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Agreement 2003 – 4725/001 – 001 EDU ELEARN

eXploring e-Learning
exchanging experiences and best practices of European Management Education
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exchanging experiences and best practices
of European Management Education
For ISTUD this research has been realised also with the contribution of Marella Caramazza, Caterina Carroli, Raffaella Galluzzi, Giorgio Ghezzi and Alberto Melgrati.
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INTRODUCTION
Cristina Godio, Christophe Terrasse*

E-learning has been, over the last years, a key word in education and one of the main issues in the transition to the knowledge society¹. Accordingly to the EU e-learning Action Plan it can be considered as “the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration”. This definition underpins the assumption that a real e-learning activities takes place only when learning is really “improved” and “facilitated” by the new multimedia technologies.

The use of new technologies in adult education has in fact been deeply studied in the last years analyzing its opportunities and risks, effectiveness and efficiency, pedagogical models and technological environment but the phenomenon has so deeply impacted the education market that a clear complete picture of which are the practices in the European practices is still lacking.

In this scenario management education plays a crucial role as it is a very peculiar field of application of e-learning to education as the target groups of this kind of adult education (both teachers and students) presents (at least ideally) lower barriers to the use and adoption of technologies in learning processes. Moreover the introduction of e-learning in management education could play an important role on the diffusion of these practices due to the fact that the “participants” to this kind of education have usually a “decision making power” in their organizations and could influence the adoption of e-learning for larger groups. On the other hand management education is a very specific kind of education oriented not only to knowledge development but especially to produce “behavioral” changes and this is one of the most challenging objectives of elearning.

For these reasons the idea of outlining the effects of the impacts of new technologies on learning processes in European management education has assumed an increasing importance both for business schools – as main actors of this “revolution” – both for institutional bodies deeply involved in management education issues.

* Cristina Godio, Institutional projects co-ordinator (ISTUD); Christophe Terrasse is Project advisor (efmd)
¹ Erkki Liikanen, Member of the European Commission responsible for Enterprise and the Information Society, eEurope: Evolution or Revolution?, Lisbon, 13 April 2000.
In fact when the eXeL project idea was conceived three years ago, there was, among the main actors of European management education, a general feeling of a “need of understanding” of what was going on and, going beyond the single numerous experiences, there was an increasing interest to point out the emerging moods and trends on the phenomenon. In particular the implementation of e-learning policies and activities in management education still needed to be clearly focused in order to understand the reasons why the education market decision makers adopted specific solutions which were their lessons learnt and their strategies for the next future.

ISTUD Istituto Studi Direzionali, efmd European Foundation for Management Development and E.M.Lyon² accepted the challenge and in September 2003 took the opportunity of the launch of a call for proposals by the European Commission under the Preparatory and Innovative Actions³ of the eLearning program.

The eLearning Program (2004-2006) launched by the European Parliament and the Council aims to improve the quality and accessibility of European education and training systems through the effective use of information and communication technologies (ICT) supporting and developing further the effective use of ICT in European education and training systems, as a contribution to a quality education and an essential element of their adaptation to the needs of the knowledge society in a lifelong learning context.

In particular the Preparatory and Innovative Actions call launched in 2003 aimed at deeply explore specific elearning issues through the developing of pilot projects that exploited some crucial sectors of eLearning strategic plan. Among those the peer-reviews seemed to be the most adequate framework to analyze the phenomenon of the impact of ICT on European management education from its inside, drawing from an “inner point of view” a picture of it in order to invite all the interested actors to jointly reflect upon.

It was the birth of eXeL project that, as better clarified in the sub title, aimed to be a way for “exchanging experiences and best practices of European Management Education”.

² ISTUD Istituto Studi Direzionali is one of the oldest and most important business schools in Italy;  
³ Efmd-European Foundation for Management Development is a centre of excellence for management education and development and the most important association of business schools in Europe  
¾ E.M.Lyon-Ecole de Management is the prestigious management school of the University of Lyon. In the field of executive training it focuses the attention on technology.  
⁴ eLearning Call for Proposals DG EAC/61/03 ‘Preparatory and Innovative Actions 2003
With the approval of European Commission the project started to pursue its’ objectives that were to:

- identify good (but not only) practices of the application of e-learning to management education in Europe,
- study the conditions necessary for the successful transfer of innovative practices and policies,
- analyze the added value, trends and crucial issues on the application of I&CT to management education processes
- disseminate the results to a wide European public.

In order to achieve these results the project has foreseen the development of different kind of activities:

- **Survey**: an exhaustive survey on a large group of European Business Schools (those associated to efmd) to point out the decision making processes and the definition of strategies in the implementation of e-learning policies applied to management education;
- **Case studies**: among these Business Schools a group has been chosen and analyzed for the innovative practices implemented;
- **Interviews to opinion leaders**: experts, public decision makers, end users, associations, producers’ opinions was collected to draw the possible lines of development for e-learning applied to management education.

Being a peer to peer based research activity, targeted to education and training actors, stakeholders, policy makers, e-learning education market players in order to better understand the real added value of I&CT to the learning processes in management the project has been a way to identify the actual practices in the use of e-learning in the executive education. As soon as the activities were carried out it become more and more prevalent the feeling that what was really important to be focused at this stage of e-learning studies it was not so much looking for “best practices” to be diffused as “best models”, (this could be a step further) but rather to “well understand” the existent practices. To well understand a practice (good, bad or just normal) means in fact to gather the connections among the critical issues that makes that practice unique and a sole source of knowledge. In this sense if each experience analyzed is unique it can’t never be (even if it is a very successful experience) a real model to be just transferred, but it can be, in a more fruitful way considered as a good unique source of inspiration.

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1 Agreement 2003 – 4725/001 – 001 EDU ELEARN
Coherently with this approach in eXeL project the practices in elearning in management education has been analyzed as case studies: the focus has been on the processes by which a phenomenon is expressed, interpreting the “how” and the “why” of that phenomenon that has been considered holistically within the specific context in which it was produced. The quality of the study in this case does not comes from fact that these experiences fits quality criteria defined a priori or are exhaustive from a quantitative point of view, but from gathering the real richness of the experience analyzes in itself and the connections among the different and unique variables that constitute a certain specific practice.

For this reason the case studies and the opinions collected are not models to be transferred but complex situations whose understanding can support the reflection on the crucial issues linked to learning and being input for other different situations and for the people that will have to take decisions upon that issues.

E-learning has been and is, from this point of view, a big challenge for management education since it is called to assure the possibility not only to transfer contents, but also and especially practical and tacit knowledge. For this reasons, analyzing how e-learning, as a sort of “killer application”, has radically changed the scenario for any of the players in the arena of management education, trying to understand how business schools in Europe have been facing in practice this phenomenon, which are their learnt lessons and their strategies for the future – avoiding the risk that this knowledge will remain a patrimony of the single organizations – can give a meaningful contribution to determine what (and how) is transferable in effective (not necessarily the best) policies and effective pedagogical practices in this crucial sector of adult education. The main focus in fact should be not on how to improve multimedia technologies, but on how to improve how people learn.

The results of the project have been widely disseminated – and this publication is just the last instrument in this direction – among all education and training institutions with the aim of understanding the real added value which e-learning can bring into management training.

eXeL project aimed to fill in this knowledge gap and the following pages synthetize its understanding.

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For its contribution to the dissemination of the project results a special thank has to be given to ASFOR The Italian Association for Management Education Development
A FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGEMENT EDUCATION
Lee Schlenker, Marc Alvarado*

The following work is not intended to be another “report” on the evolution of e-learning. Instead, this sixth framework project attempts to take a serious look at how best practices of e-learning have enhanced European management education. This more ambitious line of inquiry requires a certain number of prerequisites that lay the foundations for understanding how information and communications technologies can enhance the learning process. To begin with, we must come to some consensus of what we mean by management education. We should next explore the nature of e-learning and how it impacts higher education processes. We can then try to come to grips with the notion of “best practice” and its validity given the diversity of vision and practices in European universities.

Our desire here is to provide the reader a working toolbox for adopting innovative practices of information and communications technologies (ICT) in the context and the objectives of individual university programs. This toolbox contains several components that respond to complementary objectives. The first component, the Management Education Matrix, is designed to help higher education institutions understand the basis of their particular value propositions to their students, their faculty and administration and their institutional sponsors. The second, process and network centric models, has been constructed to help the reader understand the inherent links between how we model learning and potential opportunities to add value. Finally, a Learning Technologies Framework has been constructed to help individual professors and programs understand how specific information technologies can be used to enhance particular learning activities in class or in the general context of their educational programs.

Together this framework can serve a number of related project goals. The methodology will be used to examine current practices in a wide variety of case studies taken from recognised European programs studies conducted in the context of this mission. The framework will also help us underline the similarities and pinpoint the differences in the

* Lee Schlenker, Professor of Information Systems Management (EM Lyon) and Marc Alvarado, E-learning expert (EM Lyon).

6 This framework is explored in detail in Lee Schlenker, The Learning Season, John Wiley & Sons, forthcoming.
opinions offered from the suppliers and specialists of “e-learning” interviewed for this study. This structure will provide an agenda for understanding the state of the art of e-learning in higher education today and where we might look for value from ICT in the future. Finally, the framework can provide a forum for discussion and debate during the eXel forum on April 15th and in individual institutions.

I. Management education and the Ivory Tower

Higher education has been linked through the centuries to an almost mystical image of the Ivory Tower. As early as 60 BC, Lucretius, in De rerum natura (On the Nature of Things), wrote:

“But this is the greatest joy of all: to stand aloof in a quiet citadel, stoutly fortified by the teaching of the wise.”

Over the years, definitions of the Ivory Tower have evolved in mixing the beauty of seclusion with a more negative image of something aloof, out of touch with reality. Susan Holten cites the current Webster definition as a “secluded place that affords the means of treating practical issues with an impractical often escapist attitude; especially: a place of learning.” What issues in management education today are forcing higher education to reconsider the solace of their quiet citadel?

One issue arises from the changing composition of the workforce. Peter Drucker reminds us that fifty years ago factory workers had become the largest single section of the European workforce. The fast-growing group today is “information workers” – whose jobs require education that differs from traditional curriculum in both content and scope. Information workers have two main needs: formal education that enables them to work place, and continuous management education to keep their knowledge up to date. Management education is largely delivered outside of the traditional classroom, in weekend seminars and online training programs, from traditional universities and from a number of providers through electronic media.


3 Drucker Peter, 2001, “Knowledge workers are the new capitalists”, The Economist, November 02.
A second issue has arisen from the changing attitudes of government; the traditional sponsors of the university. The changing demands of the industry and commerce have provoked pressures to reform higher education. In Europe, the Bologna Accord, originally signed in June 1999, seeks to harmonise 40 different European higher education systems by creating a single system of degrees within an agreed framework using a consistent evaluation system. A major objective of this European initiative is to stimulate choice for a European pool of over 2.4 million Bachelor graduates each year. The GMAC believes that the Bologna Accord will create more than 12,000 Master degree programs in the field of graduate management education alone. As a result, higher education is becoming an ever increasing competitive environment.

A third issue involves the evolution of the offer of management education. Private training companies, coaches and consultants, and editors have become new entrants in the higher education market, competing for students and funding. Over 400 corporate universities have been created over the last two decades by clients themselves who feel that they can do a better job of designing and delivering curriculum tailored to the needs of their managers. Educational institutions, faced with reduced levels of traditional funding, have also begun to develop alternative revenue streams and create partnerships with businesses to survive. Gordon Thompson found that corporate funds have become increasingly important to traditional universities, consisting of more than 20% of the voluntary support for higher education. Business schools and universities have also begun to innovate in their management education offerings; open, customized, and certificate programs have constituted taken larger percentages of the institution’s attention and resources.

All of these trends have put pressure upon educational institutions to realign their conceptions of management education with market needs. These pressures have resulted in a series of issues that each institution has been forced to address. What is the goal of management education: to provide placements, placements and education, education and placement, or education and employability? Who should deliver management education: coaches and consultants, the business school or the university, business schools and

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universities working together, or the corporations themselves? Finally, what role can learning technologies play in helping understand market needs, fostering the development of content, facilitating interactions between students and faculty, and in enhancing the value proposition of management education?

**How does industry see the role of business schools in management education?**

Many corporate clients think that that higher education has entered the digital age, in providing their students and alumni with virtual desktops and access to online content. None-the-less, they feel that the institutions’ experience in managing distance learning IT driven programs is limited, and their expertise in designing embedded learning initiatives almost non-existent.

“Business schools need to hear the culture, hit the right tone and speak the language the their clients.” (Simon Middleton, Lufthansa)

“More than content, it’s the pedagogical model that higher education needs to think through.” (Philippe Koch – IBM)

“The market is looking for help in developing competencies. Knowledge acquisition alone isn’t a valid value proposition without taking into account how knowledge can be applied in context.” (Annick Renaud-Coulon – CUE)

“The key focus for Business Schools can be seen to be one of Product and Service excellence in the form of the Research capability and of an increasing need to be Customer Intimate,” (Alan Matcham – Oracle)

2. A Management Education Matrix

Given the diversity of learning contexts and objectives, how can higher educational institutions plot out value added educational strategies adapted to the diversity of professional needs and challenges? The relative failure of a myriad of books, articles and conferences to provide time proven answers over the years demonstrates the difficulty of the task at hand.
A matrix for management education can help institutions understand the nature of their individual value propositions and provide a forum for discussion to explore a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration in enhancing their educational offering. What skills and competencies need to be learnt? To what extent can technology support the learning process? Should learning be focused in ivory towers of university classrooms, embedded in the workplace, or assimilated from the comfort of student’s homes?

Our matrix suggests that management education involves three distinct continuums. The first concerns what institutions have to offer: is the subject matter more a question of mastering process or more closely tied to the individual talent? The second continuum concerns pedagogical content: to what extent can higher education provide precise answers to business challenges? Finally, a third continuum explores pedagogy as a social process: to what extent can students learn in isolation versus the extent to which learning is embedded in a team or a market? In analyzing a specific challenges to management education along each these three continuums, institutions can make reasonable assumptions about what the strengths of their value propositions, in what context their educational offerings can be optimised, and to what extent technology can assist the learning process.

Figure 1 A Management Education Matrix

After Stacey, Toby Tompson
Cranfield University
What is higher education’s value proposition to students, faculty, and the business community? One potential avenue to understanding this challenge derives from the extent to which the answer can be considered a process, and to what extent it is a question of competencies or talent. Can management education be broken down into discrete activities and tasks that can be optimised? Is knowledge work to the contrary more a question of the quality of human contact between clients and suppliers in the workplace? Does “better” mean reducing the time and cost of learning or improving the quality of human interaction?

On one hand, we could consider that the answer to these customer challenges lie in exploring the processes underlying management education. We could analyze challenges to the traditional university as the perceived inadequacies of activities and tasks commonly associated with recruiting, training, and retaining students. Ideally, we would assume that this process was predictable, and that process improvements can be measured empirically. Moreover, we could expect that there are examples of best practice in this area that can be documented, analyzed and adapted to the context of individual institutions. From this point of view, solving the challenges of the improving management education can be seen as identifying the facts, benchmarking them against prior experience, and methodologically applying best practices in the future.

On the other, we could suggest that the answer to future customer challenges can be found in understanding the human interaction between the university and the clients of management education. Rather than seeing this problem as a process waiting to be optimised, this challenge can thought of as is a result of competing visions, objectives and competencies. Improving the system would involve understanding the motivations, resources, and perceived pain of clients (students, firms, or professional associations) in a given situation. Concretely, we would dismiss predictable models of the educational process in favour of understanding the potential scenarios of interaction based on our observations, intuitions, and talent. We would assume that there isn’t any one best practice in this area, but better practices based upon the competencies and talent of those involved. From this point of view, we can best learn about management education by focusing on human interaction rather than facts, reading between the lines rather than from a manual on higher education, and searching for the better practice in this particular situation.

Rarely is management education viewed as a simple question of either mastering process
or improving the individual talents of students, faculty or administration. The distinction between levels of learning (first or adaptive, second level or generative) isn’t an either/or proposition, the validity of either depends upon a program’s particular skill set, how they qualify the opportunity to “sell” management education, and the extent to which the perceived problems can be met. In building one continuum of the learning matrix from process to talent we suggest that university decision-makers need to actively seek the best trade-off between the two at any given point in time. Optimising management education requires recognizing the necessity to personalize both the challenge and the opportunity at hand.

