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Abstract

This chapter is based on the premise that globalization will lead to increased cultural diversity in educational settings that can be leveraged into enhanced learning capabilities for all those involved. It also posits that leveraging diversity can and will be used by universities while competing and cooperating globally. Much of the literature on globalization warns against market values increasingly dominating academic values and basic human needs, and against â Americanizationâ or cultural homogenization. By distinguishing five categories of globalization effects on higher education, we argue that globalization is a much broader issue that leaves ample room for individual universities, faculties, business schools, and sections to construct their own responses to globalization and, in that way, help shape its future course. The second part of the chapter illustrates how one section of one university is responding to globalizing education. It discusses the learning by sharing concept and shows how this concept was used in three recent education initiatives to leverage diversity in the classroom. These initiatives indicate how the five globalization effects on higher education can be exploited in concrete educational settings. They also demonstrate that leveraging diversity is a learning process in itself. The lesson learned from these initiatives are therefore discussed in the final section.

Educating Professionals

Leveraging Diversity in Globalizing Education

Ard Huizing, Rik Maes & J.P. Thomas Thijssen

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Key words: Globalization, diversity; life-long learning processes; learning by sharing; postgraduate education; higher education.

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1. Introduction

Globalization leads to an intensification of worldwide social relations linking distant localities (Giddens, 1990), which will result in greater cultural diversity in educational settings. This article is based on the premise that this diversity can be leveraged into enhanced learning capabilities, which, following Ashby's law of requisite variety (1956), every system needs that is confronted with growing complexity and dynamism in its environment. However, whereas globalization enables closer contacts among different cultures, it does not inform us how to employ cultural differences. The challenge posed by globalization is therefore how to actually combine the varied ideas, knowledge, and skills of different cultures in such a way that diversity can indeed be seen as a constant source of critical inquiry, learning, and innovation? Furthermore, how can higher education institutions leverage diversity most productively and, in that way, help shape globalization?

This chapter reports on how the Section of Information Management as part of the Business School of the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands prepares itself for the effects globalization has and will have on higher education. This Section has a long record of experimentation with education design and the organization of learning processes, both relating to regular bachelor and master programs as well as to postgraduate life-long learning and continuing education initiatives. Out of these experimentations and innovations the learning by sharing concept has evolved that is based upon a social learning theory. The purpose of this article is to show how diversity can be leveraged through learning by sharing.

The chapter is organized as follows. First, the mutual relationship between globalization and diversity is explored. Then, five categories of globalization implications for higher education are distinguished, which are all further detailed and explained. Next, the learning by sharing concept is presented as the bottom up response of one part of one university. Its six guiding principles indicate how the challenge of globalization and leveraging diversity can be met. Three recent education initiatives of the Information Management Section are subsequently discussed, showing how the portrayed categories of globalization effects on higher education can be explored and exploited in concrete educational settings. They also indicate that leveraging diversity is a learning process in itself. The lessons that can be derived from the three education initiatives are therefore explicitly discussed in the final section.

2. Globalization and diversity

Surrounded by complicated issues, globalization is heavily debated. Some critics, for instance, equate it with worldwide capitalism and focus on the unrestricted movement of capital and the increasing domination of nation-states by global financial markets and multinational corporations (Greider, 1997; Soros, 2002). They also warn against market values infiltrating domains of social practice where they do not belong, and ultimately against cultural homogenization resulting in the gradual disappearance of local cultures. What they envisage is a *strong* form of globalization that asks for the production of similar kinds of human beings on a global scale (Friedman, 1994).

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Others, however, assert that the strong form of globalization underemphasizes the adaptive and creative role of all the actors involved — countries, governments, firms, and other existing or emerging institutions and local practices. They see globalization as a multi-pronged development suggesting that economic forces are sometimes reinforced and sometimes contested by social, political, and cultural processes (Held et al., 1999; Scheuerman, 2002). Also, globalization affects each actor in a different way due to each actor's individual history, traditions, culture, resources, and priorities (Lash and Urry, 1994; Yang, 2003). Local actors operating in situated contexts, therefore, always influence the uptake and use of globalization processes. Moreover, they are not confined to the passive assimilation of the outcomes of globalization processes, but can actively exploit the opportunities offered by globalization to carve new spaces of their own and make use of the changing conditions for reaching their own ends (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998; Kloos, 1999).

In this alternative view on globalization, the terms of the new world order will not be simply imposed 'from above,' but rather be negotiated by a diverse multitude of social practices and institutions. What globalization is and will become is dependent upon the dynamic interplay between top down forces and bottom-up initiatives, between 'globalization from above' and 'grassroots globalization' (Appadurai, 2000). This *weak* form of globalization is reflected in the definition of globalization as "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away *and vice versa*" (Giddens, 1990: 64; italics added). In other words, globalization simultaneously affects and is affected by many localities and, therefore, by cultural diversity.

