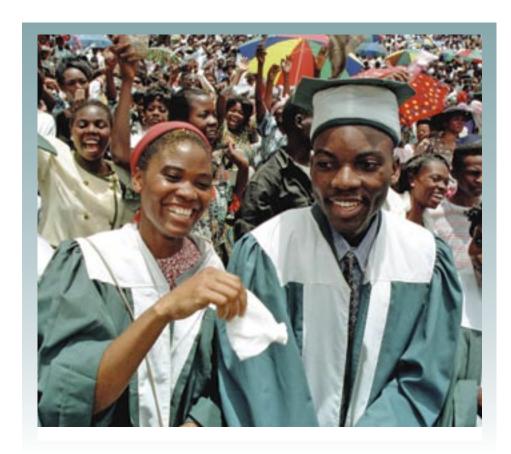# Glocalization –
A Challenge for Curriculum Responsiveness

By Dr. Teboho Moja

"To think in terms of global as against local is limiting. Instead the reality is the interaction between global and local." (Castells, 2001)

Introduction

A decade after the transformation to a democratic government is an opportune time to review what has been achieved in higher education as a result of the direct and indirect influence of current policies that were instituted with the intent of transforming the higher education system in South Africa in order to make it more responsive to the needs of society. In the mid 90's the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) presented a framework that informed new policies adopted by government. Later the Department of Education released the Education White Paper 3, the Higher Education Act of 1997 was passed, and a National Plan on Higher Education (NPHE) was developed. These laws, policies, and papers were intended to ensure that higher education play a positive and constructive role in the reconstruction and development of South African society. The White Paper presented policies intended to address both local and global concerns, i.e., the need to be competitive in the global economy while at the same time meeting local development and reconstruction needs. The expectation was that Higher Education could integrate those needs in its curriculum and thus meet the challenge of making Higher Ed an important tool in meeting the demands of a fast changing social order. The White Paper outlined the local needs and challenges of addressing past inequities so that Higher Ed could serve the needs of that new social order by responding to national needs as well as to new realities and opportunities (White Paper 1.1). The global challenge of a new economy is the need for human resource development that includes lifelong learning, high-level skills training, and knowledge production, acquisition, and application (White Paper 1.12).

The framework provided by government has guided transformation at the system level, institutional level, and at an instruction level. The case studies presented in this project serve as examples of work done at an institutional level; management promoted efforts to ensure that curriculum transformation was responsive to the needs of learners and the nation and work done in the classrooms by the researchers who wrote the case studies. The focus is curriculum responsiveness at an institutional level. Policy documents did not provide direct guidance as to how curriculum needed to be transformed to make it responsive to the new needs but the proposed changes had direct implications on how curriculum needed to become responsive. The policy documents presented a responsive context that was meant to enable curricula to become responsive to the needs of society.

It is important to understand the context that framed the recommendations that were made and the new policies that were adopted. The debates that framed that context seemed to be in contest with one another, but I would like to argue that they actually complimented each other. The concept of glocalisation is introduced in the debate as a way of integrating what appears to be contesting views and that this integration can be used for effective reforms. There are efforts in various sectors world wide to integrate local challenges with global challenges. This paper is informed by the debates on the Africanization of higher

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education in South Africa and the vast literature on globalization and the challenges it poses for higher education systems world wide. Those debates and the vast literature on the issues influenced policy for a transformed higher education system in South Africa. I also draw from the work of other researchers who have examined curricula responsiveness in South Africa. Case studies are but one element in the formulation of new policies, but they are critical because they take place in the classroom. Responsiveness at this level takes a discourse that is more in response to the needs of the learners, whom the researchers work with, and are in direct contact with, rather than the policy makers. Researchers at the classroom level indirectly respond and contribute to the needs of the broader society.

I also look at how responsive curricula has been to some of the challenges outlined in the policy documents even though these documents did not prescribe how curricula should be reformed. To do that I have relied on the copies of written reports by researchers, participation in a

workshop consisting of case studies researchers and an extended audience from higher education institutions, and participating as a panel at a conference on curriculum organized by the Department of Education.

Africanization Debate and the South African Context

To examine how responsive curriculum has been in South Africa, one needs to understand the broader context within which we operate. South Africa's isolation from other countries on the continent has to be addressed as part of educational reforms. There was a challenge for post apartheid transformation efforts in the higher education system in South Africa to ensure that the system plays its role in development and

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positions the country to take its place on the continent as well as in the world. It was widely accepted that the system needed to be strengthened in order to deliver a public good that had an economic benefit. In order to position South Africa to operate successfully in a global economy, it was necessary to transform its system of higher education to be responsive to globalization realities. Responsiveness to global challenges has wrongly been interpreted, by some proponents of the Africanization debates to mean meeting global needs at the expense of local needs. I would argue that being responsive to global challenges does not necessitate serving global needs at the exclusion of local needs. For example, one major local post apartheid need is the creation of an equitable society based on democratic values. To meet that need requires an increase in the participation rates of those eligible and a gross expansion of the system to include those who were previously excluded. In doing so, a global need for the production of greater numbers of highly skilled human resources could be met at the same time. Such a policy responds to both local and global challenges and indicates the interaction between global and local needs.

