# Embedding social responsibility in HE corporate communications degrees

The place of CSR in teaching corporate communications programs (advertising, branding and public relations)

By Rutherford and Richard Scullion

Chapter in: **Corporate Social Responsibility in the Post Financial Crisis: CSR conceptualisations and international practices in times of uncertainty** edited by Dr Anastasios Theofilou, Dr Georgiana Grigore and Dr Alin Stancu. Palgrave (2016)
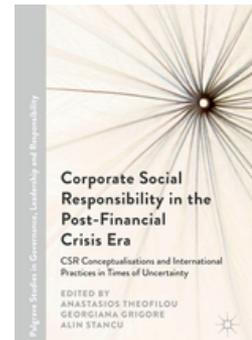
Abstract

As the continued viability of companies increasingly depends on the public's confidence in their commitment to social justice, sustainable design and environmental responsibility, companies must be prepared to reconsider what and how they communicate, to whom, and for what purpose. Corporate communications programs therefore have a responsibility, not only to our graduates and their future employers, but to those whose lives will be affected by their values and decisions.

This chapter will consider the implications, opportunities and challenges of embedding the principles and practices of CSR in the design and delivery of advertising, marketing communications and public relations programs within the context of the administrative, economic and conceptual constraints resulting from the 2008 financial recession.

keywords

CSR, corporate communications, higher education, 'mental pictures'

1. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility is a politically, morally, economically and culturally loaded concept; not simply a niche area of contemporary business practice. This chapter will consider the implications of CSR for the design and delivery of advertising, marketing communications and public relations programs, including the opportunities and challenges for fostering ethical corporate behavior. We suggest that there are two main issues: *How we can enhance our students' knowledge and understanding of CSR* and *How we can engender their commitment to the application of its objectives, principles and practices*.

As observed by the editors of this volume, consumers as well as the broader civic community increasingly demand that companies demonstrate a commitment to creating what Porter and Kramer (2011) term "shared value". In addition to the impact of CSR on competitive advantage, customer loyalty, staff morale and the ability to attract and retain staff (Webb, 2016), the OECD reports (Nieuwenkamp, 2016) that even access to finance will increasingly depend on companies' demonstrable commitment to ethical policies and practices such as sustainable design, social justice, the ethical treatment of animals and environmental responsibility. As a consequence, CSR metrics have become a standard feature of corporate annual reports (Waller and Lanis, 2009).

> [A] cursory glance at the websites of large multinationals such as British Petroleum, Shell, British American Tobacco and BT [reveals that] many industries and sectors create much fanfare around their corporate responsibility initiatives. Indeed […] Corporate Social Responsibility is now a key marketing and branding reference point for most large and medium sized corporations. (Hanlon and Fleming, 2009)

Despite the evidence that CSR is increasingly important in ensuring the goodwill of both consumers and communities, public confidence in the professed commitment of the corporate sector is regularly undermined by reports that, in the pursuit of maximized profits, many major corporations are prepared to ignore or actively flout popular notions of social justice and environmental responsibility with little or no regard for the consequences for their reputations.

> A big part of the problem lies with companies themselves, which remain trapped in an outdated approach to value creation [...] optimizing short-term financial performance in a bubble while missing the most important customer needs and ignoring the broader influences that determine their longer-term success [including] the well-being of their customers, the depletion of natural resources [and] the economic distress of the communities in which they produce and sell [...].
> (Porter and Kramer, 2011)

In the wake of the economic recession of 2007-08 which led to government spending cuts and a reduction in public services, already rising levels of social inequality (OECD, 2016) have been exacerbated by the spread of predatory employment practices such as the use of 'zero-hour' contracts (up 19% during 2014 – ONS). During the same period, the public has seen executive pay expand while the pay of workers stagnates, enormous bonuses paid to bankers widely blamed for both the financial crash of 2007-08 and the resulting austerity measures imposed by the same governments that countenance, or even tacitly support, 'aggressive' corporate tax avoidance and the use of tax havens which reduce the revenues needed to fund healthcare, education, social programs and infrastructure. As acknowledged by the Chair of the OECD Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct however, "Corporate tax responsibility […] is most often not on the radar screen of a CSR manager". (Nieuwenkamp, 2016)

> [A]ccording to a survey of the British public [...] four out of five people agreed that tax avoidance by multinationals made them "feel angry" [and] that a third of Britons say that they are boycotting companies which do not pay their "fair share" of tax in the UK. In a 2012 IBE survey carried out by Ipsos MORI, 'tax avoidance' was the second most important ethics issue that the British public think business needs to address. (Institute of Business Ethics, 2013)

Media reports of large-scale protests, boycotts, petitions, social media campaigns and various forms of public 'shaming' attest to public anger in response to what are deemed unacceptable corporate behaviors. The increase in both the number and frequency of such actions indicate that the public is both more likely to be informed about–and less willing to tolerate–the indifference of corporations to the consequences of their policies and practices on lives, communities and the climate. The claim that '*We're all in this together*' has transmogrified from just another political platitude to become a rallying cry in the growing demand for meaningful change.