The mutual relationship between globalization and cultural diversity presents a major challenge for all the actors involved. The reasoning is as follows. Ashby's law of requisite variety (1956) states that the complexity and speed of an actor's response have to increase with the complexity and speed of change in the environment. Due to globalization, most, if not all actors are faced with growing complexity and dynamism in their environments (Wilson, 2003). Hence, more is required from their learning capabilities to keep up with the changing conditions. According to Ashby's law, then, they need more variety or diversity as a constant source of learning, critical inquiry, and innovation to be able to reach the demanded higher levels of complexity and speed.

Diversity can be described (cf. Dewey, 1927; Swann et al., 2004; April, 2004) as the amount of inter-individual variability across several demographic and functional categories (e.g., value systems, sex, education, work, and socio-economic background). The good news is that globalization provides new opportunities to embrace and use diversity, for the intensification of worldwide social relations by definition implies a closer contact between different cultures. Closer contacts, however, do not automatically result in learning and creative performance. The challenge therefore is how to actually combine the varied ideas, knowledge, and skills of different cultures in such a way that the potential for creative synthesis is enhanced? How can local practices such as education institutions leverage diversity most productively and, in that way, help shape globalization?

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3. Globalization and higher education

Globalization impacts higher or tertiary education. We see five categories of implications that higher education institutions can address and potentially enhance in their efforts to create a sustainable future: 1) a need to harmonize education structures, programs, procedures, and agreements across countries, 2) a need to meet more varied and changing learning needs, 3) a need for generative learning, 4) a need for grounding education upon a social learning theory, and 5) a need for identification. Together, these categories of implications show that a weak form of globalization is more likely to evolve, because for all the actors involved they leave ample room to construct unique responses, which on their turn will shape the future course of globalization. The five categories of implications are further detailed below and summarized in Table 1.

3.1 A need for harmonization

To play a role in a globalizing world, education structures, programs, procedures, and agreements need to be harmonized across countries so that students, teachers, and researchers can move freely and choose the organizations, networks, and communities of their liking. Examples of harmonization are the creation of international student exchange programs, the adaptation to a unified course-credit system, the conformation to

Table 1. Globalization implications for higher education

A need for harmonization	• Internationalize education structures, programs, procedures, and agreements • Face growing competition and establish alliances on the global education marketplace • Take a stand on globalization issues
A need to meet varied and changing learning needs	• Increase flexibility and variation in curriculum design and implementation • Include learning and learning-to-learn capabilities in curricula • See the learners' ability to take responsibility for their own lives and learning processes as the point of education
A need for generative learning	• Combine knowledge transfer with knowledge creation • Focus on learning capabilities to foster confidence and trust in students' sense-making abilities and abilities to deal with real-world issues • Use fundamental theories • Apply an interdisciplinary approach • Use real-world complex issues to practice action learning • Apply open staffing to bring in different perspectives, ideas, and insights
A need for a social learning theory	• Ground learning programs upon a social learning theory • Translate the community of practice idea to educational settings • Provide a common frame of reference • Remove boundaries between the roles of teacher, student, researcher, and practitioner
A need for identification	• Enable personal and social identification • Shape learning environments serving economic and non-economic needs • Compete for the attention of students

international quality assessments, and for many universities outside the Anglo-Saxon academic world the implementation of the bachelor-master structure as well as teaching in English. Such acts of harmonization, bringing an international dimension to higher education, can be seen as first steps towards

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embracing diversity and achieving higher levels of complexity and speed. Without harmonization, the potential payoff of globalization in terms of leveraging cultural differences is severely diminished.

Another implication of harmonization is the emergence of a global education marketplace where each institution has to compete for funds, faculty, and students. This growing competition increasingly takes place on a worldwide scale, as is indicated by joint degree offerings among institutions in two or more countries ('twinning'), off-shoring through franchising or branch openings, and using the Internet as a new delivery channel. As a result, higher education is ever more seen as an economic sector in itself and treated as a business enterprise, which attracts new and often private providers to the market and sometimes results in public-private alliances.

Exemplary in this regard is the attempt of multinational corporations and some government agencies in the developed countries to include higher education in the framework of the World Trade Organization through the General Agreement on Trade in Services proposal. The idea behind this proposal is that knowledge is a *commodity like any other product*, which should be traded freely around the world while ensuring protections for the owners of knowledge products.

Prospective benefits of this marketization of higher education – sometimes referred to as 'McDonaldization' or 'Americanization' (Appadurai, 2000, Altbach, 2004) – are a strong motivation for traditional institutions to innovate and generate new academic environments, increase the supply of education, improve access for students, and diminish their dependency on public funding. However, as many critics contend (Yang, 2003; De Vita and Case, 2003; Altbach, 2004), tensions between academic and commercial based motives are rising as market-driven globalization does not necessarily serve non-economic yet basic human needs. Other issues involve, amongst others, the compromised sovereignty of nation-states to establish national education policies, the global dominance of the English-speaking education institutions, and the inequality between the developed and developing countries. Globalization requires from each participating actor to take a stand in these issues.