Debates on the transformation of higher education in the mid-nineties often polarized global and local issues, yet they are not necessarily contradictory and can be complementary. The NCHE located the arguments and debate for higher education transformation within the broader challenges posed by globalization on higher education systems and how reforms needed to ensure that higher education systems address those challenges. The goal was not to serve external needs, but to prepare human resources that would make the country a partner in the global world. That was a local need for South Africa. These arguments were presented with the understanding that in addition to responding to local needs, there is an additional need to prepare the country for participation in a global economy. In policy documents Africanization was not approached from an epistemological point of view in terms of the inclusion of an African body of knowledge into the curriculum or the use of an African philosophy in teaching and learning, but rather from a view that South Africa as a country on the continent needed to be positioned in such a way that it would be a force to reckon with. The 1997 White Paper and other policy documents also express the importance of addressing local, regional, and national needs of South African society as well as those of the African continent.

It was during the same period that black intellectuals located within the higher education institutions and who were proponents of the Africanization debate argued for the Africanization of the higher education system and criticized the NCHE report for not addressing this issue. The debates flooded Sunday newspapers during the policy formulation period. The Africanization debate was long

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overdue in South Africa as it had happened elsewhere in Africa. Attendees at the Madagascar 1962 University Leaders' Conference debated the Africanization of universities, the role of the African university and concluded that higher education institutions should be key agents for development (Saywerr, 2002). A decade later, the same debate was further advanced at the seminar on "Creating the African University" held in Accra in 1972 and affirmed the role of the development of an African identity.

The debate on Africanization in higher education institutions in South Africa initially focused on symbolic changes such as the transfer and

sharing of power by changing racial representation in all spheres of the institutions. The debate gradually shifted to more substantial issues that included curriculum offerings. Issues of identity and culture were raised and arguments for the use of an African philosophy and thought in curriculum surfaced, as well as arguments that curriculum has to play a central role in the Africanization process. This clearly marked a shift in the debates from a mere change of the complexion of the inhabitants of the institutions to changing the historically Eurocentric curriculum; in essence changing the very way in which teaching and learning are done and changing evaluation processes and assessment criteria. The debate has now gone even further in an attempt to allow for the interaction of both local and global considerations. For example, at the "Conference on Higher Education Curriculum and Society" organized by the Department of Education, keynote speakers such as Makgoba, not only made a case for the need for an indigenous African epistemology and African scholarship but went further to state that meeting the local need was not exclusive of the need to meet a global challenge of producing graduates with expertise to operate in the global environment.

There is continuing friction in the discussion of local versus global needs. The ABS business school case study is a good example of the tension between the global and local needs and how that tension is mediated through the programmes offered. The

old Master of Business Administration (MBA) program in the case study is retained to meet the global challenges of producing global managers and remains similar to other programs that it had been modeled on. As a way of responding to local needs, the

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business school opted for an expansion to include a course that directly responds to the political, social and economic needs of South Africa. Another response has been the design of a new program parallel to the existing programme – the Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) which attracts new kinds of students, mainly young black middle managers. A problem with this mode of response is the issue of non transferability or low transfer rates. The challenge is in combining the two without developing new silos side by

side to train local or global managers.

The debate world-wide on the transformation of higher education has shifted from a narrow focus on local needs to a wider focus on positioning higher education to be responsive to the challenges of a global knowledge intensive economy and to ensure that higher education contributes to the development of a knowledge society. The first UNESCO world conference on higher education in 1998 addressed the issue and highlighted the need for such reforms. The World Bank report (Salmi, 2002) on constructing knowledge societies, argued that higher education has a critical role to play in developing a country's competitive advantage in the global economy. It further raised issues relating to how developing and transition countries need to position themselves to take full advantage of the potential contribution of higher education. There is great concern that Africa as a continent has been left out of the globalization process (Giddens 2002) and the question is whether higher education systems in Africa are in a position to help their African countries become part of that process. In an overview of Africa's recent economic evolution, Castells (1996) argues that "the dynamics of social exclusion of a significant proportion of the population as a result of new forms of inclusion of countries in the global economy operates on a large scale in the case of Africa – being a major part of the 'Fourth World'". (p.14) He continues to state that the "systematic logic of the new global

economy does not have much of a role for the majority of the African population in the newest international division of labor" (p.15). Taking into consideration these issues, it then becomes clearer why higher education reforms in South Africa must integrate both Africanization and globalization in tackling its response to curriculum reform. South Africa is challenged by old issues that most countries in Africa and other developing countries face, such as its historical past and emerging issues in a globalization world. The challenge therefore is not only to construct an equitable society but also a knowledge society. Knowledge and equity are the context within which curriculum reforms must respond to.

