



## **Teaching Writing in the Cloud: Networked Writing Communities in the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Classrooms**

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### **Abstract**

Our knowledge is constantly shifting from analog to digital literacies, industrial to information societies, paper to screen literacies, and mono-modal to multimodal literacies, for which digital technology has become a disruptive force. Whether we realize or not, we are invariably encountering digital technologies and are embracing such knowledge shift/epistemic shift in business, science, education, and engineering alike. This epistemic shift demonstrates that digital literacy has become an inescapable element in the twenty-first century's networked communities. Based on the epistemic transformation, this article discusses potentials of teaching writing in the cloud, such as how instructors can welcome this epistemic shift in the writing classes; how instructors can engage students in 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 networked first-year composition classrooms.

*Key words:* Cloud computing, digital literacies, cloud pedagogy, cross-culture, mobile apps, sync

### **Introduction**

Cloud computing is one of the leading forces of digital communications, which refers to web collaboration, cooperation, document sharing, content creation, publication, data

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syncing, and day-to-day digital communication. Cloud computing tools include, among others, Facebook, Google sites, blogs, vlogs, Wikis, Twitter, podcasting, Google apps, dropbox, iCloud, amazon cloud, browser-based apps, browser-based programming, and mobile apps. These cloud computing tools, which are rapidly shifting the networked communities, are significantly utilized in business, science, and education alike. In other words, the mantra of cloud computing is to always become able to access shared data, collaborate, cooperate, edit, and publish them from anywhere, any device, anytime, and by any person. Cloud computing also promotes digital networked cross-cultural communication by blurring the traditional concept of center vs. periphery, private vs. public, us vs. them binaries. Concerning cloud computing pedagogy, instructors should understand that cloud computing tools are popular interactive communication tools among our college students, and instructors may consider utilizing them in the writing classes.

This article discusses how I use cloud tools to enhance students' writing skills in the first-year composition classes, and how students use cloud tools to collaborate, cooperate, and create contents. It also briefly reflects how students save, synch, and share their files with their collaborators in the cloud from any device, anywhere, and any time. Structurally, this article stresses what cloud computing is; what potentials and possibilities cloud computing has in the first-year writing classes; what pedagogical strategies instructors may initiate for cloud-based pedagogy; how cloud computing pedagogy can create cross-cultural setting (in the writing classes); and finally, it concludes by demonstrating some future perspectives.

### **What cloud computing is and why it should be introduced in the writing classes**

According to Vouk (2008) “[c]loud computing predecessors have been around for some time now, but the term became ‘popular’ sometime in October 2007 when IBM and Google announced a collaboration in that domain” (p. 235). Since then the term “Cloud Computing” became a buzzword. Furthermore, Jaeger, Lin, and Grimes (2008) state that cloud computing infrastructure resides in a large data center and is managed by a third party, who provides cloud computing resources as if it were a utility, such as electricity—accessible from anywhere by anyone with an Internet connection. And similarly Scale (2010) contends that cloud computing “implies a service-oriented architecture, reduced information technology overhead for the end-user, greater flexibility, reduced total cost of ownership, on demand services and many other things” (p. 934). Subsequently, we personally and professionally have utilized cloud-based services in our day-to-day lives in multiple ways. At this point, what we understand is that cloud computing is conceptualized and utilized as the web-based hosting of software where we, end users, do not always necessarily need to consider upgrading hardware or software because of the new releases (Knorr & Gruman, 2008).

Cloud computing virtualizes documents, such as videos, sounds, images, and texts, etc. and other colleagues, who are in the network, share them in the cloud. It demonstrates that cloud computing data are always mobile, transferable, and instantly accessible. From this point of view, cloud computing, in this twenty-first century networked communities, promises to collaborate, create, sync, and share information with friends and co-workers in the cloud. Tadjer (2010) contends that cloud computing means having every piece of data that we need for every aspect of our lives are at our fingertips, and they (data) are always ready for sharing. More importantly, the portable and interactive potential of cloud computing is the ability to sync up data to several devices, such as computer desktops, laptops, smartphones, iPads, iPods, and tablets, and the capability to share them with multiple collaborators in the cloud. Thus, the shared data is the data that we access in the cloud with any number of people and any cloud spaces, such as social networks, blogs, cloud spaces, online (shared) data storage, and newsrooms, etc.