3.2 A need to meet varied and changing learning needs

Due to globalization, higher education institutions need to display more flexibility and variation in curriculum design and implementation to meet the increasingly varied and changing needs of learners. Learning needs become more varied because the student population attracted worldwide will show more diversity in terms of their education and socio-economic backgrounds, value systems, and preferred learning styles. Moreover, as a result from the dynamic developments in most academic disciplines and the requirement to remain well informed, many people will engage in life-long learning. Another reason for experienced workers to regularly return to the university is that most organizations are involved in almost constant change programs leading to many vertical and horizontal career shifts over the workers' professional years and, thus, to specific and changing learning needs.

Furthermore, in dynamic and complex environments the purpose of education is no longer simply to transfer knowledge. Such environments require a different education that emphasizes learning and learning-to-learn capabilities so that people are better prepared to take responsibility for their own lives

and learning processes. According to Rowe (2004: 5), taking responsibility is the point of education, because if "…people do not assume authority over themselves, they cannot use their creativity and curiosity to the full, nor discover the art of living wisely."

3.3 A need for generative learning

As globalization causes greater dynamism and complexity, people, organizations, and societies are increasingly confronted with problems, issues, and dilemmas that are clear-cut nor well defined. Much of social and organizational life today is uncertain and ambiguous. Nevertheless, in large parts of the academic world education is still seen as a formal process of instruction to convey formal, existing knowledge. A typical example would be business schools relying on case-based education in which lessons learned elsewhere are copied, cloning students and professionals. Another example from the fast developing practice of management and organization is education proceeding from hype to hype, which results in the accumulation of rapidly deteriorating knowledge.

In uncertain and ambiguous environments, however, learning should be generative, implying that education should change from 'looking in the rear view mirror' to 'exploring horizons for new developments,' from imparting existing knowledge to experimentation and exploration allowing learners to create knowledge and meanings for themselves. Generative learning also means that learners become familiar and comfortable with abstract, fundamental theories and with crossing the borders of the often-rigid academic disciplines to develop interdisciplinary understandings and insights. In that way, they improve their conceptual capabilities, which aids in the continuous need to make sense in uncertain and ambiguous realities and in facing such realities with confidence and trust. Such education can be enhanced by practicing in action learning environments in which real-world fundamental issues are explored for which there are no a priori answers available. Moreover, generative learning can be promoted by open staffing, meaning that 'outsiders' — teachers, researchers, and practitioners — are invited to complement faculty and bring in different cultures, perspectives, ideas, and insights.

3.4 A need for a social learning theory

Leveraging diversity is more than enabling close contacts between diverse people. In comparison to homogeneous groups, members of culturally diverse groups can be less committed to each other and to their employers, communicate relatively poorly, experience more conflict, and take more time for decision-making (Swann et al., 2004). These causes of ineffective behavior show that learning is not just a cognitive and individual activity, but also a social and sensitive process in which new meanings are collectively negotiated. They also illustrate that learning is just as dependent upon social qualities such as tolerance, reciprocity, trust, and a sense of belonging as upon personal cognitive skills. Turning diversity into a genuine source of inspiration, critical inquiry, and learning is therefore a real challenge requiring more than bringing people together. For higher education this implies that learning programs should preferably be based upon a social theory of learning. In many academic institutions, however, students

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are approached as individuals solely seeking cognitive content, skills, and personal development, even if group assignments are a regular part of the curriculum.

A social theory of learning is nowadays strongly associated with the idea of communities of practice. Communities of practice are "groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise" (Wenger and Snyder, 2000: 139). Academic institutions can translate this idea to educational settings by establishing platforms on which diversity can be expressed, both on-line and off-line, and to guide learners to leverage this diversity into creative and motivated performance. Part of this guidance can be the provision of a common theoretical frame of reference, both as a shared point of departure and as an always-temporal point of arrival, to help shape learning as an interactive journey exploring new horizons. Moreover, in education communities the traditional boundaries between the roles of teacher, student, researcher, and practitioner blur as all participants are challenged to integrate these roles as part of their learning.

3.5 A need for identification

To a large degree, people derive their identity from the networks and communities in which they participate and to which they belong. When globalization makes them aware that they live in one big world that is capable of directly influencing their local practices, identity issues can arise. Questions such as 'who am I?' and 'Where could I, or should I, go?' inevitably challenges one's identity (Kloos, 1999). As Bauman (2001: 126) portrays, the issue "…is not so much how to obtain the identities of their choice and how to have them recognized by others, but *which* identity to choose, and how best to keep alert and vigilant so that *another* choice can be made."