There is dearth of literature addressing issues that are particularly unique to the African continent. A scan of the limited current literature on higher education in Africa raises issues that are not uniquely African but are similar to other developing countries (AAU Conference papers 1999). Other literature available is more country specific, such as publications from CHET and other similar African organizations. Most of the literature that focused specifically on the African context and its specific issues was produced in the 60's and 70's and addressed the issues of Africanization of the curriculum post colonialism. The post colonialism debate has been important for South Africa. However, instead of addressing post-colonialism curriculum issues separately the way other

African countries have, South Africa can integrate post colonialism with Africanization into a tension referred to as glocalisation.

Glocalisation is used in this paper as a way of integrating local and global issues in order to be responsive to the needs of the South African society. The concept is used first as a way of addressing contending points of view – explaining the tension between local and global perspectives and the debates that ensue. In South Africa the tension is comprised of the NCHE members' concern for responsiveness to global pressures and the proponents of Africanization. Second, as a way of indicating that the contending views are not necessarily in tension with one another but rather need to be understood as interacting with each other. There is a view that the local contains much that is global whilst the global is increasingly penetrated and influenced by the local. As the concept emerges in literature, a partnership between the World Bank Institute and a Think Tank on Glocalization has been formed and charged with the responsibility to generate a thought process on the concept and to translate the principles into policy trends.[1]

There is a renewed interest in higher education institutions of countries in the North that feel their curriculum contains too much local content and therefore needs to integrate global issues by internationalizing their curricula in recognition of the fact that the graduates they produce will work in a global setting. There are arguments

that effective participation in global environment requires strong national states. Can the same arguments be made about the need to Africanize as a pre-requisite to participating internationally and in the global setting? I would argue that the process is not linear and that we in Africa need to integrate the two processes as we reform our systems. Another question is whether the curriculum in South Africa contains too much content from outside the Continent and needs to be balanced by integrating local content into the global content. This is probably true of many courses offered in other higher education institutions, given the long history of colonialism and decades of apartheid, and makes the consideration of curriculum reform necessary. The case studies in this project address multiple topics and issues but need to keep particularly in mind the need to prepare students to live and work in local settings that are influenced by global as well as local considerations.

Globalization Pressures and Challenges in the South African Context

There are various definitions of globalization. The concept has become a major subject of study with numerous books written by scholars from a broad range of disciplines. It is not my intention to discuss what globalization is or is not, but rather to look at how the discussions on globalization impacted the policy framework developed in South Africa. I use the concept ad

defined by Giddens which refer to the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local conditions are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa[2] (Giddens, 1990). Globalization creates an ever increasing inter-dependence between countries and thus societies are more inter-dependent with others across the world than at any previous time. This

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is a reality that must be accepted and must inform all policy making. South Africa emerged from years of isolation and had no choice but to reposition itself in a world that had become interlinked and interdependent. A tool countries use to position themselves globally is their higher education systems. These institutions are under pressure to be engines of development in economies that are knowledge intensive and challenged to meet both local and global demands.

Governments and higher education leadership worldwide have embarked on major reforms of their systems and institutions. The rationale is to position higher education to play its role in the new global economy. Castells (2001) defines the global economy in terms of three major characteristics:

- First, an economy in which productivity and competitiveness depends on knowledge and information.
- Second, an economy where local jobs are influenced by the global core of the economy.
- Third, an economy that requires a technology infrastructure, organizational capacity and strong institutions.

It is mainly in the first and the third area that higher education has a role to play.

Castells (2001) further asserts that one negative manifestation of the new economy in the developing world is the devaluation of labor, which creates three interrelated heavily populated economic sectors; the informal sector, the survival sector, and the criminal sector. He argues that the criminal economy is the fastest growing economic sector in the world. South Africa has large numbers of people in all three of these sectors. The question is whether a responsive curriculum can effectively address these issues. Can curriculum be reformed to provide survival skills (the very skills denied them by apartheid) for masses of people displaced by technology and an economy that

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now has no use for their current low level skills? What other issues should a socially responsible curriculum address and how should these choices be prioritized?

One result of globalization is that due to the devaluation of labor there is likely to be a new clientele for higher education products. In South Africa we have large numbers of people who have lost jobs due to economic restructuring and have little expectations of returning to their former occupations. I do not mean to imply that all efforts to reform curriculum should attempt to solve these problems, but it is important to identify areas where global policy frameworks are needed to guide curriculum reforms. There is, for example, a clear need for adult education training and specialized mid-career training. Is higher education curriculum responsive to emerging needs, new student choices, and labor market demands? The curriculum responsiveness project documented case studies of curriculum responsiveness in order to "illustrate different forms of 'responsiveness'." Its focus was at the classroom level in order to show that changes in society can be effected at different levels of the education system. The goal of the project was to provide policy makers with educational data gathered at the classroom level[3]. The business school case study by Rob Moore is another example of this "grassroots" approach: The program it studied is meant to address the needs of specialized mid-career training as well as those of an emerging black middle

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manager class; both examples are representative of the new expectation that higher education be able to offer the citizenry the opportunity to learn new skills needed to survive in the new economy. The University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) case study details another higher education program tailored to address the needs of a non-traditional clientele in need of upgrading their skills. I would argue that these programs and others like them are examples of "glocalization" – policies that have been specifically designed to meet both local and global societal needs.

