

cloud computing in EFL classes

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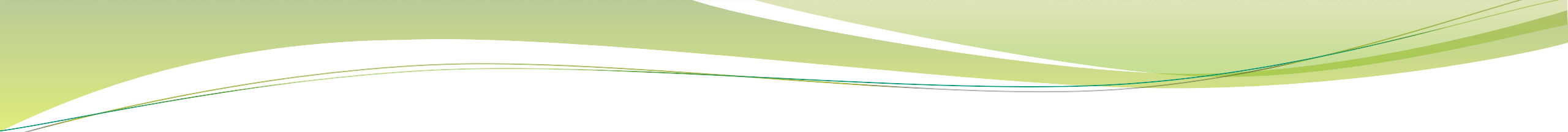


Cloud Computing

- Cloud computing is a general term for anything that involves delivering hosted services over the Internet. Cloud computing proves to be a highly efficient technology which tends to be integrated into EFL (English as Foreign Language) instruction and makes both teachers and students benefit a lot.
- Cloud computing method in teaching languages could be very challenging and motivating because students learn language faster by speaking and engaging with others as well as they learn how to write and read. Cloud computing is one of new and promising computing resources in the 21st century.

Cloud computing in EFL classes

- Teachers and students are expected to develop a set of abilities to succeed in the Information Age. These 21st century skills are listed as follows:
 - **Learning Skills**- including critical and creative thinking, collaborating and communicating
 - **Literacy Skills**- including information literacy, media literacy and technology literacy
 - **Life Skills**- including flexibility, initiative, social skills, productivity and leadership

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- There are many cloud-based tools/applications ranging from simple web sites to complex and interactive online learning environments. Several of them have free basic versions and allow for online document, spreadsheet, and presentation creation such as Wordpress, Prezi, Edmodo, Slideshare and Google Drive. Many of them provide asynchronous and synchronous collaboration not only within the classroom but beyond the classroom. Thus, cloud computing provides diverse learning environment

- The artifacts may be co-constructed, and offer online peer feedback and discussions features [5,8]. Chiu (2014:178) emphasizes two major characteristics of cloud computing: “resource sharing” and “ubiquitous” [9]. Internet-based cloud computing tools such as Microsoft’s Onedrive and Google Drive Apps for Education are getting more and more popular in educational setting. When you use the cloud-based tools/applications, you do not have to save your files on a CD or thumb drive to use them on different computers or mobile tools.

- The data in your files travel with you in the cloud wherever you go. The only thing needed is the Internet connection. You save time and energy. Khampusaen (2014) states that language teachers realize that traditional language teaching ways does not succeed anymore since they are unable to reach the desired goals and cause waste of time and paper [5]. In order to get better learning outcomes, they tend to integrate technology in their language classes.

Role of technology and internet in education

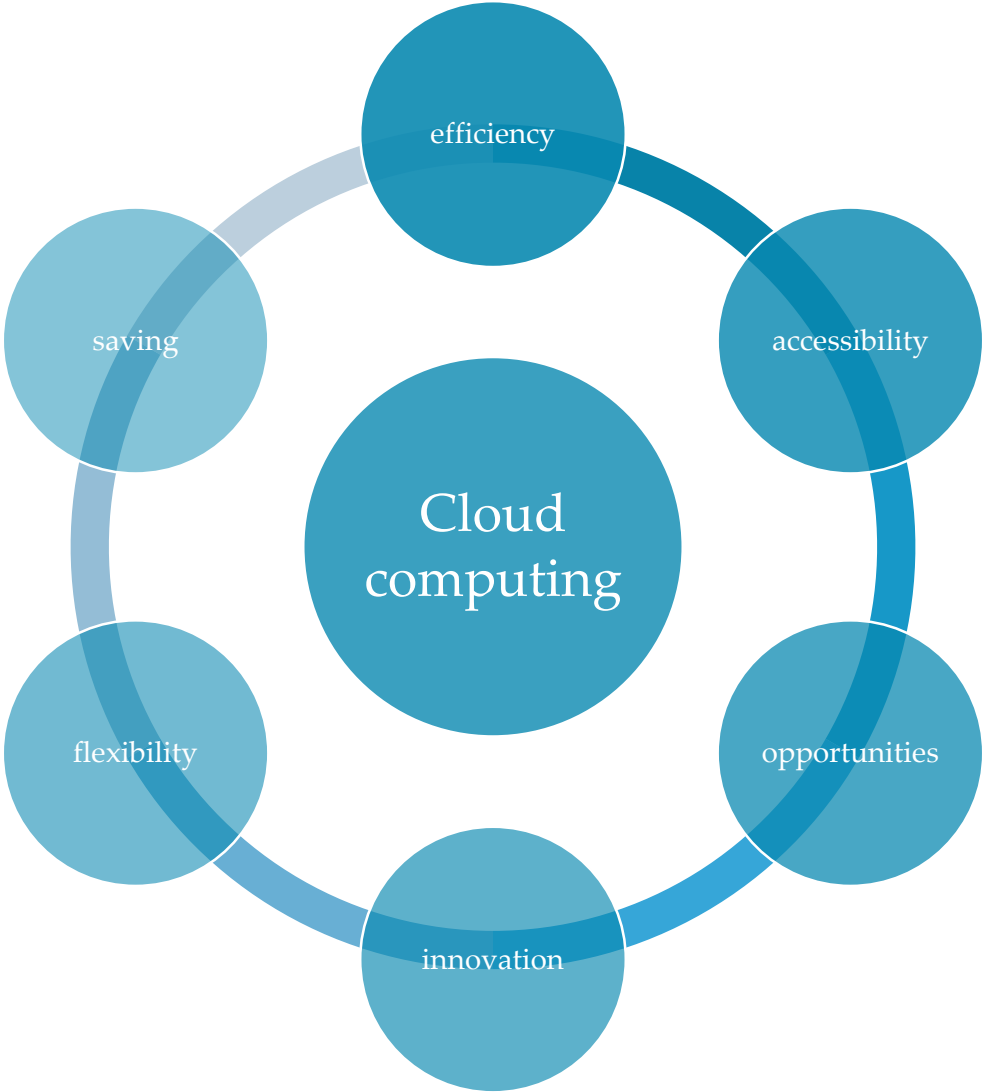
- provide genuine opportunities to strengthen students' learning experiences,
- foster autonomous learning and improves their motivation and engagement,
- provide teachers and students the facilities for creativity, innovation, engagement and self-regulation,
- support collaboration within and outside the classroom.....

