CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This special issue addresses the questions: What is the role and impact of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) on the process of internationalization in higher education? How is this internationalization process related to general models of change that are in motion? In particular, the articles in this special issue explore how the use of ICT influences the future international missions, profiles, and (market) orientations of higher education institutions.

In our own work (Collis & Gommer, 2001; Collis & Moonen, 2001; van der Wende, 2001, in press), we have used two dimensions that we have derived as being critical for analyzing (and predicting) the different strategic pathways that higher education institutions may choose with respect to the future use of ICT in their international strategies. These dimensions are

Location: Local versus global.
Quality Control: Control with the individual versus an expert/institution.

The dimension “location” relates to the term place and form of transactions, which is commonly used in discussions on the new economy (Kelly, 1998). Similarly, the dimension “quality control” relates to the idea of individualization of consumer choice in new-economy discussions. The four profiles mentioned below were derived by combining these dimensions and can be used to describe future plans for the higher education institutions. These dimensions are shown in Figure 1.

ELABORATING THE PROFILES

In the following, the four scenarios are elaborated in relation to their implications with respect to internationalization in higher education.

Profile A: Back to the Basics

In this scenario, students, including international students, still prefer to come to a campus-based institution. The international learning setting takes place through face-to-face contacts with their fellow students from different countries and through direct interaction with instructors. Virtual learning is seen as just hype; real learning takes place in a fine campus setting with its library, computer labs, instructors with office hours, and other students with whom to
interact. The basic assumption is that experts in the institution are in a better position than their students to indicate what courses are useful and in which order they should be taken. Technology appears here as a common tool but not directly as a part of the instructional process itself: for example, using word processors for the production of reports, using e-mail and Web browsers, getting course information via Web environments. Web sites are also good for consultation of external and international course resources and to simplify communication within the institution and with foreign students and institutions. But the basics are still what matters: a well-planned curriculum and regular face-to-face contacts.

Profile B: The Global Campus

Students want to study in a well-planned program, probably from a foreign institution, but they also want to stay in their own locations and continue their own lives at the same time as they are studying. They are able to participate online in the program of a foreign university even if they don’t physically ever visit that institution (or only do so one or a few times). Technology here becomes very important as a delivery mechanism. First, the student will need to use technology to find out about the program of the university. Second, the student needs to use the technology to register for the program. And third and foremost, the student will need technology for stable access to all of the course materials and assignments as well as for communication and interaction with fellow students and instructors. The study program itself remains relatively fixed by the institution.
Profile C: Stretching the Mold

The student has no particular interest in studying in a foreign country but would appreciate more flexibility and choice in his or her local study setting. He or she might like to substitute some courses from the home institution by courses from a foreign institution. This choice may be related to the fact that the foreign course takes another academic, pedagogical, cultural, or linguistic approach or be linked to the student’s desire to interact with others in an international environment. The student may also think that the foreign course is more efficient, relevant, or of higher quality than what he or she could obtain at the local institution. For all of these options, technology is an important if not essential condition. The institution responds to the learner by offering increased flexibility in a number of ways, not only in relation to place and time but also to content, assignments, prerequisites, resources, and other aspects of course participation. It may cooperate with foreign partner institutions to widen the choice for international online options within common course-management and credit transfer-and-recognition systems.

Profile D: The New Economy

The student wishes to make his or her own decisions about what, when, how, where, and with whom he or she learns. The student will often be a working professional and has a good idea of the types of courses or learning experiences that would be useful to his or her work setting. His or her employer is stimulating and supporting lifelong learning efforts, often expecting him to be workplace-based and not to require extensive time away from the job. The student approaches an intermediary or advisory person or computer system (via the Web), who provides assistance in defining his or her competency level and learning needs. The potential student may search the Web himself (or use a portal) to locate appropriate learning options or be directed to these through the learning management system of his or her organization. These options may come from different institutions around the world, selected according to the potential student’s particular profile and expertise. The student will choose on the basis of the relevance, quality, efficiency, and flexibility of the various options. The student can stay at his or her home and work location and continue his professional and family responsibilities. The student is a lifelong learner looking for a just-in-time internationally competitive provision. In principle, the student does not study for a degree, but he or she will require certification of acquired competencies and/or credit accumulation for professional-recognition purposes.

