Chapter IX

An E-Learning Journey: Opportunities and Challenges for the 21st Century

A day in the life of a student in the year 2010: A student enters a learning center building and goes directly to her personal information panel. After checking in, the student is prompted to attach her electronic notebooks to upload homework from the prior day and transmit any communications from her parents. This information is sent to her is age-appropriate and is processed based on the type/assessment criteria. The assessed work is uploaded to her file, which she can access when she attends the class that deals with the information. This information is used as a personal baseline for the day’s individually designed learning activities. She also may upload her work electronically via the Internet to receive constructive feedback in a timely manner to make decisions on the process and progress of her work. (Smith & Shelley, 2002, p. 21)
The trend of higher education in the 21st century will continue to experience enormous growth in the area of ICT. Undercoffer (2000) states in his article titled *Trends and Megatrends*: “Those of us in the business of professional education, however, must make predictions on a regular basis. Our task of preparing students for careers several years out has become increasingly complex as the rate of change has accelerated” (p. 27). In order to keep pace with this change, policymakers have opportunities and obligations to move forward with a new direction for teaching and learning in the 21st century; all educational stakeholders must collaborate in creating a new vision for education” (Maurizio & Wilson, 2004). With attention concentrated on future priorities and initiatives,

*Whether we are looking at education in 2020 or integrating technology throughout all of the curriculum and instruction by the end of 2006, we all hold the common vision that each student and educator at every level of schooling needs anytime, anywhere access to appropriate technology. (Fletcher, 2004, p. 6)*

Technology, particularly e-learning, is an integral part of today’s education. Focusing on future possibilities and directions of educational technology in general, this chapter discusses challenges and opportunities of technology in the Asia-Pacific region in particular, based on the following:

- Education in the Digital Age
- 21st Century Teaching and Learning
- Diversity, Bilingualism, and Technology
- Opportunities and Challenges for Change

**Education in the Digital Age**

E-learning is understood as a wide set of applications and processes involving Web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration, in addition to the delivery of content via Internet, intranet/extranet (LAN/WAN), audio- and videotape, satellite broadcast, interactive