The second continuum of the matrix deals with a decision maker’s ability to “know” what is best for their institution in general, and management education in particular. In drawing an analogy with complexity theory, three distinct cases arise. On one end of the continuum the decision-maker can be expected to “know” the response based upon applying his or her previous experience. On the other, the decision-makers will be a total loss to find an appropriate response: nothing in their previous experience has prepared them to deal with the future challenges of management education. Finally, in between the two, university representatives can reframe their experiences in seeking better practice to improving their education offer to the business community.

On one end of the continuum the university and its decision-makers can be expected to “know” the response based upon applying previous experience. Proponents of complexity science argue that organizations represent our mental mindsets of a limited number of pre-determined responses to business challenges. The resulting response can be evaluated as positive if the challenge closely resembles how we’ve ordered past experience, and sorely lacking if creativity or innovation is required. As we’ve suggested in previous work, “people, like organizations, are beautifully designed to get the results they are looking for.”

On the other hand we can propose that the university today is incapable of understanding the demand for management education which is in fact produced by the chaos of conditions, events, and interactions of the evolution of business communities. Huajie Lui has identified five characteristics of chaotic systems: 1) determinism; 2) nonlinearity; 3)
sensitive dependence on initial conditions; 4) a-periodicity, and 5) relative tension and stability. If the demand for management education is an output of a complex social system, the university will be at a loss for an appropriate response, nothing in their past experience of the Ivory Tower will allow them to frame appropriate responses to student requirements. This latter lapse constitutes a fundamental flaw in the dominant control paradigm of management education: the organizations goals are already “known” in advance.

Finally, between the two, we can alternatively suggest that the challenge of management education is neither a carbon copy of the past requirements for a university degree nor unpredictable, but an example of the complexity associated with most social interaction. Francis Heylighen positions complexity: “in between order and disorder, somewhere ‘on the edge of chaos’”. University decision makers can not “know” precisely which response will be appropriate for a given situation, but can rely on past experience to reframe what they believe (and the conditioned responses they’ve learnt from the university charter) in exploring valid options for developing management education. The ability to minimize organizational “truths” and management dictums in favour of enriching the university experience is at the very heart of true innovation. Optimising management education requires recognizing that the pertinence of knowledge or innovation is dependent upon how we situate the business challenge in a continuum from order to chaos.

To what extent is management education an inherently social process? On one end of the continuum the student is expected to “learn” from the university to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to deal with their professional environment. On the other, if management education is inherently a social process, the attendant can’t act alone. “Learning” is a reactive response tied to the context and the organization in which she evolves. In between the two views, management education can be seen as dealing with the paradox of both learning the facts and reacting to the story of a constantly changing business environment.

On one end of the continuum management education students are expected to “learn” find a job and further their careers by developing the needed competencies through the lectures, case studies, discussions and term papers that populate the university environment. From this perspective, often associated with methodological individualism, learning is an activity of autonomous individuals. Learning, like any other social
phenomenon, can be explained as the result of individual behaviour. Each student is in control of his or her own destiny, each develops mind maps for learning through a series of representations, maps and models of his or her future profession. In this light, learning can be equated with developing one’s mind to deal with professional challenges.

On the other end of the continuum we can argue that students are incapable of learning alone within the “perfectly” ordered universe of the university system. Methodological collectivism suggests learning is a by definition a phenomenon of social systems. In this case the social system is formed by the interaction of students with their professional environments students, future employers, business partners and clients. Individuals don’t learn alone, but as a response to patterns of interactions in communities. Marie-Jo Broeways and Walter Baëts suggest that organizational learning becomes a form of cultural development. In this light, management education is an organizational challenge that involves understanding the characteristics of professional networks that enable or obstruct the successful integration of the university’s management education students into their business communities.

Finally, between the two, we can suggest that learning about business is neither an individual activity nor an attribute of professional networks, but is dependent upon each student’s ability to deal with the paradox inherent in social interaction. Although we can learn alone the right answer to an algebraic equation or mechanical process, it’s often quite futile to apply “textbook” responses to the complexity of their future business environment. Similarly, it is also quite illusive to believe that business communities think, react or learn. Mission statements, company policies, organizational responses are nothing more than certain individual’s interpretations of their team, their organization and their market. If effective learning is dealing with paradox, this strategy suggests students must constantly learn to deal with competing visions of their personal visions, inspirations and judgements and those expectations imposed by future employers, partners and customers. The paradox of management education is that it is neither individual nor organizational, but a constant quest to understand the contextual link between the two.
Which practice is best?

Most corporations are actively seeking to improve management education, with little concern for universally recognised standards. The better practices are coming through experiences and well balanced strategies mixing generic, specific and trainee centre-based programs.

“There is no dominant model. The better examples are those that combine learning and knowledge management.” (Nadine Lhenry – CA).

“Certain corporate universities form their views on management education in line with their perceptions of market trends.” (Annick Renaud-Coulon – CUE).

“Management education is increasingly a question of introspection: helping management explore their own values, assume cultural change, explore what leadership means to them.” (Peter Charlton – Unisys).

“We need to transform the notion of ‘school spaces’, enable them to be flexible and cheaply sited to meet changing needs and circumstances as well as integrating learning into the institutions of everyday life”. (Stephen Heppel – Ultralab).

3. What is e-learning?

What exactly do we mean by e-learning? Most definitions today of e-learning, distributed learning and e-education propose the use information technology to support the way individuals or communities learn. Diana Oblinger, in distinguishing distributed learning from e-learning in higher education, suggests that the latter “extends the opportunities for interaction between faculty and student, incorporating simulations and visualisations, as well as collaborative learning”. Eduventures, Inc. prefers the concept of e-education, a “broader, end-to-end system that denotes the technology, systems, and services that support an institution’s technological infrastructure and the administration of teaching and learning.” Jones & Steeples remove e-learning from a strictly institutional setting in suggesting that ICT should bridge the gap between learning institutions and their business communities,
“Learning in which information and communication technology is used to promote connections: between one learner and other learners, between learners and tutors; between a learning community and its learning resources.”

For the purposes of this discussion, we would like to propose that information technology can contribute to embedding the management education process in the context of individual activities, companies and markets. To understand the potential of E(mbedded)-learning, we need to focus on “learning” rather than on the “e-“. Are our students trying to develop knowledge, aptitudes or competencies from their experience with management education? Should our learning agenda be geared to teaching responses to known problems, or to developing student’s capacities to question or reframe the problems themselves? Should the focus of learning be on the individual, on the team or community in which a student participates? Finally, should learning be designed to optimise the class room environment or mirror the real world? Answers to these questions will inevitably influence how we deploy information technology to improve the learning environment.

On the major challenges of embedded learning

We prefer to use the term “embedded learning” rather than “e-learning” or “distance learning” for the major challenge isn’t in taking learning out of the workplace, but in designing a blended learning environments that incorporates the particularities of corporate culture, vision, and resources. In executive development, there is still significant work to be done to understand which technologies are most appropriate in supporting specific learning activities, and capturing the appropriate metrics that demonstrate the added value of the investments.

“Corporate education is a place of communication and applied teaching. Pedagogy must be heavily impregnated with Action Learning” (Annick Renaud-Coulon – CUE).

“We are very interested in m-learning (mobile learning), which will facilitate learning through “just-in-time” principals on roaming supports. We call our system Click and learn. We must develop this pedagogy on one hand and on the other develop the corresponding space and usage scenarios.” (Christophe Lamort – FT).

“One of the challenges is there is so much out there, so many ideas, our challenge is trying to pull it together to get value for our budget. What’s missing is a way of moving forward.” (Peter Charlton – Unisys).

“One of the major issues of blended learning is fostering the communities in which people naturally evolve. Learning is knowledge, but it’s also networks, and history.” (Serge Ravet – EifeL).

4. A Process centric view of management education

Management education can be thought of a set of processes with inputs, activities, costs and outputs. From the point of view of an institution of higher education, the majority of processes begin with the inputs of clients’ demands for “education”. Clients may include traditional students, the unemployed, company executives, and perhaps the companies they work for. Objectives here can include developing competencies, building professional networks, and obtaining recognition for their accomplishments.

Individual universities structure sets of activities and tasks to provide the services required to their targeted clients. Only a small segment of the current market today is actively seeking distance learning. Contrasting, information technology can be deployed to support a wide variety of sub processes and learning activities to add value to higher education. Let’s look at a number of these sub processes and how IT can be leveraged effectively.

Recruitment and profiling

A first step in this pre-program process often includes marketing activities and client profiling to identify homogenous sets of skills and competencies. Newsletters, testimonials, open days, qualifying exams, interviews, and career planning are common process activities. Measuring skills and/or competencies at the beginning of the certificate or open programs, at the end, or periodically after degree completion can provide metrics for evaluating the effectiveness of the learning process itself. The application of learning technologies, given the growing numbers and origins of prospects for most institutions, can be a major value lever here.
Content development

A second process includes the development of content for the different programs. If the course outlines are often approved by program managers, actual course content is often left up to individual lecturers and professors. The development of course content varies widely from one professor to another, with further discrepancies in form and in scope between schools, programs and professors. In spite of this diversity, information technology is largely confined in traditional classrooms to providing storage for course descriptions and content. None-the-less, Information technology can be engineered to help individual lecturers and professors structure the development of their courses and their research, to offer a larger visibility of the evolution of course content to program directors, and to forge a better understanding of body of knowledge to the organization at a whole.

Content management and delivery

A third process of management education can be defined around content management and delivery. Course delivery is traditionally tied closely to the physical constraints of the classroom: the professor lecturing in front of a given number of students in a given sequence in a given environment. Information technologies’ role is often limited to presentation graphics, which accompany the professor’s lecture, or are available as lecture notes. As higher education addresses increasingly larger numbers and types of students, the pertinence of the traditional classroom is progressively put to question. Information technology may be profitably applied to managing the form and the sequence of learning bytes.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a critical element in the learning process as a whole. Essays, group presentations, research papers, and multiple choice questionnaires make up the largest part of current offer of tools. Information technology already plays a major role here, whether it be in providing the support for the examination or communicating the student’s results. None-the-less, information technology can be levered in several areas here. To begin with, computer applications can help better match evaluations metrics to
specific skill profiles. IT can be deployed in the workplace to measure the impact of course materials on how the students solve real business problems. Finally, information technology can provide aggregate metrics to benchmark individual performance against specific target populations.

**Compensation**

Compensation represents a final process to explore. Rewarding, or reprimanding, individual or collective behaviour has been identified as a critical element in the learning process. A majority of management education students believe their participation in certificate of open programs should lead to better employment, many expect that their institutions will actively assist them in developing their professional networks. Information technology can play a critical role both in developing institutional ties within its business community and in communicating a service offer to both students and corporate clients.

**Where can we measure value?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Potential Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within an activity</td>
<td>Lower cost, better information, communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within the learning process</td>
<td>Visibility, collaboration, coherence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within the institution</td>
<td>Reframing the process, redesigning the roles, extending physical resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between the institution and its clients</td>
<td>Lifelong learning, partnering, co-marketing, learning communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New business opportunities</td>
<td>New channels/markets, mass personalization, new products</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Leveraging learning technologies**

Successfully dealing with the changes that learning technologies can produce in the training process is one of the major challenges of embedded learning. The degree of impact of learning technologies seems to depend upon the importance management attaches to corporate education, the context in
which learning technologies are embedded into company culture, and the resources the company dedicates to leveraging learning.

“Our principal objective is to gain time and flexibility in our learning processes.” (Nadine Lhenry – CA).

“The results are far from optimal because companies don’t invest sufficiently to leverage learning. These investments could in the end perhaps be shared.” (Benjamin Amar – NetG).

“The best models are those that favour personalized learning paths and individual autonomy” (Minh Van – CA).

“Facilitating change brought on by new approaches to learning is often very poorly prepared. We’ve talked a little bit about this to our trainers, very little to their students.” (Christophe Lamort – FT).

5. A Learner centric view of management education

Learning perhaps isn’t a question of process, but of networks. This conceptualization of learning places the individual, rather than the institution, at the centre of efforts to improve models of corporate education. In this perspective, learning is seen as a consequence of an individual’s interactions within a multitude of social systems. Peter Drucker has stressed that that management education involves communicating knowledge rather than aptitudes; the learning agenda for knowledge workers differs from that of industrial workers both in its scope and its duration.14 The fact that individual careers can now be expected to span several jobs, industries and decades tests the relevancy of formal education. If the pertinence of management education today can be measured in its ability to accompany a manager throughout his career, the value of information technology is in enhancing this value proposition.

An individual learns not only from an institution, but from interactions with social networks of work, trust, and passion. Social networks can be thought of as chaordic systems involving complex and dynamic connections between individuals and their teams, companies and markets. Learning is a consequence of these interactions and is

governed by determinism (we learn in relationship to explicit and implicit goals), periodicity (we don’t learn at the same pace), dependency on initial conditions (our culture) and non-linearity (we learn from our instructors, peers, clients, etc.). Learning technologies can be used as to deepen and broaden the quality of interactions between learners and their environments.

Several sets of concentric circles of learning can be drawn around an individual in a learner-centred environment. The first involves his or her prior experience, and how experience influences their capacity and motivation to learn. The second involves formal education a 1 to N relationship between the learner and his or her instructor, coach, or facilitator. A third circle can be drawn around the individual and the class, team, or group that shares similar objectives and similar conditions. A fourth circle is composed of the learner’s social network, which is composed of individuals in networks based on trust, passion or simply getting work done. The value of learning technologies depends upon their ability to elucidate the patterns of interaction that determine the nature of each learning circle.

Figure 2 Learning Networks

After Marc Alvarado
EM Lyon
The first circle, an individual’s prior experience, influences his or her predisposition for learning. Experience is influenced both by prior events, existing knowledge and competencies and the resulting “culture”\(^{15}\). Learning technologies involving evaluations, mindmaps and narration can be used here to capture measures of existing skills or competencies involving a specific subject. Surveys and simulations can be used to understand learning styles and dispositions. Self-administered courses can be taken as prerequisites to more formal learning sequences.

The second circle, formal education, involves structured learning experiences in a particular course or discipline. Learning technologies can be used here to present the scope and depth of the subject matter, as well as to post on-line learning resources. On-line libraries, document stores, and simulations can be implemented to complete and to extend face to face experience. Surveys and tests can be used to measure learning, benchmark the evolution of targeted skills and competencies with other students and norms. Finally, questionnaires can be posted to gather feedback on the relevance of course content and delivery.

The third learning circle is drawn up of learners sharing similar learning conditions. They can be formally enrolled in the same physical class or program, or share similar conditions in different schools, companies or communities. E-mail, discussion forums, and collaborative writing can be used as narrative management techniques. Questionnaires, chat, and video can be used to benchmark experience, and to leverage local resources, passion and talent across programs and communities. Web sites and portals can be constructed to promote discussion and gather feedback on learning methods and objectives.

The fourth circle of learning can be modelled as a mirror of the social networks that individuals use to play, to work, and ultimately to learn. The patterns of interaction here are largely self-determined depending on factors of influence, confidence and affinity. These networks, rather than providing a mirror of similar profiles, are drawn together because of the diversity of motivations and experience. Learning technologies can be used here to bring to light learning paths, social networks, and shared stories. Chat, voice

over IP, and blogs can be used to highlight patterns of interest, interaction, and vision. This is the realm of systems of knowledge management and communities of practice.

Improving education is often associated with increasing proximity: reducing the distance between students and learning stimuli. Analyzing learning networks highlights two related dimensions of proximity: distance and time. The temporal dimension of learning is critical in understanding the effectiveness of learning both for the individual and for the organization.

How does time affect the individual’s ability to retain and to apply what he or she has learnt to a specific professional challenge? How do individuals integrate, process and renew learning experiences as they progress (stagnate, or regress) in their careers? How does time affect the diffusion of stimuli from knowledge brokers to their colleagues in their class, their firm and their market? How do these challenges impact the scope and the quality of exchanges in social networks over time? What forms of information technology, and what types of methodologies, can be integrated into management education to enhance the quality of these exchanges not just over distance but over time?

This approach to the modelling learning differs significantly from that of more process centric approaches. To begin with, this approach draws the attention of higher educational institutions away from formal courses and programs and towards learning experiences between individuals and their environments. Students are not defined in relationship to any one course or degree, but in relation to careers and communities. Improving learning involves focusing specific value propositions on the quality of interactions between the learner and his environment rather than the transactions involved in formal activities. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, learning metrics are defined around the learner rather than the institution.