Another effect of globalization is the emergence of a learning society; i.e., a society that is ready to learn and demands opportunities to learn. The challenge for governments and institutions is to provide those opportunities and to foster the understanding that operating successfully in the new economy may mean having to change jobs and skills quickly and often. New

curriculums need to be responsive to these new needs. How can we best assure that this is the case? For example, do case studies on teaching thinking skills, such as the one at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, provide useful data? At the time that some of the education reform policies now in effect were formulated, there were already clear signs that South Africa was moving in the direction of a global economy, as evidenced by the rapid decrease in demand for low level skills and an increase in demand for high level skills (NCHE Discussion Document 1995, p.31). We need to continue to study the curriculum reforms implemented in response to these trends and to redouble efforts to formulate new responsive and effective higher education policy.

Often in discussions of reforms it is mentioned that there is a need for higher education to contribute to the development of a labor force with high level skills, but there is very little information or explanation as to what those high level skills are. Some literature has emerged that attempts to explain this skilled labor as having *highly specialized capacity* (own emphasis) to generate and regenerate information in what it does (2001, p.196). Some of the particular skills mentioned are those needed for participation in a high technology environment; skills needed to adapt to an unpredictable and volatile global product market, to anticipate flaws in production, to become life-long learners, to retool; and to function in multiple ways. It is interesting that

there is less emphasis on providing skills for social development but more emphasis on skills that will promote economic development for a global market economy. The NCHE policy debates informed by international debates on similar issues made recommendations that would steer the system towards producing high level skills and for a high growth path of economic development. As a result, the NCHE produced a framework for meeting the challenges of globalization and a knowledge society to guide reforms in South Africa.

Another challenge for higher education is that the new economy requires the acquisition of broad, generic and transferable skills. Emphasis is put on skill portability and learning power, and indication that there would be career changes or job specification changes that include an interaction between the local and global high technology work environments to meet local and global needs. The implication is that higher education institutions need to prepare workers for unpredictable career paths and changes in employment patterns (NCHE Discussion Document, p.29). Other high level skills mentioned are skills needed to adapt a volatile global product market. In such a market, problem-solving skills to anticipate flaws in production, to become life-long learners and to retool, are necessary.

A challenge faced by higher education institutions is that of having to contribute to the process of innovation on which competitive-

ness depends. Should a responsive curriculum address such issues and if so, how? A study conducted by the University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg) details the efforts made at developing critical reasoning skills required in the new economy. International competitiveness depends on a country's capacity to access knowledge and expertise, use it, reconfigure it, and even sell it. Pavitt, as quoted in Gibbons (1998, p.72) states that even if ideas, methods and techniques are produced globally, the innovation process for the development of new products and processes usually takes place locally. This has implications for a responsive curriculum to prepare human capital that can participate in a process of innovation.

The NCHE policy framework took into consideration the need to redress past inequalities in higher education and the broader society but emphasized providing guidance for South Africa's preparation to participate in a global economy. Suggestions of redress of past inequalities, such as limited access, included the dual demand for expansion and growth in a system to accommodate learners who were previously excluded. The expectation was that such an expansion would provide an increase of highly skilled labor to the new economy. Examples of case studies that make a contribution in this area are from the School of Psychology at the University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal-Durban and the undergraduate science program at the University of the Western Cape. An area that seems

not to have received much attention is access for non-traditional students and the reform of curricula to respond to their needs. A transformed higher education system was expected to be accessible to new kinds of learners, provide new skills and re-skill those where already skilled. A large scale study on how responsive the curriculum has been since those recommendations were made would need to look at how curriculum responses have addressed those issues.

The policy framework aimed at making South Africa competitive by strengthening its system of higher education in order to deliver a public good that had an economic benefit. This goal had taken into consideration global needs that included demands for development and the creation of a more equitable society. It was in this context that higher education was to play a role as an agent of social change and mobility. These recommendations were systemic but had implications for recommendations for the curriculum to be reformed in order to be more responsive to new needs. The selection of case studies for the study includes those that have reformed their curriculum to cater to the needs of an anticipated new clientele; those in the past who would have been excluded from higher education.

The reforms in South Africa are in response to global pressures and challenges. As South Africa locates itself in the network of global exchanges and interactions, higher education will have to play a role in the production of high level skills and technological

innovations necessary for successful economic participation in the global market (Moja and Cloete 1996, p.3).