As cloud computing tools are communicative, collaborative, and user-centered, they have unimaginable potentials to cultivate students' writing and communication skills. Therefore, instructors can use digital tools to observe cloud potentials, such as what cloud computing is in the context of culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms; how cloud-based networked writing enhances students' writing; how it enriches intercultural and cross-cultural communication skills; how both students and technologies interact to produce meanings; and how technologies and students coexist in symbiotic relationship in the context of twenty-first century digital world (see Graupner, Nickoson-Massey, & Blair, 2009; Porter, 2007). Moreover, students, in cloud computing setting, both collaborate, cooperate, and create contents, and they also save and sync them in the cloud data storage spaces, such as dropbox, Google drive, box.com, and iCloud. So, in this setting, students can share their files and documents in the cloud with peers, collaborators, and instructors from any device, anywhere, and any time. In so doing, students not only will be able to collaborate and cooperate, but they will also be able to share and cultivate their writing strategies.

Hence, cloud computing is a networked space where students can exchange their texts, documents, sounds, and videos. It also provides students opportunities to share and learn from their peers and colleagues within their writing community and beyond when they engage in the interactive cloud tools (see DePew, 2011). As Warschauer (2011) states the use of digital media facilitates students' writing because in cloud-based pedagogy, students' writing becomes much more visible, accessible, and readable than in the traditional handwritten one. So, from a pedagogical perspective, cloud-based writing makes students' writing more vibrant and dynamic as peers, colleagues, and other audience can read, edit, and comment on their documents (from anywhere, any devices, and any time).

### **Cloud computing pedagogy and its potentials in the writing classes**

The emergence of cloud technology offers people newer ways of communication by conferring many user-friendly affordances, such as technical tools for sharing, collaborating, and creating contents within an identified web-based pedagogical environment (Panteli, 2009; Werstch, 1998). So, cloud tools confer possibilities where students can collaborate, cooperate, compose, revise, and comment on their peers' papers in the cloud. In this pedagogical setting, students become able to express their thoughts and opinions via digital tools; they become able to understand other cultural and linguistic systems by discoursing with peers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds; and they can also change our preconceived assumptions about literacies and the world (Vaidhyanathan, 2004, p. 21). In other words, cloud pedagogy is perhaps more explicitly global, intercultural, and cross-cultural communication medium that allows students to comprehend and create their own networked paths as authors to their readers (Aleman & Wartman, 2009; Limbu, 2011a, pp. 17-18; Purvis & Savarimuthu, 2009; Richardson, 2007; Thatcher, 2005). From this perspective, cloud computing has become a digital networked medium through which students can construct their cultural and individual identities by reframing horizons of their cultural artifacts and understandings (Heidegger, 1977; Lawson, 2008). Therefore, teaching writing in the cloud in linguistically and culturally diverse classroom is a convergence of self, other colleagues, cultures, and new media technologies in the context of twenty-first century digitized networked classrooms (Limbu, 2011a, p. 22).

Although recent composition theories advocate for empowering students to bring their own real voices in the writing classes, current writing pedagogy still informs traditional teacher-centered pedagogical practices. For instance, writing instructors identify themselves as experts who still impart prescriptive forms and grammars to their students, and in such pedagogical approaches students are, more often than not, expected to demonstrate prescribed proficiencies (Berlin, 1984, 1987; Brereton, 1995). The traditional prescriptive pedagogy offers only one-on-one student and teacher relationship in which student writes paper, and teacher reads and gives feedback and grades. This pedagogy, unlike cloud pedagogy, prevents students from sharing their individual experiences, cultural narratives, stories, and prior academic literacies with their peers. From this standpoint, traditional pedagogy not only limits the significance of audience analysis, peer collaboration, and cooperation, but also confines cross-cultural, intercultural, and global aspects of communications in the age of digitally networked knowledge communities.

Cloud pedagogy also tends to deconstruct the traditional notion of authority and authorship, for human minds are now profoundly influenced by popular cultural activities, culturally produced and transmitted tools, including symbolic nature of language and social circumstances, from which we construe our situated rhetorical

situations (Bazerman, 2008; Berlin, 1988, 1992; Vygotsky, 1978). So, cloud-based pedagogy shapes networked knowledge communities in such a way that deconstructs traditional notion of authority and reconstructs newer pedagogical strategies, such as when students write in the cloud environment, they, as authorities of their cultures, share a complex set of situated rhetorical identities by informing their fellow classmates and instructors about their cultural narratives, individual experiences, and rhetorical choices. Cloud pedagogy allows students both to comprehend diverse local and global literacies and to be familiar with different rhetorical choices and rhetorical strategies people use to communicate in different cultures.

