

Part I

**Web-Based Learning
(WBL)**



Chapter I

Web-Based Education

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The Internet is changing the very nature of society in ways unparalleled since the industrial revolution. It is affecting local, national and global economies and their infrastructures. Information is available at any time from any place to any Internet user. This is creating tremendous opportunities for universities to provide a learning environment that is accessible to all. The “same time, same place, only some people” traditional educational environment is giving way to “anytime, anyplace and anybody” instructional models. For universities, the question becomes how to preserve and expand the desirable aspects of face-to-face teaching models when translating them into the new environment of Web-based education (WBE). This challenge is made even more complex when seen in the context of other trends in education: the transition from passive classroom lectures to hands-on, student-centered, interactive learning; the perception of students as “customers,” with increased control over the learning process; a higher education market where traditional universities have to compete with for-profit enterprises.

This chapter examines Web-based education and argues that it can successfully simulate face-to-face teaching models, while adding some unique features made possible by the technology. To be successful, however, this simulation requires adjustments in many areas, including student assessment, faculty training and expectations, and student expectations and motivation. In addition, the chapter examines several critical aspects of Web-based education, including technological, administrative, quality and control issues that need to be addressed in order to create favorable environments for Web-based education.

Information technology, especially the Internet, is creating tremendous opportunities in many areas and education is no exception. Electronic commerce is increasing by leaps and

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