On new ways of learning

Corporate clients expect their employees to be more and more autonomous and responsible in the way they manage their learning agenda. This objective leads most companies to experiment with pure e-learning platforms, and then to adapt blending learning systems to better meet the pedagogical and motivations requirements of learning. The nature of executive development, as well as the complex criteria used for evaluating performance, has pushed learning technology to focus on improving the quality and persistence of community interactions.
“Education is more and more a question of process zapping. L’éducation est sujette au zapping des processus. We need to put together training strategies that are coherent with the world around us” (Annick Renaud-Coulon – CUE).

“Personally I feel we need to focus on adaptive learning, helping managers understand that didn’t know what didn’t know. Executive education should focus less on knowledge than on shifting its foundations” (Simon Middleton – Lufthansa).

“We measure skill gaps at the level of the individual, and then personalize training plans incorporating a variety of methods on the principal of “Just enough – Just in time” (Philippe Koch – IBM).

6. The Learning Technologies Framework

How does information technology improve management education: through improving pedagogical processes tied to teaching and learning or through enhancing the interactions between individuals in private and professional networks? How can your institution “learn” from implementations of learning technologies in other organizations and other markets? A Learning Technologies Framework can be applied to help faculty and administration alike understand how learning technologies can potentially enhance their institution’s value proposition in management education.

The axes of the Learning Technologies Framework can serve as reading glasses to elucidate specific value propositions. The “value” of learning technologies in management education can’t be seen solely in either simple processes or complex networks. Learning processes are the result of both an institutional desire to formalize learning, and managerial desire to automate transactions and generalize value propositions to individuals and in the market. Learning networks are the result of how individuals interact in different learning places: whether they are inside the classroom, in workgroups or in communities. Since the introduction of learning technologies inherently impact patterns of behaviour in both formal processes and informal networks, value propositions need to take into account the specifics of learning paths, organizations and markets.

The different processes we’ve identified (profiling, administration, development, delivery, assessment, and placement) form the horizontal axis of the Learning
Technologies Framework. The generic typologies of learning networks (based on the individual, the traditional classroom, the university experience and social networks) provide the vertical axis. In mapping the current use of learning technologies along one axis and then the other, institutions can gain insight into how information technology affects organizational behaviour in any one institution. In comparing this map with the generic possibilities of learning technologies in management education as a whole, faculty and administration can identify and discuss opportunities for potential value in the future.

Figure 3 The Learning Technologies Framework – generic opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profiling</th>
<th>Admin</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Placement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Psychometric testing</td>
<td>case studies/ virtual</td>
<td>self-teach eModules/ website</td>
<td>combination of methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>groups/ discussion boards</td>
<td>addresses / electronic articles /</td>
<td>used moth virtual and face-to-face</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>questionnaire</td>
<td></td>
<td>webcasts / telephone pres’n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>“Open Day’s”</td>
<td>case studies / work</td>
<td>lectures / videos</td>
<td>Attendance, participation,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>submitted assignments, live</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program or University</td>
<td>testimonials</td>
<td>contact database</td>
<td>webcasts</td>
<td>Self-assessment, coaching, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Online newsletter</td>
<td>sync and asynch</td>
<td></td>
<td>collaboration with place of work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smart advertising</td>
<td>communication, file</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sharing, online</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>calendars, photo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>galleries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Social networks
- Demo courses
- Virtual “Open Day” Action based learning activities.
- Participant management system Social communication and announcements
- Virtual groups/discussion boards
- Self-teach eModules / website addresses / electronic articles / webcasts / CD ROM
- Online testing Participation tracking iAssignment submissions, coaching, self-assessment, feedback, Commenting tools

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After Alan Rushton, Cranfield University  
Adam Mendelson, IESE

The two axes of the Learning Technologies Framework are not road maps for driving organizational change forward, but rather optical frames to help faculty and administration understand what choices make sense in the context of specific value propositions. The juxtaposition of maps of current use and benchmarks from other institutions doesn’t represent “current” and “future” states of the organization, but a storyline for discussing the characters, the vision, the challenges, and the moral of the story of using learning technologies to improve management education. Particular stores will ring “true” when they mirror and enhance institutional strategy, beliefs, and resources.

### 7. Improving the value proposition of management education

In contrast to the fairly passionate opinions of both students and professors, published studies on learning have provided little conclusive evidence of the differences between the traditional and “virtual” classroom. In an often cited review, Thomas Russell, on the basis of several hundred research studies, found no meaningful difference in grades, satisfaction, or effectiveness among training conducted in classrooms, by postal correspondence, or through Web-based training.\(^\text{16}\) Although these conclusions need to filter out potential variance caused by the learners’ profiles, subject matter and targeted learning outcomes, they suggest that e-education has a much brighter future than many

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current clients would suggest. Are the arguments being raised by the critics of learning technologies tied to information technology itself, or tied to the challenges of the meaning of management education today?

The impact of information technology on learning efficacy depends largely what objectives have been set for management education, and which activities are deployed to set those goals. Marc Prensky, in his work on digital learning, points out that students and organizations put under the general concept of “learning” a complex and somewhat contrasting set of behaviors, activities and objectives. Management education can attempt to teach facts through questions, exercises, and associations. On a different level, management education can seek to develop skills through imitation, feedback and repetition. On a still a different level, educators can attempt students to focus on best practices and processes through analysis, deconstruction and practice. Finally, it can be argued that management education itself should focus on influencing its participants’ mindsets through inquiry, immersion, and narrative management.

Improving learning efficacy also implies assumptions of what we mean by improving the productivity of learning organizations. In their work, Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (1999) argue convincingly that effective learning is either learner-centred, knowledge-centred, assessment-centred, or community-centred. By learner-centred the authors suggest that content delivery will be effective only if it brings to light the unique cognitive structures and understandings of the targeted participants. By knowledge-centred, learning specialists like McPeck (1990) argue that delivery mechanisms must be grounded in the specificities and constraints of particular disciplines and knowledge domains (i.e. teaching mathematics can be quite different from teaching management). Assessment centred learning stresses the importance of delivery mechanisms that facilitate formative evaluation to motivate, inform, and provide feedback to both learners and teachers. Finally, community centred learning implies that delivery mechanisms must mirror the social dynamics of community in which learning is to take place. In short, the role of information technology isn’t to mimic the classroom, but to mirror our vision of the nature of management education.

A third aspect of learning efficacy deals with the relationship between learning content and the context in which we are trying to learn. “Productivity” is a concept embedded in the second industrial revolution in which organizations were essentially factories that integrated technology to produce physical goods as quickly and as cheaply as possible. How relevant is such a concept of “productivity” in describing how universities, business schools and corporate learning centres elaborate their products and services? Is the goal of management education to shorten learning cycles and produce programs more inexpensively? Productivity in management education probably has less to do with the efficiency of its internal processes than the quality, innovation, and effectiveness of the students it “produces”. How can learning technologies best be deployed to enhance these types of value propositions?

Management education has rarely been viewed as essentially disseminating content, but largely viewed as pedagogy in which content is endowed with both vision and meaning. Traditional models of face to face interaction highlight this inevitable link between context and content: apprenticeships and workshops offer forums to gauge the trade, the language and the vision that are integral parts of knowledge. The current debate over the Semantic Web recognizes the need to link content and context: how can the patterns, visions and mindsets of disciplines, industries and work be reflected directly in way we structure our information architecture. In a similar vein, how can we structure learning technologies to allow a variety of autonomous human agents (students, instructors and communities) to make sense of management education?

Learning technologies can improve management education only if we can develop metrics that shed light not just on pedagogical activities and processes but on learning outcomes. Defining those measures may in itself pay by helping organizational change to emerge—rethinking business processes, rethinking organization structures of management education to focus on meeting client demands for quality, timeliness, trust, effectiveness, and so on. To contradict a well-known maxim: what you measure isn’t exactly what you get.

Three types of metrics can be used to measure information technology’s impact on the management education. In tying learning metrics to measures of organizational performance, we are suggesting that learning should focus on reducing interaction costs, improving transaction costs, and actually creating value for both the individual and the organization.
Transaction costs

One application of learning metrics can be found in improving how each institution builds learning into the design of the organization of management education itself. In other words, the use on learning metrics is an opportunity to focus on improving the business processes that favour learning on an individual and/or organization level. What are the sub processes, activities and tasks that favour learning in the organization? How can information technology improve our understanding of the demand (the clients’ needs and objectives), the supply (the institution’s product and service offer) and organizational outcomes (publications, placement rates, notoriety, etc.)? In suggesting that learning metrics can help us improve the learning process, we are suggesting that the potential benefits aren’t just for the student’s, but for anyone that can potentially learn from the organization (faculty, administration, corporate clients, the community as a whole.)

Interaction costs

Organizational culture influences our ability to learn from our environment. The organization’s vision, rules, “instructors” and resources either favour or hinder each individual’s ability to learn. The development of collaborative technologies suggests that information technology can play a role in reducing the cost of interacting in information networks in school, at work, and with our markets. Such technologies can help overcome the challenges of distance, of time and of culture in reinforcing the proximity between the individuals and learning stimuli. Since individual efforts don’t necessarily contribute to better products and services, similar metrics can be developed to monitor and evaluate how teams, departments, and organizations respond to client needs. Good management education isn’t necessarily found in institutions with the best faculty or housing the best libraries, but in organizations that provide the best access to learning experiences.

Not just costs but value

A third application of learning metrics can be found in creating new approaches to leveraging management education, rather than simply reducing costs. Focusing on learning as a process reveals how the learning experience is intertwined with other administrative, logistical and financial processes. The same focus brings to light how
organizational “success” depends upon the development of personal and professional networks that extend far beyond the classroom itself. Far from being an intellectual ivory tower, learning organizations that recognise and seek to elucidate both learning processes and learning networks position themselves more firmly in their markets. Learning technologies can help focus on developing synergies between processes and markets, and even to design new approaches to education that will help the institution rethink how they wish to do business, today and in the future.

On evaluation

Learning platforms are still largely evaluated on metrics of cost and time. The return on investment of information technology in supporting management education is complicated by the issues of operationalizing concepts like creativity, innovation, and leadership. The challenge lies in conceptualising, measuring, contextualizing and communicating the total costs and total benefits of supporting learning initiatives.

“Evaluation criteria should be based on the results of a given activity, but also on the capacity of a student to communicate what he or she has learnt: this is the essence of management.” (Minh Van – CA).

“In an era of budgetary restrictions, the number one evaluation criteria remain cost.” (Benjamin Amar – NetG).

“Learning systems are beautifully designed to measure what we expect to find” (Alan Matcham – Oracle).

“In fact we don’t ask for anything in the area of technology. That is part of the challenge. We need to foster and measure networking, community development, especially at the mid-management level.” (Peter Carlton – Unisys).

8. Best practices in management education

How should this work be read, interpreted and applied to the context of your institution and your market? Finally, any search for best practices in any institution doesn’t in itself address concerns of how best to use information technology to improve management
education. Do “best practices” refer to an organization’s use of technology, the successful integration of technology given organizational culture, or an improvement in the bottom line? How can the identification of best practices help management schools learn to improve their own value propositions? In summary what meaning should you attach to the results?

Before turning to our case studies, let’s quickly condition some of the potential uses of “best practice” in management education.

– There is a best way to practice management education?

Can anyone define one best way of implementing embedded learning without a clear definition of what need’s higher educational institutions are trying to meet? How valid are successful stories of past experience in understanding future evolutions of corporate education? Can a discussion of “best practices” make sense without taking into account the specificities of local culture and the markets? Can one “size fit all”, or should best practices be analyzed in the context of organizational vision and resources. In the scope of this study, we suggest that best practices refer to “better ways” of doing things subject to each institution’s specific business model.

– Have we precisely identified and codified what is e-learning?

There is no market agreement today concerning the definitions of e-learning, management education, and value. At the level of an institution, to what extent do learning technologies should add value to management education? Does any one individual accurately reflect the contrasting visions, interpretations, and practices of a school, its faculty and its students? The study of e-learning in the context of executive education can lead to very different conclusions than the studying the impact of learning technologies on executive education. Rather than interpret or aggregate institutional views on e-learning and management education, we have deliberately allowed each institution to tell its own version of the e-learning story to promote discussion in the other institutions.

– We can then get employees to follow best practice.

Faculty, administration and students don’t reflect management’s views on the value of
learning technologies, they interpret these visions and adapt practices to their individual aspirations and resources. In relating in this study the institutional views of successful implementations of e-learning, we do not wish to ignore the multiplicity of anti-stories that underlie individual beliefs and interpretations of success and failure in any one institution. Instead, we have deliberately tried to relate institutional views of the perceived impact of learning technologies on management education to promote discussion within each institution.

– The purpose of best practice is to support the drive for organizational change.

For all of the reasons mentioned above, this study is not intended to offer institutional support for a specific vision of the value of information technology in management education. We do not believe that successful practices can be copied without adapting them to the specifics of each department, institution and market. This report has been structured to support institutional discussion and debate regardless of whether such efforts have been taken to improve technological infrastructure, pedagogical processes, informal learning networks, or institutional results. We propose an analysis grill to evaluate current experience, and enrich the conversation between institutions, their faculty and students of the coherence of blended learning strategies with individual and organizational stories of successful management education.
E-LEARNING IN EUROPEAN BUSINESS SCHOOLS: EVIDENCE FROM SURVEY AND CASE STUDIES
Chiara Slanzi

The survey

The first step of the research was the realization of a survey addressed to the group of European Business Schools members of efmd. The aim of the investigation was to identify the decision-making processes and strategies of the adoption of e-learning in European Management Education.

The picture deriving from the survey intends to represent a “state of the art” of the diffusion and application of e-learning in management education which is necessary to understand the breadth of the phenomenon and the policies of adoption in order to be able to identify good (but not only) and innovative practices.

The survey tool is a questionnaire with closed-ended questions which addressed all the fundamental issues, from the organization’s characteristics and the processes of development of e-learning products to the effects on learning outcomes and training:

- Practices
- Approach
- Target of e-learning initiatives
- Economical sustainability
- Partnerships between organizations
- Decision making process behind e-learning
- Standard compliance importance
- Change in the role of the trainer

The themes to be investigated are exquisitely linked to the organizational strategy of Business Schools. Therefore the questionnaire has been addressed only to the top management level, in order to draw a complete and precise picture of the projects realized.

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20 Chiara Slanzi, eXeL project co-ordinator (ISTUD).
and understand the strategic and institutional background at the beginning of e-learning activities and further development in the training offer.

Between June 2004 and October 2005, among the 198 schools involved in the research 57 have provided the feedback required. The extensive survey has achieved a redemption rate of 26.7%; this element together with the geographical spreading, organizational profile history contributes to assure the representativity of the sample.

The organizations which have replied are mainly of medium-large dimensions (average revenue of 19 millions of euro and number of employees slightly above 150) with a solid tradition (around 40 years), from 17 European States and big incidence of France and UK.

In most of the cases the questionnaires have been completed by the Dean or Executive Education Manager; the percentage of answers given by IT managers or Program Directors is irrelevant. This element represents an interesting “termometer” of the commitment and attention which is paid by the top management of the Business Schools to e-learning; if it had to be considered together with the redemption rate of 25% the picture which comes out is interesting. This element provides us with an important evidence in relation to the relevance which e-learning has from an organizational point of view. This tells us how much e-learning is managed by individuals covering a strategic position inside the organization more than by persons with a mainly technological background.

Figure 4 *The profiles responding to the survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-learning manager</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT manager</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Education Manager</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (including: Director, Rector, President, Head of School)</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coherence between the profile of the expected target and the one effectively reached allows to take the qualitative insights stemming from the survey as an expression of the institutional direction of the Business School.
A striking evidence which is very common in all the Business Schools is the perspective from which the Deans look at the e-learning phenomenon: a crucial factor in the evolution of executive education which covers a primary position in the agenda of the top management.

Figure 5 The approach to e-learning in business schools

E-learning doesn’t represent something new for Business Schools; on average the first experience on the field, be it a small project in a large program, an improvement of the web support to traditional classes or bigger projects for the curricula development has been realized around 1997.

The analysis of practices highlights the consolidation of a predominant approach, blended learning. If only the 12% of school had a curricula taught only with a traditional approach, none of them offers pure online programs but usually put together face to face and distance teaching.