As a result of its sheer size, the emerging global economy inherently lacks possibilities of personal and social identification. Markets are impersonal; they spur neither commitment nor engagement. Even worse, market-driven globalization may undermine the social conditions of social networks and communities (Adler, 2001). From this perspective it is not surprising that identity and communities of practice as 'homes of identity' (Wenger, 1998) have recently attracted so much attention. "Just as community collapses, identity is invented" (Young in Bauman, 2001: 128).

In the global economy, there is a need for institutions enabling personal and social identification. Unlike this economy, universities can contribute to this need as they provide identification possibilities related to professional and knowledge domains. Implications are that they have to serve economic as well as non-economic human needs such as social engagement and mutual commitment among students, teachers, researchers, and practitioners to create invigorating learning environments, not just in the classroom but also during the other hours in the week. We are only just beginning to learn how such demands can be reconciled with mass student recruitment and decreasing public funding. The answers we can imagine, however, could very well be a major factor in the growing competition among education institutions competing for the attention of students who are constantly evaluating a multitude of interesting 'distractions' in their efforts to balance personal, social, and economic value (Thijssen and Vernooij, 2004). Higher education is just one of them.

4. Learning by sharing

The five categories of globalization implications discussed in the previous section offer significant degrees of autonomy and initiative for all the actors involved to carve a space of their own on the emerging global education marketplace. As shown above, much of the literature on globalization is focused on the marketization or 'Americanization' of local cultures and the attendant fear of cultural homogenization. Globalization, however, is a much broader issue. As to higher education, the harmonization of its institutions will inevitably lead to closer contacts among cultures. The resultant cultural diversity in the classroom on its turn will influence how local education will evolve. Local education institutions will differ in their responses to these developments, not only because of their varying individual histories, traditions, cultures, and resources, but also because they will actively differentiate themselves while competing and cooperating globally.

We posit that leveraging diversity can and will be used as a major distinguishing factor in the search of a unique position in the global education market space. That is, universities, their faculties, business schools, and sections will differ in the way they will address the portrayed needs for meeting varied learning needs, generative and social learning, and for institutions facilitating personal and social identification with professional and knowledge domains. The ultimate effects of globalization on higher education are dependent on how such bottom up globalization initiatives interact with the relevant top down forces.

'Learning by sharing' is the social learning framework upon which the grassroots initiatives of the Information Management Section of the University of Amsterdam in The Netherlands are based. Providing education to academic students ranging from first-year newcomers to experienced life-long learners, the Section's ambition is to build a lively community with a global presence with which those sharing an interest in information management can identify. The Section is involved in regular, publicly funded bachelor and master programs. For 18 years now, it additionally provides a privately financed, two year postgraduate executive program on information management offering practitioners with at least five years of experience the opportunity to acquire an accredited executive master degree. Currently, this MBA-like program is also offered in-house at the Dutch police. The maximum enrollment of 24 students annually underlines the small-scale nature of the program allowing all participants to build personal and social commitment, while private funding enables worldwide recruitment of renowned teachers (open staffing). The more than 350 students who have attended this program are united within the Amsterdam Association of Information Management. On top of that, graduated students can participate into the Fellows program, a new initiative on which we will report later in this chapter. Finally, information management researchers – faculty, practitioners as well as foreign and local researchers – channel their projects and publications through the PrimaVera research program. All these initiatives are supported by web sites and intranet technology enabling all participants to share ideas, work on projects, and expand their community.
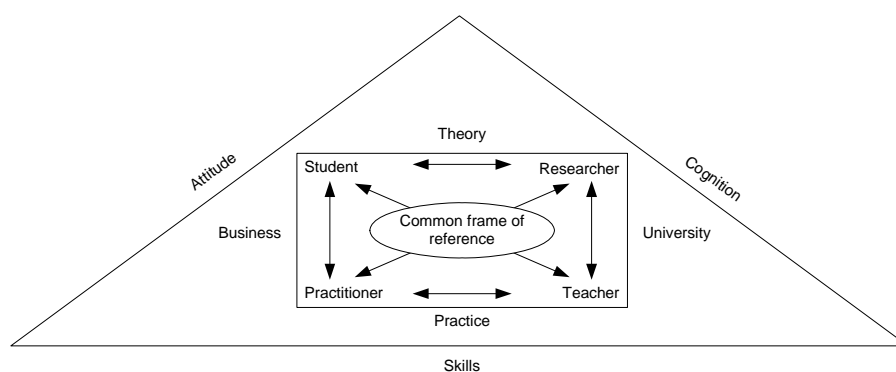
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Figure 1. Learning by sharing

The learning by sharing framework (see Figure 1) has emerged out of these education and research experiences and will continue to evolve as new initiatives and experiments lead to adaptations and refinements of its guiding principles (Thijssen et al., 2002; Maes, 2003). These guiding principles illustrate how diversity can be leveraged in concrete educational settings and, therefore, how the portrayed implications of globalization can be exploited. We distinguish six guiding principles to construct education curricula and programs: 1) use a common theoretical frame of reference, 2) include students, teachers, researchers, and practitioners in every educational setting and promote role-switching, 3) combine business and university in action learning programs to study real-world fundamental issues, 4) apply fundamental theories to diverse and complex practices, 5) focus on cognition, skills, and attitudes to stimulate generative learning and learning-to-learn capabilities, and 6) shape learning as a social process to explore and exploit the potential value of diversity.