> [T]he tide of public opinion is visibly turning. Even 10 years ago news of a company minimising its corporation tax would have been more likely to be inside the business pages than on the front page. In September 2009, the Observer ran with the headline: "Avoiding tax robs our public services, declares minister". (Barford and Holt, 2013)

In light of growing public anger, cynicism and increasingly well-organized campaigns able to channel this into effective action, empty claims by companies of ethical practice behind which it is 'business as usual' risk being promptly and publicly exposed with potentially devastating consequences for reputations and share value. (It will be instructive to see how long it will take for Volkswagen's reputation for environmental responsibility to recover from the discovery of having 'cheated' in emissions testing.) The OECD has warned of the consequences should the public come to see CSR "primarily as a PR tool [and] merely a greenwashing exercise" (Nieuwenkamp, 2016), especially where such assurances are used as an argument against government regulation. The authors take the position that, to ensure public goodwill, CSR initiatives must reflect a demonstrable commitment to ethical policies and practices.

As a major influence over the attitudes and behaviors of graduates (Stes et. al., 2010; Parsons et. al., 2012), we argue that educators have a responsibility to foster students' understanding of–and commitment to–the principles of corporate social responsibility. Following a brief examination of the role of CSR in corporate communications, we consider how HE communications programs might achieve this.

2. CSR in corporate communications

While the relevance of CSR to business and management is gaining acceptance, Kendrick et al. (2013) note that less attention has been paid to its application to, and its implications for corporate communications. While CSR has an important role in guiding the management of companies (for example, in its procurement and HR policies), corporate communications has an equally important role in creating constructive relationships between customers and brands as a means to enhance social justice and environmental sustainability.

At the heart of corporate communications is the notion of compelling narratives: the 'stories' told about brands, products and services, as well as politicians, policies and the Right Priorities. Through the affective use of emotionally resonant words and images, corporate communications is able to present clients' products as the solution for the audience's desire for popularity, worthiness and success, thereby subtly influencing the way in which audiences define their desires and 'mentally picture' their fulfillment. As a result, despite the contribution of advertising, marketing communications and public relations agencies to constructive social change through *pro bono* work on campaigns to reduce smoking, domestic violence and climate change, the corporate communications industry is often associated in the public consciousness with less positive influences.

> [T]he social impact of advertising is often viewed as detrimental [with] criticism ranged from promoting commercialism, intrusion and irrationality, reinforcing sexual stereotypes, trivializing language, and provoking negative feelings. (Kendrick et al., 2013)

The persuasive influence of the presentation of information on our perceptions is well known.

> The effect of making men think in accordance with dogmas, perhaps in the form of certain graphic propositions, will be very peculiar: I am not thinking of these dogmas as determining men's opinions but rather as completely controlling the *expression* of all opinions. People will live under an absolute, palpable tyranny, though without being able to say they are not free. (Wittgenstein, 1937)

However, as companies come to realize the extent to which their ability to differentiate their brands and so protect their share value depends on their public *persona*, communications agencies have begun to provide more substantial services than the design and production of materials that influence the perceptions and behaviors of consumers. As "the first step towards developing a CSR mentality is to redefine the principles of the company" (Camilleri, 2016), to assist clients in responding effectively to the market's demand for sustainable design, social justice and environmental responsibility, advertising, marketing communications and public relations agencies are increasingly called upon to lead clients through a fundamental re-conception of who they are and how they 'prove' it.

In undertaking this work, creative agencies have both an opportunity and responsibility to assist clients in recognizing the extent to which their current definition of 'success' and the pursuit of short-term financial goals has got them 'stuck' in policies and practices which, by damaging the environment and the social and economic well-being of the communities in which they operate, threatens to undermine their continued viability.

But of course, in preparing to undertake such an ontological task (*Help us to become something else…something better…*) the corporate communication industry must ask its own '*raison d'être*' questions. Thus, just as the rise of social media fundamentally changed both the purpose and practices of advertising, branding, marketing communications and public relations (from creating persuasive messages and visual materials for defined target markets to engaging diverse audiences in meaningful

conversations and relationships), the demand for socially responsible practices and 'corporate citizenship' is once again obliging communications agencies to comprehensively re-evaluate the nature of the relationships between brands and their customers, including what and how they communicate, to whom–and for what purpose.