Despite the quick diffusion in European schools the level of adoption of e-learning in the training offer remains quite limited; more than 60% of the organizations use blended learning approach in not more than ten programs. The percentage reaches 80% when it comes to pure on-line products.
Introducing e-learning turns quite often into heavy investments; more than half of the organizations had to sustain the economical commitment entirely on their own and only in 25% of the cases they could benefit of public funding. Together with the financial burden e-learning means also entrepreneurial risk; the total of private orders accounts only for the 19.6%. For 80% of Business Schools launching an e-learning program means developing with high costs a new product without all the competencies required, often without having an idea of the response from the market.

The approach to e-learning has been frequently forwarded by preliminary analysis and researches, not intended to catch the market demands but to define the potential methodological approach or focus the “state of the art” of technology, in order to operate a correct outsourcing/buy.

With the launch of e-learning activities Business Schools had to cope with a lack of skills linked to the design and management of such a program; the solution identified by Business Schools was mainly the development of existing resources, even if at the beginning some new staff had been hired.
Approaching e-learning is a learning process in itself for Business Schools; the priority for them is to keep under control the methodology and contents, while technology can be outsourced. Establishment of partnerships is quite common with the aim of knowledge sharing or acquiring new competencies.

Figure 8 The outsourcing policy for business schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Insource</th>
<th>Outsource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>27,3%</td>
<td>72,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>93,2%</td>
<td>6,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>95,3%</td>
<td>4,7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The impact generated by e-learning on management education is considered by the respondents as quite limited: on a scale from 1 to 7 the value is 3.5 (under the average value, which is 4) and even lower is the evaluation on the impact of the organization on the organization processes (3.2%). On the contrary is expected that e-learning will bring major changes in the future (4.8).

Figure 9 Impact of e-learning on management education

How much do you think e-learning...
Even less is the evaluation of the change which e-learning has produced on the reference market (2,9). According to the declarations of the Deans e-learning has not opened up any market opportunity neither has generated significant effects on the positioning of the Business School in the competitive arena. At an impact level we can find the poor client orientation of Business Schools.

Moving our attention to the impact of e-learning on the training process (need analysis, design, delivery and evaluation) the highest value (4,5) is related to the delivery while lower values are registered for design (4), evaluation (4,1) and need analysis (3,6). A tentative interpretation of these data refers to the use of technology mainly as another way for delivering contents which affects the designing stage but where the evaluation and need analysis processes remains traditional.

The analysis of correlation and clusters highlights two different behavioral patterns among the organizations. On one side there is a group of medium-large Business Schools – based on number of employees and revenue – with a solid tradition; on the other side there is a group of Business Schools smaller in the structure, with less volumes in terms of activities and of recent foundation.

The two groups are characterized by different behavior on the themes which are the object of this research:

- **First e-learning experience**: the first group has realized its first e-learning experience earlier than the second.
- **Public funding and market demand**: the first group tends to turn less to public funding for the realization of the first experience: if, as it has been underlined, the first e-learning projects are implemented earlier, then they were probably carried out when the public funding system (and especially the one belonging to the European community) was not developed yet. As for the first e-learning experience, the schools of the second group realize their e-learning activities more with public funding (which in more than one third of the group represent the main type of funding). The internal investments are for both groups the widest part of total funding, and in the second group they represent the main one in almost two thirds of it. Private order still plays a marginal role for the second group, while the first act more effectively on the market (in almost one third of the first group, private order is the main typology of funding).
Changes on management education: the second group deems as more significant the changes on management education which resulted from the adoption of e-learning while the first one seems to be more waiting for the future changes which e-learning will bring; the second group considers more relevant the effects which e-learning had on organizational processes and the way in which the organization stands in the market of management education.

Impact on the training process: a similar conclusion can be drawn from the consideration on the impact of e-learning on the training process: the Business Schools of the first group think that e-learning has changed far less the training processes, while, on the other side, the evaluations of the second group are, on an average, higher than the median value.

Competence gap: the Business Schools belonging to the second group claim to be still coping with the competence gap of staff (this goes in the same direction of the answers given on the impact of e-learning, explained in the previous paragraph), on the contrary the schools of the first group seem to have overcome the problem, which nowadays doesn’t constitute a big issue. The strategy designed and implemented to
face this issue are very similar in the two groups: in a first stage the development of internal competencies coupled with hiring new professionals while nowadays the focus is only on the development of internal personnel.

- **Standard compliance**: the diffusion of standard compliance is similar in both groups but the second one deems it as more important: this data can be interpreted as the necessity of using the standard to get accreditation in a market where – for dimensions and tradition—they risk not to be well known.

- **Membership in e-learning networks**: membership in e-learning networks is present in the same level in the two groups, even if in the second one the trend is to exploit the partnership to acquire complementary competencies which – since the small dimensions of these organizations – are not present inside and it is not convenient to develop.

Analyzing the characteristics described above two profiles can be drawn:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Business Schools with a long tradition which have a god reputation in the domestic or international market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• e-learning is a relevant phenomenon, which has not changed the relationship with the market.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• e-learning is just an innovative pedagogical approach with no impact on the strategy, identity or place on the market of the Business School.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They act more effectively on the market; for almost one third of them private orders represent the main funding category.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Business Schools with a solid position on the market but of more recent foundation in respect to those of the first group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They approach e-learning as a radical change which affects the organisational structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• E-learning is treated in the perspective of a new market, carrying out several preliminary researches and with a certain level of precaution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Despite the adoption of a market based approach, private orders are still very low and most of the funding come from the inside</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading through the results emerging from the survey there is one contradictory element, which strikes. The top management of Business Schools says to consider investment in e-learning as strategic for the evolution of executive education and therefore it represents a priority in long term planning. But evaluating the level of adoption in the training offer it seems clear that it is still marginal compared to the traditional face to face teaching. After
almost eight years from the realization of the first projects, e-learning is still used in a small amount of programs and has not generated significant effects on the design of training programs neither on the structure of the organization or the relationship with the market.

The case studies

With the analysis of good and innovative practices the research moves directly on the field in order to analyze in depth what has been really done by Business Schools in Europe.

The objective is to identify the different strategies adopted in approaching e-learning and managing the implementation side in order to understand which are the crucial factors for the success and effectiveness of learning in different contexts.

The case studies have been realized following an ethnographic approach, which uses different types of data gathered mainly from in-depth interviews, analysis of documents and access to e-learning platforms.

The main areas of investigation on which the case studies structure is built are the following:

– the Business School, history and role of e-learning in the strategy
– the approach to e-learning
– the impact on the organization, the relationship within the market arena, the training roles
– a particular e-learning project/program
– lessons learnt

The case studies analyzed regarded mainly schools in Europe with long traditions, which had introduced aspects of distance learning into their syllabus, later evolving into e-learning.

If we look at the panorama of the practices developed thus far we can single out three main areas of application:

1) E-learning as support for individual study, group work and interaction with faculty;
2) E-learning as an indispensable tool to reach a global client base;
3) E-learning as a response to specific market needs (located in a specific geographic area);

E-learning as support for individual study, group work and interaction with faculty

This approach, by far the most widespread, uses e-learning to facilitate distance learning.

One can see this strategy mainly in long term programs such as part-time masters for executives. These courses are structured into modules where class-work alternates with distance learning supported by a platform.

The use of internet supported distance learning allows to maximize the effectiveness of learning through the activities of self-study, which is preparatory to classroom sessions, case studies and exercises. But the main added value of e-learning lies in the possibility of sharing knowledge and experience between managers and professionals which takes place through group work case studies and opinion exchange in the discussion forum.

The master for executives was devised with the purpose of conferring specific knowledge of a constantly changing and innovating discipline in an international context. The course contains eight compulsory modules each lasting a week stretched over an eighteen month period. The international nature of the program means that each of these courses is taught by traditional methods in different universities according to the subject being taught. The key stages of the course are still classroom based but are also interwoven with internet supported distance learning during which e-learning is used for pre-work, homework, panel discussions among professionals to remotely resolve study cases and for interaction among faculty members for clarification or comments on specific issues. Of course, in a program of this type, where faculties, participants and locations are international, the use of e-learning is a necessity. Without it, it would not be possible to design a course of studies where an important role is played by individual and group activities created with distance support by the faculty.
E-learning as an indispensable tool to reach a global client base

A different strategy is adopted by Business schools, and especially corporate education centers offering training for global organizations such as corporations whose branches are distributed worldwide. Satisfying the needs of this type of target involve planning and devising courses for large corporate staffs located in geographically distant regions.

The approach is completely customer oriented, as is the introduction of e-learning. The choice of teaching methods is specific to target needs and teaching objectives by carefully evaluating what would be the best way to help participants interact with the faculty.

The mission of the school is to create custom made corporate education to support the implementation of company strategies. The objective of the service is therefore to make programs in response to specific business issues. The approach is completely customer oriented, as is the introduction of e-learning. The choice of teaching methods is specific to target needs and teaching objectives by carefully evaluating what would be the best way to help participants interact with the faculty.

A course embodying this approach that seeks to develop managerial skills (leadership, team work and business performance awareness), is currently being taught to hundreds of managers with different professional roles. The adoption of e-learning allowed all participants to be reached and to interact in a group. The architecture of the program was structured by alternating face to face lessons and e-learning. Initially e-learning was used to present the program, for orientation and preparatory reading. Later in the course, after the teams were formed during class-work, group work was done both synchronously and asynchronously. At the end, the projects were presented and simulated.

E-learning is presented as a solution, which ensures both cost efficiency and flexibility in terms of time and space.

Compared to the previous approach, where the most important parts of the course are concentrated in the class-work sessions, e-learning does not only play a supporting role. Choosing between distance learning or class-work is done through an open decision making process guided by the sole objective of ensuring that interaction with participants is effective.
E-learning as a response to specific market needs (located in a specific geographic area)

Finally there is a third strategy associated with courses devised for a specific but geographically separate clientele where most activities are on-line.

“Thanks to the availability of funding from the European Union, one business school saw the opportunity to increase its share in the education market for South American professionals and executives by recourse to e-learning.”

In this case e-learning was indispensable in the supply of an educational service, because otherwise the Business school in question would not have access to its market.

*The predominant form: blended learning*

A strong trend emerging from the research, which was common to Business Schools, management education centers and Corporate Universities was the predominance of blended learning. Pure e-learning is almost unknown. Although traditional classroom activities are almost invariably associated with distance learning, synchronous technologies are still rarely used. The classroom remains the place where the teacher imparts his/her knowledge and is almost always the key feature of the course.

Blended learning has been credited with the ability to maximize learning efficacy. Different teaching tools and methods can be chosen and integrated according to the teaching objective, stage of the program, contents and the typology of knowledge the course imparts, exchanges or creates.

It should be pointed out that until now, blended learning has adopted fairly standard modes, specifically in the typical structure of part-time masters. The pillars of the architecture of the course are the classroom modules which can be connected using parallel activities involving individual study and group work created using the platform.

The primary motivation given by more than one analyst for a blended approach are the drawbacks of electronically mediated learning. Here the transfer of tacit knowledge held by the teacher becomes impossible while it is difficult to establish a process of cooperative learning through the exchange of experiences among participants.
Introducing e-learning: focusing on the product or the process?

The mode with which the Business Schools have moved closer to e-learning partly depends on the prevailing vision shared by the organization.

In those cases where the potential of e-learning to add significant value to the school’s activities has been recognized, whether in terms of innovating teaching methods or reaching new markets and better client satisfaction, its introduction has tended to involve the education process.

By ‘process’ the following is meant:

– Involvement of different protagonists within the Business School: faculty, specific units or project teams for the management of e-learning;
– Interaction between these is bi-directional and there are cooperation mechanisms already at the design level;
– Implementation is gradual and aims to create change not only in the short term by creating specific projects but its also has the objective of producing long term change in the organization’s culture, its approach to teaching and in the skills held by teachers.

Most Business Schools introduced e-learning in teaching by concentrating on a single project or product. In some cases approaches oriented towards the process or the project were mixed giving life to hybrid forms where one started with one approach and then continued with the other.

We can give the example of one recently founded Business School, characterized by an innovative teaching and flexible organization, which introduced e-learning by following a pure process approach.

The framework for introducing e-learning into the teaching was part of a thorough overhaul of the syllabus of the whole university. By deciding to adhere to the Bologna Reform the university decided to insert a portion of self-study into each course. Clearly this became the attempt to insert e-learning into the overall teaching product.

E-learning is conceived as a driving force for innovation in teaching, an instrument capable of generating changes and improving the experience of learning. It should be
emphasized that the primary strategic objective is not to implement e-learning extensively: this is considered only one of the many options for the organization of self-study. Its adoption is strictly connected to an assessment of the added value that it can confer in regard to the reference target. The process of introducing e-learning has involved the following actors:

- The Center for innovation in learning works with the Business School by offering advice pertaining to all levels of the impact made by e-learning: organization, technology, pedagogy and culture. It engages in research, consultancy, quality improvement, organizational development and change management for other institutions as well;
- Institute of Business Education and Educational Management: this is a special unit with the task of managing the process introducing e-learning to teaching products and offering support for implementation;
- The Faculty was involved both passively as the receiver of educational initiatives regarding e-learning and actively in experimental projects introducing e-learning in academic products;
- The IT department chooses the platform and ensures it works efficiently. It also has a supporting role for the faculty, both in a technical capacity and in the actual configuration of support for e-learning in teaching programs.

What made the process approach distinctive was the involvement of all these actors and the interaction between them.

The unit with the task of managing e-learning played the major role in setting the approach. However, the strategies and the degree of interaction of e-learning in the product and the processes to be initiated, including the degree of involvement of the different units, all depended on how these actors interacted as they fashioned the practices to be applied. The Department of Pedagogy of the university, for example, integrated its skills regarding the teaching process with the recommendations of the Center for Innovation in e-learning to solve problems associated with e-learning. At the same time, the Department of Pedagogy gave constant feedback to the Centre for Innovation in e-learning by establishing a continuous learning dynamic on this issue, and creating a knowledge-base that could be capitalized on. For its part the IT staff helped teachers to devise experimental projects, illustrating the potential of e-learning and collaborating in defining more adequate tools and modes in regard to contents.
The educational role played by the faculty and the creation of experimental projects with supporting staff had the objective of gradually stimulating a changed approach to teaching and generating a cultural change in the organization.

In most cases, the business Schools focused the process of introduction of e-learning on a single product, indifferently an educational program or a project.

Sometimes this led to designing a specific program with the intention of exploiting the potential of e-learning to tap new markets or clients. More often the task was to set up an infrastructure capable of providing electronic support to an already prepared course. In this case, some stages in the course are ‘decentralized’ and shifted onto the platform to lighten class work, which could then focus on core contents. Generally the purpose of distance learning was to effectively manage the preparatory work in the classroom (pre-work), allow homework and project work to be done, and enable discussion groups and course evaluation.

Alternatively, the intention of Business Schools was to implement projects which, by departing from the renewal of the technological infrastructures, sought to widen access to the faculty and allow the gradual and partial introduction of electronic support in the programs. From the organizational viewpoint, the task of introducing, managing and developing the theme of e-learning was attributed to a specific unit or a project team purposely created for this objective.

The evolution of these projects clearly showed how a prevalently pragmatic approach emerged, showing an awareness of the constraints affecting the organization. The cautiousness which characterized the introduction of e-learning into Business Schools emerged in part from an awareness that it means partly overturning a codified approach to education in large organizations which tend to react slowly to change.

*Lessons learnt: critical points for the development of good practices*

Analysis of the effects that the introduction of e-learning has had in European Business Schools has consistently highlighted the following:

- **Limited organizational impact:** the opening of executive education and the academic world to e-learning has not led to any significant structural change. The management
of e-learning was entrusted to a project team or to a specifically designated unit. The role attributed to the unit was confined to a number of specific initiatives, both on a structural level and in terms of teaching products and acted as an independent unit interacting with the rest of the organization only to illustrate the potential of e-learning and experiment with pilot projects. The context in which the unit operated still required convincing to legitimize e-learning.