All education programs of the Information Management Section are constructed upon these six principles. They are all based upon a common theoretical frame of reference that is used as a shared starting point to discuss and reflect on information management theories and practices. This frame of reference is the focal point of attention in the community's research activities (for those interested in this common frame of reference, see Maes, 2003 and http://primavera.fee.uva.nl). With regard to this theoretical framework, community members can play four roles: student, practitioner, teacher, and researcher. The arrows between these roles indicate that the boundaries between them blur as members proceed from the periphery of the community towards its center, that is, there is a direct relationship between participation, engagement, and learning. The arrows also show that learning involves close interactions among fundamental, interdisciplinary theory and culturally diverse practices as well as among business and university that are jointly engaged in action learning exploring new horizons that are both theoretically and practically relevant. Furthermore, 'cognition, skills, and attitudes' reflect the emphasis put on generative learning capabilities enhancing the participants' abilities to take

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responsibility of their own lives. They express that learning is about personal and social change aimed at improving individual and collective meaning making capabilities, which are increasingly needed to continually make sense out of a rapidly evolving and globalizing world. Finally, there is value in diversity. The best way to realize this value is to shape learning as a social process in a critical yet committed community. Membership of this community is open to all those who want to identify with information management in a broad sense and who wish to participate in the community's activities in one way or another.

5. Experiments in educating professionals and the organization of learning

As mentioned, learning by sharing is the overall learning theory of the Executive Master in Information Management program, as discussed in Maes (2003), of regular programs at bachelor and master level, of derived, targeted programs and of initiatives in continuing education. This section shows three recent initiatives, taken respectively from regular programs (Course Information Management in Practice), continuing education (I+M Fellows), and derived programs (Investigative Course in Experience Economy). Each experiment is shortly described after which it is related to the distinguished categories of globalization implications for higher education. For each experiment, Table 2 highlights the concrete measures taken, all of which are based upon the learning by sharing principles discussed. Together, the three initiatives prove that consistency in curriculum design in itself contributes to the preparation of professionals who can operate in an open, global and diversified world.

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	Information Management in Practice	I+M Fellows	Investigative Course in Experience Economy
A need for harmonization	• Diverse acts of harmonization at Dutch universities • Increasing diversity due to harmonization	• Extra-curriculum initiative counterbalancing the trend towards harmonization • Combination of private funding with academic and human values	• Initiative showing that the uptake of global issues is culture-dependent requiring local interpretations
A need to meet varied and changing learning needs	• Individual learning needs drive learning methods and style • Personal learning in a social context • Learning relates to cognition, skills, and attitudes • Project teams based on maximal diversity	• Participants set their own learning agenda and their own projects • Emphasis on professional and personal growth • Learning relates to cognition, skills, and attitudes • Participants coming from multiple backgrounds	• Diverse group of international participants coming from multiple backgrounds • Learning needs related to varied business and research objectives in diverse contexts • Learning relates to cognition, skills, and attitudes
A need for generative learning	• Ill defined real-life projects • Problem- and participant-driven content; no formal program • Open confrontation among all participants • Open staffing	• Innovation and intrapreneurship are rooted in personal development • Few pre-programmed activities • Out-of-the-box, real-life topics requiring an interdisciplinary and fundamental approach • Open staffing	• Interactive, generative workshop • Real-world complex issue • No pre-fined but co-constructed outcomes • Interdisciplinary and fundamental approach • Open staffing
A need for a social learning theory	• Unite all participants in a community • Continuing efforts to promote an open and trustworthy climate • An electronic learning environment	• Collegial learning in a community • Blurring of boundaries between the roles of student, teacher, researcher, and practitioner • An electronic learning environment	• Co-construction of local interpretations of the issue at hand • Shared learning in a community • An electronic learning environment
A need for identification	• Identification with community, projects, and information management in general • Open discussion of students' diverse backgrounds	• Identification with community, projects, and information management in general • Emphasis on personal engagement and participation	• Working on modern society's identity • Cross-national and local identification with globalization issues • Community and social learning

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5.1 Experiment I: Information Management in Practice

This course, part of the master programs in Business Information Systems and in Business Studies (80% and 20% of the students respectively), was for the first time organized in the academic year 2003-2004. Its unequivocal objective is to confront master students with professionals working in real-life *and vice versa* (remark the unmistakable reciprocity): learning by sharing between students, reflective practitioners, and the accompanying teaching staff.