In his 1964 manifesto *First Things First*, British designer Ken Garland spoke for many corporate communications professionals who had grown increasingly uneasy with supporting–and thereby implicitly endorsing–their influence on the ways in which "citizen-consumers speak, think, feel, respond and interact", arguing that this had led to "a reductive and immeasurably harmful code of public discourse" (Garland, 1964). Revised by Barnbrook et al. in 1999, thirty-three visual communicators renewed the call for an urgent change of priorities:

> Unprecedented environmental, social and cultural crises demand our attention. […] We propose a reversal of priorities in favour of more useful, lasting and democratic forms of communication – a mindshift away from product marketing and toward the exploration and production of a new kind of meaning. The scope of debate is shrinking; it must expand. Consumerism […] must be challenged by other perspectives expressed, in part, through the visual languages and resources of design. (Barnbrook et al., 1999)

3. Teaching CSR in higher education

This impetus for more reflective approaches and more socially conscious practices by communications professionals demands a meaningful response from higher education. In considering our role in shaping the knowledge and perspectives of graduates (what they understand and how they use this), institutions of higher education must also reflect on our societal purpose beyond merely supplying the next generation of skilled workers.

Despite–or perhaps in response to–the failure of many companies to embed CSR practices, HE business and management programs have begun to include ethics, corporate social responsibility and sustainability into their curricula (Brennan, 2012) to equip students/graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to assist their future employers in responding to the growing pressure to contribute to (or, at least, to be seen to contribute to) the wellbeing of the community. "The companies that hire our graduates are demanding it, our students need and usually want it, and our economy and society rely on it" (Ikenberry and Sockell, 2012).

Despite this however, there is evidence that the inclusion of CSR into HE business and management programs has been uneven. Although a majority of the top 50 global MBA programs (as rated by the Financial Times in their 2006 Global MBA rankings) now include CSR in their curricula, a 2003 survey of European business schools found an "intellectual bias against business ethics" (Matten and Moon, 2004), that CSR is often relegated to the status of "an elective or optional track of studies" (Hasrouni, 2012), and that, "[r]egardless of what is happening in the top […] MBA programs, there is a trend toward less ethics education overall" (Nicholson and DeMoss, 2009). Furthermore, consistent with the findings of Kendrick et al. (2013) that less attention has been paid to the role of CSR in corporate communications as a means to promote social justice and environmental sustainability, the literature on CSR in HE has likewise given relatively little attention to its integration in (or its implications for) the curricula of corporate communications (advertising, marketing communications and public relations) programs.

If HE programs are to serve the national economic interests (Mandelson, 2009), our programs must enable our graduates to understand and respond effectively to the changing socio-economic environment in which companies–their future employers–now operate. This will require more than just new modules inserted into existing curricula (Nicholson and DeMoss, 2009; Turker et al., 2016); it demands a fundamental reconsideration of the purpose of professional education, including what and how we teach–and for what purpose. It requires a critical review and re-evaluation of what these 'national economic interests' should (and could) be.

> [E]thics and corporate social sensitivity is not just a core curriculum issue. [The] ethical culture of a business school is pervasive. It is reflected in the context of courses, in expectations of ethical student conduct (and repercussions for unethical behaviors) […] and in the projects and programs to which the school devotes its energies and resources. (Nicholson and DeMoss, 2009)

We argue therefore that those who teach the corporate leaders of tomorrow have a responsibility, not only to our students and their future employers, but to the broader communities whose lives will be affected by their values and behaviors. Embedding the values of social and environmental responsibility within the teaching and learning environment is therefore essential, not only to improve our graduates' career prospects but, by encouraging 'business students to critically evaluate, analyse and question the basic premises underlying contemporary business practices' (García-Rosell, 2012) and their impact on the lives of those who will be affected by the policies and practices they will help to shape. This, in turn, will both encourage and enable our students to redefine the concept of 'successful business practices' and what it means to engage in these.

> The question is no longer whether CSR should have a place in the business curricula, but how it should be incorporated and what role business schools play within the wider "business in society" debate. Students, the marketplace, the community, government and civil society are increasingly demanding that business schools rethink their traditional role. (Haski-Leventhal, 2014)

> The oft-cited argument is that higher education has educated the politicians, managers, teachers, scientists and engineers who have taken us to our current and generally unsustainable position, and it is the education of future groups of these folk that will enable us to step up to new levels of sustainability. On this basis, curriculum change towards sustainability, for all students and not just those who choose to study sustainability-related topics, is the next critical stage. (Shepard, 2015)

In a recent review of CSR teaching in European business education, Turker et al. (2016) report that the wide variations in the way in which CSR is taught (and, by inference, the wide variations in the way in which it is defined) have significantly influenced students' perception of the topic. As observed by Boulding (1956), the way in which we IMAGInE, define or 'mentally picture' what something 'is' shapes our (often subconscious) assumptions about what it is 'for', and this, in turn, informs the decisions we make in our efforts to achieve it (Rutherford 2015).