In the era of the webbed world, cloud tools impact our daily communication experiences, and when the media by and large sing the praises of the local and global communication, it becomes important for those of us teaching writing (Arola, 2010, p. 13) because cloud tools have aptitudes to cultivate students' writing skills, such as glocal (local + global) professional writing skills, cross-cultural composition skills, and critical and analytical understandings. Therefore, instructors should attempt to utilize cloud tools so that students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds will be able to share as well as question to understand other cultural, linguistic, and geopolitical rhetorics. In this pedagogical process, as students get abundant opportunities to compare, contrast, and construct their own situated identities by connecting them to the global level, they can also develop newer critical and analytical skills. Moreover, since students are constantly exposed to diverse cultural and geopolitical situation in the cloud, they also learn to question power, privilege, and difference (Berlak, 2008; Freire, 2001; Giroux, 1985, 1995, 2004; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2007). In a nutshell, the potential of cloud pedagogy in the writing class is not only its ability to create and share contents with multiple collaborators and sync up data among several devices, but cloud tools are also cost-effective, i.e. free or cheap.

### **Networked cloud pedagogy in the writing classes: Facebook as an interactive writing cloud tool**

Facebook allows students to understand cultures, people, and geographical situations locally and globally. It also provides newer venues for students to articulate themselves and to interact with colleagues from their class, their networked communities, and even beyond. In other words, Facebook provides an environment from where students construct their spaces and identities; it potentially tends to make Facebook stand as students' identity marker as well. When students engage in digital dialogical environment, they also expand their various literacy skills by producing unpredictable texts that propel them towards their future goals. In digital pedagogical environment, students develop their ability to critically explore and understand uses of diverse cultural narratives, digital texts, and multimodal texts, and they also achieve confidence to

appreciate and create multiple texts (texts, sounds, images, and videos, etc.) in effective and productive ways.

Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert (2009) contend that “[s]pending time on social networking sites, such as Facebook, appears to be part of most U.S. young adults’ daily activities” (p. 228) as they frequently communicate on Facebook. Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, and Witty’s (2010) study also demonstrates that most college students, as we see, have a presence on many social media spaces. Furthermore, Fletcher (2010) claims that there were more than 400 million people who were active Facebook users in the early 2010, and among them, 43% of Facebook’s 45.3 million U.S. users are of college-age (as Facebook, 2010 cited in DePew, 2011). These studies demonstrate that students tend to communicate, create, and disseminate their ideas on Facebook as networked communities; and Facebook seems to be one of the fastest, easiest, and free means of communications in today’s networked knowledge communities. Students working on such networked spaces do not simply support to create and disseminate their intended information, but also contribute to amplify their cultural narratives and individual experiences within their networked groups and beyond. It suggests that Facebook offers students opportunities to collectively collaborate, cooperate, and create contents, or social media like Facebook offers “students a more expansive palette for creating a greater impact” (DePew, 2011, p. 59). In this pedagogical setting, students also tend to enter into different communities and learn different cultural rhetorical writing strategies and communication approaches (Limbu, 2011a).

Similarly, writing in the cloud in the composition classes, especially on Facebook, is like grabbing an opportunity at the right time, for college students constantly communicate on Facebook by posting messages, writing their journals, updating their statuses, uploading images/videos, and chatting with their colleagues. Not only do students post contents on regular basis, but also use a variety of Facebook apps for various purposes. Due to students’ constant digital engagement, Facebook becomes a better pedagogical cloud tool with which students can communicate quicker and better than they do on Angel, blackboard, and other traditional emails. Students also seem to persistently share, interact, and create on Facebook; they frequently seem to write/text in informal settings. This is one of the reasons why I propose that instructors use Facebook in their composition classes by applying every potential of it so that students learn to cultivate their writing skills.

Better part of cloud pedagogy, including Facebook pedagogy, is that students’ shared materials (documents, video, drafts, reviews, prezis, and responses) are always accessible and visible in the cloud spaces. Because of this possibility, as I stated earlier, students can access their peers’ documents from anywhere and any time, which informs them of other students’ strategic writing processes and rhetorical choices. Moreover, students also do not necessarily need their computers/laptops to access their

documents, they can use their mobile devices, such as smartphones, iPads, iPods, tablets, and they can also share them (documents) with their peers and instructors via these devices. This cloud-based pedagogy suggests that students always walk around with their and their colleagues' narratives, documents, and projects. Likewise, instructors can also save students' papers, responses, and digital documents on the cloud data storage spaces (dropbox, box.com, iCloud, and Google drive, etc.) and can have access to them from anywhere, any device, and anytime. For instance, I always save my teaching materials and students' projects, responses, and progress records on online data storage (dropbox and Google drive) when my students ask me about their papers, projects, and progresses, I can show or share them right away from my computer and other mobile devices. Thus, saving most of the teaching materials, syncing them online and accessing and sharing them from anywhere and anytime makes teaching easier and more professional.

