr Olivia Ramsbottom, Dr Marc Duffy, Dr Caroline Linhares (Sheffield Hallam University)

Questions of ‘sustainability’ in management have tended to concentrate on ecological responsibility (Mirvis, Googins, and Kinnicutt, 2010), but there is increasing recognition that sustainability covers three parts: ecological, economic, and social responsibilities as part of a linked system, and if we can balance the ecological with the social and economic, then we stand more chance of creating lasting solutions (Edwards, 2005).

This ‘Systems Thinking’ approach recognises that the world is complex and made up of a series of networks incorporating individual work and social units, and all individual units and networks interact with each other and with the ecological environment, our world, of which we are all part. Often in management and in the design of products, services, and infrastructure, we tend not to look outside of the individual unit or insular entity (Haslam and Shenoy, 2018) and we fail to understand the impact of our decisions on other units and networks. This has been recognised and discussed, always with a sense of impending doom when looking at the ecological impact of our economic and social decisions, by theorists and authors, from at least the 1970s onwards (Beer, 1973; Forrester, 1971; Liedtka, 1998; Senge, 1997; Sterman, 2002; Higgins, 2015; Raworth, 2017). Instead of standing separately, the units and networks are, and should be considered as, cogs or levers processes of cause and effect, stocks, and flows and feedback loops (Sterman, 2002; Higgins, 2015; Raworth, 2017). The danger is in making decisions in one area without being aware of the impact on another.

To reflect the need for systems thinking in strategic thinking, a team of academics from three different universities (Sheffield Hallam, Derby and Ulster) and from different disciplines (management, politics, law, public policy, finance, economics) (recognising the necessity for systems thinking in developing solutions) has come together to create a systems view toolkit that reflects the complexity and interconnectedness of our world and encourages a systems view approach to strategic thinking in future, to ensure a balance of greener, healthier and fairer business and organisation planning.

This interactive workshop will talk through examples of our complex, interconnected world, challenge the traditional linear rational approach to strategic management and planning, explain the systems thinking approach, and present a model for future thinking (a work in progress) with case studies of where ‘thinking differently’ has worked in organisations.

## Teach, Play, Learn, Repeat – Iterative Playful Design for Creating Supportive Classroom Dynamics

Dr Sean Tanner - Research Seed Funding Competition for Innovative Pedagogic Approaches and Teaching Practices winner, Dr Conor Drummond, Dr Helen McGrath, Michael Murphy, Dr David Alton, Dr Tadgh Nagle (University College Cork)

There is increased recognition of the need to reassess pedagogic approaches within the marketing discipline to best enable students to meet broader industry and societal challenges upon entering the workforce (Moufahim et al., 2023). Consequently play-based approaches which foster engaging, open and collaborative learning spaces have been garnering increased attention (Dichev & Dicheva, 2017), specifically in higher level business education (Gupta & Goyal, 2022). Particularly, in the context of responsible management and sustainable leadership, exploration of difficult and often contentious issues requires instructors to create open learning environments conducive to the sharing of viewpoints reflective of diverse perspectives and stakeholders. To this end, play can act as a vehicle for both establishing relationships between students and creating collegial environments, as well as exploring complex and contentious issues.

Building on the work of Huizinga (1955) play takes various forms and can employ a combination of mimicry (e.g. role play, dramaturgy, simulation), competition (e.g. individual/group-based gamified learning within the boundaries of rules), chance (e.g., games based on luck/‘randomness’), and vertigo (e.g., experiences that result in heightened emotions such as ecstasy, fear). Although play has been previously argued to support the creation of a 'ludic learning space' (Kolb & Kolb, 2010), it is also recognised that playful learning may be unfamiliar for many students.

This paper outlines multi-module iterative play-based teaching intervention deployed with 28 postgraduate marketing students over one semester to understand how play-based interventions support the creation of open learning environments and enable students to:

• engage in responsible and collegial business practice

• communicate effectively and transparently with media stakeholders

• identify best practices in real-world environments to inform decision-making

• critically assess sustainability considerations for new product development.