> [W]e are bound to take a view of […] higher education, whether or not we articulate it and whether or not we are conscious of it. In that case, the models and approaches that we develop […] will take on the form of an ideology [that] contain hidden interests, bound up with our assumptions about the fundamental purposes of higher education. (Barnett, 1992, 15)

It follows therefore, that way in which we 'mentally picture' the purpose of teaching CSR will shape the way in which we present it to our students (what Entwistle, 2003, termed our "ways of thinking and practising in the subject"), and this, in turn, will influence our students' assumptions about the reasons we are teaching it. If we wish to encourage our students' commitment to the principles of CSR and its role in establishing a new, constructive relationship between the corporate and social spheres, we must consider carefully *our* 'mentally picture' of CSR and our beliefs about the purpose for including it in the curriculum. Do we 'see' CSR as just another promotional tactic for short-term economic advantage, and therefore just another professional skill our students will need if they are to improve their 'marketability' to future employers–or do we 'see' CSR as a means to engage our students, as citizens and professionals, in a debate about the contribution of affective communication to social justice, environmental responsibility and community health? (To "build value in people's lives, rather than plant messages in consumers' heads", Johnson, 2013) In the way in which we 'see' (and so present) the purpose of teaching CSR, we believe that HE programs have an opportunity to reclaim and re-invent our historic role as a critical friend and a source of radical social reform.

As explicitly endorsed by the Mission Statements of many universities, a central objective of higher education is to encourage our students to see themselves as more than just aspiring professionals, consumers and tax payers, but as human beings and citizens with a responsibility to contribute to the

wellbeing of the communities in which they will live and work. In our efforts to foster this attitude among students, we submit that advertising, marketing communications and public relations programs have a clear positional advantage over many other business disciples.

If we are to help our students to understand how to use communications to influence the ways in which audiences IMAGInE or 'mentally picture' brands, products, services, ideas and events, it is necessary to encourage (and assist) them in identifying–and in reflect critically upon–how the narratives implicit within commercial messages have influenced *their* perceptions. In other words, if we are to teach students *How We* (as advertisers) *Do It to Audiences*, it is necessary to lead them to consider *How They* (advertisers) *To It to Us* (Rutherford, 2012). If our students are unable to recognise how and why *they* have been affected by certain campaigns, we argue that they will be at a significant disadvantage in being able to make informed and appropriate decisions in the conception and execution of materials that will likewise affect others.

In designing our programs to foster, or even require, such on-going reflection and analysis on the part of students, we must encourage (and equip) our students to 'look around the frame' of the current neoliberal dogma in order to recognize–and question the implications of–the values and assumptions implicit within campaigns and messages. In this way, we not only encourage and validate the integration of professional and civic objectives, but simultaneously assist our students in developing the critical, imaginative and creative problem-solving skills upon which the future of their employers and clients will depend. In the effort to achieve this, there are two inter-related issues: *How we can enhance our students' knowledge and understanding of CSR* and *How we can engender their commitment to the application of its objectives, principles and practices*.

3.1 Enhancing students' knowledge and understanding of CSR

New dynamics, as well as changing consumer values and expectations have radically changed the communications industry. If students are to develop the cognitive, strategic and practical skills needed for a career in the communications industry, they must understand how to "build value in people's lives, rather than plant messages in consumers' heads" (Johnson, 2013) and develop the ability to translate that understanding into action (Ikenberry and Sockell, 2012).

According to numerous studies (Hidi and Harackiewicz, 2000; Crumpton and Gregory, 2011; Entwistle, et. al., 2002; Hockings et. al., 2008; Sanacore, 2008; Thomas and Jamieson-Ball, 2011; Yorke and Longden, 2008), the single most important influence on students' willingness to engage with a subject is the extent to which they perceive it to be 'relevant' to their lives and careers. To assist our students in *understanding* the ways in which CSR contributes to "shared value", we must provide opportunities to witness its impact through practical examples, case studies and live projects.

As identified by Haski-Leventhal (2014), students studying business subjects are keen to see how CSR issues can be incorporated into 'real life' business situations (Figure 3.1).

