Chapter 3
The Claim on Human Conviviality in Cyberspace

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ABSTRACT

This chapter sets out by defining conviviality in a way that allows the term to be simultaneously applied to face-to-face and virtual experiences. The educational context is introduced as one of many that can benefit from both types of experience. Impairment of the components of a shared learning experience (self, others, teacher) does not have to occur if educators understand the unique combination produced by the content to be learned plus the markers of the type of learning experience selected. Matching the content to the medium produces the optimal results. The authors conclude that conviviality in a specific application is not only possible, but, potentially highly productive in cyberspace, minimizing the logistical, high-risk, and cognitive constraints identified by Calandra & Puvirajah (2014) that can impair other forms of communication and specifically non-cyber learning experiences. This chapter contributes to new era of human interaction literature in the age of virtuality.

INTRODUCTION

Technology today is an overwhelming force. The available handheld information devices are becoming a necessity for those that need to remain connected for real-time information. According to Hopkins and Turner (2012), there are more handheld devices available in the world than toothbrushes! Although technology experts and futurists proclaim that we are still very much in the transformational stages of technological evolution, many feel that we are barely in the age of discovery (Bonk, 2010). Millennials, the next generation entering society after the turn of the century, have adapted the use of their electronic devices throughout their daily routines. Unlike generations of the past, they communicate through texts and instant messages as opposed to phone calls. For entertainment, millennials prefer to personally download their music, stream movies, and choose dating partners online. The Internet becomes the information center for inquiries about restaurants, cars, medical providers, electronics, or various appli-

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Figure 1. Scene from learning simulation depicting West Point

ances or services (Burstein, 2013). Further, Millennials are not the only populations that are dependent on technology. By 2014, Facebook had an estimated billion members, while Twitter boasted 271 million users. Between 2012 to 2014 Facebook's most prolific demographic group were new users from ages forty-five to fifty-four. Additionally, Twitter announced a 79 percent growth of their users between the ages of fifty-five and sixty-four during this same timeframe (Pew Research Center Internet Project, 2014). The "information superhighway" of the early 1990s has evolved into a collection of colorful metaphors today attempting to define these technological spaces such as "cyberspace," "the Net," "online," and "the Web." Regardless of the term, these computer networks allow the creation of new social spaces allowing people to meet and interact with one another (Wellman, Salaff, Dimitrova et al., 1996).

Figure 2. Scene from learning simulation depicting foyer of air operations center

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