Moreover, cloud pedagogy also shifts the traditional teacher-centered pedagogy into student-centered pedagogy. For instance, in the traditional pedagogy, "[s]tudents mostly interact with their instructor by asking questions or submitting work, and they tend to have little correspondence with other peers" (DePew & Lettner-Rust, 2009, p. 174). Similarly, in the traditional pedagogy, instructor also occupies the center space and is considered as the purveyor of absolute knowledge, but the mantra of cloud pedagogy is that instructor is not the one who occupies the center space in the writing class/es, but s/he is a contributor, facilitator, and learner. In other words, by inviting culturally and linguistically diverse students as ambassadors, ethnographers, and historians of their cultures, cloud pedagogy encourages them to bring their cultural narratives and individual voices to the composition classes. In this pedagogical procedure, students discourse on the materials they bring in; they question on the materials and negotiate their spaces; and they also tend to validate their colleagues' cultural and individual voices. Furthermore, since cloud pedagogy tends to be more democratic, students have freedom of bringing their thoughts and ideas to the center. In short, Facebook, as a cloud pedagogical tool, empowers students to play dominant roles in the writing classes, and it also seems to challenge the traditional concept of instructor's role as the "Teacher" (purveyor of knowledge and authority) in the writing classes.

Additionally, the better aspect of Facebook pedagogy is that instructors do not always have to respond every student's questions and concerns, but students themselves do help each other because Facebook communication never stops; meaning, students always log on to their laptops, tablets, smartphones, iPods, and iPads, and someone from that particular writing class is always on Facebook and will be able to respond to their colleague's questions and concerns. However, this does not mean that instructors should remain idle, but they, as contributors and facilitators, have to observe how students are collaborating; what and how students are writing; and how

they are participating without intervening them because instructor's frequent intervention can be very intimidating, and it can also paralyze students' creativity and cloud-based participation.

Furthermore, while using Facebook as a writing tool in the class, students reported that Facebook discussions were effective and efficient; everyone in the class could interact to make sure what classroom activities were going on; and what assignments, reading responses, and projects were due. Likewise, students believed that Facebook alone stood as the leader of class discussions and reading responses, while website and blog were the leaders of collaboration/cooperation and peer review, and prezi and Google drive were front-runners of group collaboration and presentation. It demonstrates that Facebook, including other cloud tools, better assists students to interact, collaborate, cooperate, and create contents in multiple ways.

Pedagogical application of Facebook in the writing class also blurs the boundaries between the virtual and physical classroom spaces because of its effective applications, such as chat app, video app, and so on. For instance, when students are absent in the class (for any reason), they can still participate in the classroom discussions from anywhere and any time in both synchronous and asynchronous settings. To illustrate it more apparently, in my writing classes, despite the fact that students are absent in the class, they can still collaborate, cooperate, and create with their group members (who are present in the class). The cloud-based networked collaborative work and cloud-based discussion are as effective as they (absentees) are in the class. Therefore, when we teach in the cloud environment, students, by being absent in the class, can also easily contribute, create, and capture information in the cloud, such as what activities their classmates have done in the class; how these activities have been done; and who have participated for the discussion.

Similarly, cloud computing deconstructs the traditional notion of western writing. The traditional western pedagogy is limited to just written texts, but cloud pedagogy allows students to use technologies to create unimaginable texts in multiple ways. For instance, students, other than traditional writing, create multimodal documents as a part of their projects and assignments in the writing classes. Such multimodal texts, such as sounds, images, graphics, and videos always empower non-traditional students to precisely reflect their cultural narratives and to better articulate their ideas. In cloud pedagogy digital technologies become mediums through which multilingual and multicultural students, including monolingual students, can mediate their cultural, linguistic, and individual stories to construct their situated identities in the writing classes. In short, cloud pedagogy saturated by new media technologies engages students in different digital, multimodal, and cross-cultural writing projects that not only offers them to create their identities, spaces, and voices in the center, but it also prepares them for valuable future career preparation (Limbu, 2012).