	Level of agreement in general
Bring in experts and leaders as guest speakers on these topics	85.1%
Encourage professors to introduce more applicable case studies in classes	80.4%
Educate recruiters on the importance of these themes in the MBA curriculum	72.6%
Integrate social and environmental themes into the core curriculum	70.7%
Provide students with internships related to corporate responsibility / sustainability	68.6%
Create a concentration on sustainability and corporate social responsibility	59.4%
Increase the number of electives that focus on social and environmental themes	55.6%
No changes are required	25.5%

Figure 3.1 Levels of agreement by 1,250 international MBA and Masters of Business students to proposed changes in responsible management education (adapted from Haski-Leventhal, 2014)

3.2 Engendering students' commitment to the objectives, principles and practices of CSR
We believe however, that it is not enough that students *understand* the ways in which CSR contributes to "shared value". To encourage our students' commitment to the aspirations of CSR, we advocate that we must do more than 'teach' it: we must 'practice what we preach' by demonstrably embedding CSR in the design and delivery our programs (Entwistle's "ways of thinking and practising in the subject"), including the nature of the projects we set and the criteria by which we assess these–ensuring that a passing grade requires the appropriate and effective application of its principles and practices and, at higher levels, the ability to critique these.

We must also embed its principles and practices in the management of our institutions. (While the widening participation agenda is often cited as a prime example of the incorporation of CSR in the management and delivery of UK higher education, as universities now reply for their funding on student tuition, 'widening participation' has become an economic necessity in order to ensure an adequate revenue stream.)

4.   The challenges in embedding CSR in HE

A number of the changes introduced into the UK HE sector since the 2007-08 economic recession pose significant challenges for the effective integration of CSR into our institutions and for the design and delivery of corporate communications programs.

As a direct consequence of the reduction in state funding, there has been a significant increase in the tuition fees at UK universities (from £1,000 in 2006 to £9,000 in 2010). This reflects the government's stated intention to shift the cost for HE from the state to "the individual who benefits" (Briefing Paper: *HE in England from 2012 - Funding and finance*). This has resulted in two significant changes in HE: the need for universities to attract and retain customers, and the shift in the perceptions of students as to the role and purpose of higher education.

4.1 The need to attract and retain customers
Central to universities' recruitment and retention strategies in this increasingly 'marketized' sphere is the need for evidence that students achieve high marks as 'proof' of high quality teaching and learning (Molesworth et al. 2010; Kahu, 2013). And so, as assessment of practice-based skills tends to produce higher marks and 'customer satisfaction' statistics (Brown, 2001), the shift towards assessment of HE programs weighted towards practical skills identified by Stevens (1999) is likely to only intensify (Rutherford, 2015).

As the business and industry leaders brought in as guest speakers regularly remind our students, the effective application of CSR in corporate communications demands knowledge and understanding of several complex factors as well as the ability to translate this understanding into appropriate solutions for diverse and complex problems. However despite this requirement to foster greater cognitive skills, several recent trends driven by the need to attract and retain customers (including grade inflation and efforts to reduce failure rates, increased student choice of optional units in which students gravitate towards their comfort zones, and the rise in importance of student satisfaction as a driver of HE policies [Molesworth et al. 2010]) are all likely to adversely affect students' capacity for critical thinking, structural analysis and the ability to develop innovative solutions.

As a result, the changes in the design and delivery of HE programs driven by the market forces which now dominate the discussion of the role of HE are likely to undermine both our graduates' career prospects, the ability of industry (their future employers) to respond to consumer demand for meaningful change, and so will reduce the value of our programs, and ultimately, the long-term prospects of our institutions.

4.2 Students' perceptions of the role and purpose of HE
Under the neoliberal paradigm, the purpose (or 'mentally picture') of higher education has been 're-framed'. Once seen as an opportunity to acquire knowledge and understanding esteemed in their own right (Collini, 2012), HE is now increasingly 'seen as' a mercantile service (Newstead and Hoskins,

2003) and a financial investment in the acquisition of professional qualifications and skills which can be 'sold' in the market (Fitzmaurice, 2008). And, with 'economic advantage' its purpose, it follows that, as its primary beneficiaries, students should be expected to bear the burden of its costs and be treated primarily as consumers (Molesworth et al. 2010).

This new conception of 'HE as a mercantile service' has coincided with an increase in resistance to difficult/complex assignments by both students and university management. Students (for whom the objective is now *the degree* rather than the subject knowledge and understanding to which it used to attest) oppose them because they often lead to less-than-laudatory grades. University management resists them because they are obstacles to the high student marks desired for recruitment and retention strategies. These pressures will have to be addressed if we are to encourage a greater proportion of students to engage with the inherently complex challenges of social justice and environmental protection.

But those of us who teach communications are in the business of changing frames of reference, and we must accept the challenge. We might begin by encouraging our students to 'see' themselves as more than just aspiring professionals–but as human beings and as citizens and vitally, to accept the responsibility for considering carefully both the origins and implications of the assumptions they carry around in their heads–because these will not only determine the lives they will lead, but the shape of the world they will leave behind.