Advantages of Cloud Computing

- Cloud computing provides cost-free or low cost systems to users. Cost of hardware or software purchase is decreased.
- It is ubiquitous- always available anytime and anywhere; allows users to store work and to work in the cloud.
- USBs or flash drives would not be needed as users would not store anything on their drives.
- Users need only a computer with the Internet access to reach the data from anywhere at any time. Lesson plans, grades, notes, PowerPoint slides, anything digital that you use in teaching is easily uploaded and accessed anytime.

- Students are engaged in collaborative activities. You can set-up various student groups to work on projects and assignments in the cloud.
- Cloud computing applications provide flexibility for all e-learning.
- It promotes learner autonomy.
- Cloud computing enhances teaching and learning.
- Cloud computing is a very stable technology that you can rely on.
- It is secure in that if something happens to the technology at schools, you can still reach the data you saved or uploaded. Moreover, it is not easily accessible by anyone since it generally requires an ID and a password.

- You can work collaboratively with your colleagues. You can share some or all of your files that you have stored in the cloud.
 - With cloud computing, the amount of photocopying is reduced significantly.
 - Cloud computing systems are regularly backed-up, so the chances of losing content are quite small.
 - Cloud computing will save multiple revisions and versions of a document so that you can make changes to a lesson.
 - Cloud computing saves memory space in personal devices
- Review ideas.

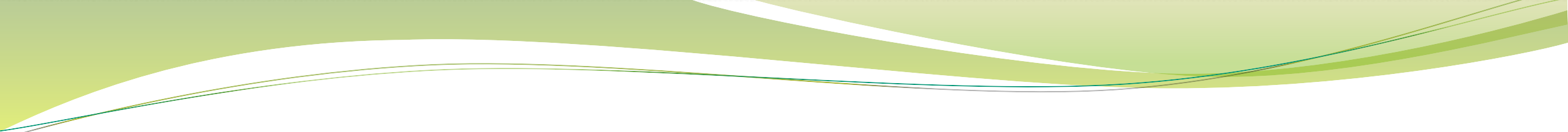


Types of cloud computing tools/apps

- synchronous / asynchronous
 - Google drive
 - One drive
 - Dropbox
 - Amazon cloud drive
 - Sound cloud

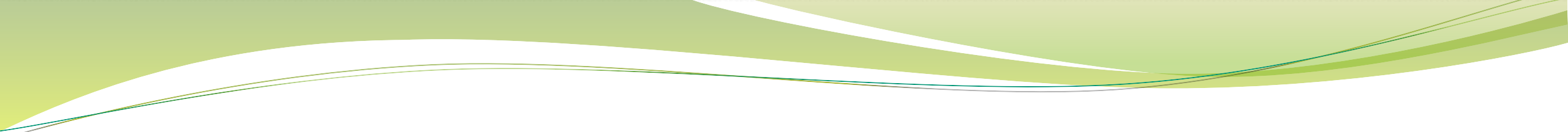
Google drive

- Google Drive is a file storage and synchronization service from Google that allows users to store and share files, edit documents, spreadsheets, and presentations with collaborators. It offers 15GB of free storage space and encompasses Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides. They are a suite of free web-based software within Google Drive service. This office suite allows collaborative editing of documents, spreadsheets, presentations, drawings, forms in real-time [17,18].