Cloud computing reinforces students to work as networked knowledge

communities by engaging them in digital dialogues where they get better opportunities to globalize their local narratives and localize the global contents. In the process of working in the digital environment, students learn different multimodal skills to express themselves. Thus, cloud computing has some unique potentials, such as users can create digital multicultural materials, diverse digital narratives, and resources, and they can publish and share them with their peers. Cloud pedagogy, including Facebook, has probability to dialogically engage both monolingual and multilingual students so that they learn newer literacies and create newer texts in digital and physical spaces. Hence, “preparing students to communicate in the digital world using a full range of rhetorical skills will enable them to analyze and critique both the technological tools and the multimodal texts produced with those skills” (Handa, 2004, p. 3). Furthermore, “social networking sites provide an easy, accessible way to interact with peers and gather feedback. These opportunities may be particularly significant since peers are readily available online at almost any time, and the tools provided make communication easy to accomplish” (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009, p. 228). Such digital information and communication enriches students’ learning processes by intensifying the sense of trust on their personal and professional development.

To further reiterate cloud potentials, Facebook is not only about communicating with colleagues, but it is about contesting and negotiating their spaces. In this process, students use cloud tools that allow students to reach a larger audience with the work they are undertaking. When students share their multimodal stories in digital environment, they, more often than not, question on the contents when they do not understand, or when they disagree. In this pedagogical setting, at times, they both agree and disagree, which makes them challenge each other, and they also tend to rhetorically support their arguments. Therefore, such questioning, contesting, and supporting arguments have an immediate impact on their interests and lives that offer them to create newer rhetorical strategies. This pedagogical perspective extends students’ understanding of critical communication, writing, and response in a larger scale, which helps students connect their local materials and individual understanding to the global level and vice versa. Furthermore, many cloud apps consist of a one-to-many communication style, where information tremendously amplifies, and they reach a diverse audience at a time (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009, p. 234). Overall, cloud pedagogy prepares students better critical, analytical digital collaborators, contributors, and writers.

### **Teaching writing in the cloud: Why and what strategies instructor should initiate in the composition classes**

Our knowledge is constantly shifting from analog to digital literacies, industrial to information societies, and mono-modal to multimodal literacies (Warschauer, 2011).

Thus, cloud technology has become a disruptive force in this digital world that has transformed the traditional paper, analog, and industrial worlds into information science. Because of the impact of such epistemic shift, the world is constantly changing. Therefore, writing instructors should also address the epistemic shifts in the writing classes so that we can transform the traditional pedagogies, outdated classes, and outmoded universities into digital, information, and global networked communities. Since digital literacy is inescapable, we should introduce digital technologies to students so that they can fit in the twenty-first century's networked education, business, science, and engineering, etc. And, we should also push ourselves towards cloud writing so that our now students and future colleagues will be able to address the epistemic shifts according to the demands and expectations of the digitally networked communities.

As I implied earlier, the other reason why instructors should use cloud tools in the writing classes is that many cloud-computing apps are accessible, user-friendly, and cost-effective (mostly free or cheap); meaning, students can afford to use them. And since cloud computing tools are user-friendly and user-editable, they offer students a freedom of expression by allowing them to work within their own cultural accounts and prior academic experiences (Hocks, 2008; Limbu, 2011a; Takayoshi & Selfe, 2007). In this pedagogy, students can create their cultural and individual voices by sharing materials to construct their cultural identities and individual subjectivities. Since students' cloud spaces are accessible, they also will be able to share other linguistic codes and cultural conditions, which illuminate previously untapped cultural, linguistic, and geopolitical information. This pedagogical landscape will prepare students to become digitally competent critical and analytical communicators and writers. And gradually, they will be able to create their own worlds for themselves and for their community members. Therefore, we should teach our students all available means of persuasion, all available means of rhetorical approaches so that they can communicate in effective and productive ways (Selfe, 2009, p. 645; Takayoshi & Selfe, 2007, p. 8).

More importantly, instructors generally assume that students are digital natives (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008), and they learn digital skills by doing, or they also learn from their friends, online help systems, and YouTube. However, instructors invariably should keep in mind that though students seem to be digital natives, and they know much more about new media technologies, they obviously do not have analytical digital and multimodal understandings and skills that our composition classes demand. For instance, many students, in my writing classes, always tell me that the use of cloud tools, such as Facebook, blogs, websites, prezi, dropbox, and Google Sites, are very efficient and effective; they are better means to communicate, collaborate, cooperate, and create contents with peers, but they also admit that they have never utilized them before (the way they use in my class). Instructors should remember that instruction on the use of different multimodalities, web creation, web publication, and online data storage is always essential because majority of students are not familiar with software,

hardware, and other multimodalities (Cooper, 2007; Pandey, 2007; Selfe & Hawisher, 2004). Furthermore, students also admit that they know some functionality of cloud tools, such as Facebook, but they do not know more features about Facebook and other cloud tools, such as Facebook apps, websites, blogs, online data storage, and other multimodalities (that we use in the writing classes). So, instructors should understand that students always “need help in framing their understandings critically so that they can question their own judgment and look at their work from the perspectives of audience” (Selfe & Hawisher, 2004, p. 209).