Traditionally, students from Business Information Systems and Business Studies at the University of Amsterdam have diverse ethnic and social backgrounds; the 31 students taking part in this experimental course represented 12 different nationalities, ranging from Surinam and India to former Yugoslavia and the Netherlands. Including the teaching staff, there even were 14 nationalities working together. The professional organizations involved were municipal services from the city of Amsterdam, in itself a growingly multi-cultural city. The projects undertaken were equally unusual: projects *together with* the city services *for the benefit of* the citizens.

The course got unanimous approval. Practitioners as well as students, the municipality as well as the teaching staff were enthusiastic, not to say lyrical about the outcome of the projects, but even more about the personal lessons learned through this open confrontation at the edge of the thinkable (brought in by the students), feasible (idem, by the practitioners) and makable (to be realized in cooperation). It was generative learning from diversity in optima forma.

As to the *need for harmonization* mentioned in Table 2, it can be said that the University of Amsterdam has implemented the bachelor-master structure in 2003. Moreover, the already common practice of giving specific courses in English will be extended to full bachelor and master programs in 2005. While conducting new experiments, the Information Management Section takes such acts of harmonization as a given. However, while increasing diversity is expected as a result of further harmonization, the Section has already gained much experience with diversity for considerable time now as the Netherlands has become a multi-cultural country over the past decades. In that sense, globalization is not a new phenomenon for the Section.

One way to make use of diversity is to *meet the varying individual learning needs* and engage students and other participants to help each other fulfilling these needs. This aspect was overtly addressed in this experiment, in terms of clearly deviating learning methods and style, being driven by the individual learning needs of all participants involved (including those of the non-students). Students collaborated in small project teams that were composed in such a way that diversity was maximized. Moreover, this experiment aimed at personal above professional learning. In fact, this aspect was the raison d'être of this experimental course.

Generative learning also played a central role in the course. The projects chosen were all ill defined, most of them basically existing in the mind and experience of the (badly understood and highly diverging) citizens and other actors participating. A great part of the efforts spent were in making sense

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out of these divergent signals and in dialoguing with practitioners as well as with citizens. The cursory part of the course was completely problem- and student-driven. There was no formal program, meaning that meetings were organized according to the emerging needs of the participants. Staffing was open: university teachers, including faculty from other universities, practitioners as well as students themselves were bringing in quite different perspectives.

The need for community building based on a *social learning theory* needed great care. In particular at the beginning of the course, the social aspects of learning required specific attention due to the different backgrounds of the participants and the university culture, where 'staying in your own comfort zone' is both reassuring and safe. Having project teams based on maximal internal diversity was helpful in this regard, as well as the efforts put in creating an open and trustworthy atmosphere. For instance, students not showing up were called, even in the middle of the night, and told that they deprived other participants from their own input. Heavy use was made of a QuickPlace electronic learning environment, where personal and social learning as well as gossip and joking were integral part of. The end result was a warming feeling of a community of practice as well as of togetherness, which is quite different from normal practice at the University of Amsterdam.

As to the *need for identification*, this aspect is partly dealt with in the foregoing discussion on social learning theory and community building. Besides, students were overtly and positively talked to on their social and racial background. This open encounter was highly appreciated by the participants, contrary to common belief.

5.2 Experiment II: I+M Fellows

I+M Fellows is the continuing education sequel to the postgraduate Executive Master in Information Management (EMIM) program mentioned earlier. In the first year of this experiment, 20 alumni participated. These are professionals, being employed as information managers, consultants in information management, and so on. In many instances, their career was boosted by successfully finishing the EMIM course.

The Fellows initiative is aiming at professional and personal growth and at close cooperation with the PrimaVera research program of the organizing Information Management Section. It is highly participant-driven, where participants are actively invited to set their own learning agenda, to go around together in shared learning projects, and to find each other in collegial learning. Apart from the alumni, external experts and teachers from the EMIM course, two of the latter in the role of dedicated learning facilitators, are participating. Topics chosen in the first year were, for example, learning from your own mistakes, the Socratic dialogue, and personal power in relation to professionalism. Apart from the bimonthly meetings, active study groups (e.g., on 'the lively organization') and reading groups are stimulated, a study tour is organized, and so on.

The initiative was facing some start-up problems, especially due to the uncommon approach taken directed at personal growth and group's initiatives, and the fact that only a few pre-programmed activities had been scheduled. It is clear that professionals operating in a highly competitive environment

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have difficulties in overcoming barriers of time, belonging to, and loyalty. Nevertheless, the experiment was experienced as a fruitful year, where the second year is endeavoring after more concrete output to achieve greater balance between professional and personal learning. The driving idea behind this experiment, that personal development is at the heart of professional success, was however not at all questioned.

