Chapter 1

Cloud- and Crowd- Networked Pedagogy: Integrating Cloud Technologies in Networked Classrooms and Learning Communities

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ABSTRACT

Our knowledge is constantly shifting from analog literacies to digital literacies, industrial literacies to information societies, paper literacies to screen literacies, and mono-modal literacies to multimodal literacies for which digital technology and/or digital culture has become a dynamic and evolving force. Concerning the literacy shifts whether we realize or not, we are invariably encountering digital technologies and are explicitly and/or implicitly embracing such knowledge shift in almost all across the world without any exception. This knowledge shift demonstrates that digital literacy has become an inescapable component of our daily life in the context of the 21st century’s digital world. In this chapter, I will discuss affordances of cloud/digital pedagogies such as what teaching, learning, and writing are in digital context, how digital, cloud, or crowd pedagogy currently became an inescapable element, and why instructors from any global communities (should) welcome this pedagogical shift in academic spaces. Additionally, this chapter stresses on how instructors can engage students in the cloud environment, how students can share a complex set of linguistic and cultural narratives, and how students can collaborate and cooperate to create their realities in the context of the 21st century’s networked classrooms.

INTRODUCTION

With the virtualization of data, communication, and services, cloud computing is not only opening up many newer horizons in education, business, and politics all alike, but cloud computing is also offering more efficient and effective cloud technologies, networked devices, networked apps, and pedagogical

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affordances. Having emerging interactive features such as creating, saving, sharing, and syncing data and communication in the cloud from anywhere, any device, anybody, and any time bases, cloud technologies have potential to offer democratic, inclusive, and representational spaces such as networking, crowd-engagement, and writing spaces. Similarly, due to the cloud-based or digital-based writing or collaboration, the so called enormous world has become a tiny global village. Due to the democratic, inclusive, and representational cloud affordances, there is a growing trend of collaborating, communicating, exploring, contesting, and creating in higher education settings. Cloud technologies such as Google-based apps, Google docs, Eli Review (Eli Review is a peer-based review platform that allows writers, reviewers, and students effectively and efficiently review their peer’s manuscripts/drafts, in short “Eli”), Wikis, Amazon Web services, Microsoft cloud, institutional cloud (cloud space offered by institutions), Dropbox, myCloud, iCloud, Web 2.0/3.0, social media, and other cloud-embedded technologies are rapidly permeating the 21st century networked classrooms and networked-based learning communities. Networked-based and/or cloud centric-classes are capable of generating pedagogical possibilities for improving and/or transforming existing pedagogical practices and learner engagement. Pedagogically, we (instructors who prefer to embrace cloud pedagogy) envision the use of cloud technologies as learning tools, learning spaces, and networking organisms. Therefore, cloud technologies are preferably utilized at the individual, classroom, and institutional levels as they (cloud technologies) have unimaginable capacities of producing, sharing, disseminating, and maintaining knowledge and/or as they have changed the ways people circulate information across the world (Limbu, 2013, p. 67).

After the advent of the cloud technologies and crowd engagement in the cloud, production of knowledge never remained personal and exclusive because the cloud and/or Web 2.0 offers much more inclusive and representational capacities in the cloud. In such cloud capacity, the binary between writer and reader and/or dichotomy between consumer and producer is blurred. Meaning, in cloud spaces such as blog, vlog, cloud spaces, and YouTube to mention a few, it is hard to affirm who is the reader and who is the writer because even the so called reader is contributing to the production of newer knowledge just like the so called writer; here binary between producer and consumer becomes “prosumer” (producer or consumer). In other words, even (most) readers effectively and efficiently contribute to the production of knowledge. The main purpose of this chapter is to briefly discuss cloud technologies, cloud-based networked spaces, and cloud learning spaces and to critically explore and examine the features and affordances of cloud technologies for pedagogical purposes focusing on the improvement and transformation of existing pedagogical practices (e.g., teaching, learning, training, and collaborative knowledge engagement in general). Similarly, this chapter captures the uses and impacts of cloud computing in teaching, learning, and engendering new types of student engagement opportunities. It also demonstrates how newer cloud- and crowd based pedagogical strategies function within networked community members and beyond in relation to collaborative knowledge building processes, and it exhibits how cloud- and crowd based pedagogy harnesses collective intelligence within networked learning communities and beyond.

This chapter opens up with the concept of cloud computing, cloud technologies, networked spaces, and learning spaces. Second, it discusses what cloud- and crowd-based networked pedagogy is in relation to classroom and workplace setting; it justifies why present sites and potentials of cloud-technologies and cloud- or crowd-based pedagogy is important within classroom and beyond. It primarily justifies how cloud tools are used to enhance students’ inquiry, communication, discovery, and knowledge construction processes. This chapter reflects how students and/or networked community members write when they write and/or how they communicate when they communicate in the cloud; and it discusses what rhetorical strategies students and/or networked community members use when they compose in