In terms of introduction of cloud tools to students, I always spend first one or two classes to introduce syllabus, course, and cloud tools, such as Facebook (for classroom discussion, reading response, and peer review), dropbox (for online data storage), Google drive (for group work, peer feedback, and data storage), vblog/website (for draft, peer review, comment, and final project), and prezi (for group presentation). Once students get familiar with these cloud tools, I teach students how to customize cloud tools; customizing cloud tools means to make students create web spaces based on our class’s goal as well as students’ interests/requirements. Only after ensuring that students are able to navigate cloud tools, I get students to create their individual websites, web pages, external links, Facebook groups, and blog spaces. Similarly, since I get students to do remix projects, I also familiarize them with functionality of prezi presentation, online data storage, sound, video, and image. Therefore, I, at this point, ensure that students understand digital instructions, multimodal conversations, and other cloud applications. Once students are familiarized with cloud tools, they can create their blogs or websites by linking their cloud spaces with that of their peers so that they can access their colleagues’ cloud spaces (blogs, vlogs, and websites) and can work as a networked community. Once students create their Facebook accounts and add their friends as their cloud friends, they start establishing their friendships right from the first day (which cannot be expected in the traditional classes). This pedagogical landscape develops a good rapport for students to work as networked community members in the writing classes.

As the semester progresses, students use Facebook to write reading responses and to post comments on their peers’ responses. In which students tend to question and negotiate as well. Similarly, before students begin to work on their major writing projects, students post their research questions, inquiry questions, and idea maps on Facebook, and as “students develop material through the use of the heuristic and begin to write initial drafts of their essays, they discover the culturally coded character of all parts of composing” (Berlin, 1992, p. 30). In this pedagogical process, as students tell me that having seen other students’ reading responses, research inquiry questions, and ways of inventing, organizing, and revising strategies, they also learn how they can create them for themselves. Also when students post reading responses, reflections, and group presentations in the cloud (Facebook, blogs, and prezis), students get an

opportunity to reframe and re-envision their ongoing theoretical and practical networked experiences (Limbu, 2011b).

Gradually, when students do peer reviews, they read the drafts of their peers on their (peers') websites/blogs and write comments and feedback on Facebook, or they do both on Facebook and blog as assigned. Reading peers' paper and posting comments on Facebook not only boosts up shy and quiet students' paces, but students (multilingual and monolingual students) also share how students, from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, are exploring contents, rhetorically developing ideas, and processing them. Moreover, as students' peer review comments as well as draft essays are accessible in the cloud, students also get the abundant opportunity to compare and contrast their strategies and rhetorical choices with that of their peers'. From this perspective, cloud pedagogy always helps expedite everyone's, (including slow, quiet, and shy student's) writing paces because in cloud computing pedagogy, students work as networked communities, where they constantly share their rhetorical approaches to develop their writing, critiquing, organizing, and revising skills.

Furthermore, the other reason why composition instructors should embrace cloud pedagogy is that the importance of digital literacies is inescapable in the twenty-century's digitized world (Cooper, 2007, p. 181). Therefore, "the composition classroom should immerse students in analyzing digital media, in exploring the world beyond the classroom, in crafting digital personae, and in creating new and emerging definitions of civic literacy" (Clark, 2010, p. 28). In this webbed world, digital literacies are "social practices through which we define meanings and values and discover the effects of digital literacies [which] is an important goal for students"; additionally, one who will "enable them not only to survive in this world but create better worlds for themselves and others" (Cooper, 2007, p. 186). Thus, we cannot be content to exclusively focus on "teaching the production of academic texts"; in addition, our discipline must "instruct students in signifying practices broadly conceived—to see not only the rhetoric of the college essay but the rhetoric of the institution of schooling, of the work place, and of the media" (Berlin, 1992, p. 24). Mostly, the implication of cloud pedagogy is not only to prepare students to share, collaborate, and create with peers within their classroom setting and beyond, but also to make them able to create their own situated voices, which will be better heard and validated in the writing classrooms.