Being Responsive in a Responsive Context – A Policy Framework

An important consideration in the debate about the responsiveness of curriculum is the degree of responsiveness of the context itself. I would argue that the South African context is responsive in two ways. First, higher education in South Africa changed and became responsive to the needs of a new economy, society and political system. Policy debates over economic policies highlighted the need to address both needs of development and equity (NCHE 1996, p.53-56). The changing context was a factor that contributed to a need for higher education institutions to play a key role as agents of social change and mobility by promoting equity both within higher education and the broader society (Moja, T. and Cloete, N. 1996).

Second, the context, by informing a policy framework for transformation, produced numerous policy documents, publications, debates and information to guide reforms. A very broad policy framework that we described as too sophisticated for implementation by international higher education experts was provided by government to guide reforms. There were not direct recommendations for curriculum but reforms were implied in the recommendations and policy statements. For example, the report of

the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE), states that "new research agendas and new learning programs will be needed to mobilize the culture, social and economic potential of the country and its entire people" (1996, p.3). Those policy recommendations had implications for curriculum reform without making specific recommendations on curriculum change. Ensor (2003) states that lack of direct guidelines "gave rise to ambiguity and widely divergent readings of its policy text." Criticisms, then and now, most recently at the workshop discussing the case studies, are that the framework was not specific enough for researchers in institutions to know what to do in making their curricula more responsive. There are different views on the degree of specificity needed to ensure change in policy documents to allow for flexibility and creativity in implementation. The guidelines for curriculum reform are provided throughout the report by the NCHE report (1996) and the NCHE discussion document (1997) and Ensor (2002), in her work, provides yet more specific suggestions for both curriculum and policy framework:

- A shift from courses to credits
- A shift from departments to programs
- A shift from subject based to learner centered teaching
- Changes in institutional arrangements
- Redefinitions of institutional missions
- Flexible approaches to curriculum

(modular programmes, credit accumulation, credit transfers)
- Restructuring qualifications for multiple entry, exit and re-entry points
- Flexibility to allow interface between work and study and multiple sites of learning
- Teaching of marketable skills
- Recognition of prior learning

The points above could serve as a starting point in assessing the degree to which curricula has been responsive to the needs of South Africa based on the expectations outlined in the policy documents. Any study on curriculum responsiveness needs to provide a clear understanding of what "curriculum responsiveness" means. The absence of a clear definition suggests a lack of well developed theory on curriculum responsiveness. Another issue is that of the underlying values in the reforms under discussion. The latter issue is addressed by Kopano Ratele in his paper and identifies a need for utilizing different responsive approaches according to the situation. Ian Moll, as one of the researchers in this study, addresses the former issue and presents an analysis which hopefully will contribute to the development of curriculum responsiveness a theory.

The case studies make little effort to address the needs of the country as opposed to the needs of the learners. There is an assumption that the audience has a common understanding of what is mean by a responsive curriculum so the scope is broadened to include everything. Systemic

responsiveness in the proposed framework for transformation by the NCHE defined a responsive system of higher education as one that meets the *social, cultural, political and economic* needs of its environment and has the ability to adapt as these needs change. It went on to say that higher education institutions need to take seriously the challenges presented by the South African societal context and the challenge of developing and modernizing the country. The expectation is that responsiveness would be reflected in institutional programmes, designed at all levels of higher education. In what could be interpreted as an example of responsiveness to the need to re-organize administration, a case is being for the rethinking of the role of middle management and the role in institutions by researchers based at the Cape Technikon and the University of the Western Cape as well as the study by Rob Moore. Expectations were that there should be a shift from discipline-based education to more open systems that are interactive; there would be increased diversity of population, mixed programmes, and skills for inter-disciplinary co-operation. Responsiveness entails greater accountability to colleagues and the broader society (NCHE 1996, p.79). The NCHE also warned against responsiveness that could be characterized as a mere reaction to short term or immediate problems. Are there cases beyond those in the study that have met those expectations?

The Discourse of Responsiveness

The policy framework as discussed above provides guidelines of what was anticipated at various levels of the system in responding to the new challenges facing South Africa. The guidelines provided directed at the institutional level. The presented case studies, however, operate largely at the classroom level, although some do address institutional issues such as the role of middle management in curriculum reform. The issues here are how policy has been implemented at the class room level and how that work relates to national goals for development. A question to be considered is to what degree curriculum that is directly responsive to the needs of the learners can be said to be responsive to the needs of society at large?

Answering these questions is difficult because curriculum reform issues were not directly addressed within the broad policy framework but were

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implied in the anticipated changes. The assumption was that some of those changes would have a direct impact on the curriculum. Although particular goals that are to be met through a responsive curriculum were left vague, it is clear that some expected curriculum reforms in South Africa to favor the social reconstructionist approach (SRA). The need to ensure that higher education is responsive to the needs of society has caused this approach to dominate policy discussions. Theorists who support this approach argue that education has to play a role in creating a new social order and that education should help prepare students to transform their world for the benefit of all (Freedman 1998, p.42). The role of higher education in the White paper is expressed as that of reconstruction and development, and more recent studies have further espoused this theory of higher education. Looking closely at the case studies for this project, it is clear that they are based on multiple approaches to curriculum design and contain elements that reflect the SRA. For example, I would argue that the ABS Business School Case Study reflects this view because it attempts to both respond to the market and societal needs. The curriculum also uses learning processes that involve group activities that extend beyond the institution and the expectation is that students would interact with peers and their community (community broadly defined). These elements are typical of social reconstructionist approaches (ibid, 42-43).