Student engagement with playful learning can be underpinned by varied motives (Jaskari & Syrjälä, 2023). Consequently, this project encompassed 4 distinct play-based teaching interventions, including dramaturgy, competitive role-play with PR practitioners, treasure hunt-based activities and board games. These activities sought to reflect different play modalities and support students in transitioning from simulative, less structured play to competitive play, wherein students play occurred within the boundaries of rules which defined acceptable behaviours. As a common theme throughout the activities, the project also sought to draw on the i5 Principles (PRME, 2023) to create meaningful, enjoyable and engaged learning experiences. This was enabled through an iterative approach to play interventions which sought to reflect not only marketing practice dilemmas, but also the impact of decisions from the viewpoints of others.

Data were collected contemporaneously, through a combination of co-teaching facilitated peer review, instructor reflective journaling, student artefacts and qualitative and quantitative student feedback. Initial findings suggest that play supported the development of stronger social bonds between students, improving the classroom dynamic from both a student and instructor perspective. Play was cited by students as a vehicle through which they could better appreciate others’ opinions. Interestingly, combining play modalities such as simulation and rule-based play was observed to lead students to question the appropriateness and fairness of current systems, thereby facilitating broader discussions of marketing’s role within society.

## The ASPIRE Project at Sheffield Business School: Advancing Fairness and Equity in Higher Education

Dr Caroline Kom; Dr Francis Awolowo (Sheffield Hallam University)

Racism persists within British society, subtly permeating public, and private sectors, including academia. Structural racism, particularly evident in UK universities, presents a daunting barrier for Black academics aspiring to reach professorial ranks. Despite a growing number of Black academics, their representation at senior levels remains disproportionately low. Statistics reveal a stark reality: of the 23,515 professors in UK universities, a mere 165 identify as Black, with only 61 being female. With just two Black Vice Chancellor among 164, the absence of role models raises the poignant question – how can one aspire to what one scarcely sees?

This proposal aims to introduce initiatives like the Accomplished Study Program in Research Excellence (ASPIRE) in fostering a more inclusive academic community. Funded by the Office for Students, ASPIRE is a collaborative endeavour led by Sheffield Business School, Manchester Metropolitan University, and Advance HE. Tailored by Black academics for Black students, ASPIRE aims to cultivate confidence and nurture aspirations among socially disadvantaged Black and Black heritage students interested in doctoral study. The program empowers students and fosters deeper reflection and understanding of race among PGR supervisory teams.

ASPIRE is a dynamic six-month journey comprising weekly workshops, activities, and synchronous/asynchronous classes. In alignment with SDG 10 on reduced inequalities, as well as the PRME's seven principles of responsible management education, ASPIRE employs a compassionate pedagogy to address the challenges of disparity and underrepresentation in Higher Education. ASPIRE is anchored on five core pillars – professional and personal development, academic writing, employability, and research skills. This approach acknowledges scholars as individuals with unique experiences and needs.

Now in its third cohort, the ASPIRE project at Sheffield Business School has mentored Black ethnic minoritized students through personalized mentorship delivered by trained Black academics. Moreover, ASPIRE catalyzes tangible outcomes. Reflecting on their journeys, scholars have expressed newfound courage and resilience. Crucially, the shared lived experiences with mentors foster a sense of belonging and understanding previously absent in their academic journey. Scholars, initially hesitant and undervaluing their skills, have reported heightened confidence and self-belief in taking the next step on their academic journeys. Many of these scholars now envision doctoral study or graduate employment, while others have excelled in their postgraduate programs or ventured into previously unconsidered fields.

The success of ASPIRE underscores the transformative potential of personalised mentorship and equal opportunity to marginalized and minoritized students. It challenges universities and business schools to confront structural racism and embrace diversity at all levels. Prioritizing personalized mentorship and equal opportunity can empower underrepresented Black scholars and reshape institutional landscapes; fostering inclusive environments that propel qualified Black academics to professorial ranks. The need for increased representation of Black academics in senior roles cannot be overstated. ASPIRE exemplifies a model for change in UK universities, amplifies the commitment of Business Schools in addressing barriers to PGR and paves the way to a more inclusive academic community.