5.   Case study: CSR embedded in higher education persuasive communications programs

The following case study briefly outlines one department's pedagogic approach to embedding the underlying principles of corporate social responsibility into its teaching and learning environment for a variety of a BA (Hons) degree programs (Advertising, Public relations, Marketing Communications and Marketing). We offer this as an example/illustration of how one HEI department has attempted to address/embed these issues. Both the philosophical underpinning and its practical manifestations are outlined. We are not claiming extraordinary outcomes as a result of these recent efforts; however we believe that this case demonstrates a commitment to the principles outlined in this chapter and illustrates some of the issues, and recommendations that flow from it.

This case study describes a recent revalidation process and the outcomes for three well established undergraduate degree programs taught in a post-92 south coast university. The revisions were made in response to a number of sources, including a comprehensive review of the offerings of competitors, constructive input from industry contacts, and an evaluation of student and alumni feedback. In this, we have responded to our stakeholder groups: one of the cornerstones of acting in a socially responsive manner. The changes are also the result of efforts by the academic team to enhance the current suite of programs to ensure they are 'fit for purpose' in the current and anticipated future environment (including the industries with which we align, as well as their current and *potential future* practices). In preparation for this revalidation, the department undertook a reflective and reflexive mirroring process to ensure that we recognized the nature of the relationships HE has and *should have* with the society in which we operate in order to 'practice what we intended to preach': designing our offering with due consideration to both its current–and crucially, its potential and future societal impacts.

Our stated aim was:

> …to provide an environment in which we can help to produce visionary Advertising, Marketing Communications and Public Relations practitioners. To facilitate and support our graduates in becoming independent, creative, entrepreneurial, ethical and enlightened practitioners, able and committed to define new industry practice and benchmarks for excellence in their fields, and so capable of contributing to the transformation of their industries.

8

This is bold, ambitious and purposefully challenging: features which we believe characterize CSR-informed programs committed to improving the societal role of business. We are asking our students and ourselves to go beyond knowing 'what is happening' in the commercial world, to recognize why this might be and so to be able to imagine ('mentally picture') alternatives. One of the intended consequences of our revalidation is to help locate CSR (and indeed other corporate and organizational practices) within a socio-historical context. Thus CSR will not be treated as the newest trend for building (possibly undeserved) reputational goodwill, but as a complex and multi-faceted way of thinking and practicing communications that offers a new way to learn.

Our pedagogy is based on a learning hierarchy of *knowledge*, then *doing*, then *practice* and finally, *critical creation* through which students are expected to first learn *about* their discipline (its foundations, structures, roles, processes) then *apply* these knowledges and skills in practical projects, before *demonstrating* their transferability in a year-long professional placement. In their final year, they are expected to have both the ability and the confidence to generate–*and demonstrate*–the capacity for innovative thinking and practice. The distinctions between each phase are reflected and reinforced in the bases for assessment in the following ways:

Year 1   Students are assessed on their ability to describe and explain the foundational theories of CSR and the industry roles, structures, processes and practices in this area of business.

Year 2   Students are assessed on their ability to apply existing methods and processes in designing and implementing CSR projects in a given context.

Year 3   Students take into their placement this appreciation of CSR and are tasked at the end of the year with reflecting on how CSR does/could play a prominent role in the organization they are working for.

Year 4   Students are assessed on their ability to demonstrate potential in contributing to CSR thinking and practice that builds on existing modes, and to actively critique and challenge existing practice through the prism of an appropriate intellectual lens (i.e. using notions of consumer as citizen or 'prosumers').

Central to our commitment to embed a professional practice ethos within the curriculum in a way that both encourages and assists students to place their leaning in a wider active context is the year-long placement required of all students on all three programs. As part of their reflection on this experience as they start their final year of study, students are expected to consider the impact and implications of the CSR practices in which the organization either was engaged, had considered or in which the students believe it should have been engaged.

This placement is aligned with the newly-revised unit *Innovation and Enterprise* required of all students in their final year and tailored to the specifics of each of the three programs: Advertising, Marketing Communications and Public Relations. Here, notions of enterprise culture and 'the enterprising self' are explored in ways that allow and encourage students to consider their own agency as they prepare to become active members of a societal workforce to which they must both be able to adapt and also begin to influence. To this end, we have also developed bespoke units/modules for these revalidated programs that speak directly to the impact and implications of Corporate Social Responsibility for the practice of Advertising, Marketing Communications and Public Relations. These bespoke units/modules require our students to consider various practices–and their actions within these–through an ethical lens, such as social communications, consumer culture, advertising and society and transcultural communication.

Whilst the final year outlined above may sound overly ambitious for undergraduates, we define the notion of 'creation' as stretching across a continuum, breaking, to various degrees, with existing practice and thinking. For some, this will mean developing the ability to make tangible recommendations on ways in which to improve existing CSR programs for a specific company, organization or even an entire industry–whilst for others, it will involve developing a radical departure from existing ways of thinking and practice.

