
Globalization 'Defines the Modern World'

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Mauro F. Guillén is director of the Joseph H. Lauder Institute of Management & International Studies. A native of Spain and a management professor at the Wharton School, Guillén has done extensive research on globalization and also serves on the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Emerging Multinationals. He spoke with Knowledge@Wharton High School about the power of globalization.

An edited transcript of the conversation follows:

Knowledge@Wharton High School: What is globalization, and why should students be interested in it?

Mauro Guillén: Globalization is a very complex process that encompasses many different subjects – economy, politics, culture, society – and basically puts us into contact with everyone around the world. Students should be interested in it because it is what defines the modern world – every day we are more aware of, and more connected with, other people in other parts of the globe.

KWHS: How do you think globalization has affected the system of education?

Guillén: In a very powerful and clearly defined way. For starters, I think the content that is used in classrooms is more readily available every day thanks to new communication technologies. And also because every day there is more interaction in the world of education, there is more exchange between students and professors from one place to another.

KWHS: What benefits do we receive from globalization? Sometimes students think it can be somewhat harmful. Is this true?

Guillén: Of course. Globalization can carry with it negative consequences, especially for those communities or people or countries that do not adapt well to the change. Globalization can also produce, as we have seen in the last three years, very complicated and complex crises that are called systemic – in other words, they affect various countries at once. What happens in one country has consequences, or ramifications, in other countries and other economies [around] the world.

KWHS: What challenges do students have to face thanks to globalization? Do you think they face more competition?

Guillén: Of course. Look, for example, here in the United States. Before, it was relatively easy to come study here, and now it turns out that anyone in the world can compete for a slot in a university. I think that globalization does create many opportunities, but it also means much more competition. But competition in principle is not necessarily a bad thing. It is also stimulating, and it prompts you to better yourself and transcend your personal boundaries.

KWHS: Do you think social networks such as Facebook or Twitter have a positive impact on globalization?

Guillén: It seems like in general they have a highly beneficial impact, because otherwise people would not use them. There are still people who fear that participation in these social networks could turn into an activity that has to be catered to every minute of every day. But the truth is that you can control – whether you use Facebook or you use Twitter, etc. – up to what point you want to participate and how much information about yourself you want others to see.

KWHS: What can a student age 18 or 22 do to take advantage of globalization?

Guillén: What is most important is to be exposed to globalization. Get to know other places [through] contact with people and reading – not just traveling, but also reading about other countries. [It's also important] to comprehend what you pointed out earlier – both the opportunities that globalization presents, as well as the problems or challenges that this process involves.

Related Links

- [Mauro Guillén](#)
- [World Economic Forum](#)
- [Globalization101.org](#)
- [The World Bank](#)
- [The World Trade Organization](#)
- [PBS: Understanding Globalization](#)
- [Global Policy Forum](#)
- [Global Trade Watch](#)