## The development of a Sustainability Mindset Toolkit for enterprise educators – results of a research project

Barbara Tomasella; Richard Howarth; Anne Wylie; Michelle Littlemore, Chris Moon, Dr Karen Cripps, Walid Al Saad, Dr Catherine Brentnall (University of Derby)

The lead of the PRME working group on Sustainability MIndset, Isabel Rimanoczy, recently participated in an online meeting convened by a team of researchers and practitioners from the UK. This meeting followed an initial workshop, hosted by University of Derby, and funded by Enterprise Educators UK, to develop a toolkit on Sustainability MIndset for enterprise educators.

The workshop was preceded by a survey of participants, all expert educators, and practitioners, and followed up with a post workshop survey, to ascertain which tools were currently being used and how such a toolkit could add value. All participants were familiarised with The Sustainability Mindset Principles (SMP), as developed by Rimanoczy (2020), and interactive tools were used during facilitated sessions to exemplify how the SMP could be used in practice.

This paper or workshop at PRME 2024 will thus disseminate findings from the two prior events and provide a useful update to PRME members of this important funded research.

The EEUKRP project included a review of literature which was conducted on the following basis. We conducted a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of the published literature from trustworthy peer-reviewed publications in the major database Scopus. Using a set of 199 publications, including journal papers, conference papers, and reviews, for the last 15 years, between 2007 and 2023, the SLR highlights the frameworks, competencies, and opportunities of implementing sustainable entrepreneurship in higher education to improve sustainability teaching practises. Sustainability research on entrepreneurial education exposed a substantial increase in research in the past few years. A total of 199 papers were obtained and systematically reviewed.

Based on examining the existing literature concerning sustainability and entrepreneurship, we've pinpointed several areas where there is a lack of knowledge. These gaps present opportunities for conducting research that can have a more significant impact on the subject.

Our findings from the literature reveal several exciting results, firstly we compiled the extant literature on sustainable entrepreneurship education and secondly we developed a preliminary sustainable entrepreneurship competencies framework.

## One Planet Leadership – Implementing collaborative education for Staff, Students, and Executives within the PRME Network

Prof. Jonathan Gosling (Pelumbra); Miriam Gage (McGill University); Prof. Donald Lancaster (University of Exeter); Orla Keleher (University of Derby)

Aim: This workshop aims to refine proposals for PRME-registered schools worldwide to introduce collaborative One Planet Leadership courses targeted at: (a) Experienced managers (Executive Education) (b) Full-time students engaged in capstone projects (Masters or final year undergraduate level)

Overview: Recognizing the inherent interconnectedness of our world, effective leadership must embrace systemic thinking and inclusivity. Moreover, the broader environment—ecological, political, economic, and cultural—intersects with leadership at all levels, prompting reflection on values and the breadth of interests at stake. Responsible leadership necessitates both a moral compass and inclusive stakeholder engagement, coupled with ‘response-ability’ — an objective integral to management and leadership education.

Hence our proposal to establish consortia to develop and administer two courses under the banner of "One Planet Leadership." These courses aim to facilitate universities and business schools in offering immersive experiences to their students in a straightforward and cost-effective manner. This idea was floated after the 2023 UK&I PRME Chapter Conference, is now progressively recruiting Schools and planning a launch in 2025. This workshop would be a key opportunity for UK&I registered Schools to find out more about, and perhaps sign up to the initiative.

The first course targets Executive MBA and Executive Development participants, addressing the unique challenges faced by individuals holding significant roles in formal organizations, communities, or campaigns.

The second course targets full-time undergraduate and Masters students (including MBAs) during their capstone project phase. It is designed as a co-curricular offering, emphasizing leadership, team dynamics, client relations, and project management within the framework of One Planet principles, emphasizing sustainability and responsibility.

This Conference Workshop will delve into the proposed design, pedagogy, and content of the courses, exploring their potential value for faculty and schools in integrating sustainability, ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance), SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), and responsible leadership in a practical, experiential format.

Workshop Design: Following a brief overview of the course and consortium proposals, participants will engage in small-group discussions to identify specific challenges in their school’s current course offerings, referencing PRME, AACSB, EQUIS, and other criteria. They will then explore how the One Planet Leadership courses could address these challenges. Through facilitated sessions, participants will critique and refine the proposed course designs, as well as discuss practicalities related to collaboration with institutions worldwide.

Facilities: A flat room setup with tables for small-group discussions