6.   Conclusion

At the core of Corporate Social Responsibility is the expectation that organizations will recognise and respond proactively by being prepared to act on both the ideals and the 'deliverables' of social justice and environmental stewardship.

Higher education has an essential role to play in contributing to this development by encouraging–and engaging our students in–a thorough review of the current orthodoxy which values short-term financial goals at any cost. If we wish to encourage and enable our students/graduates to do their part, to integrate citizenship with corporate objectives, we must begin to consider carefully the impact of the ideological 'frames of reference' which have driven recent changes in the design and delivery our programs, and be prepared to undertake the same radical 're-imagining' of both our purpose and practice that society now demands of the business sector our graduates must be ready and able to lead.

A commitment by academics and senior management to the principles of CSR and the meaningful integration of its practices in the design and delivery of our programs will allow us to identify, reflect on–and, most importantly, to challenge–currently short-sighted modes and models of corporate and organizational practices and priorities and, in doing so, enable us to reclaim and re-invent our historic role as a critical friend and a source of radical social reform.

References:

Barford, V. and Holt, G. "Google, Amazon, Starbucks: The rise of 'tax shaming'". *BBC News Magazine*. 21 May 2013 (Accessed: 08 March 2016). http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-20560359

Barnbrook, J. et al. "First Things First Manifesto 2000". *Eye magazine*. Autumn 1999. (Accessed 10 March 2016). http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/first-things-first-manifesto-2000

Barnett, R. *Improving Higher Education: Total Quality Care*. Bristol: Open University Press, 1992

Boulding, K. *The Image.* University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI (1956)

Brown, G. "Assessment: A Guide for Lecturers" (Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) Generic Centre Assessment Series Number 3). (2001).

Brennan, R. *Teaching Marketing at University Level.* Higher Education Academy report. 10 February, 2012. (Accessed March 1, 2016). https://core.ac.uk/download/files/125/9256646.pdf.

Camilleri, M.A. "Reconceiving corporate social responsibility for business and educational outcomes". *Cogent Business & Management*, 3. 2016.

Collini, S. "The threat to our universities". *The Guardian*. 24 February 2012.

Crumpton, H.E. and Gregory, A. ""I'm Not Learning": The Role of Academic Relevancy for Low-Achieving Students". *The Journal of Educational Research* 104(1) (2011): 42-53.

Entwistle, N., McCune, V. and Hounsell, J. "Approaches to Studying and Perceptions of University Teaching-Learning Environments: Concepts, Measures and Preliminary Findings of the ETL Project". Occasional Report 1: Enhancing Teaching-Learning Environments in Undergraduate Courses. 2002. (Accessed: 21 July 2012). http://www.etl.tla.ed.ac.uk/docs/etlreport1.pdf

Entwistle, N. "Concepts and conceptual frameworks underpinning the ETL project." Occasional report 3 (2003): 3-4.

Fitzmaurice, M. "Voices from within: teaching in higher education as a moral practice". *Teaching in Higher Education*. 13: 3 (2008): 341-352.

García-Rosell, J-C. "Struggles over corporate social responsibility meanings in teaching practices: The case of hybrid problem-based learning". *Management Learning* (2012) 1-19

Garland, K. *First Things First.* 1963. (Accessed 10 March 2016). http://www.designishistory.com/1960/first-things-first/

Hanlon, G. and Fleming, P. "Updating the critical perspective on corporate social responsibility". *Sociology Compass* 3, no. 6 (2009): 937-948.

Haski-Leventhal, D. "MBA student values, attitudes and behaviors: a cross-cultural comparison of PRME signatory schools". *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 79(4) (2014): 29.

Hasrouni,L. "Cultivating Values - How business schools can plant the seeds of change" *Responsible Business* (July – September, 2012): 54-67.

Hidi, S. and Harackiewicz, J.M. "Motivating the academically unmotivated: A critical issue for the 21st century". *Review of Educational Research*, 70(2) (2000):151-179.

Hockings, C., Cooke, S., Yamashita, H., McGinty, S. and Bowl, M. "Switched off? A study of disengagement among computing students at two universities". *Research Papers in Education*, Vol.23, Issue 2. (2008) (Accessed 21 July, 2012) http://www2.wlv.ac.uk/celt/Projects/RPiEAcademic_Feb08.pdf

Ikenberry, D.L. and Sockell, D. "Occupy Our Business Schools". *Bloomberg Business*. (2012) (Accessed: 25 March 2016) http://www.businessweek.com/business-schools/occupy-our-business-schools-01112012.html

Institute of Business Ethics. *Tax Avoidance as an Ethical Issue for Business*. Issue 31 April 2013.