Reflecting on the implications of globalization on higher education, I+M Fellows is an extra-curriculum initiative counterbalancing national and university acts of *harmonization*. It is an example of how private funding can be combined with academic motives and basic human needs. Moreover, it suits the *need to meet varying learning needs* in that alumni with a special interest in personal growth were given an extra learning opportunity in addition to the other education offerings of the Section. Furthermore, as there was no formal, pre-planned program and students could set their own learning agenda, the variation of learning needs that could be expressed within the 'curriculum' design was optimal. The combinations of professional and personal learning as well as the personal initiatives expected were addressing learning and learning-to-learn capabilities. It appeared that the participating professionals had to overcome serious barriers in taking up that responsibility. This could be due to the fact that the EMIM program in which they were previously involved, was more supply-driven. Closer investigation, however, reveals that there is an area of tension between personal learning and growing needs (individualized) and expectations from the employer (more standardized). To a certain extent, one could say that present-day organizations, as a result of the immense pressure under which they are supposed to attain short-term results, are not exploiting the full potential of their high-level employees. It is our belief that innovation and intrapreneurship are deep-rooted in personal development and creativity as sought after in this Fellows program.

The objectives of personal development and creativity indicate that *generative learning* is at the heart of the Fellows initiative. Subjects dealt with are by definition interdisciplinary and cross the boundaries of cognitive learning. Two examples are: 1) the subject of information infrastructures was tackled by inviting the participants to actively develop ideas for the crucial and real-life start-up of a major cultural infrastructure – a former industrial plant transformed into a cultural breeding ground, and 2) the first meeting of the second year, dedicated to coping with major transformations, was centered around the eventuality of the Netherlands being inundated due to a major natural disaster. In both cases there are no pre-defined answers to the challenges posed. Participation, therefore, requires creativity and out-of-the-box thinking to create new knowledge and meanings.

Next, the Fellows program is set up as a *community of practice* of and in itself, including the use of a QuickPlace digital environment for intermediate communication and collaboration. It however appeared that participants all subscribe the idea of learning by sharing, but find it difficult to implement it: a number of initiatives (working groups in particular) started enthusiastically but were not continued after the first period of thrill. It was agreed upon that this initial zeal could probably be better sustained by fixing clear and tangible targets for each of the initiatives taken, which might be opposite to the original aim of open-ended learning.

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As to the *need for identification*, this aspect was hesitantly taken up. Only at the end of the first year, participants were identifying themselves with the personal, transgressing and even confrontational learning style of the Fellows program. This common identity, transcending the day-to-day solicitudes, is nevertheless experienced as one of the main reasons to participate; we believe that we just need more time to establish it.

5.3 Experiment III: Investigative Course in Experience Economy

This course is organized by the European Centre for the Experience Economy, a centre associated with the initiating Section of Information Management through the PrimaVera research program. The purpose of the Centre is to conduct research and to organize courses in order to ground the practice of the Experience Economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004) in theory and to build a community of practice around this emerging concept.

The four-day course is organized according to the learning by sharing principles, where each of the participants successively plays the different roles involved. Participants are executives interested in introducing elements of the experience economy in their organization, university researchers, Ph.D. students, consultants, etc. The 'course,' which was organized twice until now, is more than a course in the strict sense of the word in that common meaning building, developing new ideas, and grounding the concepts of the experience economy in theoretical research are integral part of the experiment. A large part of the course is in the form of a highly interactive, generative workshop.

The underlying idea of the course is that the current state-of-the-art in providing experiences as a business proposal is too limited, as customers more and more demand authenticity and true value. Understanding the value seeking process of individuals is considered key in positioning the experience offering. The quest for this authentic need asks for innovative approaches to both research and teaching.

Relating this course to the implications of globalization for higher education as mentioned in Table 2, a first observation is that it underlines the point that local actors operating in situated contexts always influence the uptake and use of globalization processes. At first glance, the experience economy seems a global issue that is part of globalizing world trends. Again and again, however, it appears that new business concepts and ideas, which often originate in the USA, cannot be exported to other cultures on a one-to-one basis. The idea underlying the course is therefore to make the experience economy concept adaptable to the European scene and hence more culture-dependent. In fact, the very existence of and apparent need for a European Centre proves this point. Paradoxically perhaps, by translating the concept of the experience economy to local contexts, the global application of this concept increases. This observation puts the *need for harmonizing education programs*, and in particular the fear for Americanization and cultural homogenization in a different perspective.

Participants in the course come from different European countries. The diverse composition of the participating group, ranging from 'hardcore' business people to equally 'hardcore' university researchers, implies very *different learning needs and styles*. The complementary nature of the learning goals is nevertheless experienced as an essential component of the course that can be leveraged by approaching

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the experience economy through critical inquiry, as a business opportunity, a research subject and part of the globalizing world where cultural variety and identity play a prominent role. This approach emphasizes *generative learning*, as the outcome of the course is not established beforehand but is co-constructed during the investigative course. To promote knowledge creation, the approach taken also entails the participation of a wide range of experts, for instance, a professional chef introducing the role of the senses in designing experiences, and a group decision support system as part of the technical support for the course.