- **Separation of educational roles:** The establishment of blended modes in e-learning practices helped to separate roles in the teaching process. On the one hand we have the teacher, the unchallenged scientific leader, and on the other the tutor, the supporting co-ordinator. The former is the charismatic individual, a reference point for all content who rarely operates outside of the classroom as his/her exclusive preserve. By his/her side we see the tutor who has a more practical brief (according to the above) mainly based on managing distance learning with clients, fostering discussion forums and operating as a mediator with the faculty when specific content questions were asked which he/she was not able to answer. In practice the tutor becomes the key figure in the distance learning process where the teacher is almost wholly absent. The only, albeit weak, link between the class and distance phases is the tutor’s role in relaying content questions to the teacher.

- **Separating the learning process between class and distance modes:** it is evident that the separation of the roles leads to a clear separation between class and distance learning. This side effect contrasts with the very concept of blended product based on maximizing the efficacy of learning by employing different tools and methods harmoniously and coherently within a course. In the planning stage programs are designed with a specific architecture where tools and modes alternate within a single learning process. However, given that no co-ordination exists with regard to contents, the potential of the blended approach remains largely unexploited.

The introduction of e-learning in educational products and the creation and development of a program are closely linked to the organizational context where they are to be adopted. As was pointed out previously, the culture of Business Schools and their concept of e-learning have decisively influenced the degree and style of their penetration into the system.

If we analyze the organizational context which forms the background to the practices analyzed and the strategies/actions which have facilitated their implementation, it emerges clearly how certain pre-conditions exist which make the introduction of e-learning easier:
Support by top management: the faculties of Business Schools both hold and impart managerial knowledge and profess a consolidated teaching method. E-learning threatens the hitherto undisputed setting for education, the classroom, and this has inevitably led to widespread opposition. In a context of this type, the ability and commitment of top management to transfer the value of e-learning and to support the activities of the unit with the task of managing e-learning become critical.

Promotion on the market by creating a specific brand for the on-line product: if we take into consideration the most common product sold by European Business Schools, part-time masters for executives, it clearly emerges how e-learning is seen as necessary by users but not fundamental. The opportunity to engage in distance activities through a platform is not a variable, which influences the choice of a course. The participant often is not aware of the potential that distance sessions could offer, even when the work done is considered positively. Hence the need to enhance the potential market value of e-learning as part of educational programs. The creation of a specific brand for a blended product can in this case be a solution: a brand name could bring e-learning under the banner of value added learning.

The route through which the development and continuous improvement of e-learning in management education can be channelled is implementation. The creation of good practice is prevalently associated with the effort the organization dedicates to translating e-learning into concrete terms. E-learning is not simply an alternative method of delivery unlike what the top management of Business Schools has uniformly declared. The effective management of a blended program with the objective of maximizing learning results requires co-ordination both of the single distance stages and the overall product. For this reason the creation of most good practice must start from a need analysis and be conveyed into educational planning and become the subject of assessment. The following gives a number of critical points, which have been significant in the development of a good and innovative practice:

Development of an approach, which creates value by adopting technology: for technology to generate value it must be inserted into a specific pedagogic context. Simply carrying out certain activities with the support of a platform runs the risk of separating it from classroom teaching. To enhance the value of what is taught in distance sessions, content must be related to the rest of the course. Only on this manner can results be maximized while at the same time guaranteeing time and space flexibility. It is interesting to note that building-up value in this sense distances us
from certain tenets of the e-learning philosophy: cost efficiency and constant technological innovation. With the affirmation in management education of blended products, a new educational paradigm has been established in distance learning where the logic behind the use of e-learning is based on efficacy.

- **Design and use of multiple channels**: if it is true that the efficacy of a blended program lies in the opportunity to use different tools to maximize learning results, the design phase becomes crucial. The importance of careful and sensitive planning can be seen in the following needs: choosing the most adequate technological tools to attain individual didactic objectives; formulating a solid course architecture capable of holding together distance modules, different activities and modalities; effective co-ordination; creating methods and instruments to stimulate interactivity and contribute towards the creation of a learning community. For a blended program to be effective one must understand how value can really be created for the reference target.

- **Continuous product innovation**: considering research done so far, it emerges fairly clearly how Business Schools have developed a limited number of e-learning products. In most cases this has made it difficult for management education to gain recognition and consolidate a position in the market. The experiences analyzed, despite being chosen because they are “good innovative practice” often remain single projects within the overall supply of educational products provided by a school. Experimentation is generally cautious and the products developed are very similar. For this reason it is better for schools on the one hand to innovate to meet demand, especially from corporations, and on the other, invest in increasing volume once this demand has been established. In this way the Business School crosses the critical threshold beyond which the market recognizes it as a significant player.

- **Management of the value chain of the on-line product**: establishing the value of an e-learning product is difficult. The oscillation of education market prices shows how the demand and supply mechanism fails to identify shared criteria for the attribution of value. The evolution of e-learning in management education will inevitably have to go through a stage in which the suppliers; the Business Schools, and the clients; the executives, will meet and together build a paradigm for the creation of value.

- **Strategic value of distance interaction for the creation of a community of practice**: the establishment of processes for co-operative learning over distances is the basis for the formation of professional communities. By creating case studies, group work and practice sessions, the exchange of experiences, opinions and perspectives can be guaranteed between executives and professionals. These constitute the most significant and crucial aspect of distance learning. The introduction of these processes
over distance largely depends on the awareness of the potential for on-line learning by the Business School, its desire to invest in it and the ability to do so. On the one hand, the activities have to be suitably structured, on the other there must be the resources to manage the distance learning process. In this sense the structuring of e-L activities has the objective of making the interaction the most efficient and effective possible thereby maximizing its value for the participants. Effective management leads to professional relationships, which last beyond the course and create a community of practice. In this perspective, the communities of practice bring their added value directly to managerial life and become fundamental motivators of lifelong learning. The analysis of the case studies has shown how one of the areas needing the greatest investment today is distance interaction. Since Business Schools tend to ignore or underestimate its importance, that it’s potential remains latent.

Critical importance of the relationship between students and tutors/teachers and the consequent need to invest in training: what emerges clearly is how the management of interactive dynamics between participants is gaining increasing importance. In this context the role of the tutor becomes strategic insofar as it not solely confined to coordinating distance activities but also guarantees the cohesion of the course, the consistency of each stage and the establishment of processes of collaborative learning which can lead to the founding of a community of practice. The creation of numerous and effective processes of exchange not only depends on how the activities were structured during the design stage but especially on the ability of the tutor to stimulate interaction among participants, introduce suggestions and observations during intervals and manage dialogue by guiding it towards course objectives, thereby maintaining a link between distance and class learning. Unfortunately the role attributed to tutors is often confined to providing prompt responses to student requests and forwarding any questions regarding complex content issues to the teachers. Only in a very limited number of cases is there an awareness of the importance of the tutor’s role as a facilitator of the learning process. The staff covering this role is generally students completing their PhDs who work part-time as experts on the subjects covered by the course. The tutor’s activities, however, not only require good knowledge of the contents but also a series of skills for the management of group dynamics and the learning process. Unfortunately there is still a strong discrepancy between the role attributed to tutors by the organization and the potential they have to enhance the efficacy of the learning process. The crucial value of the roles covered by educational staff and the current divergence between the activities currently undertaken and potential activities highlight the need for intervention. In particular an investment in
education by Business Schools could enhance the value of blended programs by satisfying the following objectives:

– to create awareness regarding the impact that the management of the role can have;
– to develop the skills necessary to facilitate the learning processes;
– to transfer the skills necessary for the overall co-ordination of the program.
**CONCLUSIONS**

*Luigi Serio*

**Introduction**

The development and the spread of tools and technologies for e-learning, has deeply changed the way in which adults are trained in organizations.

Widening knowledge, skills and individual abilities is indispensable to improve the efficiency of organizations. In play is the continuous development of skills and to some extent the “managerial penchant” in recent years for staff management and development to be closely connected to more or less continuous education for all levels of the active population, from the most technical to exclusively managerial roles.

The demand for less expensive training (i.e.: education involving less time in class and not requiring residence) which is also much more tailored to the individual needs of each participant, is constantly growing. Training and business schools have seen this change coming and are endeavoring to adapt to these new needs. An overall analysis of the British and American experience has highlighted the trend towards managerial education, independently of the choice of technological tools used. Market proposals combine distance education with more traditional methods (classrooms and seminars), an option that associates the classic benefits of in-company/residential education with the advantages of distance learning.

“With the development of e-learning, management education is facing a new scenario and challenges: it has to change its delivery methods because classrooms are still the exclusive setting for many providers. Moreover, it must also rethink consolidated criteria for needs analysis, planning and evaluation: it must be able to manage high volumes which are unusual for the management sector, adapt to lower profit margins and hence shift its focus from efficacy to efficiency. It has to govern a context where competition comes from providers whose backgrounds are often distant from teaching, being mainly technological and with financial resources unusual for this market.”

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8 Luigi Serio, Institutional Department Director (ISTUD).
At the beginning of 2002 these appeared to be the main challenges that the management education system had to face relatively quickly. Three years have gone by and, if one reads between the lines of what has been written above, the issues are still largely unresolved. There is both concern because we are clearly witnessing the effects of the above processes, and complacency as many hope that the change, however significant, will not substantially change this business sector in the end.

This is a weak response that is often hidden and overlaid with the proclaimed urgency to “affirm” and “do” something with technology under the threat of being excluded from the market, while subjecting to more critical appraisal those traditional schools that are “resting on their laurels”. Despite this attitude, e-learning and new IC&T technologies will influence the form schools will take, prioritize strategies and give visibility to investments made in the past.

In first place, this type of market mandates the use of technology. For schools operating in the global market, whose participants come from and operate in different areas, technology is an indispensable factor. The available technological tools keep the group cohesive, maintain rhythm and help to build and consolidate the social aspects of learning, clearly not possible to guarantee otherwise.

Use of technology is not strictly complementary and a function of learning, in other words, it is not always correlated with the development and maintenance of crucial skills. However, it is often functional in terms of acquiring these skills.

Technology in this light becomes a truly ‘enabling factor’ overcoming the space and time constraints which the reference target embodies. Its most fruitful applications are prevalently in the following three product macro-categories:

− Part time executive master: these programs consist in non-consecutive blocks of educational modules, which can also move between countries. Here connection with and continuity between modules is guaranteed by a supporting technological platform;
− Corporate education programs where the clients are in different locations and where technology acts to maintain cohesion and coordinate sequences;
− Programs for geographically distant countries, where e-learning has numerous applications in aligning methods and contents for faculties and maintaining links between participants.
In traditional programs and for schools still firmly anchored to local market in terms of “place” of education and origins of the “participants”, e-learning may exist but its links with the ongoing learning process are tenuous. Here it is often a “victim” of forced schemes and used with unclear objectives.

The pathologies emerging from this situation can be summarized as follows:

- E-learning is often an after-thought which is demanded but not given much value by the client, who uses it very little after buying it;
- The structure of the courses offer e-learning and “traditional” learning as two parallel initiatives by simply adding them together, with modest and especially inadequate sections of integration;
- The roles supporting the learning process are separated according to their respective fields of competence into “managerial” and “technological”;
- Even the expectations regarding the outcomes of the education generally vary widely and reflect different points of view.

Nevertheless, e-learning is much more prevalent in business school practices than what emerges from an empirical evaluation. Indeed, thanks to e-learning and new technologies, at least three fundamental areas of the strategic process of management schools, viz.: institutional and ‘political’ pressures, organizational aspects, and the evolution of roles and behaviors by teachers, are all being deeply reconsidered opening out new ways and perspectives for analysis.

**Institutional and political pressures**

Some indications come from observing the relationship between business school strategies and e-learning practices.

In first place we have the neoinstitutional perspective. This assigns precedence to material and symbolic conditioning on human behavior by institutions, to some extent overturning the basic assumptions of traditional organizational analysis. In contrast, the latter considers individual organizations as the focus for analysis and conceives of them as subjects capable of making decisions according to independent criteria of limited rationality, while the environment remains in the background. The neoinstitutional view
is exactly the opposite: the primary focus of attention is the institutional framework within which organizations operate. Behaviors, events and strategies are examined as deriving mainly from the conditioning applied by this framework.

We therefore ask what this perspective adds to the comprehension of the phenomenon we are analyzing.

What emerges very clearly is an inconsistency between what the institution affirms (in this case the Dean – see the results of the survey) and what individuals actually practice (i.e.: the faculty members and the professional staff in general).

The institution enunciates the urgency and the needs and advocates the wholesale adoption of e-learning as the fundamental driver for the development of the school, for the maintenance of a quality relationship with clients and to enhance an overall reputation as an innovative school. In contrast, the professional staff observes this phenomenon with apparent detachment, and engages in strategies to reduce, if not neutralize, its effects on their customary practices.

If we adopt the institutional perspective to read and analyze this fact, it appears that over time the institutional framework expressed by the Dean will eventually impact on and change both form and substance of the business school’s modality of being and action, much more significantly than what will be seen immediately.

In this sense, to understand possible future directions of evolution of business schools, one should highlight and reconstruct the institutional frame of reference and on the basis of this envisage future scenarios.

From this viewpoint, the fundamental elements can be mainly reconstructed from the quantitative survey, where the profile of the business school of tomorrow emerges clearly in its operative modalities, its renewed relationship with the market and in the evolution of skills and roles supporting teaching.

Another interpretative key helpful in singling out possible development trends is the political perspective by adopting the definition of “study of intersubjective behaviors” (the search for laws regulating social phenomena).
In this context the map of actors in play is distributed as follows: on the one hand there are the corporations, on the other business schools, then there are the technological companies.

The relationship between business schools and corporations has characterized both the birth and development of the management education system. In the decision to found a school there has always been a company, or a group of companies of reference which for philanthropic or practical reasons promoted its establishment. This duality, albeit conflicting, remains constitutive of its origins.

The management education schools were created and developed as places where the “truths” of managerial sciences were rationalized and made common knowledge: the schools were places of rationalization and consolidation of those practices that could then be transferred to companies through classroom activities. In practice, the role of the teacher was to transmit knowledge to all participants. The more the teacher succeeded in adapting the practices to the context and the ‘level’ of the participants, the greater their efficacy. The average life cycle of this knowledge was very long and was refined over time with practice and by dissemination. It was common (and recommended to younger participants) to stage internships with companies to help the real needs of the organization to emerge and assimilate the corporation’s language and culture. These internships became a form of consultancy, which helped better calibrate knowledge that would then be transferred to the classroom during traditional education.

In the field of research-education-consultancy within which a teacher acquires professional expertise, management education is prevalently centred on the education-consultancy dichotomy. Research used to be the preserve of academia. Only a small number of prestigious business schools over the years took this role on successfully as well as transferred resulting knowledge to companies and implemented it in management systems.

This method of creating and disseminating knowledge entered a crisis phase due to faster obsolescence so that separating the production of knowledge from education-consultancy was no longer a viable option. Increasing demands were placed on business schools and their professionals to innovate, which in management language is termed “research”. Here we are not talking about theoretical book based research that can be impractical and difficult to apply. This is research in action, often conducted directly with companies, capable of opening out new perspectives for analysis and action.
In addition to the profound changes in the product, which is increasingly less standardized and customized, the teacher must integrate a capacity for theoretical rationalization (research), communication (teaching in the strict sense) and practical application (consultancy). The evolution and nature of this relationship has made the corporation-business school relationship more symmetrical. The less knowledge is preconceived and the more it is developed in progress, the smaller advantage business schools have over corporations. As the former’s role changes from knowledge disseminator to facilitator of the learning process it thus becomes less visible and harder to standardize.

With the introduction of IC&T technologies and e-learning, the issue gets even more complicated. The task of facilitating the learning process, at least from the corporation point of view can be attributed to technology, in its definition as a purely ‘enabling factor’. This shifts the area of operation and the dynamics of the relationship, which is no longer between corporations and business schools, but between corporations and technological firms. The business school thus loses its supremacy and leadership.

The business school – corporation axis appears not to have developed a significant strategic partnership, or exploited the opportunity offered by technology providers to widen relationships with companies in the educational field.

This has had two consequences: on the one hand, the growth of what are commonly called Corporate Universities which have institutionalized the central role played by companies in governing education; on the other, a certain neglect for the learning process by forcing it using technological tools.

What has created this solidarity between corporations and technological providers to the exclusion of business schools?

