Web-based learning would not be possible without information communication technologies. Likewise, Web-based learning would not be possible without integrating adult learning principles and/or philosophies. Mention of any universities in North America or those in other developed countries or even better developing countries, we will come to the realization that at least one third of any university’s undergraduate and graduate courses are taught via information communication technologies. Prior to the beginning of the 21st century, only a few universities like the University of Phoenix and Capella University offered courses online to learners not only in the United States but from around the globe. Initially, universities began to purchase WebCT or Blackboard programs to deliver courses online to learners anywhere, any time. As time goes on, engineers keep developing new software like Elluminate.Com services or podcasts to enhance Web-based learning. As courses are taught online on a continuous basis and as degrees are conferred on learners who are able to seek degrees only from online universities, the debate continues regarding the effectiveness of learning or teaching via information communication technologies. A dividing line seems to exist between younger faculty (a small number of them are digital natives) and senior faculty. While younger faculty are for Web-based learning, some senior faculty “insist” that learning not occur without “face-to-face” instruction in the traditional four-walled classrooms. Some even argue that the whole educational enterprise has been frozen into the pedagogical educational model, which means teachers must direct students’ learning in the traditional classroom settings.

Outside the adult education arena, very few scholars or practitioners would care about principles of adult learning or adult teaching philosophies. In fact, some faculty may be using some of the principles of adult learning without actually knowing that they benefit from adult teaching philosophies. In fact, it was the father of adult education, Malcolm Knowles, who in the 1970s predicted that education in the 21st century would be delivered electronically. His prediction came true as more and more universities from around the globe began to offer classes via information communication technologies at the beginning of the 21st century. Without a doubt, Web-based learning has become the trend in this century regardless of whether senior faculty members like this phenomenal phenomenon or not. To say the trend is a phenomenal phenomenon is no exaggeration. First and foremost, Web 2.0 technologies have made this phenomenon possible. More importantly, it is principles of adult learning that have made Web-based learning possible.
As a university professor who has been teaching both in the traditional classroom settings and in the online teaching environments for 20 years, I used to believe that some courses, such as Educational Statistics, cannot be taught online. I was proved wrong recently when I was hired as adjunct professor by both North Central University, Arizona, and Capella University. When I began to teach research methods classes online for North Central University, I was amazed by their cutting-edge instructional design. Their learners turned in well thought-out assignments, which were often better than the assignments done by learners taught in traditional classroom settings. I thought about this phenomenal phenomenon and came to the realization that Web-based learning is dictated by principles of adult learning popularized by Knowles. One of the principles is the so-called “Self-Concept of the Learners,” which means learners are capable of teaching themselves. It does not mean that learners do not need instructors. Rather, they need some kind of helping relationship between learners and course instructors. In Knowles’ terms, instructors serve as process managers, learning facilitators, and consultants, linking students to learning resources. This is true that in an online learning environment, everything will be at learners’ finger tips when their online libraries can offer any learning resources for learners. There is also no question that technology provides multiple access points to knowledge, whereas instructors can only provide one access to knowledge if they choose to lecture their students. If this one access provided by instructors is missed, it can be remedied by other multiple access points to knowledge via information communication technologies. Indeed, Web-based learning has to do more with how learners approach learning, the nature of knowledge, the nature of learning, constructivism and various kinds of teaching philosophies.

As I researched books regarding adult education and information communication technologies, I did not find one on Integrating Adult Learning and Technologies for Effective Education: Strategic Approaches. Such a book will not only equip adult learners with the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to succeed in the field of adult education, but those outside the adult education arena will understand why adult education teaching philosophies enhance Web-based learning in general. By reading such a book, tension between digital natives and senior faculty will be loosened so that every faculty, whether he or she is in higher education, adult education, middle school education, social sciences, humanities or even hard sciences, will focus more on effective education for learners via information communication technologies than on the debate regarding which format of education (traditional or Web-based) is more effective. As I was approached to select six articles of highest quality from my forthcoming book titled Integrating Adult Learning and Technologies for Effective Education: Strategic Approaches to be published as a special issue by the International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies, I was extremely delighted to accept this opportunity. To be frank, out of the 15 chapters (to be published in the forthcoming book by IGI Global) that survived the blind peer-review process, it was hard for me to select six. Then, I focused on the theme of Web-based learning and information communication technologies. My job became a little easier. I hope both the six articles published in this journal and the 15 chapters in the book will be made equally accessible to our readers, as they were written by first rate authors who are well-versed not only in adult learning philosophies, but also information communication technologies. All have taught in traditional classroom settings and the virtual teaching environments. Their insights regarding Web-based learning and teaching technologies will definitely benefit readers far and wide, as I know that IGI Global’s journals and books are distributed worldwide among the academic circles.

As you read the first article, you will be amazed at how the authors explore the use of various learning technologies as tools for facilitating learner-centered teaching. The second article will help readers understand that teaching and learning can be approached from the nature of knowledge, the nature of learning and various kinds of teaching philosophies. The third highlights adult learning developments and the implications for curriculum design, instruction, and use of technology. The fourth argues that the ability to use learning style research to accomplish both will lead to enhanced student learning and a more productive experience. The fifth addresses time and social space for the tacit dimension of teaching and learning by comparing how two young universities in Spain
have dealt with the effects of information communication technologies in relation to the tacit dimension of learning and teaching. The sixth provides a critical review of the past two decades of technology use in adult education.

These six articles only provide our readers with a bird’s eye view of the pertinent issues regarding teaching and learning via information communication technologies. For a much more comprehensive view, I encourage you to read the whole book, Integrating Adult Learning and Technologies for Effective Education: Strategic Approaches. Reading requires readers to effectively “communicate” with authors. Since our authors are frontline professors and scholars in the field, you are welcome to contact them regarding any teaching or learning issues via the use of information communication technologies. Finally, I wish to thank the publisher, IGI Global and the International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies for giving me the opportunity to publish this special issue of six high quality articles as the guest editor. I look forward to hearing from our readers far and wide.

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