As to the *need for a social learning theory*, the investigative nature of the course could not be attained without the explicit adherence to the learning by sharing format. Building up the feeling of a real community of practice is, given the divergent composition of the group, an integral part of the course, though not always easy to realize from the very beginning on, as traditional attitudes regarding participation in a course are at right angles to the generative way of social learning.

Finally, with regard to the *need for identification*, the experience economy is addressed as an economic, social and cultural phenomenon, going beyond the original intentions behind the concept and hence as a part of the identity of modern society.

6. Conclusions and lessons learned

The five categories of globalization implications on higher education summarized in Table 1 leave ample room for individual universities, faculties, business schools, and sections to construct responses of their own to globalization. Learning by sharing is the bottom up response of one section of one university that expresses how this section is preparing itself for a globalized world. Globalization leads to an intensification of worldwide social relations linking distant localities (Giddens, 1990) and as such leads to greater cultural diversity in educational settings. A basic assumption behind learning by sharing is that this diversity can be leveraged into enhanced learning capabilities, which, following Ashby's law of requisite variety (1956), every system needs that is confronted with growing complexity and dynamism in its environment. The Section of Information Management of the University of Amsterdam sees it as its responsibility to help shape education in such a way that diversity does result in improved learning and learning-to-learn capabilities of individual participants, and hence of the organizations they work for and the societies they live in. The learning by sharing concept shows how this can be achieved.

The three recent initiatives of the Section of Information Management discussed in this chapter show in more detail how the six guiding principles of learning by sharing can be applied in concrete educational practices to face the challenge of globalization and leveraging the potential value of diversity. They also illustrate that exploiting diversity is a learning process in itself. The lessons learned relate to all the categories of globalization implications described.

As to the *need for harmonization*, harmonizing education structures, programs, procedures, and agreements should be viewed as a necessary yet insufficient condition to embrace diversity. Harmonization enables closer contacts among different cultures, but does not tell how to exploit such

differences. That is where the other implications of globalization come into our discussion showing that harmonization is not the end of globalization, but rather the beginning of major transformations in higher education. Requiring much time and energy, such transformations need to be balanced with the speed of change that is considered necessary to keep up with the changing conditions. Although individual universities, faculties, business schools, and sections have their own responsibility in this and can pro-actively prepare themselves, preserving this delicate balance is primarily a task for national and international higher education institutions and governmental agencies.

Another implication of harmonization is the emergence of a global education marketplace, which, according to many (Adler, 2001; Yang, 2003) would result in the marketization of education undermining the social conditions of networks and communities. Market-driven globalization would predominantly serve economic needs and disregard human and academic values such as integrity, disinterestedness, and trust. This chapter shows how the Section of Information Management attempts to reconcile both kinds of needs. Although there is an economic motive involved in extending the supply of education with continuing education initiatives and derived, targeted programs, the three recent initiatives indicate that the human and academic values dominate in learning by sharing. The dominance of these values becomes clear in the explicit recognition of the need to provide opportunities for *personal and social identification* that markets simply cannot deliver and in organizing *learning in communities* with which people can identify themselves. As globalization proceeds, we expect these elements of learning by sharing to become even more important than they already are.

With regard to the growing *need of identification and using communities* to shape learning processes, additional lessons learned can be derived from the three experiments described. Most importantly, the building and maintenance of communities require constant care. As all three experiments indicate, there is a tension between professional, personal, and social learning, between individual learners having their specific learning needs and employers who are paying for their education, and between career and private life that every learner has to balance. The lessons learned are that the value added of every education initiative must be clear in advance and that a learning rhythm (Wenger, 1998) should be created that fits the community members. This latter point relates, amongst others, to the regularity of physical meetings, the time and effort needed to participate, and the support of on-line facilities. The right rhythm can only be discovered through experimentation and fine-tuning programs according to the feedback given. Moreover, the knowledge and experience gained through experimentation help tremendously in achieving the Section's ultimate ambition of building a lively community around information management with a global presence.

Compared to communities creating a sense of belonging, increasing flexibility and variation in curriculum designs to *meet varied and changing learning needs* is relatively easy to implement. The lesson learned here is that it is increasingly rewarding to see students as life-long learners and offer them a large variety of education programs in an inspiring academic environment. In particular when the extra funding generated by privately financed initiatives is used to improve this environment, a virtuous cycle of continuous innovation can emerge.

Furthermore, the three experiments discussed show that *generative learning* always meets great enthusiasm on behalf of all participants – students, practitioners, researchers, and teachers alike. However, such learning is particularly suited for master students who have finished their bachelor's and for experienced managers returning to the university. As learners proceed from first-year academic education to postgraduate programs, the emphasis can increasingly be put on generative learning, on learner-guided education in which the learners themselves are responsible for their own learning agenda's, and on blending learning and working. It is the combination of being familiar with existing knowledge and being challenged in generative environments that enhances people's learning capabilities and their abilities to take responsibility over their own lives.

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