Whatever the evolution, the change involved will be synergistic, involving the interaction of societal, cultural, and institutional contexts; implementation strat-
egies and procedures; pedagogical models; and technologies (Collis & Moonen, 2001). In this special issue, the focus is on the societal, cultural, and institutional contexts and responses, with Internet technologies as a ubiquitous background.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE

As guest editors of this special issue of *Journal of Studies in International Education* focusing on ICT and the internationalization of higher education, we have invited an internationally diverse and highly experienced set of authors to explore the proposed scenarios as a framework for their own analyses. The authors reflect on the basis of their own research and/or experiences on questions such as the following:

1. Which of the scenarios is/are most likely to become dominant in your country or region, for which type of institution(s), and why?
2. What consequences will this have for the future international mission, profile, and (market) orientation of higher education institutions and for the process of internationalization in general?

However, the authors were free to also take their own perspectives with respect to models of change in universities, the role of ICT in these changes, and the implications for internationalization. The authors responded from a variety of viewpoints.

Duke from New Zealand and the team of Hanna and Latchem (from the United States and Australia, respectively) chose broad, conceptual perspectives and focused on policy issues evolving from the increasingly transnational character of higher education. Duke explores different meanings and forms of internationalization in terms of emerging models of the so-called virtual university and the global e-learning market. In his analysis, he sees ICT as possibly assisting deeper forms of internationalization but also possibly facilitating forms that are more superficial and essentially commercial. Hanna and Latchem analyze internationalization and globalization in higher education and the new and emerging organizational models for institutions and networks made possible by open and distance learning. They examine ICT by identifying trends, characteristics, and organizational practices in open, online, and internationalized higher education across the globe and the issues of culture, collaboration, cost, and leadership. They conclude by questioning whether altruism or commercialization will prevail in internationalization.

Middlehurst also considers examples from a variety of countries but focuses in more detail on specific examples from the UK. She uses the four scenarios to organize a discussion of how UK universities are positioning themselves in terms of their uses of ICT and their approaches to internationalization within the context of “borderless education.” Her analysis reveals a particular interest in
how national policies relate to the development of new markets for higher education and the dilemmas that this increased flexibility can bring to the institutional decision maker.

Although Middlehurst’s examples are drawn primarily from the UK, Sakamoto focuses specifically on Japan and discusses increased internationalization in higher education in the context of broad reforms within Japanese education, reforms in which ICT plays a major role. Sakamoto identifies recent national policies relating to ICT in Japanese universities and discusses factors that are either facilitating or inhibiting the emergence of new forms of technology-based teaching and learning.

In contrast to the national focuses of Middlehurst and Sakamoto, the core of the experience on which the articles of Harley and Alexander are based comes from particular institutions. Harley first describes pressures on American higher education institutions to maintain or increase quality and access opportunities while holding or reducing costs and then illustrates how ICT can play a major role in such a course-redesign process through one example from the University of California, Berkeley. Internationalization is not a direct focus in her analysis, but the sort of course that resulted from the redesign process discussed in her analysis lends itself to more flexible access for students regardless of location. Alexander, by contrast, focuses specifically on the needs of international students who will be studying via a “global campus.” She provides an overview of opportunities and illustrates how learning management strategies, the development of programs and courses, the reuse of learning objects, learner-support strategies, learning-delivery aspects, pedagogy, and assessment all need to be considered in curriculum, course, and delivery redesign. Her article is based on extensive experience with international students at the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia.

All of the authors succeeded in using the four scenarios in Figure 1 as an interpretive framework, although a number suggested alternative frameworks as well. A major purpose of any conceptual framework is to provide a common reference point, not necessarily or even possibly the only reference perspective. In this sense, it is not the scenarios that dominate this special issue but the extensive experience and insights of the authors.

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Guest Editors
REFERENCES

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Marijk van der Wende is a professor and senior researcher at the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies at the University of Twente. She holds a chair in comparative higher education studies, with special reference to the impact of globalization and network technologies. Over the last couple of years, she has focused on the role of ICT in the process of internationalization in higher education.