Johnson.S. *The Future of Sustainability Is Design, Not Communication*. (2013). (Accessed 23 February, 2016) http://www.sustainablebrands.com/news_and_views/communications/future-sustainability-design-not-communication

Kahu, E.R. "Framing student engagement in higher education". *Studies in Higher Education* 38.5. (2013): 758-773.

Kendrick, A., Fullerton, J.A. and Kim, Y.J. "Social responsibility in advertising: A marketing communications student perspective". *Journal of Marketing Education*. 35(22) (2013): 141 –154

Mandelson, P. *Letter to Tim Melville-Ross, Chairman, Higher Education Funding Council for England*. 22 December 2009. (Accessed 24 October, 2010) http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2009/HEFCE,Grant,settlement/

Matten, D. and Moon, J. "Corporate social responsibility education in Europe". *Journal of Business Ethics*, 54(4) (2004): 323-337.

Molesworth, M., Scullion, R. and Nixon, E. (eds.). *The marketisation of higher education and the Student as Consumer*. Routledge. 2010

Newstead, S.E. and Hoskins, S. "Encouraging student motivation". In Fry, H., Ketteridge, S. and Marshall, S. (eds.) *A Handbook for Teaching & Learning in Higher Education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer. 2003

Nicholson, C.Y. and DeMoss, M. "Teaching ethics and social responsibility: An evaluation of undergraduate business education at the discipline level". *Journal of Education for Business*, 84(4) (2009): 213-218.

Nieuwenkamp, R. "2016: CSR is dead! What's next?" OECD. 22 January 2016 (Accessed March 9, 2016) http://oecdinsights.org/2016/01/22/2016-csr-is-dead-whats-next/

Office for National Statistics (ONS). "Contracts with No Guaranteed Hours: 2015". 02 September, 2015 (Accessed March 23, 2016) http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/contractswithnoguaranteedhours/2015-09-02

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2016. "Inequality". (Accessed March 24, 2016) http://www.oecd.org/social/inequality.htm

Parsons, D., Hill, I., Holland, J. and Willis, D.. "Impact of teaching development programmes in higher education." HEA Research Series. York: The Higher Education Academy (2012).

Porter, M.E. and Kramer, M.R. "The big idea: Creating shared value". *Harvard Business Review*, 89(1) (2011): 2.

Rutherford. "Improving Student Engagement in Commercial Art and Design Programmes". *International Journal of Art & Design Education*, 34(1) (2015): 89-101.

Rutherford, "Why advertising students should be required to write" *Networks*. Higher Education Academy (17) (2012)

Sanacore, J. "Turning Reluctant Learners into Inspired Learners". *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 82:1 (2008): 40-44

Shepard, K. *Higher education for Sustainable Development*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2015

Stes, A., Min-Leliveld, M., Gijbels, D. and Van Petegem, P. "The impact of instructional development in higher education: The state-of-the-art of the research". *Educational Research Review*, 5(1) (2010): 25-49.

Stevens, M. "Human capital theory and UK vocational training policy". *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, Oxford University Press (1999): 16-32

Thomas. L. and Jamieson-Ball, C. (eds.) *Engaging students to improve student retention and success in higher education in Wales*. Higher Education Academy. 2011

Turker, D., Vural, C.A. and Idowu, S.O. eds. *CSR, Sustainability, Ethics & Governance*. Springer. 2016. http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-26716-6

Waller, D.S., and Lanis, R. "Corporate social responsibility (CSR) disclosure of advertising agencies: an exploratory analysis of six holding companies' annual reports". *Journal of Advertising* 38.1 (2009): 109-122.

Webb, J. "The 'shared value' of corporate social responsibility". *The Financial Times*, 11 February, 2016. (Accessed March 11, 2016) http://blogs.ft.com/mba-blog/2016/02/11/the-shared-value-of-corporate-social-responsibility/

Wittgenstein, L., (von Wright, G.H. ed). *Culture and value*. London: Wiley-Blackwell. (1937) 1998

Yorke, M. and Longden, B. "The first-year experience of higher education in the UK". York: *Higher Education Academy*. (2008)

Authors:

Rutherford
Previously a director of communications for nonprofit groups, since 1999, Rutherford has designed and led programs in advertising and corporate communications. His essays on the influence of the visual presentation of information on our perceptions ('mental pictures') of products, policies and the Right Priorities have appeared in peer-reviewed academic journals, newspapers and magazines. Rutherford's website: http://www.theshadowofthephotographer.co.uk/

Dr Richard Scullion
Has a PhD from the London School of Economics on '*The meanings that consumers ascribe to their consumer and political choice practices*'. His research interests include the intersection of consumer culture and civic culture, and the issues of voice and marginality linked to the Paralympics. Member of the Promotional Cultures & Communication research group: http://promotionalculturescommunication.org