### **Cross-culturalizing students' rhetorical approaches, rhetorical choices, and writing strategies in the cloud**

By engaging students in networked knowledge communities and by sharing their prior academic and cultural literacies, cloud pedagogy amalgamates diverse cultural conditions, rhetorical appeals, and writing strategies together. Such digital engagement encourages students to discourse on the contents students create, and it also reinforces

them to deconstruct the traditional boundaries and reconstruct newer paradigms for their purposes. In so doing, cloud pedagogy aids students' settling-in process by promoting the existence of Facebook communities (Madge, Meek, Wellens, & Hooley, 2009, p. 152) and by constructing their ingenuities in multiple forms in the cloud. In this process, students always provide digital cultural narratives, stories, descriptions, and elaborations, which are culturally reflexive and individually subjective (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008). Additionally, students conceptualize digital narratives on their social, political, and economic contexts by gathering points of references in the cloud, and when such narratives are brought into dialogical engagement, students become cross-culturally reproductive and transformative. This networked dialogical process tends to generate cross-cultural communications that master interpretive syntheses and critical analyses of the realities in immeasurable ways, and possibly it can also transform student's individual identity and social conditions through the shared narratives and stories (Bruner, 2002; Chavez Chavez, 2003).

When students read essays and write responses in the cloud contexts, they can also capture diverse cultural and individual understandings. For instance, in one of my first-year writing classes, students watched Dr. Martin Luther King's famous speech, "I Have a Dream"; then students wrote responses, followed by the classroom discussion. During the physical and virtual discussions, the way students understood, interpreted, and reflected it was different based on their cultural, racial, sexual orientation, prior literacies, and geopolitical locations. African American students, for example, interpreted it based on their cultural and historical backgrounds, which was different from the way Anglo-American students interpreted. The way Middle Eastern students interpreted "equality," "rights," and "liberty" was different from the way Mexican, Korean and, other students did. Similarly, the way Chinese students construed "freedom" was different from American, Taiwanese, and Middle Eastern students did. Obviously, students' interpretations and analyses also differed within homogenous cultures; or students' perspectives differed from culture to culture and person to person as well. Likewise, in one of my writing classes, though there were a number of different opinions and interpretations, the way a Middle Eastern female student interpreted "women rights" was different from the majority of female students as well as male students did. Through such cloud engagement, students tell us what they already knew and what they learned from the dialogical engagements. In other words, students understand how the same content is understood, interpreted, and consumed in multilayered ways in various cultures. This dialogical engagement not only boosts up students' horizon of critical understanding of diverse cultures, but also encompasses their cross-cultural understandings in the local and global context.

Similarly, in the course of interpreting texts, students gradually perceive how people from different cultural and geographical locations use different rhetorical strategies to express their thoughts and ideas via different multimodal tools. In other

words, when we engage students in the cloud-based dialogues, they understand how culture and language can shape human communication and understanding. In a larger picture, sharing such a complex set of linguistic and cultural strategies tends to blur the traditional contrastive concepts of universalism vs. particularism, individualism vs. communitarianism, specificity vs. diffuseness, achieved vs. ascribed status, and inner direction vs. outer direction (see Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000). In so doing, students in cloud-based writing tend to build complex intercultural and cross-cultural codes, for the “networking and socialization supported by Facebook is in many respects a hybrid, replicating ‘real-world’ social interaction alongside facilitating the formation of new contacts based on interest rather than physical proximity” (Kreps & Pearson, 2009, p. 158). So, because of the cloud-based pedagogy, traditional cultural and linguistic boundaries become blurry; they become ambiguous and overlapping since there are not any wholly and virtually clearly defined benchmark between languages and cultures (Connor, 2008; McCool, 2010; Thatcher, 2010).

By introducing various cultural codes, cultural narratives, socio-economic conditions, and geopolitical materials, cloud pedagogy expands the understanding and horizon of global cultures. Similarly, it also contributes to the construction, dissemination, and amplification of diverse cultural artifacts, which are more feasible in cloud computing platforms, for digital global discourse can be steered in more democratic and socially equitable directions (Fairclough, 2006, p. 162). For instance, in cloud-based writing classes, students write on their cultural artifacts, such as festivals, cultures, women rights, minority identities, and technologies. While working on these projects as I stated earlier, students post their inquiry questions, outlines, drafts, and comments on Facebook; and other students get the opportunity to read their colleagues’ questions, outlines, and comments that help them both understand diverse cultures’ rhetorical situations and rhetorical choices. This pedagogical setting helps students expand their understanding of diverse local and global cultures in newer ways. This cloud-based pedagogical landscape not only allows students to appreciate other cultural patterns in multifaceted ways, but also helps them develop newer cross-cultural understandings at the micro-to-macro level.