The impression one gains from observing existing market supply and its evolution is twofold. In the first place, methodological analysis has led to qualitative improvements in the final product. It now has greater usability and employs approaches now distant from its pioneering days. However, it has also led many to consider e-learning as a panacea for all educational needs, including management education. Defining e-learning in this context implies not facing the deep differences characterizing the learning process which seeks to impart the competence and complex skills needed by managers. The use of advanced and complex technology, the adoption of inductive processes and the most
disparate methods to involve and motivate the user appear to constitute methodologically justified attempts to recreate the efficacy that learning based on interaction between man and machine or mediated relationships with others can achieve only with difficulty. This methodological approach risks losing sight of the “what” by privileging the “how”. Concentrating on methodological aspects connected with e-learning relegates to second place crucial considerations as to the objective of the learning process and the coherence existing between medium/method and contents.

Secondly, such methodological considerations on learning rather appear to be a posteriori attempts to justify (and give a pedigree to) learning as a phenomenon originating and thriving in a wholly different context; that of efficiency and cost/benefits analysis. E-learning was not devised to improve the learning processes for the individual, but to make company education more efficient. It was created to supply a uniform education, but more often training, to a large number of people whilst reducing costs (less travel, man-hours, teachers to pay) while maintaining substantial educational efficacy.

The products from the pioneering phase were devised to satisfy simple training needs that were coherent with the tool being used: basic computer use, languages, corporate procedures, regulations, etc. They appropriately promoted themselves as tools for self-learning or distance learning and did not address learning processes. FaD, now a term rejected or considered with commiseration for its retrograde implications was and still is simply a means of industrializing supply. It was feasible for certain types of content and educational objectives, but a contradiction in terms when referring to management education which develops abilities, skills and competence.

The evolution of e-learning thus appears to be a phenomenon which has unjustifiably appropriated an attractive label emphasising learning exactly where learning constitutes its weak if not missing link.

According to the opinions expressed by the business schools in our sample, the more or less voluntary ‘absence’ of the business schools in this process and recurring criticism of existing e-learning practices are the result of this “impulsive” severance of the traditional relationship between business schools and companies. This relationship has only partly been recovered by the proportional growth of in-house corporate activities in schools where the link with companies has been re-established. In business schools whose corporate education sector has been downsized, we are witnessing a slow but gradual academization of activities and a polarisation towards the academic at the expense of professional learning.
Changes in organization

If, from the strategic point of view, e-learning in its wider definition has created or is creating discontinuities with the system of management and corporate education, its impact on organization has been less apparent.

In the first place, there are no changes in form.

When the initial orientation was product development, the forms of organization were Business Units. Given it was impossible to self-fund, over time these gave way to dedicated roles whose position was close to and sometimes structurally incorporated in the department connected with the ICT. This role often corresponded to that of a sort of process owner, and used mainly external experts for technological mediation. The need to enucleate and give visibility to a unit or a specific figure for e-learning appears to be a declining need among business schools and so is gradually losing prominence.

For those schools that interpreted e-learning prevalently as innovation in the teaching process, this role is even more concealed and inserted in areas such as faculty development. It may be quite influential but it is also less visible.

What forecasts can we make in this field?

There appears to be no traditional organizational time lag behind strategy as premised by Chandler “on the issue of whether the organization follows the strategy and the adaptive nature of the organization.”

Business schools maintain their nature as organizations with weak links, partial laboratories for diverse organizational formulae with permeable boundaries. Here it is not easy to distinguish with certainty what is inside from what is outside. Their interorganizational ties, which are typical of the school system, are vertical with corporations and horizontal with other schools and appear increasingly dense and integrated.

“To highlight these heterogeneous characteristics the dynamism and ambiguity of their new forms as well as the recursive aspects of the processes structuring them, one uses – as has always happened in the history of organizations – images and metaphors taken
from daily experience: for example one hears terms like: ‘moebius strip organizations’\(^{22}\) (alluding to objects that produce an optical effect which prevents observers from distinguishing inside from outside); ‘bricolage’ (a modality of resolving problems without making use of previous theories based on what is available at the time creatively re-using ‘leftovers’ from routines, procedures and organizational systems), or ‘platforms’\(^{23}\), rather than organizational ‘forms’ (to indicate a set of human procedural and technological resources that can be reconfigured according to needs), and so on (Gagliardi, 2003)”\(^{24}\).

The correlation between the evolution of organizational forms and more intense adoption of e-learning solutions nevertheless appears to be weak. Much more intense is the correlation with the market of reference and openness to the global educational market, which imposes, flexible and swift solutions to bridge the gap between current practice and the demands placed by the evolution of the globalized market. In this case too, technology operates more as a medium than as an end in itself, exploited as a pretext for integrating different skills with a higher objective: to be the global player in the education market.

Finally some considerations as to the evaluation of roles.

In this case too, the situation appears to rapidly developing, but does not exhibit serious discontinuities. No one is mentioning separating roles from the theoretical point of view, as was confirmed by the survey of the opinions of the Deans. Indeed, the trend appears to be towards integrating the two macro-categories of skills of learning and technology. In reality, however, the two roles appear to be markedly differentiated.

From the point of view of new roles, there are the tutors who govern learning processes involving e-learning. There appear to be no doubts as to what the tutor actually does. These responsibilities include:

- When switching from class learning to distance learning, to govern the ‘weight’ to be given to each phase, thereby regulating the learning process;


\(^{24}\) Gagliardi P., 2002, “Forme organizzative emergenti”, from the proceedings of the XXII AIDP Congress.
– To govern interaction among various actors. Given that the classroom is not the only educational setting, the tutor must establish modalities, channels to be used and timing, controlling the information flows, governing and encouraging the participation of all the actors in the learning process;
– To work with teachers and often replace him/her in preparing teaching materials on the web, interact at a distance with the students, develop debate with participants, work with them in practice sessions and individual assessments.

In recently monitored integrated learning experiences in a number of vocational and managerial schools the tutor was the figure of reference guaranteeing continuity for participants. Thus the tutor no longer appeared to be subordinate to the teacher, but operated to facilitate the learning process and guarantee the results.

Completely entrusting the task of e-learning to the tutor has in reality created a sort of double parallel market: the traditional educational market and the e-learning market, the latter being theoretically as important as a process but in practice less so, such that it can be “delegated” completely to the tutor. In this light we witness an implicit process of “neutralisation” of technology by traditional faculties.

By neutralisation one means that the behaviors and strategies enacted by teachers have prevalently been to use technology whilst limiting its impact on consolidated procedures and individual relationships with the organization.

To conclude, technology has gone from being the “strategic lever for development” to a “factor enabling efficiency and enhancing process rationalization”. Here technological competence has not become a survival skill (in the sense that one cannot do without it) to be integrated with specific traditional teaching skills. This is because these two fields of competence have substantially remained connected in the cultural backgrounds of teachers showing an accentuated separation of ‘technology’ from the ‘governors’ of the learning process and increasing fragmentation rather than an integration of the teaching process with the operating mechanisms of business schools.
ANNEXES
SURVEY

Questionnaire

Name of the person who fills in the questionnaire

Role:
- Dean
- E-learning manager
- IT manager
- Executive Education Manager
- Other (please specify: ____________________________ )

Section A – Organization facts

1. Organization data
   - Name: ____________________________
   - Number of employees: ____________________________
   - Revenues 2003 (_): ____________________________
   - Founded in (year): ____________________________
   - Country: ____________________________

2. Type of organization
   - Business school
   - Corporate University
   - Vocational training school
   - Other (please specify: ____________________________)

1. What kind of educational activities does your organization offer (choose one answer)?
   - Only classroom [if choose, questionnaire ends]
   - Only E-learning
   - Both classroom and e-learning (not blended)
   - Both classroom and e-learning (blended solution)
2. Year of your first e-learning experience, including first generation e-learning

3. Did you use public funding (p.e. UE, local government…) to carry out this experience?
   YES  NO

4. Number of e-learning programs carried out in 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>e-learning</th>
<th>Blended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 50</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5. What is your “make or buy” – “insource/outsource” policy referring to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Insource</th>
<th>Outsource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section B – E-learning impact

6. How much do you think e-learning has changed management education?
   (1 = no change – 7 = totally changed)
   1———2———3———4———5———6———7

7. How much do you think e-learning will change management education in the next few years?
   (1 = no change – 7 = totally changed)
   1———2———3———4———5———6———7
8. How much do you think e-learning has changed your organization processes?  
(1 = no change – 7 = totally changed)  
1———2———3———4———5———6———7

9. How much do you think e-learning has changed the way your organization is on the education market?  
(1 = no change – 7 = totally changed)  
1———2———3———4———5———6———7

10. What is the impact of e-learning on training process’ phases  
(1 = no impact – 7 = very high impact)  

Needs analysis 1———2———3———4———5———6———7  
Planning 1———2———3———4———5———6———7  
Delivery 1———2———3———4———5———6———7  
Evaluation 1———2———3———4———5———6———7

11. Thinking about your e-learning projects, do you find a competencies gap in your training staff?  
(1 = no gap – 7 = very high gap)  

At your first experience 1———2———3———4———5———6———7  
Today 1———2———3———4———5———6———7

12. How do you mainly face with this gap?  

| At your first experience | Hiring new resources  
|                         | Developing existing resources  
| Today                   | Hiring new resources  
|                         | Developing existing resources |

13. Please provide a short description of your overall strategy, paying particular attention to the impact of technology on management education
SECTION C – HOW TO E-LEARN

14. *Is your organization part of any e-learning network/consortium addressed to developing and producing e-learning solutions and activities?*
   
   YES  NO

14bis. *If yes, the main objective is:*
   
   - cost saving
   - knowledge sharing
   - best practices benchmarking
   - competencies integration
   - other: ...................................................................................................................................................................

15. *Before starting your e-learning activities did you carry out preliminary researches/studies about:*
   
   - Methodological approaches
   - Market demand
   - Market structure/competitor
   - Technology benchmarking
   - other: ...................................................................................................................................................................

16. *Your e-learning activities are funded by*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund Source</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your investments</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. *Your e-learning products are*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Type</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customized (on demand)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardized</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION D – TECHNICAL ISSUES

18. Is your e-learning offering standard compliance (p.e. AICC, SCORM, IMS…)?
   YES NO

19. How much is important the standard compliance?
   (1 = no importance – 7 = very high importance)
   1———2———3———4———5———6———7

20. Is your e-learning offering part of a national or international accreditation system (p.e. ECTS – European Credit Transfer System)?
   No
   Yes, National
   (if Yes, name it: ........................................................................................................)
   Yes, International
   (if Yes, name it: ........................................................................................................)

21. Which delivery technology do you adopt?
   CD-ROM
   WBT – Web Based Training
   GroupWare
   LMS – Learning Management System
   Videoconferencing
   Other, please specify ....................................................................................................

22. Does your organization use
   Self-developed platform
   Acquired platform (please specify your provider:
   Aspen
   Docent
   Learning Space
   Oracle
   Pathlore
   Saba
   SmartForce
   Other: ..............................................................................................................................

ISTUD Istituto Studi Direzionali S.p.A.
23. If you are interested in being involved in the next step of eXeL project (interviews and case writing) please tick this box
   If you have any e-learning experience accessible and visible online, please point out the web link

24. Thank you for your co-operation!
INTERVIEWS TO OPINION LEADERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Activity

10 interviews to opinion leaders and stakeholders.

The targets

– Producers
– Public decision makers (UE representatives, trade unions, agencies, ETF..)
– Final users: for example HR managers or CEO of big companies that use e-learning to train their employees
– Experts
– Associations

Objective

To draw possible lines of development for e-learning applied to management education.

Approach

A non structured approach has been followed based on a check list.

– Overall introduction on the person interviewed, on the organization and the way in which the organization is linked to e-learning; for example in the case of business schools this is represented by the projects, in the case of the suppliers it is represented by the products offered...
– A description of the actual situation with the aim of getting the different point of views of the organizations interviewed concerning:
– Present situation of the market and it players in the e-learning industry
– Current state of the art on the technology side
– Thoughts/considerations on the methodologies and learning models in e-learning
– Strategies implemented and best practices/successful strategies
– Critical aspects that have influenced the evolution of e-learning in management education
- Point of view of the person/organization interviewed on emerging issues and future trends of e-learning in management education
- Whether in his/her experience he/she has seen good practices and which are they? What kind of criteria make a practice a best practice

Opinion leaders and stakeholders

E-learning Experts
- Prof Paul Quintas Open University – Knowledge Management Professor
- Philippe Koch, IBM director of education and public sector business relationship.

Institutions
- Mrs Margereta Nikolovska – Expert on Secondment ETF “E-learning initiative on Project evaluation” in the Western Balkans
- Ms Maruja Gutierrez-Diaz – Director of DG Education

Associations
- Mr. Tom Cavenagh – Conference Board Senior Research Associate Professor in the Global Citizenship Program
- Serge Ravet, director of European Institute for e-learning
- Annick Renaud-Coulon, director of European club for Corporate Universities

Suppliers
- Mr Davide Palummo – Giunti Interactive Labs–e-Learning & New Media Sales Manager Italia
- Benjamin Amar, director of Thomson NetG for Western Europe

Final Users
- Mr. Michelangelo Avallone – Banca Intesa Human Resource and Organization Department
- Mr. Michele Angerosa – Canon School Specialist – HR & Corporate Strategy
- Christophe Lamort, director of e-learning development, France Telecom
- Nadine Lhenry, director of e-learning, Crédit Agricole
- Minh Van, coordinator of Crédit Agricole Managers Corporate University
CASE STUDIES

Activity

15 Case Studies: an in deep analysis to focus best practices and experiences on the application of e-learning to management education in Europe, in order to better understand how this good practices have been developed and how (under which conditions) they could be spread throughout Europe. They will analyze innovative practices of the application of e-learning on European management education and they will be shared among the community of the European Business Schools; a particular attention will be devoted to EU funded initiatives.

Methodology

From a methodological point of view the distinctive feature of the case study research method is that, regardless of the phenomenon investigated, it uses multiple sources of data. It is mainly this use of numerous sources of information – this ‘all round’ study of a certain phenomenon – that gives validity to case analysis. Consequently, in order to conduct an in-depth study of the cases selected it is necessary to employ an array of investigative tools.

In practical terms, conducting a case study using a largely ethnographic approach means observing three main categories of organizational clues (or sources of ‘data’): material artifacts, the behaviour of individual subjects and collective events, verbal texts.

There are substantially three methods with which these data can be collected: analysis of documents, as well as of other material artifacts, participant observation (in order to ‘see’ behaviors, events, artifacts), unstructured or semi-structured interviews with individual subjects.

The function of the case studies in the overall research plan is to extract a qualitative point of view from the mainly quantitative information collected through the survey. The Business Schools selected could be for example illustrative of different strategies using e-learning in management education.
Note that in the overall research activity no pedagogical and didactical approach has been chosen “a priori”, best practices come out from a scientific analysis of European experiences of the application of e-learning to management education and focus on innovative actions. This choice has been done because the effectiveness of e-learning strategies is contextually bound. There is no “one best way” but practices that are more or less effective in a given situation.

The case studies are realized in co-operation by ISTUD and EM Lyon. Each Business School has been visited for two days by the research team who will carry out the interviews and examined eL products.

Selection of Business Schools

- Nationality: create a panel that can be in some ways representative of the 15 EU member states (taking care of the impact of different cultures on education processes)
- Application of eL in executive education: some business schools apply eL in many postgraduate management programs which are not addressed to executives
- Implementation of blended learning programs: since the evolution of the e-learning goes towards blended learning more than pure e-learning, the attention will be focussed on these kind of projects
- Use of eL funds

Actors

In each Business School the aim is to gather the different point of views of the following actors (coherently with the internal organization of the institution):

- Dean
- IT/eLearning specialist
- Final user
- Trainer/Tutor
- Project manager
- Executive Education Manager (when possible)
To carry out the interviews to the targeted Business School members a checklist containing the main issues to be investigated.