A number of studies, for example, those done by Ensor 2002 and the policy debates organized by CHET (1997) reiterate the notion of curriculum responsiveness as set forth by the SRA:

- Policy papers anticipated that there would be more inter institutional transfers and that credits earned through modules would be transferable. The conclusion was that portability has not been achieved, as was assumed in the policy papers, and therefore there is less flexibility in the way the curriculum has been reformed. These policy expectations are not directly addressed in the case studies because the broader issue of organizing learning into portable modules is an institutional one and not an issue for classroom instruction.

- There was an expectation that courses and programmes would be reorganized and that learning would be organized across disciplines and institutions. The conclusion was that this was only partially achieved. It is hard to assess the level of interdisciplinary work though individual case studies. There are inter-disciplinary elements in the work presented by Holtman and Marshall as well as in the case study presented by Ramani and Joseph.

- Reorganization of learning material was expected to produce more coherent classroom study plans. The conclusion was that there are still questions as to how to achieve coherence; for example, should the
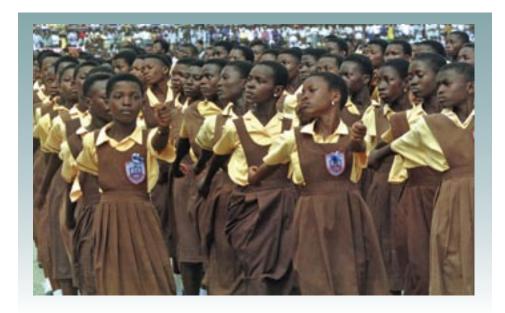
emphasis be on vertical coherence to be achieved through disciplines, or horizontal coherence, to be achieved through student choice of courses. Ensor concludes that the reorganization of the curriculum into one or two vertical subject sequences resembles the old single or double major bachelor's degrees. Using that as a reference point, the Ramani and Joseph case study would fit that mode in its recommendation to make learning programs responsive to the needs of a multilingual and multicultural society.

- Another conclusion is that curriculum responsiveness has been achieved through course revisions, repackaging and renaming. The ABS Business School case study presented a model that did not necessarily repackage and rename a programme, but opted to add-on rather than fundamentally change the curriculum to become a glocal. The changes described through these case studies appear to be directed towards developing new programs that are responsive to the needs of an emerging economy. It is not clear as to whether the programme proposes a fundamental shirt to prepare learners for a changing work environment. The focus of the programme on individuals and personal development leads me to conclude that there is indeed an effort to help learners be adaptable to new situations. The reforms in this case study clearly address not only the need to

provide skills to people who were previously excluded but has also identified the need to create a curriculum that meets both local and global needs.

There are instances where responsiveness has been achieved through revisions, renaming and repacking of existing courses, and that is effective if those courses become responsive to the needs of learners and the broader society. Ensor argues that responsiveness in some instances has been due to a need for survival as a result of budget cuts and mergers. The same argument advanced above applies in some of the other case studies and I would agree that responses to other pressures had little to do with policy implementation but rather by default, which addressed some of the issues that were raised in policy debates. The reforms implemented were a result of new and unanticipated needs in higher education.

It is on the basis of such changes that I conclude that there is indeed been a substantial discourse on responsiveness. There have been important reforms, but not necessarily changes that were directly anticipated in policy formulation. For example, there were expectations that higher education institutions would experience financial constraints, and it was anticipated that these constraints would be so severe that in some instances institutions would become bankrupt. Some restructuring occurred, not due to policy frameworks or policy discourse, but

simply as a market response to a drop in enrollment. The outcome is not a surprise given the fact that policy only provided a framework that allowed for some flexibility and creativity in being responsive.

There is evidence of responsiveness to learners' educational needs in the case studies. The case study of Holtman and Marshall presents two examples of curriculum responsiveness to academic under preparedness by the faculty of Science at the University of the Western Cape. It highlights the gap between the content deficit which students bring to class and the epistemological belief of those students. The case presents an example of responsiveness to understanding ways in which issues of inequity are to be addressed in an attempt to build capacity in the science fields. The National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) lists capacity building in the sciences as one area that could contribute to meeting the need for knowledge as

well as the need for human resources in a transforming South Africa to help the country to operate in a globalizing world.

Another case study that serves as an example of a curriculum that is responsive to the educational needs of students is the Steinberg and Slonimsky case study at the University of the Witwatersrand. The study analyzes students' work in order to understand how learning takes place and what support resources are needed to ensure that it does so via delivery mode that combines both contact and distant learning. The policy documents called for new modes of delivering higher education to those who could not access it in the past. Many institutions seized the opportunity to expand their enrollments by increasing access and combining distance education with contact education. However, little has been done to research the learning that is occurring under these circum-

stances. The Brodie and Long case study advances an understanding of the integration of learner's ideas with disciplinary content in learning mathematics and mathematics pedagogy. The policy documents called for more students to learn science, mathematics and technology.