The praxis of cloud pedagogy is a complicated and arbitrary, and multimodal process also invariably demands students’ engagement within non-linear stages of digital production (inventing, inquiring, creating, organizing, revising, editing, publishing, and sharing). The complexity of cloud computing, including Facebook, is a multidimensional phenomenon that carries the intricacy of cultural contexts due to its amplified digital dialogical interaction with other dynamic socio-cultural and geopolitical codes. In cloud pedagogy, since students utilize different cloud computing tools, they tend to immerse in the make up of the local and global communities within and outside their networked communities. Moreover, Facebook, including other cloud tools, also informs that cloud-based communication is a platform for diverse student populations

from where they reduce adaptive unconscious cultural and geopolitical gaps, they illuminate invisible ideological blind spots, and they mutually challenge inequalities that were invisible and undetectable in the traditional pedagogy. Thus, when students tell their stories and share them in the cloud, their learning has an immediate impact on their lives and interests that allow them to put their newer skills into play within their networked communities and beyond.

Furthermore, cloud computing pedagogy empowers students as ethnographers, historians, and ambassadors of their cultures. For instance, when students participate in the cloud as their community representatives, they bring their cultural narratives where they share the concept of knowledge and practices as historical, social, and political acts. Therefore, in cloud-based pedagogy, cloud tools become mediums through which students mediate their cultural materials, economic conditions, and social situations. This mediation includes their own language, community, and learning that shape their identities, subjectivities, and conceptions of their cultural narratives and social conditions (Berlin, 1992, p. 26). So, while students share their stories, narratives, and sufferings in the cloud, they grasp other global cultural conditions, global economic settings, and geopolitical situations. With such digital dialogical participations, by blurring the traditional boundaries (local vs. center, superior culture vs. inferior culture, and standard and non-standard English), cloud pedagogy promotes students' cross-cultural communication skills that make their prior notion of language and culture fluid and arbitrary.

Moreover, while sharing, discoursing, and creating contents in the cloud, students realize that writing is not static and mechanical, but it is situated and is always in-the-making. So, in the cloud pedagogy, students understand that there is no universal "Truth," but truths are multiple, and they are culturally and ideologically constructed (Berlin, 1988; Bruffee, 1984, 1986; Brummett, 1979; Limbu, 2011a; Scott, 1967). In the cloud-based writing, students recognize that writing is framed as an open inquiry, and it makes their research more accessible for them by connecting their prior literacies and online experiences. Additionally, cloud pedagogy consequently makes students' research and writing activities seem less foreign (Purdy, 2010, p. 55) even though they are in the newer academic spaces.

## **Conclusion**

Because of cloud computing's gradual emersion in the global networked communities, we should understand that cloud-based pedagogy is inescapable. So, we should embrace the digital social constructivism practice that devises active and self-regulatory learning practices by discoursing collaboratively within the networked knowledge communities. In the cloud-based pedagogy, students, by respecting and understanding other cultures, people, and languages (World Englishes), can also alter the traditional

conservative boundaries because digital media are the primary social fields, and they have become powerful tools to mediate social elements (Silverstone, 1999; Thompson, 1995; Tomlison, 1999; Virilio, 1997). Consequently, digital interfaces are sites within which ideological and material legacies are continuously questioned, written, and rewritten along with more positive cultural legacies (Selfe & Selfe, 2004, p. 431). What is important about cloud pedagogy is that it also allows students to enter into other global networked knowledge communities and to discourse with the complex intercultural, cross-cultural, and global cultures. Moreover, in cloud-based writing classes, whether students are monolingual English speaking students or multilingual students, they believe that their opinions are validated in the writing classes. Cloud pedagogy also creates environments where students can explore how rhetorical traditions, cultural materials, and geopolitical conditions are changing, and how such epistemic shifts are influencing their roles as local as well as global citizens.

Finally, although I advocate for the revolutionary use of cloud tools in the writing classes, I can testify how social networking sites and cloud spaces tend to distract students both inside and outside of the classes. For instance, as students open their computers and other mobile devices, the first things they usually tend to check are social networking spaces, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google+; then they begin their regular work. Even when students are in the midst of the class discussions and other activities, they frequently tend to either communicate with their colleagues or glance their social networking spaces (Limbu, 2011b). However, cloud-based pedagogy lies as an agentive force in the fast changing global networked village saturated by digital technologies, for digitally literate students not only can communicate effectively with people from different cultures, but also produce more effective, accurate, and high quality texts. It informs that we should engage students in different digital, multimodal, and global writing projects that will provide them valuable global future career preparations. In this journey, we, along with our students, will continue to enact an epistemology of representation that will guide present pedagogical practices and will shape prospective pedagogical research inquiries. Here, we do not perpetuate the traditional hegemonic and ideological pedagogy as they have always been practiced, but will reform and redesign global writing courses as they will have been practiced in the future.

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