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- Google Docs is free and it was especially built for schools, universities and non-profit organizations allowing users to share a variety of Word spreadsheet, presentation and other documents in a collaborative manner. It can be used “for rosters, course management, collaborative project work and homework submission” [19].

One drive

- OneDrive is Microsoft's cloud tool. It is pre-installed on Windows 10 and 8.1. Yet, anyone can use it on the Web, by downloading a desktop app for Mac and earlier versions of Windows, or the OneDrive Android, iOS, Windows Phone and Xbox apps. You can access and share files and photos on PC, Mac, Android and iOS. It keeps your files and photos organized. Once you save your photos in OneDrive, they are automatically tagged based on visuals. Thus, you can easily find the photos you are looking for.

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- If you have an Office 365 subscription and open a document saved in OneDrive, you can collaborate on it in real time with other people. These real-time notifications let you know when a document is being edited and by whom. If you have a Microsoft account, you get 5GB of free storage and get extra space when you pay for it [11,12].

Dropbox

- Dropbox is a web-based file syncing app and provides 2 GB of file storage without any charge. If you want more storage, you can get it with monthly payments. When you install the app on a device, it creates a folder there, and keeps the files in that folder in synch with any other Dropbox installations you have on other computing devices.

- You can store any kind of file in Dropbox, by either uploading to the website or adding it with the desktop apps and can get to your files at any time from Dropbox's website, desktop applications for Mac, Windows and Linux or the iOS, Android, BlackBerry and Kindle Fire mobile apps. [Dropbox](#) is a reliable in the cloud storage; it is easy to install and use.

Amazon cloud drive

- Amazon Cloud Drive is an online storage service with a focus on photos and is supported on Internet Explorer version 9 and higher, Safari 6 and higher, Firefox, and Chrome. It is intended for personal use- not for professional or enterprise use- and provides easy access to the documents, spreadsheets, music, photos and videos stored in Cloud Drive. It has apps for iOS and Android with automatic upload so videos and photos you take with your phone get saved to the cloud right after you shoot them.

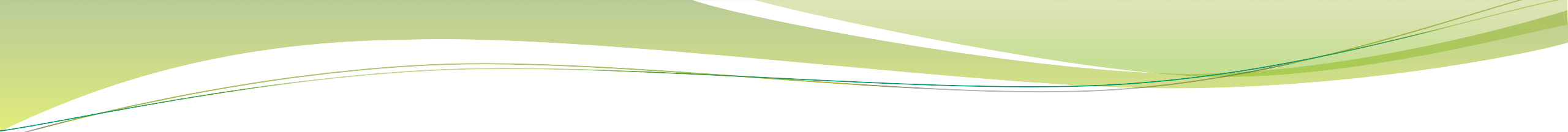
- This storage service lacks some important features like file versioning or scheduled backups. You can only view and manage files from the Cloud Drive website, but you cannot upload files larger than 2GB there. The desktop app does not work with your file system, you can only use it upload or download files [12,15].

Facilities of cloud computing

- Uploading and sharing documents, materials, videos, etc.
- Creating educational blogs
- Student portfolios
- Assigning and evaluating
- Feedback
- Evaluation

Some limitations of cloud computing

- Sometimes it requires a well-established infrastructure
- Uploading and downloading files may take much time depending upon the pace of the internet connection and size of the files
- Students may cheat during the exam via their mobile devices
- Security and privacy problems may occur
- Some cloud computing sites and applications require money

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- Peripheral devices like printers or scanners might not work with cloud.
 - Integrating internal applications with those on cloud can be complex and in some cases not viable.
 - Users can only control and manage the applications, data and services operated on top of that, not the backend infrastructure itself.

Conclusion

- One of the most powerful benefits of a cloud app is ubiquitous access.
- Internet based tools provide excellent functionality that you can access from multiple devices. Many of them are either free or have free basic versions and provide unlimited storage places for monthly or annual payments. one of the main benefits of these apps is their collaborative function.
- Students will be more capable of thinking critically if they work collaboratively.

- Collaboration increases learners' motivation and engagement in learning.
- Cloud based tools and applications bring flexibility and new opportunities to improve education.
- The social learning environment provided by the Cloud can considerably increase teachers- students' engagement...

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