There are a number of case studies that document responsiveness that focus on researchers' disciplines rather than programmes or interdisciplinary work; for example, the Ramani and Joseph case study on a bilingual degree and Bradbury's case study at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The first study responds to the need to prepare students for a multilingual society. A democratic South Africa now acknowledges that its multilingual and multicultural heritage needs to be supported through a reformed curriculum. The set goals are achievable within the discipline and do not necessarily depend on a reorganization of the learning material into an interdisciplinary program. Ensor (2002) developed a typology that indicates how curriculum gets re-packaged in a disciplinary discourse to responsiveness. The case study by Ramani and Joseph is an example of a type of vertical discourse with two majors that resemble the old one or two major programmes. The second study is discipline based and addresses the issue of access to higher education and the degree of success achieved by the new higher educational consumers. Broader access to higher education is regarded as a key reform in the effort to redress past inequalities caused by apartheid.

The research on success was necessitated by the high failure rates of this new student population. This issue was raised by former Minister of Education Kader Asmal.

The case study by Spurrett at KwaZulu-Natal is an example of curriculum responsiveness to skills training – thinking skills – essential for the human resources produced in higher education. Another case study that addresses the issue of skills is the ABS business school case study. These policy papers call for an emphasis on skills development. The skills referred to are generic and can be flexible to the employment needed of the new economy.

There are two areas of curriculum responsiveness that have received little attention: community and cultural. An argument can be made that the debate for Africanization has itself been a call for cultural responsiveness. A curriculum that is culturally responsive capitalizes on students' cultural backgrounds and integrating them rather than bypassing or negating them. The case study on bilingual teaching at the University of the North integrates the learners' cultural experience with new experiences and develops in the learner the use of language as a tool for rational thought.

Community responsive curriculum has often been implemented through community service learning programs. The same case studies do not include a case study of community responsive curriculum but due to its importance, I will address some of the issues related to it. There are

pressures for change coming from a range of stakeholders located outside of the institutions who ask different sets of questions. The public, who fund higher education through their taxes, want to know what benefit they receive from their expenditure. Neighborhoods around universities want those institutions to be responsive to their communities' needs. Curriculum reforms must take all those stakeholders into consideration when planning their reforms. A number of questions need to inform planning of a service learning curriculum that is to become responsive to community needs. For example, is a responsive curriculum informed by a service learning philosophy? Is there a connection between the curriculum and learning service? Does the curriculum extend learning beyond the lecture room into the community? Is there a move to learn about the context in which service is to be provided? Is service learning designed in collaboration with the community?[4]

Two additional issues follow; that of course versus programme based reforms and the role management in instituting responsive curriculum. Based on the information provided through the samples used for this study, there appears to be more focus on individual courses than on institutional programmes. If that is the case, the danger is that a lack of focus on programmes could lead to fragmentation and diluted impact at both institutional and national levels. The second is related to issues of management support and the broadening of partici-

pation for those not directly involved in teaching that could assist in ensuring that the reforms are more holistic. Volbrecht and Bougey, and Moore and Lewis case studies present arguments for support systems for curriculum responsiveness and greater participation of other role players not directly involved in teaching. Participation in policy debates was more focused on governance structures and did not address participation in management structures. The case studies argue for expanded access and extend the definition for institutional management. These case studies also redefine inter-disciplinary curriculum and expand the definition to include non-teaching fields such as academic development. What is academic development? The studies make a case for linking curriculum and management as a strategy for responsiveness and sustainability.

In the absence of indicators to measure what progress has been made, I would like to conclude by using two Ensor (2003) findings from the Eastern Cape case studies that can be used in assessing progress made towards responsiveness. One conclusion was that the focus was still primarily on the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. In assessing curriculum responsiveness nation-wide we need to take a closer look at the balance between reforms in undergraduate and graduate curriculum responsiveness. The second conclusion was that there was little evidence of responsiveness to the needs of non-traditional learners; such as lifelong learners, those seeking mid-career

training, and those seeking to acquire new skills. There is a need to pay attention to this new class of students who are interested in obtaining a higher education. Lastly, I would like to address the needs of learners who cannot continue with their studies after entering higher education institutions. Should a responsive curriculum prepare them for success even if they fail to graduate? The policy documents made a case for multiple entry and exit points in higher education.

Responsiveness for the Transformation of Society

The concerns and interest in curriculum reforms are not only directed to curriculum responsiveness to those in higher education, but also to the needs of the broader society. How has the curriculum been responsive to the needs of the broader society and how has it contributed to the transformation of our society. There is a clear need to locate curriculum responsiveness discussions within the debate on the role of higher education in the transformation of society. Kader Asmal, as Minister of Education in 2003, raised the issue in his discussion document presented to the meeting of the president's working group on higher education. He stated that higher education institutions in South Africa are not yet fully prepared to meet the challenge they face of being a catalyst in the transformation of the broader society.