**Checklist**

**Business School**
- Foundation, evolution and distinctive assets
- Strategy
- The role of IT and eL in the BS strategy

**E-Learning**
- The beginning of eL activities: reasons and approach
- Subjects involved in eL activities (inside and outside the BS)
- Present position regarding e-Learning
- Type of eL projects realized

**Impact**
- How eL has affected the business model
- How eL has affected the relationship with the market arena
- How eL has affected the organization
- How eL has affected the roles inside the BS

**Project**
- Description of the most distinctive eL product developed by the BS: strengths and weaknesses

**Dissemination of best practices**
- Conditions for the success of a eL practice (internal and external)
- When a practice turns into a best practice
- Critical issues
- Future perspectives
- Possibility to replicate/translate the experience into a different context
Business Schools

- ABB University
- Ashridge Business School (Berkhamsted, UK)
- Duke Corporate Education (Durham, USA)
- EOI-Escuela de Negocios (Madrid, Spain)
- Helsinki School Of Economics (Helsinki, Finland)
- Hochschule für Bankwirtschaft (Frankfurt, Germany)
- Instituto de Empresa – IE (Madrid, Spain)
- London Business School (London, UK)
- Sankt Gallen University (Sankt Gallen, Switzerland)
- SDA Bocconi (Milan, Italy)
- SGH School of Economics (Warsaw, Poland)
- UMEA University
- Universiteit Nyenrode (Breukelen, Netherlands)
CASE STUDY SUMMARIES

ABB UNIVERSITY ITALY

The Global training network

ABB University is a virtual organisation formed by all ABB Technical Training Centers. It provides technical training about ABB Products and Systems, which can be delivered at the organisation centers, on site or via the internet.

e-Learning

From the corporate perspective, the use of e-learning brings several advantages linked to efficiency and flexibility: standardisation of company knowledge, easier worldwide reach, fast deployment of training, reusability, time and space flexibility and tracking of results.

The added value of e-learning lies mainly in the improvement of training effectiveness, which is linked to the use of the blended approach:

“Blended learning focuses on optimising achievement of learning objectives by applying the right technologies to match the right personal learning style to transfer the right skills to the right person at the right time.”

ABB University is generally committed to providing “Sustainable training”; it is characterised by the following key points:
- It has to be useful to both participants and company objectives
- It takes care of both educational objectives and business constraints
- It is easily available to the larger possible number of participants

Besides having to cope with the typical obstacles deriving from business (time shortage, overloaded resources, cost), training via e-learning encounters more barriers which prevent its use and which are all linked to the implementation side. In order to avoid them, it is extremely important to keep in mind the following crucial points:
– participants have to feel comfortable with technology
– logistics have to be taken care
– the content has to be high quality
– the program requires the support of trainers/facilitators

The effort of ABB University is very much focussed on applying the learning styles which involve a social dimension; the use of discussion groups, practice by doing, teaching others or immediate use are proven methods for increasing learning retention

Project

Integrated Program on “Sustainability affairs Italy”

The 4 modules of the program were built around the same structure: traditional classroom lecture, web based training, test and virtual class

The pedagogical approach foresees the use of different technologies playing all a specific function in the overall program:

– Traditional Class; to create the group spirit and utilise social interaction on role play and simulations
– WBT-Web Based Training; is employed for self-study in a rich multimedia environment including assessment of learning made by testing
– Virtual Class; mode for being in contact with the “expert” in real-time without travelling
– LMS-Learning Management System; is the tool for managing all the training events and reporting

Lessons learnt

– Appreciation by participants of the blended learning approach for its completeness and flexibility
– The embeddeness in a social context plays a key role in the overall learning results; virtual classes for instance, have proved to be very efficient in keeping alive the social contact
– Internal support is necessary whenever technology is employed
- Tutoring/supervision/facilitation is required for any training activity
- Key factors to be taken into consideration in all the different e-learning for a successful implementation are the following: quality, interactivity and customisation of messages
- LMS can act as facilitating factor in coordinating mixed delivery of training
ASHRIDGE BUSINESS SCHOOL

The Business School

Mission: it delivers executive education and development to individuals and organizations that want to go further.
Approach: it works on practical development and conceives learning as flexible, adaptable and blended.
Programs: executive development-open and tailored programs
            Full time and part time MBA
            Masters in Organization Consulting and diploma in general management
Ashridge Strategic Management Centre
Ashridge Consulting

E-learning activities

History of eL activities
– the Centre represents the final evolution of a process started approximately 10 years ago with a project aimed at delivering general management training materials on electronic support (cd rom)
– after that Ashridge invested on the creation of a Learning Resource Centre: it was conceived as a tool for pre-work before onsite training. Readings and articles are provided on the platform in order to fill knowledge gaps previously assessed through a 360° questionnaire
– In 1999 creation of VLRC-Virtual Learning Centre: it provides just-in-time web access to learning materials such as learning guides, book summaries, articles etc.

The creation of the VLRC is consistent with the internationalization strategy of Ashridge, cause it enables Ashridge to reach a wide number of clients all over the world MBA participants and important clients of the executive education.

Market driven strategy: willingness to satisfy the growing clients’ needs in this direction
– companies require e-learning in MBA programs.

Pedagogical approach: blended learning, considered more effective from the didactical point of view.
EL introduction has been focussed on a product, which is the VLRC; the eL consultant provides a process type support when eL is applied to the programs.

**Insource for technology**

E learning impact

On the organization: dedicated unit for the development of e-learning strategies linked with the top management of the school, and the sale of e-learning tools to the market. Unit is supported by an eL consultant who takes care of “training the trainers”, so that they can understand fully the specificity of e-learning and are supported in adapting the existing teaching materials (made them more interactive).

Resistance among the faculty members. For this reason a process of organizational change is on going and it is aimed at gaining a stronger commitment from the faculty.

The overall organizational impact is limited, as well as the strategic impact.

Project

“Consortium MBA”: MBA program designed for 4 German companies.

Structure: 9 modules, two of which are on line. The innovative element of the project is that the on line modules are brand new conceived to stimulate interaction and support learning.

The role of the e-learning consultant, who designs the teaching materials and tutors the participants in these modules, is fundamental for the success of the project.

EL is a necessity since it is a long program.

Lessons learnt

On the organizational side, the main obstacle is the faculty who is reluctant to change its way of teaching in favour of on line learning.

Conditions for e-learning spreading and success:

- process of organizational change
- growing demand from the market
DUKE CORPORATE EDUCATION

The Business School

Duke CE is a global provider of custom corporate education, it is a private company funded in 2000 as a carve-out from Duke University’s Fuqua School of Business.

Mission: to provide custom corporate education designed in response to a business issue.

Distinctive assets: hybrid, design capability, customisation, global pool of educators.

Approach: strategy execution through education

E-learning

Model

– Target: all the levels inside a company: executives, directors, managers and individual contributors
– Capabilities focus: individuals, teams and enterprise
– Knowledge dynamism: static and dynamic

Key partnerships with external resources to integrate the technical capabilities inside DukeCE.

eL introduction

– the best way to connect with participants and faculty

– guiding principles:
  – support for the learning process
  – strive to offer always very innovative tools

Each initiative is managed by a project team (client leader) composed by: managing director, project director and program director.

EL introduction followed a process type approach.
Impact

- On the market: access to certain clients
- On the training offer: leverage of faculty from remote locations, variety of approaches to design and delivery
- On roles: change in skills for educators who deliver through ‘e’
- On the business model: no change – duke is driven by the purpose of responding to customer needs and accelerating the learning process – eL can make this process more effective or can just be the demand of a client

Project

Building Global Leadership

Objectives

- Build business acumen and financial performance awareness
- Develop cross-functional teaming skills
- Build leadership skills and awareness of role
- Understand strategic issues and participant impact
- Empower participants with tools to apply concepts at work

Target: Managers from across the organization.
Cross-functional representation, geographically distributed, groups of 30, (currently in 5th iteration).

Pedagogical approach: blended learning.

Structure

phase 1: logistics, program orientation and pre-work
phase 2: content presentation, simulation, connections with peers, team formation, team diagnostic tool and action planning for phase 3
phase 3: asynchronous and synchronous distributed team work, team diagnostic tool, logistical preparation for phase 4, introduction 2 additional tools
phase 4: complete simulation, debrief of team diagnostic tool and content presentation.
Strengths – customized, event-driven.
Weakness – too much, not enough time

Lessons learnt

– Buy-in and support from leadership; relevance to participants; integration in design
– When participants own the eL content or process
– Design stage is crucial for the success of eL activities: it has to derive from a real understanding of the situation
– Connectivity across multiple channels.
EOI-ESCUELA DE NEGOCIOS

The Business School

Founded in 1955 by the Ministry of Economy and Education as Training Center for Executives, tightly linked to the corporations world.

In 1997 EOI becomes a Foundation owned by institutions and private companies and adds “Escuela de Negocios” to its name wanting to enlarge its target of reference to the overall industry, not only the manufacturing sector.

Training activities are focused on: Entrepreneurship, Executive programs, Master programs (many functional MBAs).

E-Learning

Launch of e-learning activities (funds from EU) responds to the desire of wanting to tap into a new market segment: education of professionals and executives in South America.

Guiding principles: same quality of faculty of face to face sessions, e-learning implemented only in a limited number of activities, strong relationship to be maintained among the alumni network.

Initially strong investments in “training the trainers” activities in the faculty and preparation of materials.

Nowadays e-learning is applied only in “long” programs like MBAs: profile of students is similar to face to face editions, learning how to deal with the platform is a time consuming activity and financial investment necessary for technology can be sustained more easily.

After an introduction of eL activities, which responded to a specific market demand, nowadays implementation of eL follows a process type approach.

Technology support is outsourced
**Impact**

Market driven strategy: South America opportunity
On roles: new competencies required for teaching on a distance basis

- Teacher has to be able to actively stimulate the participation of students in the virtual class
- Teacher has to develop on-line materials which are straightforward following a clear logic
- Teacher is responsible for feedbacks to students

New role: TAO-Tecnico de Apoyo as supervisor of the platform for technical reasons.

The communication between teacher/student is enhanced and more intense but less rich.

On overall training activities: tools and materials developed for eL programs are used also to integrate residential programs in order to enlarge the knowledge transfer.

**Project**

MBA Online
Development of a distance training methodology called “Metodologia di Presenza Virtuale” which allows the teaching experience to be equivalent to residential courses.

Target: young professionals wanting to deepen their general management knowledge.

Very detailed structure requiring on-line contact on a daily basis.

Each module lasting approximately 1-2 weeks is organized so that the workload is concentrated at the weekend. There are three main residential moments: introduction to the program for team building and social skills development, intermediate-project work introduction and business game, final-project works presentation.

Pedagogical approach involves a mix of virtual lessons, self-study and group-working.
Duration: 2 years

Average n° participants: 20/25

The product is purchased mainly from a company, which sustains the high costs of the product.

*Lessons Learnt*

Key success factors:
- capability of the teacher to stimulate the students to take part actively to the learning activities
- high motivation of students: program requires daily commitment an self-discipline
HELSINKI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

The Business School

Founded in 1911, it starts offering programs for executives in 1970
- MBA full time and part time
- Joko Executive Education
- EMBA-Executive MBA

Three research centres: Center for Knowledge and Innovation Research, Center for Market Transition, and CIE-Center for Innovative Education.

E-learning

In 1996 takes place the first experience of CIE which in 2001 becomes institutionally recognised.

CIE: unit which manages e-learning projects and supports faculty in implementing the use of IT in academic programs.

CIE acts as a consultancy which helps teachers in shaping the website platform according to target and contents of the academic program. Three tools actually available: Front Page, Optima and WWS.

No obligation from top management in integrating eL with traditional face to face teaching.

Blended Learning: in most of the cases the programs couple traditional face to face teaching with eL.

eL is intended mainly for document storage, discussion groups and lectures via videoconferencing; the platform is just a support for face to face lessons which play still a major role in the training offer.
eL is applied just in undergraduate programs.

Training initiatives addressed both to faculty and students on how to use eL tools.

Resistance initially from faculty and students who are not familiar with IT.

Impact

Institutional driven strategy: from 2002, CIE makes its strategy public in response of the Ministry of Education asking to the Finnish universities of being active in the field of e-Learning.

On organization: creation of a dedicated unit-CIE.

Lessons learnt

Choose an innovative pedagogical approach for online activities.

Create a good group work between students and professors who can effectively support the online sessions.

Motivation of faculty: the use of eL made by students and the perception of added value really depends on the importance which the professors give to eL and how they communicate it.
HOCHSCHULE FÜR BANKWIRTSCHAFT

The Business School

Founded in 1991 as a subsidiary of Bankakademie e.V. the consortium owned by the major German banking institutes (Commerzbank, Deutsche Bank etc.) which has a long tradition in vocational training.

HfB offers three Bachelor programs: Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Computer Science in Banking and Finance and Bachelor of Finance and Management.

Master programs are also offered: Master of Banking & Master of Finance and Frankfurt Executive MBA in co-operation with Henley Management College.

e-Learning

Long distance learning experience from 1957.

EFIPORT: company which provides full-service e-learning systems founded in 2001 as a spin-off of Bankakademie e.V. in order to capitalise the extranet experience which resulted in a great success.

Outsourcing of design and technology.

eL is a necessity (students are all over Germany and working in banks), conceived mainly as an additional tool…

but different high value projects aimed at implementing eLearning in the training processes are in progress:

– Flexible learning – project launched by Bankakademie to influence – through eLearning solutions – the way of designing, developing and managing training programs
– Virtual campus – launched in 2004, is a support system for students (providing info and steps for the exam enrolment, counseling services etc) and faculty (helping to develop formats, contents and training modules through the use of eL).
Impact

Step by step introduction with single projects will be followed by a reframing of processes conceived mainly for facilitating the training process rather than changing it.

On organization: foundation of EFIPORT – eL provider
On roles: strong resistance from faculty. Role of the teacher changes dramatically since he is in charge of tutoring the long distance students; this requires different skills and new competencies like the e-moderation. Support though is not always there; potential solution is to have 2 different people, a ‘subject matter expert’ (the former ‘teacher’ or ‘professor’) and an e-Moderator, who manages the online interaction between professors and managers.

Project

The BFM-Bachelor in Finance and Management, is a part time program for young bankers wanting to up-grade their career prospects. The pedagogical approach is a mix of face to face lectures (30% of the program, taking place all over Germany), self-study (40%) and interactive team-working on specific assignments (remaining 30%). The participant is guided through the learning process thanks to an individual structured “Learning plan”. These eL activities are realized through an extranet which works mainly virtual space for document storage and discussion forum.

Contents are built on the professional expertise of Bankakademie coupled with the traditional methodology of a Business School.

It lasts approximately 4 years and costs 16.600 Euro. The Bachelor qualification is in line with the ECTS-European Credit Transfer System.

Lessons learnt

– Conditions for the success of an eL practice: design and development of a structured program and existence of a study-related support.
– Implementation of an effective support and communication in the tutoring activity; critical is the selection of profiles and organization of the process.
INSTITUTO DE EMPRESA – IE

Origin

Founded in 1973 in Madrid (Spain), Instituto de Empresa (IE) is a private, independent, not-for-profit organization. All the educational activities are intended to cover the educational interests of post-graduate students and executives at different stages in their careers. It is accredited EQUIS, AACSB and AMBA.

Main figures

Academic staff 100 full-time, 200 part-time.
Administrative staff 90

Alliances member of the SUMAQ Alliance, 8 leading business schools in the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking worlds, 11 campuses in Europe and Latin America.

IE offers four types of studies

– MBAs (international and executive, full-time, part-time or distance)
– Professional Masters (full-time, part-time or distance)
– Executive programs (open short and long programs, mid to top management)
– In-company custom programs.

E-learning activity

In-source ilearning.net for training and online content development.

Process blended learning programs using ICT facilities, existing digital course material and specific online case studies and simulations.

People involved 50 ilearning.net employees, tutoring made by IE teachers.
E-learning impact

Strategy: ielearning.net activities are supporting the distance learning programs development and training the faculty members to use the online learning Blackboard platform. Simple and reliable technology. 10 to 15 corporate clients are working on custom blended learning programs.

Organization: former subsidiary company then reintegrated in the school disposal. Part of the marketing and innovation department.

Projects

Actual position: busy activity on specific distance learning based programs: SUMAQ MBA, professional masters, open and tailor made executive programs. 150 teachers.

English and Spanish speaking online courses.

The teaching style wants to remain as closest as possible to the successful traditional IE style based on the case studies method: same course material, same methodology, different sessions (one week distant equivalent to a 3 hour face-to-face session).

