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Rhizomatic Recoding: Rethinking Learning with CMCT in Disrupted Spaces

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The abrupt pandemic-driven shift to online learning fractured traditional academic spaces, exposing deep vulnerabilities in communication, collaboration, and the very foundation of the stable academic subject. This study, drawing on post-qualitative inquiry and Deleuzoguattarian rhizome theory, recodes this disruption not as a mere obstacle, but as an unexpected and fertile ground for transformative learning with computer-mediated communication technology (CMCT). Interwoven narrative maps, rich discussions, and intimate conversations with three undergraduate students and three professors at the University of the Philippines Los Baños reveal their diverse and often poignant experiences navigating this tumultuous shift. Mumby's Discourse of Vulnerability is reframed here, not as a deficiency, but as a potent catalyst for collaborative experimentation and dynamic interactions fostered with the unique affordances of CMCT. This study emphasizes the crucial importance of embracing messiness, fluidity, and contingency in the digital classroom. By meticulously exploring how CMCT reshapes communication, collaboration, and even identity formation in these fluid digital spaces, it offers valuable insights and practical guidance for educators and researchers seeking to cultivate more open, inclusive, and resilient academic environments in the age of online learning. The analysis revealed how shared anxieties and challenges spurred collaborative experimentation and dynamic interactions, akin to the rhizomatic model, (re)shaping online learning communities using computer-mediated communication technology. The findings emphasized the importance of embracing messiness and contingency in online spaces, fostering collaborative meaning-making through open communication, and rethinking academic success beyond traditional metrics. This rhizomatic recoding, driven by CMCT and vulnerability, points towards a future where learning thrives in dynamic, interconnected networks, not only redefining academic success but also transforming the very landscape of education itself.

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Primary author: Dr SAN PABLO, Shari Eunice (University of the Philippines)

Presenter: Dr SAN PABLO, Shari Eunice (University of the Philippines)

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