The rationale for reforms in higher education has been to ensure that higher education contribute to the

> **"There is a clear need to locate curriculum responsiveness discussions within the debate on the role of higher education in the transformation of society."**

reconstruction of our society as well as to contribute to social and economic development. Issues to be raised at this stage relate to the contribution of curriculum reforms vis a vis the achievement of national development goals. The debates on the role of the university in Africa have emphasized its responsibility in contributing to the development path decided upon by the governments. Are there links between a responsive curriculum and local development goals such as the presidential national priorities? Are there links to the African Renaissance agenda and NEPAD? Are there links between a responsive curriculum and global development goals such as the millennium development goals (what are these goals)? There is a need to clearly articulate these linkages in order to inform social policies and to ensure that higher education institutions contribute to that development path. A social reconstructionist approach to curriculum design needs

to be considered for its potential to make the curriculum more responsive to the needs of a broader community.

Castells, after an extensive overview of higher education in developing countries, concludes: "The ideological and political origins of most third world universities cannot be ignored but should not be permitted to suffocate the necessary evolution of the university towards its central role in modernization and development. If third world countries are also to enter the information age, rejecting an increasingly marginal role in the world system, developing policies must include the impulse and transformation of higher education systems as a key element of the new historical project" (1991; p.35). Some links between curriculum responsiveness and development goals are clear, but others are not.

Conclusion

Providing a meta-analysis of the case studies posed two unanticipated challenges. The first challenge had to do with the broad selection of the cases and the broad scope they covered such as programmes, disciplines, courses and management support issues. The selected case studies also represented different levels of study, i.e., undergraduate and post-graduate studies. Presenting a context that frames the need for responsiveness, then analyzing how the case studies have responded to that context posed the second challenge. The meta-analysis process and the case study process did not run parallel to each other so that contextual issues could

be addressed by the researchers by indicating how responsive the curricula has been to those issues.

There has been a tremendous effort to make the curriculum responsive to the needs of the nation but those efforts are too fragmented within institutions and across institutions for them to have impact on the education system and the nation. The case studies demonstrate researchers' experiences and their efforts to make curriculum be more responsive to the learner's needs. There is more than the documented evidence of curriculum responsiveness within institutions and in the entire system. These pose a challenge to other research on transformation efforts to make curriculum responsive and to contribute to the development of theory on these issues.

Another challenge is to find ways of addressing the fragmentation issue for greater impact on society. The one problem with the work that has been done through individual courses is that, as isolated cases they are good but lack the collective good. I would like to conclude by making a few suggestions on the elements that could be helpful in developing a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of our nation, planned in a way that it is not too fragmented and piecemeal to have impact on our society. First, there is a need to agree on a list of present and probable future skills often referred to in the policy documents without being defined, then seek clarity on what content provides those skills as well as how those skills should be imparted to the learners. Second, there is a need

to organize information into topic areas across disciplines, with logical bridges between them to ensure coherence. To do that, there should be preparedness amongst those involved to start from a clean page that is not constrained by the current course content and structures. The results of such planning should be organized into manageable courses across disciplines and programmes. There is

> ## "First, there is a need to agree on a list of present and probable future skills ..."

a need to infuse similar work in other disciplines and programmes within the institution. Taking resource limitations and constraints into consideration, some adjustments would need to be made to existing programmes and there might be a need to add new programmes and eliminate some programmes. Lastly, I would suggest the development of indicators that would help in the assessment of responsiveness through the curriculum.

I will conclude by returning to the issues raised at the beginning of this paper related to glocalisation challenges in the curriculum and how those issues have been addressed in the case studies. There is no direct indication in the case studies as to how local and global issues get integrated in the curriculum. There is more focus on the pedagogical

issues and how knowledge and skills are imparted than on the content of what is imparted. The business school case study is the only one that makes reference to meeting global and local challenges. A curriculum that is South African needs to include what is South African and African in nature and its global goals need to be shaped by its local goals for national development.

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Endnotes

[1]For more information on this topic check http://www.gruppo-cerfe.org/glocalization/pdf/Glocalexecutive.pdf (accessed May 14, 2004) and http://www.glocalforum.org/3how_we_do/think_tank.asp (accessed March 04, 2004)
[2]Anthony Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity (1990) at p.64. Cited on several websites including http://www.arthur.meu.unimelb.edu.au/globalisation/module1.htm and http://fsw.kub.nl/lubbers/lexicon.asp?term=Globalization
[3]Briefing notes and discussion with Hanlie Griesel, March 30, 2004. Pretoria
[4]These are some of the questions that inform the design of a community responsive curriculum at the University of Kentucky. http://www.amsa.org/programs/ky.cfm (accessed March 20, 2004)