Lessons learnt

Don’t try to change the teaching style too much

Give more credits to online activities to promote the system

Think about where the added value in online course development is

Open new online programs every year.
LONDON BUSINESS SCHOOL

Origins

Personal experience
– Pearson – FT Knowledge – publishing
– Quisic – content
– Blackboard – structure
– Business schools – pedagogy
– Former work with Henley MBA

Need to have global view in post program
– Relationship management
– Classroom is the starting point
– Facilitation for PD or project development
– Tutorial support on a continuous basis – Vodafone

Main figures

Centre for Management Development
– Separate legal entity
– Value proposition is in structuring the learning process
– Objective: medium and long term impact
– Client base: 150 to 200 corporations

Program
– 45 program directors – only 3 are full time
– Program directors by theme – strategic leadership, 360, discovery
– 50 tutors

– Face to face meetings, on-line community, OD conference once a year, associate directors review twice a year

20 to 25 professors participate regularly
700 days of training a year

E-learning activity

Market
– Design and deliver learning processes
– Central management
– Organization and Personal lifes
– Mirror working environments
Example of the BG group
- 5500 to 6000 people
- High hit rate exploration
- Diminishing returns
- Decision to move down the value chain
- Need to think about business a different way

Wharton story
- We want to talk to each other
- $3500 seminar on e-business
- 40 participants
- 5 week course
- Centra – strategic reviews, WebEx
- 12 person team
- EL credits could be cashed in for free consulting time
- Metrics: Pearson wanted 4000 people

E-learning impact
I. Structure of groups
II. Facilitation
III. Virtual space
IV. Silo structure – exec education is on its own

Lessons learnt
I. It will cost money
   – Long term investment

II. Provide a fully supported environment
   – Focus on the team rather than the individual
   – Carefully profile the teams
   – Help them understand what working in the virtual environment
   – Focus on simplicity
III. Make the environment task driven – milestones
   – Make sure it’s interactive
   – Project focused – that can be implemented
   – Introduce an element of competition
   – Set and manage the expectations

IV. On-line facilitators need to be trained to add value
   – Critical feedback
   – Make the facilitation as much as possible driven by the business
   – The environment must be continually revised
SANKT GALLEN UNIVERSITY

The Business School

Founded in 1898 it is traditionally a state university but with a financial far reaching autonomy. Degree of self-financing is close of 60% nowadays.

The University aims at becoming a leading institution in continuing education in German-speaking Europe.

Among the 5000 students actually enrolled, 450 participants in executive master programs.

Executive Education: full-time MBA, executive part time MBA, summer academy initiatives, in-house programs and open programs in the form of short seminars.

Wide network of international BSs in Europe, North and South America and Asia.

e-Learning

In the year 2000 eL is introduced in response to the redesign of the curriculum: 25% of every degree will consist in self-study as “media supported learning in teams”.

The process involves the entire faculty.

IWP (Institut fur Wirtschaftspedagogik) is the special strategic unit for managing the process and providing support.

SCIL – Swiss Center for Innovations in Learning offers its support as institution which promotes competent and meaningful use of new technologies in university and corporate education. It is involved in five field of activity: consulting, quality improvement, research and development, community platform and academy.

eL is intended as way to improve the learning experience, a trigger to follow other objectives, a tool to bring new ideas in learning and teaching.
eL introduction is driven by added value potential and coherence with the target group and has followed a process type approach.

Training faculty activities.

**Impact**

The introduction of eL activities is institutional driven; nowadays there is potential for selling it on the market.

On the Business School: eL has a side effect on the brand of the university.

On the organization: it means a fundamental change of learning and teaching culture in the long run.

On executive education: eL doesn’t affect the traditional process behind the design of training programs (need analysis, design, delivery, evaluation); it impacts just on the delivery side.

On the roles: the introduction of eL in the self-study requires that the teaching faculty adopts a “school” approach more than a “university” one; professors need to have more pedagogical competencies.

**Project**

EMBL-Executive Master in European and International Business Law: part time program which consists of eight obligatory one-week course blocks, held over a total period of 18 months taking place in different locations depending on topical relevance. Face to face sessions are blended with internet supported distance learning in between the blocks and self-study to prepare for practical applications like moot court, panel discussions etc.

Flying Faculty concept: support to the associates from the world’s leading faculty including representatives.
Tutoring activity: e-tutor and scientific coach.

Large alumni network extremely important for professional life after the program.

Strengths: EMBL is international at all levels (content, faculty, students, location), actual and relevant contents, flexibility of institutional background, project team composition and skills (deep understanding from both business, technology and education perspectives).

Cost: 22.000 Euro.

Average number of participants: 37.

Lessons learnt

Preconditions for the realisation of a good practice, drawn from St.Gallen experience
– Top management support
– Recognised project leadership
– Rely on the self-motivation of the staff
– e-learning as a tool to create co-operative partners from outside

Critical factors for the implementation of eL from a general point of view
– Goals communicated adequately from beginning
– Intense support to learners at the beginning
– Training for technical skills
– Implementation requires consistent policy in the various areas within the educational institution
– Tele and social communicative phases of learning to be well co-ordinated
– The learner workloads to be determined adequately
– Instructors to be prepared for new roles
– New goals-new ways of assessment
SDA BOCCONI

Origin
- Necessary to launch executive MBA
- Didn’t want weekend formula
- Modular format – once every two months
- Bridge the gap between modules

Main figures
- Management education
- Executive/MBA
- 200 full time students
- 120 part time students
- Evening MBA
- Logistics
- 75 % of global revenues
- Program managers
- Faculty member
- 100 program managers
- Ask for chart/presentations

Executive
- Specialized short courses
- 3,000 alumni from 30 countries
- 30 core + punctual faculty
- 3 business units
- Executive MBA uses e-learning
- Traditional lessons 25%
- Case study 10%
- Group projects 10%
- Simulations 5%
- Experiential learning 15%
- Distance learning 35%

E-learning activity
- Asynchronous process
  - Learning Space
  - Each department can in source or outsource learning objects
  - Mandatory requirements
- Synchronous process
  - Webcast
  - Professor – multicasting
- Enable collaborative work
- E-mail, Scheduling, Portal
  - Customized software – proprietary solution
  - Professor decides
  - Couple of live sessions per module
– Huge investment  
– Project by project budget  
– Budget request from MBA director  

E-learning impact

No impact today  
– Need to reshape executive education  
– Rigidity of the clients  
– On top of existing process/value proposition  
– Importance of social networks

Faculty  
– Need to develop skills but not specialists

Lessons learnt

I. Need to add value  
– Not just replicate existing products  
– Market needs to see a different product  
– Students want off-line access

II. Needed prerequisites  
– The way we purchase education  
– The way we purchase content

III. Future challenges  
– Use of mobile technology  
– Stronger community  
– Link to pre and post program activity

IV. Real value  
– Eliminates barriers  
– Same time different place

V. No value alone  
– Bundled proposition  
– Needs to reinforce the brand – content, package, e-learning
SGH SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

Origin

Established in 1906 as the Private Advanced Commercial Courses for Men, the present-day SGH is the oldest university of economics and management in Poland, and one of the leading universities in Central and Eastern Europe.

Main figures

Over 16 500 students study at SGH in the academic year 6 400 full-time students, over 6 000 part-time students, 3 000 students participate in postgraduate courses and 1 200 students in Ph.D. degree.

SGH employs 1 613 staff members, of which 914 are teaching and research staff.

SGH offers four types of studies

- Full-time initial studies
- Part-time initial studies
- Postgraduate programs and MBA programs
- Ph.D. studies

E-learning activity

In-source: the Centre for Development of Distance and Permanent Education (CDDPE)

Process: blended learning programs using ICT facilities, online course material development

People involved: 10 persons including IT programmers, content designers, trainers and administrative staff. Tutoring and courses provided by SGH teachers.
E-learning impact

Strategy SGH is implementing extramural studies, in which whole curriculum is supported with online additional contents. The first step is to support all basic subject with online materials. The next is to complement all subjects with them and provide whole courses on the Internet. No corporate clients.

Organization The e-learning activity has been financed by Polish public funds, EEC funds and self investments. It used the existing facilities of computer network for students and researchers with broadband Internet access.

Projects

Actual position There are over 60 courses with 300 classes in e-sgh.pl platform. They include over 5 000 slides and 1 000 interactive tests and exercises. Most of texts are published in Polish, but more and more materials are available in English.

E-learning development at SGH mainly aims at partime postgraduate studies. The objective is to increase the optional courses offer with e-learning material, in-house made, using the e-sgh.pl platform.

Lessons learnt

Don’t go too fast Polish population internet equipment ratio is 50% and online programs are not recognised by Polish regulations.

Follow your own model, don’t look at the others too much.

E-learning is a good answer to the specific Polish education situation that favours part-time initial and post-graduate studies.
UMEA UNIVERSITY

The Business School

Umea University was founded in 1966; the same year research activities in Economics and Business started, but the Business School was established later in the '90 with the purpose of enhancing business studies, increasing quality and is closer to the industry. Nowadays USBE offers three Bachelor programs and five master programs.

Executive education accounts still for a minimal portion of total revenues.

Umea University is the largest provider of distance education in the Scandinavian region. Despite its long tradition in the field, the Business School approaches closely e-learning only at the end of '90.

E-Learning

Institutional driven approach; thanks to a grant funded by the government USBE develops an on-line Project Management master.

The design and development process has been carried out by a project team formed by:
– co-ordinator, in charge of creating a new pedagogical approach for the e-learning environment and managing the entire process of introduction in the organisation supported by two colleagues:
– a PhD student in pedagogy and teaching who is responsible for stimulating and managing the on-line interaction among the participants
– a subject matter expert with the role of managing the different activities on the LMS training activity for the professors to be involved in teaching activities in on-line courses.

Development of a new pedagogical approach, where the learning process is very much participant centred; great portion of the course is built into different assignments.

Discussions cover also a significant role for the interactivity in the learning process; they
link the modules and they help the participants in connecting different types of knowledge (theories deriving from literature, professional expertise and case studies).

**Project Management Online Master**

The launch of a PM program combined the resources and competencies of the offer with the demand of students.

The Master is a two years half time program targeted to people already working structured in 6 modules. The virtual class is composed by approximately 140 participants and foresees a high number of interactions and discussion via e-mail.

The initial phase is crucial to set up the involvement of the students. It has different objectives: to present the methodology based on interaction; to explain how the platform works; to realise a first assessment useful to create the working groups; to start a first pilot discussion at the end of which participants are asked to evaluate each others.

After having gained the commitment of the classroom, each course foresees a pre-work on case studies, a discussion that lasts from 7 to 10 days and a final evaluation on the topics object of the discussion. The evaluation process is critical to the set up interaction mechanism: to this purpose the whole program foresees not only assignment assessments, but also and especially evaluation of the quality of the discussions, both asymmetric (realised by the teacher) and symmetric (peer review).

**Lessons learnt and future perspectives**

E-learning adds value to the offer, it is more than a replacement of traditional learning, it stimulates to work in a different way and it is a powerful tool for our specific needs:

- It allowed us to enhance communication with students and reach more of them
- It is convenient also for the students on campus, because it permits to avoid time constraints
- It resulted to be an important way to test new pedagogical methods

Implementing e-learning allowed us to gain a first mover advantage and a reputation on the national market
The technology is in service to the experimentation of new learning approaches and methods that enhances social interaction.

Developing further e-learning is a learning process in itself for the entire school.

The future developments could be centred around:
– in the short run: the PM course will be expanded in professional master program similar to the first level masters. Furthermore, the same methodology will be applied also to “marketing” and “finance and accounting” courses.
– in the medium run: enlargement of the use for other courses and other target groups
– in the long run: executive education
UNIVERSEIT NYENRODE

Origin

Began in 1999
- Institute for KM and virtual education
- Began as a 4 year PhD research grant
- Under the direction of Walter Baëts, Maire-Jöelle Browaeys
- Clients included Microsoft, ACHMEA, Sarah Lee

E-learning laboratory
- Common platform
- Business innovation et entrepreneurship program
- 80% on line/ 20% on campus
- 14 applicants the first year in Certificate or Masters
- Judged as not profitable
- Economic climate was quite difficult

Main figures

In-company programs
- Young Management Program (YMP)
- Foundations of Management (FMA)
- Advanced Management Program (AMP)
- NCD-Nyenrode Commissarissencyclus
- Sales Leadership Masterclass

Different centres are involved
- Centre of Finance
- Executive and Management Development Center (EMDC)
- Centres for entrepreneurship, supply chain, strategy
- Each centre has its own budget

Faculty
- Solicited by project
- Either internal or external staffing
- Supply Chain Centre 50/50
E-learning activity

1. Wholly individual initiatives
2. Cross cultural management
   - 50/50
   - Now a MSc course
3. Crédit Agricole seminars
   - Work with professor of finance
   - They have a proprietary platform
   - Simulation
   - 3 rather than 5 day seminar
   - Other banks are interested
   - Pearson book – uses examples

E-learning impact

Infrastructure works well
- Mostly multi-media
- Digital video
- 1 Business Information Systems professor

Professors test mostly multi-media applications
- Focuses on technology rather than learning
- Involves the digital business laboratory
- E-learning pedagogy isn’t the first priority

Current work on the learning process
- Pre-class
- Post-class
- Collaboration

Lessons learnt

I. Crucial challenge is marketing to get new students

II. Redesigning learning process
   - School is more interested in multimedia
   - Videoconferences
III. Learner based pedagogy
   – Example of a workshop organized by the World Bank Institute: Improving Training Quality through Interactive Learning Technologies
   – Training quality rather than content

IV. Other markets – Partnership with IN-Holland (Bachelor level School)
ISTUD Istituto Studi Direzionali is an independent business school that operates in Europe in the field of executive education, advanced lifelong learning and in the field of management research. Its mission is to consolidate and spread a management culture based on corporate social responsibility, multiculturalism, academic rigor and value production. ISTUD is a not for profit organization founded in 1970 on the initiative of Assolombarda and a group of large Italian companies in order to provide a training service of a quality matching that of the leading international institutions. For more than thirty years this tradition has been reinforced through research that significantly improved expert knowledge on management practice and, through dissemination of this knowledge via masters, inter-company and tailor-made education programmes and other professional activities. Since different years a crucial role among ISTUD activities has been played by the “development and capacity building projects” organised in collaboration with and with the financial support of national and international institutions that acts as agents for collective interests and policies. ISTUD is part of important international networks such as EFMD, the Conference Board, EABIS-European Academy of Business and Society, the BDP/EEP network and IABS. ISTUD is also a founding member of EUDOKMA, and an entering partner of EDAMBA.

More information is available at ISTUD website - www.istud.it

EFMD The European Foundation for Management Development is an international, membership driven organization, based in Brussels. With more than 500 member organizations from academia, business, public service and consultancy in 65 countries across the world, EFMD provides a unique forum for information, research, networking and debate on innovation and best practice in management development. Runs the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), which is one of the leading international systems of quality assessment, improvement, and accreditation of higher education institutions in management and business administration. Its fundamental objective, linked to the mission of EFMD, is to raise the standard of management education worldwide. EQUIS is not primarily focused on the MBA or any other specific programme. Its scope covers all programmes offered by an institution from the first degree up to the Ph.D. EQUIS has established its prestige and recognition worldwide. In its first seven years of existence, EQUIS has accredited 86 institutions in 28 countries.

More information is available at the EFMD website - www.efmd.org
Founded in 1872 by the local business community, affiliated to the Lyon Chamber of Commerce and Industry, EM LYON (Ecole de Management de Lyon) is a leading European management school accredited EQUIS by EFMD (European Foundation for Management Education). Its mission is to offer participants and firms a wide variety of opportunities to acquire and improve their competencies throughout their lives.

EM LYON focuses on 3 major strategic axes:
- Internationalisation: a European identity for a global mission,
- Entrepreneurship: for the development of entrepreneurship and business creation,
- Technology: use of new technologies to advance learning in all programmes.

Over the last three years, E.M.LYON faculty members have produced 22 books, 67 articles, many of which have been published in the top international academic journals, 74 chapters of books, 16 case studies, 41 working papers, 115 contributions to French and international conferences. To support and accompany the two major teaching activities (Graduate Programmes and Executive Programmes), the E.M.LYON has designed a unique “learning factory” for the development of e-learning solutions:

- a range of on-line courses devoted to the main fields of management (HR, Marketing, Finance),
- a “virtual campus” [em-lyon.net]: offering a multitude of on-line services, tools and products to help all E.M.LYON students and programme participants in their learning experience,
- an e-learning factory for E.M.LYON programs and projects tailor-made for companies. These learning solutions are adjusted to company needs, contexts, languages and experience,
- an e-consulting service for teaching, meant to train professors, contributors and company-based trainers in the new interactive teaching methods and/or improve their knowledge in this field.

For further information please contact Chiara Slanzi at cslanzi@istud.it
Or visit exel project website: www.istud.it\exel